

Chapter Two

The Idealism of the Transcendental Deduction

This dissertation proposes an interpretation of Kant's transcendental deduction alternative to P.F. Strawson's interpretation. The first chapter considered Strawson's reconstruction of the deduction's transcendental argument and Strawson's rejection of the deduction's transcendental psychology; it did so in order to propose an interpretive strategy alternative to Strawson's strategy. This second chapter considers Strawson's rejection of the deduction's transcendental idealism; it does so in order to defend my alternative interpretive strategy.

According to Strawson, the deduction's project is to reform empiricism, to establish that our employment in experience of the categories is rationally justified; its transcendental argument proves from a premised feature of any intelligible experience the conclusion that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience; its transcendental psychology attributes our necessary employment in experience of the categories to the a priori constitution of our subjectivity; and, its transcendental psychology thus contains the "seeds"¹ of its transcendental idealism, the doctrine that our experience necessarily has a categorial structure because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, and therefore, that while we know that appearances to subjects such as ourselves necessarily have a categorial structure, we also know that things in themselves do not necessarily have a categorial structure. Strawson's strategy for realizing the deduction's reformed empiricism is to reconstruct its transcendental argument, to reject its transcendental psychology, and thereby, to uproot

¹ Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 21.

its transcendental idealism. Strawson's achievement is to recognize both that the deduction's project is to reform empiricism, and that the deduction's reformed empiricism must reject transcendental subjectivism, both the deduction's transcendental psychology and the deduction's transcendental idealism.

My first chapter argued that Strawson's strategy fails, and proposed an alternative strategy. Strawson's strategy fails because in order to reform empiricism the deduction's transcendental argument must establish not just that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience, but furthermore, that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. According to my alternative, the deduction's transcendental argument premises an understanding of what it is to be an object of experience, shows that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, concludes that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, and does so by analyzing our cognitive faculty. The deduction's transcendental argument can show that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure by analyzing our cognitive faculty, according to my alternative, on the assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together: finite cognition is cognition that depends upon objects in experience; objects of experience are that upon which finite cognition depends.

This second chapter considers the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction's transcendental argument the implicit assumption that the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty become

intelligible together. I raise this objection by showing, in Section One, that Strawson rejects the deduction's transcendental idealism for the reason that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism, and, in Section Two, that Henry Allison's attempt to redeem transcendental idealism by differentiating ontological and epistemological interpretations of transcendental idealism fails. I answer the objection, in Section Three, by distinguishing the deduction's explicit doctrine of transcendental idealism from the doctrine of idealism implicit in the deduction's transcendental argument. I explain that the deduction's explicit doctrine of transcendental idealism is the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon the a priori constitution of our cognitive faculty for their necessary structure, whereas the doctrine of idealism implicit in the deduction's transcendental argument is the doctrine of a mutual interdependence of the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty for their intelligibility. In Section Four, I consider transcendental idealism in its own right, and argue that it is inessential to the deduction. In Section Five, I consider a final objection on behalf of realism.

I. In order to reform empiricism, the deduction's transcendental argument must establish that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience – not because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, not because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects, but instead – because of the necessary structure of objectivity, because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. The deduction's transcendental idealism is the doctrine that our experience necessarily has a categorial structure because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, and therefore, that while we know that appearances to subjects such as

ourselves necessarily have a categorial structure, we also know that things in themselves do not necessarily have a categorial structure. By showing that Strawson rejects the deduction's transcendental idealism for the reason that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism, I will raise the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction the implicit assumption that the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together.

Strawson derides transcendental idealism as a "model of a mind-made Nature."² It might thus seem that Strawson rejects transcendental idealism only because he mistakes it for empirical idealism, which denies the independent existence of the objects of our experience. Strawson does distinguish transcendental and empirical idealisms, however. He writes,

What is needed is a distinction between the import of the question, "Do bodies exist independently of perceptions?", as raised within the conceptual scheme to which we are committed in experience, and the import of the question as raised within the context of the entire critical philosophy. One of the results of the critical philosophy [...] is to show that we must connect our intuitions with the aid of concepts of objective things, existing independently of our perceptions, which we take those intuitions be perceptions of. Nothing would count as a possible experience, as a kind of experience which we could make intelligible to ourselves, for which this necessity did not hold. So long as our questions and replies are raised and given within the framework of the scheme of ideas to which we are necessarily committed in experience, the answer to our question must be affirmative – and a trivial enough affirmative at that.

