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The Kantian Notion of Categories and their Origin

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The objective of the present work is to understand and elucidate Kant's notion of category and how he derived the categories from a single transcendental principle. Kant did not put forward any definition of categories. He believed that categories cannot be defined without perpetrating a circle. Thus, he began his discourse with certain features of categories in his work Critique of Pure Reason. We have discussed the characteristic features of Kantian categories. An important point to be noted here is that the categories, in the fullest Kantian sense of the term, must have a distinct property, namely that it should necessarily be applicable to all objects of knowledge. However, we are not concerned with the necessary applicability of concept to all objects of knowledge here in this paper. The analysis about the Kantian notion of categories, more importantly, necessitates a discussion about how he derived them from a single transcendental principle. Kant referred to the single principle which guides the search for the categories as "the clue to the discovery of the categories." The specific and clear formulation of the principle which served as the transcendental clue to the discovery of the categories for Kant is that to every form of judgment there corresponds a pure and basic concept of the understanding. The forms of judgments and the categories both originate from the same source, namely, the function of the understanding, i.e., thinking. It may be noted here that the understanding is the power or faculty of knowing and thinking or judging is the function of understanding. Kant argued that the twelve logical forms of judgments provided the clue to the origin of twelve corresponding a priori concepts or categories. Two arguments provided by Kant in support of the principle serving as a transcendental clue to the discovery of the categories are analysed. An orthodox view held by some philosophers that for Kant the forms of judgment are forms of analytic judgment has been critically analyzed and is interpreted as erroneous.

Keywords: *category, judgment, understanding, categorematic, syncategorematic*

Introduction

The term 'categories' in its philosophical usages is not introduced by Kant for the first time. His notion of categories, however, is markedly original. It is necessary therefore to try at the very outset to be clear about what he meant by categories. The notion of categories would not be clear unless we discuss the origin of those categories. The primary intent of the present paper is to clarify Kant's notion of categories and their origin.

Kant did not put forward any definition of categories. He believed that categories cannot be defined without perpetrating a circle. Therefore, he began his

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discourse with certain features of categories, instead of a definition, in his work *Critique of Pure Reason*, henceforth referred to as *Critique*. An important point to be noted here is that categories, in the fullest Kantian sense, must have a distinct property, namely that it should necessarily be applicable to all objects of knowledge. However, here in this paper, we are not concerned with the necessary applicability of concept to all objects of knowledge. This aspect is discussed by Kant under the section *Transcendental deduction* and *Analytic of Principles* in his work *Critique*. The analysis about Kantian notion of categories necessitates the discussion about how and whereof did Kant derive the categories. Indeed, Kant attempted to derive all the categories from a single principle. This principle which acts as a guide to the search for the categories is transcendental in nature and is called the clue to the discovery of the categories. Kant has provided two arguments in support of the principle serving as a transcendental clue to the discovery of the categories. An attempt has also been made in the present work to provide an understanding of the objection raised against the principle which acts as a transcendental clue to the discovery of categories and study the validity of this objection in the light of Kant's own work.

The text has been divided into several sections. Each of these sections deal with the issues underlined above.

Kant on the Definition of the Categories

Kant has not provided us with any definition of the categories. He has made two different kinds of assertions on the question of such definitions.

In the course of the metaphysical deduction, Kant observed: "In this treatise, I purposely omit the definitions of the categories, although I may be in possession of them… In a system of pure reason, definitions of the categories … merely divert attention from the main object of enquiry, arousing doubts and objections which, without detriment to what is essential to our purposes, can very well be reserved for another occasion" (Kant 1978, $A_{82\text{-}83}/B_{108\text{-}109}$). This observation suggests that the categories are definable and that Kant has been possibly in possession of their definitions. But this suggestion is not in keeping with his view expressed elsewhere in the *Critique*. There he said that the categories are indefinable. Thus, he observed: (A_{245}) "But they (the categories) cannot themselves be defined. The logical functions of judgments in general, unity and plurality, assertion and denial, subject and predicate, cannot be defined without perpetrating a circle, since the definition must itself be a judgment, and so must already contain these functions" (Kant 1978, $A_{244\text{-}245}$).

It appears that according to Kant categories cannot be defined without perpetrating a circle. A definition can be given only in the form of a judgment and all judgments must involve categories. Thus, in order to define a category, we require categories. This is a viciously circular reasoning. Hence, instead of a definition Kant began with a kind of characterisation.

This later observation seems to reflect a mature view and so, we may attach a greater importance to it. The impression should not persist that the categories,

which are logically indefinable, are on this account devoid of meaning. They are as clearly intelligible as the logical forms of judgments themselves. They come to acquire a determinate meaning and relation to any object by virtue of the general condition of sensibility, that is, in so far as they are schematised. Since at present we are concerned with the pure categories, and not with the schematised ones, the question of the determinate meaning and significance conferred on the categories by schematisation need not bother us.