But the critical philosopher, Kant must hold, achieves a certain detachment from the scheme to which, as a being concerned with empirical questions and answers, he is wholeheartedly committed. The detached point of view from which the necessities of that scheme can be appreciated is also a point of view from which our questions assumes a quite different import and demands, not an affirmative, but a negative, answer.³

Strawson distinguishes transcendental and empirical idealisms by contrasting transcendental and empirical senses of the question, "Are the objects of our experience independent of our subjectivity?" The empirical sense of this question asks whether the

² Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 22.

³ Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 259-260.

objects of our particular experiences exist independently of those particular subjective experiences. Empirical idealism, Strawson explains, answers this empirical sense of the question in the negative. The transcendental sense of the question asks whether the necessary structure of the objects of our experience is independent of our subjectivity in general. The deduction's transcendental idealism, Strawson explains, answers this transcendental sense of the question in the negative.

Strawson thus interprets the deduction's transcendental idealism as "a model of a mind-made Nature" – not in the empirical sense, not as asserting that the objects of our particular experiences depend for their existence upon our particular subjective experiences, but instead – in the transcendental sense, as asserting that the objects of our experience depend for their necessary structure upon the a priori constitution of our subjectivity. Strawson rejects this model of a mind-made Nature in the transcendental sense for the reason that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism.

The following passage from Section 26 of the B-edition deduction is explicit that transcendental idealism is a model of a mind-made Nature in the transcendental sense.

The passage begins with a question:

Categories are concepts that prescribe laws *a priori* to appearances, thus to nature as the sum total of all appearances (*natura materialiter spectata*), and, since they are not derived from nature and do not follow it as their pattern (for they would otherwise be merely empirical), the question now arises how it is to be conceived that nature must follow them, i.e., how they can determine *a priori* the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter. (B163)

The question is "How could it be that our cognitive faculty legislates a priori for nature, and that nature is necessarily lawful?" or "How could it be that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience, and that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure?" The passage from

Section 26 then alludes to the Transcendental Aesthetic's doctrine of transcendental idealism:

It is by no means stranger that the laws of appearances in nature must agree with the understanding and its a *priori* form, i.e., its faculty of *combining* the manifold in general, than that the appearances themselves must agree with the form of sensible intuition a *priori*. For laws exist just as little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding, as appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being, insofar as it has senses. (B164)

Finally, the passage from Section 26 answers the question:

The lawfulness of things in themselves would necessarily pertain to them even without an understanding that cognizes them. But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves. As mere representations, however, they stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes. (B164)

Section 26's question is "How could it be that our cognitive faculty legislates a priori for nature, and that nature is necessarily lawful?" or "How could it be that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience, and that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure?" Section 26's answer is transcendental idealism; its answer is that nature is necessarily lawful because our cognitive faculty legislates a priori for nature, that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience.

Transcendental idealism's model of a mind-made Nature in the transcendental sense does undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism. In order to reform empiricism, the deduction's transcendental argument must establish that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience – not because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, but instead – because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. The deduction's transcendental

idealism asserts the reverse; it asserts that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects.

Now, according to my interpretive strategy for realizing the deduction's reformed empiricism, the deduction's transcendental argument premises an understanding of what it is to be an object of experience, shows that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, concludes that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, and does so by analyzing our cognitive faculty. The deduction's transcendental argument can show that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure by analyzing our cognitive faculty, according to my strategy, on the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together: finite cognition is cognition that depends upon objects in experience; objects of experience are that upon which finite cognition depends.

But, having seen that Strawson rejects the deduction's transcendental idealism for the reason that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism, it shall now be objected that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together. For, this assumption answers the transcendental sense of the question, "Are the objects of our experience independent of our subjectivity?" in the negative. Does it not thereby undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism?

II. Henry Allison attempts to redeem transcendental idealism from Strawson's objection that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism by differentiating

ontological and epistemological interpretations of transcendental idealism. By showing that Allison fails because both ontological and epistemological interpretations undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism, I will bolster the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism.

Ontological interpretations, Allison explains, assume a realist conception of objectivity, according to which the necessary structure of the objects of our experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent. Transcendental idealism's claim that our experience necessarily has a categorial structure because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity – interpreted ontologically – means that our necessarily categorially structured experience is merely subjective, or of a merely subjective realm.

Ontological interpretations undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism because they deny that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. In order to reform empiricism the deduction's transcendental argument must establish our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. Whereas, transcendental idealism's claim that while we know that appearances to subjects such as ourselves necessarily have a categorial structure, we also know that things in themselves do not necessarily have a categorial structure – interpreted ontologically – means that while we know that the merely subjective realm of our experience necessarily has a categorial structure, we also know that the objects of our experience do not necessarily have a categorial structure.

Allison attempts to redeem transcendental idealism from the objection that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism by differentiating ontological and epistemological interpretations. To do so, Allison introduces the concept of an epistemic condition; and, Allison idealistically reconceives objectivity.

An epistemic condition, Allison explains, is “a necessary condition for the representation of objects, that is, a condition without which our representations would not relate to objects.”⁴ Transcendental idealism's distinction between appearances and things in themselves – interpreted epistemologically – is a distinction between things considered in relation to the necessary conditions for the representation of objects, and those same things considered in abstraction from those conditions. Transcendental idealism's claim that while we know that appearances to subjects such as ourselves necessarily have a categorial structure, we also know that things in themselves do not necessarily have a categorial structure – interpreted epistemologically – means that while we know that things considered in relation to the necessary conditions for the representation of objects necessarily have a categorial structure, we also know that things considered in abstraction from those conditions do not necessarily have a categorial structure.

To differentiate ontological and epistemological interpretations, Allison still must show that our necessarily categorially structured experience is not merely subjective, but also of objects. Allison acknowledges, “[T]he fundamental problem confronting transcendental idealism is to explain how [epistemic] conditions can be both subjective and objective [...] at once.”⁵ Allison must show that the way things are, considered in

⁴ Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 11. Cf. Henry Allison, “Transcendental Idealism: A Retrospective” in *Idealism and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

⁵ Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 11.

relation to the necessary conditions for the representation of objects – not the way things are, considered in abstraction from those conditions – is the way things objectively are.

To do so, Allison idealistically reconceives objectivity. He writes,

[T]he concept of an epistemic condition brings with it an idealist commitment [...], because it involves the relativization of the *concept* of an object to human cognition and the conditions of its representation of objects.⁶

Elsewhere, Allison formulates his idealist reconception of objectivity as follows:

[T]he conception of an epistemic condition involves a certain idealistic commitment [...]. The basic point is [...] to consider objects in terms of the conditions of their representation, and this means that an object is understood idealistically as the correlate of a certain mode of representation.⁷

According to Allison's idealist reconception of objectivity, objects of experience are correlates of our faculty of representation; what it is to be an object of experience is to be represented in accordance with the necessary conditions for the representation of objects.

Allison's idealist reconception of objectivity is a verbal sleight of hand. It superficially differentiates ontological and epistemological interpretations of transcendental idealism, while masking the deeper similarity that either undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism.

Allison's idealist reconception of objectivity differentiates ontological and epistemological interpretations as follows. Given that what it is to be an object of experience just is to be represented in accordance with the necessary conditions for the representation of objects, it follows that things considered in relation to the necessary conditions for the representation of objects – not things considered in abstraction from those conditions – are things considered as they objectively are.

⁶ Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 12.

⁷ Allison, "Transcendental Idealism," 5.