An objection may be raised against Kant's view that categories cannot be defined without perpetrating a circle. It is true that any definition needs a judgment and hence the use of categories. But to conclude that this would lead to a vicious form of circularity is unwarranted and itself fallacious. Using a premise in demonstration of what that premise says is circular in a vicious manner, but employing judgment and thus categories to define (not demonstrate) what categories are in general, is logically unproblematic. The function of definition is not to demonstrate anything but to add conceptual clarity to a previously obscure notion.

Kant's Characterisation of Categories

As is well known, both intuitions and concepts are, for Kant, necessary for knowledge in the sense of knowledge of objects. Through intuition an object is first given to us, through concepts the object is thought in relation to the given representation. Concepts, however, are of no use unless they are referred to the object, or rather, to the sense-manifold, presented in intuition. In other words, concepts must be used in judgments. Judgments are formed by combining or connecting certain concepts with one another. The mere combination of one concept with another does not result in a judgment. One concept may be combined with another so as to obtain a compound concept. There are certain definite rules, some basic ways in which concepts are united in judgments. Reflection on these basic ways or rules gives us certain concepts, which are necessary to any judgments, in that they are concepts required for uniting or connecting any given concepts into judgments. Such connective concepts - concepts of connexion - are categories for Kant (Dryer 1966, p.112).

Categories, for Kant, are, then, certain syncategorematic concepts which represent the basic rules or ways in which categorematic concepts are connected or united into judgments. Lewis White Beck has made the point adequately clear:

> A judgment is a synthesis of concepts according to a rule. For instance, if I should have, as it were floating around in my consciousness, the categorematic concepts 'black' and 'pipe', the rules of judgment limit the possible ways I could combine them into a unitary judgment: 'the pipe is not black', 'the pipe must be black', 'the pipe may be black', 'if the pipe is black …', but not 'the is pipe black'. Now each of these rules corresponds to a concept of a kind or form of synthetic unity in which categorematic concepts are content. To each rule there corresponds a pure concept of the understanding- pure because syncategorematic concepts such as 'all', 'some', 'not', 'if, …then', 'either… or', 'is', 'may be', and 'must be' are not derived a

> posteriori: from experience. They are concepts supplied by the understanding itself, the faculty of synthesizing categorematic concepts into judgments (Beck 1969, p. 447).

We are now in a position to appreciate Kant's own statement that categories are "original pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself *a priori"* (Kant 1978, A_{80}/B_{106}). An examination of this statement shows that categories, according to Kant, are concepts having certain features. These are (i) concepts of synthesis; (ii) concepts of the understanding, i.e., intellectual, not sensible, concepts; (iii) they are original, i.e., basic or primary concepts, and (iv) they are pure or a priori concepts. These features of categories need to be explained.

In the first place, categories are concepts of synthesis. Part of what is meant by this has already been pointed out. Categories are concepts of synthesis, because they represent, or correspond to, the basic ways in which certain (categorematic) concepts are united or synthesised into judgments. But something more is meant than merely this when Kant says that categories are concepts of synthesis. Consideration of this additional significance may, however, be postponed for the time being.

Now, in the second place, categories are concepts of the understanding. That is, they are intellectual, not sensible concepts. This might be objected to since, for Kant, all concepts rest on the understanding and only intuitions are due to sensibility, it is a redundancy to describe the categories alone as 'concepts of the understanding' and even misleading to describe them so, because this may suggest as if other kinds of concepts were due to sensibility (Kant1978, A_{51}/B_{75}, A_{68}/B_{93}). In answer to this objection, it might be said that categories are concepts of the understanding in a special sense. All concepts are made by the understanding as regards their form only, but not as regards their matter. The matter (i.e., the content) of such concepts that are derived by the understanding from intuitions, presented by sensibility, is obviously not made by the understanding. Such concepts are, because of their matter, not concepts of the understanding but sensible concepts. Categories are to be distinguished from such sensible concepts. Both the matter and the form of the categories are due to the understanding. That is why, Kant said that the understanding contains them 'within itself'. They are related to our understanding in a special way in that they are the concepts or thoughts of which our understanding must avail itself in uniting concepts of other kinds into judgments.

In the third place, the categories are original concepts. By 'original,' Kant here meant 'underivative' (Kant 1978, A_{82}/B_{108}). Concepts derived from empirical intuitions are empirical concepts, such as those of redness, blueness, etc. Concepts derived from pure intuitions are called 'modes of pure sensibility,' e.g., the concepts of spatiality, temporality, triangularity, etc. Again, concepts derived from the combination of one category with another or with a mode of pure sensibility were called (by Kant) 'predicables.' From such derivative concepts, i.e., empirical concepts, modes of pure sensibility, and predicables, Kant distinguished his categories by dubbing them 'original.'

Doubtless, the categories stand distinguished from empirical concepts and modes of pure sensibility by the fact that they are 'concepts of the understanding,' but they cannot, merely by virtue of this fact, be distinguished from such

predicables as resulting from the combination of one category with another. Hence the qualification 'original,' added by Kant, is not superfluous.