However, Allison's idealist reconception of objectivity undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism as follows. According to a realist conception of objectivity, the necessary structure of the objects of our experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent. Allison idealistically reconceives objectivity. According to Allison, what it is to be an object of experience is to be represented in accordance with the necessary conditions for the representation of objects. Allison leaves in place, however, the realist conception of subjectivity. He writes, "[Transcendental idealism] relativize[s] the concept of an object to the conditions (whatever they may be) of the representation of objects."⁸ According to Allison, the necessary conditions for the representation of objects are whatever they may be independently of what it is to be an object of experience. This combination of an idealist reconception of objectivity, according to which the necessary structure of the objects of our experience is dependent upon the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, with a realist conception of subjectivity, according to which the a priori constitution of our subjectivity is independent of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience, implies that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. Indeed, Allison acknowledges, "cognition is fully objective, since it is governed by *a priori* epistemic conditions."⁹ On Allison's epistemological interpretation, therefore, our necessarily categorially structured experience is objective, but it is objective because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects.

⁸ Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 12.

⁹ Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 17.

Allison's attempt to redeem transcendental idealism from the objection that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism by differentiating ontological and epistemological interpretations fails. To reform empiricism, the deduction's transcendental argument must establish that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience – not because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, not because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects, but instead – because of the necessary structure of objectivity, because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. Allison's epistemological interpretation does differ from ontological interpretations: while ontological interpretations deny that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, Allison's epistemological interpretation asserts that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. However, Allison's epistemological interpretation nevertheless undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism: it asserts that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects.

Seeing that Allison's failure to redeem transcendental idealism from the objection that it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism bolsters the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together. For, the implicit assumption that I ascribe to the deduction's transcendental argument idealistically reconceives objectivity. According to a realist conception of objectivity, the necessary structure of objects of experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent; whereas, according the implicit assumption

that I ascribe to the deduction's transcendental argument, the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty are mutually interdependent for their intelligibility. Does my strategy not thereby undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism?

III. I have now raised the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together. To answer this objection, first, I will distinguish the idealism implicit in the deduction's transcendental argument from the deduction's explicit doctrine of transcendental idealism. To do so, I will explain that the deduction's transcendental idealism is the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon our cognitive faculty, whereas the idealism of deduction's transcendental argument is the doctrine of a mutual interdependence of the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty. Second, I will show that the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument does not undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism. To do so, I will explain that the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument reconceives both objectivity and subjectivity, and thereby, grounds – not the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, but only – our knowledge of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in our knowledge of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity.

Section 26 of the deduction is explicit that transcendental idealism is the doctrine of a one-way dependence of our experience upon our cognitive faculty. Recall, Kant writes,

Categories are concepts that prescribe laws *a priori* to appearances, thus to nature as the sum total of all appearances (*natura materialiter spectata*), and, since they are not derived from nature and do not follow it as their pattern (for they would otherwise be

merely empirical), the question now arises how it is to be conceived that nature must follow them, i.e., how they can determine *a priori* the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter. Here is the solution to this riddle.

[...] The lawfulness of things in themselves would necessarily pertain to them even without an understanding that cognizes them. But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves. As mere representations, however, they stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes. (B163-164)

Section 26 raises the question, “How could it be that our cognitive faculty legislates a priori for nature, and that nature is necessarily lawful?” or “How could it be that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience, and that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure?” Section 26’s answer is transcendental idealism; its answer is that nature is necessarily lawful because our cognitive faculty legislates a priori for nature, that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience. The deduction’s explicit doctrine of transcendental idealism is thus the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon our cognitive faculty.

The idealism implicit in deduction’s transcendental argument, by contrast, is the doctrine of a mutual interdependence of objects of experience and our cognitive faculty. The deduction’s transcendental argument establishes that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, and it does so by analyzing our cognitive faculty. The deduction’s transcendental argument can establish that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure by analyzing our cognitive faculty, on the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together: our finite cognition is cognition that depends upon objects in experience; the objects of our experience are that upon which our finite cognition depends. The idealism

of the deduction's transcendental argument is thus – not transcendental idealism's doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon the a priori constitution of our cognitive faculty, but instead – the doctrine of a mutual interdependence between the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty.

Transcendental idealism and the idealism of the deduction's transcendental idealism are therefore two distinct forms of idealism. Nevertheless, does the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument not undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism?

According to a realist conception of objectivity, the necessary structure of the objects of our experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent. Allison's epistemological interpretation combines an idealist reconception of objectivity with a realist conception of subjectivity. Thereby, it renders the necessary structure of the objects of experience dependent upon the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, allows that the a priori constitution of our subjectivity is independent of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience, and thus implies that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. Allison's epistemological interpretation undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism because it grounds the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity.

The idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument, by contrast, reconceives both objectivity and subjectivity. It renders the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty mutually interdependent for their intelligibility; however, it does not imply that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because

the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. On the assumption that the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty are mutually interdependent for their intelligibility, the deduction's transcendental argument can establish that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure by analyzing our cognitive faculty. The idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument thus grounds our knowledge of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in our knowledge of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity. It does not, however, ground the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity. Because the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument renders the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty mutually interdependent, it no more implies that the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects, than it implies that the categories are our a priori concepts of objects because the objects of our experience necessarily have a categorial structure. Because the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument grounds – not the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, but only – our knowledge of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in our knowledge of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity, it does not undermine the deduction's reformed empiricism.

I have now have answered the objection that my strategy reintroduces transcendental idealism by ascribing to the deduction's transcendental argument the implicit assumption that the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together. I have done so by distinguishing transcendental idealism, the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon our cognitive

faculty for their necessary structure, from the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument, the doctrine of a mutual interdependence of the objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty for their intelligibility. I have argued that transcendental idealism undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism because it grounds the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity; whereas, the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument does not undermine, but instead makes possible, the deduction's reformed empiricism because it grounds only our knowledge of the necessary structure of the objects of our experience in our knowledge of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity.

IV. So far, this chapter has distinguished the deduction's explicit doctrine of transcendental idealism from the doctrine of idealism implicit in the deduction's transcendental argument; and, it has argued that while transcendental idealism undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism, the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument does not. This section will consider transcendental idealism in its own right. I will argue that transcendental idealism is introduced – not, in section 14, as the key to the proof of the deduction, but only – in section 26, subsequent to the proof of the deduction. I will thereby explain that transcendental idealism is inessential to the deduction.

In a letter to Marcus Herz from 1772, Kant identifies as “the key to the whole secret of metaphysics” (10:130) the question, “What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call “representation” to the object?” (10:130) Kant elaborates,

If a representation comprises only the manner in which the subject is affected by the object, then it is easy to see how it is in conformity with this object, namely, as an effect accords with its cause, and it is easy to see how this modification of our mind can

represent something, that is, have an object. Thus the passive or sensuous representations have an understandable relationship to objects, and the principles that are derived from the nature of our soul have an understandable validity for all things insofar as those things are supposed to be objects of the senses. Similarly, if that in us which we call “representation” were active with regard to the object, that is, if the object itself were created by the representation (as when divine cognitions are conceived as the archetypes of things), the conformity of these representations to their objects could also be understood. [...] However, our understanding, through its representations, is neither the cause of the object [...], nor is the object the cause of our intellectual representations in the real sense (*in sensu reali*). Therefore the pure concepts of the understanding must not be abstracted from sense perceptions, nor must they express the reception of representations through the senses; but though they must have their origin in the nature of the soul, they are neither caused by the object nor do they bring the object itself into being. (10:130)

In this passage, Kant identifies as the key to metaphysics the circumnavigation of a Scylla and a Charybdis. The Scylla is classical empiricism. According to classical empiricism, the categories relate to objects passively; their relation to objects is due to their being derived from the experience of objects. The Charybdis is empirical idealism. According to empirical idealism, the categories relate to objects actively; their relation to objects is due to their creating the objects of experience.

Section 14, titled “Transition to the transcendental deduction of the categories,” returns to the question, “What is the ground of the relation of the categories to the objects of experience?” and charts the deduction’s course. Kant writes,

There are only two possible cases in which synthetic representation and its objects can come together, necessarily relate to each other, and, as it were, meet each other: Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible. If it is the first, then this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*. And this is the case with appearance in respect of that in it which belongs to sensation. But if it is the second, then since representation in itself (for we are not here talking about its causality by means of the will) does not produce its objects as far as its *existence* is concerned, the representation is still determinate of the object *a priori* if it is possible through it alone to *cognize something as an object*. (A92/B124-125)

This passage first explains that the deduction must avoid the Scylla of classical empiricism: experience cannot serve as the basis upon which our *a priori* concepts of

objects relate to objects. This passage then explains that the deduction must avoid the Charybdis of empirical idealism: our theoretical reason does not bring its objects into being. Finally, this passage charts the deduction's course: the deduction must establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects.

According to a common interpretation, the deduction's course for the circumnavigation of the Scylla of classical empiricism and the Charybdis of empirical idealism is to establish transcendental idealism.¹⁰ On this common interpretation, the deduction keeps well away from the Scylla of classical empiricism, and modifies the course through the Charybdis of empirical idealism. While empirical idealism is the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon our subjectivity for their existence, transcendental idealism is the doctrine of a one-way dependence of the objects of our experience upon the a priori constitution of our subjectivity for their necessary structure. According to this common interpretation, Kant introduces transcendental idealism as the key to the proof of the deduction, in section 14.

This common interpretation, however, reads more into the first paragraph of section 14 than is written. The deduction's course for the circumnavigation of the Scylla of classical empiricism and the Charybdis of empirical idealism is to establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects. This leaves open the question, "Why are the categories conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects?" Transcendental idealism gives the specific answer that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. Whereas, the first paragraph of section 14 leaves open the

¹⁰ For an example, see Herman-J. De Vleeschauwer, *The Development of Kantian Thought*, trans., A.R.C. Duncan (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1962), 62-64.

alternative answer that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure.

Indeed, the second paragraph of section 14 gives this alternative answer; it explains that the deduction's course for the circumnavigation of the Scylla of classical empiricism and the Charybdis of empirical idealism is to establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the cognition of objects because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. Kant writes,

The transcendental deduction of the categories [...] has a principle toward which the entire investigation must be directed, namely this: that they must be recognized as *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experiences [...]. Concepts that supply the objective ground of the possibility of experience are necessary just for that reason. (A94/B126-127)

The first sentence of this passage states that the deduction must establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience; the second sentence explains that the deduction must establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience for the reason that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure.

The deduction's course for the circumnavigation of the Scylla of classical empiricism and the Charybdis of empirical idealism, therefore, is – not to establish transcendental idealism, not to prove that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience because the categories are our *a priori* concepts of objects, but instead – to reform empiricism, to establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. The deduction does not stay well way from the Scylla classical empiricism, and modify the course through the Charybdis of empirical idealism; instead, it stays well away from the

Charybdis of empirical idealism, and modifies the course past the Scylla of classical empiricism.

Kant introduces transcendental idealism – not as the key to the proof of the deduction, in section 14, but only – subsequent to the proof of the deduction, in section 26. There, Kant asks yet a further question: “Given that the deduction must establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure, how it could be that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure?” Section 26 answers this further question with the doctrine of transcendental idealism, the doctrine that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. Once again, recall that Kant writes,

Categories are concepts that prescribe laws *a priori* to appearances, thus to nature as the sum total of all appearances (*natura materialiter spectata*), and, since they are not derived from nature and do not follow it as their pattern (for they would otherwise be merely empirical), the question now arises how it is to be conceived that nature must follow them, i.e., how they can determine *a priori* the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter. Here is the solution to this riddle.

[...] The lawfulness of things in themselves would necessarily pertain to them even without an understanding that cognizes them. But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves. As mere representations, however, they stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes. (B163-164)

According to section 14, the deduction must reform empiricism; it must establish that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the experience – not because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects, but instead – because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. According to this passage from section 26, the deduction’s transcendental idealism explains that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects.

I have already argued that transcendental idealism undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism. But, if transcendental idealism must therefore be rejected, how do I propose to answer the question, "How it could be that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure?" Transcendental idealism explains that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. What is my alternative?

My alternative is that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because to have a categorial structure just is what it is to be an object of experience. This flat-footed response may seem to offer no alternative at all. But, let us ask why transcendental idealism's response to the question, "How could it be that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure?" seems essential to the deduction. Transcendental idealism's doctrine that the necessary categorial structure objects of experience is grounded in the a priori constitution of our subjectivity would be essential to the deduction, if this doctrine were the only explanation of how the deduction could prove that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. But, transcendental idealism is not the only explanation; the idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument also explains how the deduction can prove that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. The idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument grounds our knowledge of the necessary categorial structure of objects of experience in our knowledge of the a priori constitution of our cognitive faculty, and thus explains how the deduction can prove that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. Because it does so without grounding the necessary structure of objects of experience in our subjectivity – only our knowledge of

the necessary structure of objects of experience in our knowledge of our subjectivity – it renders transcendental idealism inessential to the deduction.

In this section, I have offered the following picture. In his 1772 letter to Herz and again in section 14, Kant identifies as the key to metaphysics the circumnavigation of the Scylla of classical empiricism and the Charybdis of empirical idealism. In section 14, Kant charts the deduction's course of reformed empiricism: the deduction must prove that the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. The deduction's proof relies upon the implicit assumption that objects of experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together. In section 26, subsequent to the proof of the deduction, Kant unnecessarily and mistakenly articulates transcendental idealism, the explanation that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure because the categories are our a priori concepts of objects. Transcendental idealism's explanation is unnecessary because the idealism implicit in the deduction's transcendental argument already explains how it can be proved that objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure; and, transcendental idealism's explanation is mistaken because it undermines the deduction's reformed empiricism.

V. This section will consider a final objection on behalf of realism. Realism assumes that the necessary structure of the objects of our experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent. As a result, realism can attempt account for categories' relation to objects of experience only on the basis of a one-way dependence of the categories upon our particular experiences of objects. In section 14, Kant argues that

“if the object alone makes the representation possible, [...] then this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*” (A92/B124-125). The objection on behalf of realism is that Kant has no grounds for denying that “the object alone makes the representation possible,” rather than accepting that “representation is never possible *a priori*.” That is, the objection on behalf of realism is that Kant has no grounds for denying that our concepts relate to objects only on the basis of the one-way dependence of our concepts upon our particular experience of objects, rather than accepting that a priori knowledge of objects is impossible. A flat-footed Kantian response to this objection is that the deduction’s project is to establish that a priori knowledge of objects of experience is actual, and therefore, that the deduction is entitled to assume, at least for the sake of argument, that a priori knowledge of objects of experience is possible. In the end, this flat-footed response is convincing. It will help, however, to consider further the objection on behalf of realism.

The realist assumption that the necessary structure of the objects of our experience and the a priori constitution of our subjectivity are mutually independent, and therefore, that concepts relate to objects only on the basis of a one-way dependence of our concepts upon our experience of objects, is a pre-theoretical starting point of common sense. Now, as Kant argues in section 14, it follows from the assumption of common sense realism that a priori knowledge of objects of experience is not possible. From this point of view, it seems that even though the deduction’s project is to prove that a priori knowledge of objects is actual, the deduction cannot take for granted, but instead must prove, that a priori knowledge of objects is possible. From this point of view, it seems

that the deduction's proof that a priori knowledge of objects is actual must include a disproof of common sense realism.

Kant points out, however, that the assumption that a priori knowledge of objects is actual is also a pre-theoretical starting point of common sense. In the Section Two of the B-Introduction, which is titled, "We are in possession of certain *a priori* cognitions, and even the common understanding is never without them" (B3), Kant writes,

Now it is easy to show that in human cognition there actually are [...] necessary and in the strictest sense universal, thus pure *a priori* judgments. If one wants an example from the sciences, one need only look at all the propositions of mathematics; if one would have one from the commonest use of the understanding, the proposition that every alteration must have a cause will do" (B4-5)

In this passage, Kant notes that according to both science and common sense, a priori knowledge of objects is actual. Kant's examples are perhaps poorly chosen. An example of a priori knowledge of objects from natural science is the causal principle, the principle that every alteration must have a cause. An example of a priori knowledge of objects from common sense is the judgment that when that baseball strikes this pane of glass, it must shatter. While Kant's examples are poorly chosen, his point is that the assumption that a priori knowledge of objects is actual is an assumption of science and common sense.

If this line of reasoning were interpreted as an attempt to disprove realism, or as an attempt to prove the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects, then it would render the deduction question begging. The deduction's project is to prove that a priori knowledge of objects is actual. It is a *prima facie* objection to the deduction that it follows from the common sense assumption of realism that a priori knowledge of objects is impossible. It would beg the question if Kant were to answer this objection by

assuming that a priori knowledge of objects is actual, and thereby proving either that realism is false or that a priori knowledge of objects is possible.

Instead, the line of reasoning from the B-Introduction should be understood as shifting the burden of proof. If we take as our starting point common sense realism's assumption of a one-way dependence of our cognitive faculty upon the objects of experience, then it follows that a priori knowledge of the objects of experience is impossible, and as a result, it seems that the burden of proof is on the deduction to prove either that realism is untenable or that a priori knowledge of objects is possible. But, it is equally common sense to take as our starting point the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects. And, if we take as our starting point the common sense assumption that a priori knowledge of objects is possible, then it follows realism is false. This line of reasoning thus shifts the burden of proof: the fact that realism and the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects are incompatible calls into question realism's assumption of a one-way dependence of our cognitive faculty upon the objects of our experience just as much as it calls into question the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects. The burden of proof is no more on Kant to disprove realism than it is on realist to prove the impossibility of a priori knowledge of objects.

Realism's objection that Kant has no grounds for rejecting the realist assumption that "the object alone makes the representation possible" rather than accepting that "representation is never possible *a priori*" therefore fails. A successful objection to the deduction on behalf of realism must take one of the three following forms: an independent proof of realism, and independent disproof of the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects, or an argument that Kant's rejection of realism undermines the

deduction's proof that a priori knowledge of objects is actual. An objection of either of the first two forms is not forthcoming, and I have answered an objection of the third form in this chapter. The idealism of the deduction's transcendental argument does not undermine the proof of the deduction.

VI. The first two chapters of this dissertation have proposed and defended my interpretive strategy for realizing the deduction's reformed empiricism alternative to Strawson's. My interpretive strategy appropriates Strawson's understanding of the deduction's project, but appreciates better than Strawson both the deduction's strength and its breadth.

Strawson recognizes that the deduction's project is to reform empiricism, to establish that our employment in experience of the categories is rationally justified. Strawson's strategy for realizing the deduction's reformed empiricism is to reconstruct the deduction's transcendental argument as a proof from a premised feature of any intelligible experience to the conclusion that our employment in experience is necessary as structuring possible experience, to reject the deduction's transcendental psychology, according to which our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because of the a priori constitution of subjectivity, and thereby, to reject the deduction's transcendental idealism, according to which our experience necessarily has a categorial structure because of the a priori constitution of our subjectivity. Strawson's achievement is to recognize that the deduction's project is to reform empiricism, and that the deduction's reformed empiricism must reject

transcendental subjectivism, both the deduction's transcendental psychology and the deduction's transcendental idealism.

Strawson's strategy, however, does not go far enough in its reconstruction of the deduction's transcendental argument, and goes too far in its rejection of the deduction's transcendental psychology and the deduction's transcendental idealism. The deduction's transcendental argument must be stronger than Strawson's reconstruction, and the deduction's argumentative method and base must be broader than Strawson's rejection allows. The deduction's transcendental argument must establish not just that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience, but furthermore, that our employment in experience of the categories is necessary as structuring possible experience because objects of experience necessarily have a categorial structure. To establish this further conclusion, the deduction – though it must reject transcendental psychology, still – must analyze our cognitive faculty; and, the deduction – though it must reject transcendental idealism, still – relies upon the idealist assumption that objects of our experience and our cognitive faculty become intelligible together: finite cognition is cognition that depends upon objects in experience; objects of experience are that upon which finite cognition depends.