In the fourth place, the categories are pure or a priori concepts. Some might object that this qualification is superfluous, because a priority of the categories is already indicated by the fact that they are original or underivative concepts. Empirical concepts are derivative, being derived from empirical intuitions. Hence categories, as underivative concepts, cannot be empirical and so must be a priori. This objection, however, is based on a neglect of the philosophical tradition. Empiricists like Locke and Hume regarded certain concepts as basic or original. They called them simple concepts and maintained that complex concepts are formed by compounding the simple concepts (Locke1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 1; Book II, Chap. XII, Sec. 1; Hume1982, Sec. II). For them, these simple concepts are empirical and not a priori. The objectors might here retort that even the simple concepts of the empiricists are on the Kantian view, derivative, not original concepts, as being derived from sensations. This is no doubt true, but to insist on this point would be to legislate for other philosophers as to what concepts, or what kind of concepts, are to be reckoned as basic. The empiricists have indeed the right to decide for themselves that their simple concepts are basic concepts. The deeper reason remains to be considered why Kant regarded his basic concepts as a priori. Simple empirical concepts of the empiricists are not syncategorematic, but categorematic. They can be, and often are, used as terms in judgments. Accordingly, they also are subject to the Kantian categories, which are concepts required for uniting any categorematic concepts into judgments. Categories are a priori, because they come to be known only through reflection on the ways in which any given concepts are used in judgments, and not by appealing to empirical observations.

We may now redeem a promise made earlier. We said that we should say something more on the point that the Kantian categories are 'concepts of synthesis.' Categories are concepts of synthesis, not merely because (as already mentioned) they represent the ways in which any given concept is connected in judgments, but also because, (as is to be emphasised now) they represent the ways in which the given indeterminate manifolds of sense are necessarily organised or synthesised into determinate objects of knowledge. Emphasis on this additional point does involve a tacit reference to Kant's Copernican Revolution in philosophy. The term 'category,' as used by Baumgarten before Kant, stands for the universal predicates (Paton 1936, p. 257). If Kant has chosen to apply this term to the basic pure concepts of the understanding, it is because he thinks that such concepts apply universally and necessarily to objects of thought and even of knowledge. The universal and necessary applicability of categories to objects of knowledge is for Kant guaranteed by their being concepts of synthesis. The categories represent certain conceptual rules in accordance with which the sense-manifold must be, on Kant's view, synthesised into determinate objects of knowledge, and accordingly the categorial features must universally characterise the objects of knowledge. Now, in order to make the notion of categories clear it is necessary to know how and wherefrom Kant derived the categories or the pure concepts of the understanding. What is the clue to the discovery of the categories?

Kant's Attempt to Trace the Origin of Categories

Kant put forward his claim in his metaphysical deduction of the categories in the *Critique*. He said:

> [The] following are the points of chief concern: (1) that the concepts be pure and not empirical; (2) that they belong, not to intuition and sensibility, but to thought and understanding; (3) that they be fundamental and be carefully distinguished from those which are derivative or composite; (4) that our table of concepts be complete, covering the whole field of the pure understanding (Kant 1978, B_{89}).

Kant's objective in the metaphysical deduction was not to prove that certain concepts were categories in the fullest sense that the term category bears in the Kantian philosophy. Kant's own claim is comparatively modest.

It is clear that Kant, in his metaphysical deduction, was concerned with showing that certain concepts were pure, intellectual, and fundamental, and that they together constituted a complete system of the basic elements of the understanding. If any concept can indeed be shown to be such, it would be fair to maintain that they lay a good claim to the categorical status.

However, it does not follow that concepts that possess the above-mentioned features, are necessarily categories in the fullest Kantian sense. Categories, in the fullest sense, must have an additional property, namely, necessary applicability to all objects of knowledge.

The problem of necessary applicability of certain concepts to all objects of knowledge is tackled by Kant in his *Transcendental Deduction and Analytic of Principles*. This topic has not been discussed in the present work.

We may, therefore, say that Kant's argument to prove that certain concepts are categories in the fullest sense was a complex argument that began from the metaphysical deduction and developed progressively through the transcendental deduction till the analytic of principles. Kant's task in the metaphysical deduction was not simply to discover the categories in the sense of making known certain concepts which were previously unknown. The task was rather to trace the origin of the categories to their common source in the nature of the understanding according to a principle. It is this task which cost Kant several years of hard reflection.

There was a time when Kant, like many others, put the ideas of space and time on the same footing with such other concepts like those of existence, possibility, necessity, ground, unity, plurality, etc... It was after a long reflection that he came to distinguish the categories as basic concepts of the understanding from the elementary notions of sensibility such as space and time. Thus, he wrote in the *Prolegomena*:

> After long reflection on the pure elements of human knowledge, (those which contain nothing empirical), I at last succeeded in distinguishing with certainty and in separating the pure elementary notions of the sensibility (space and time) from those of the understanding (Kant 1950, p. 70).

The distinction between intellectual concepts and sensible ideas came to be made by him for the first time in 1770 in his *Inaugural Dissertation.* We find him observing there: "(The) concepts met with in metaphysics are not to be sought in the senses, but in the very nature of the pure intellect, … To this genus belong possibility, existence, cause, etc., together with their opposites or correlates. These never enter any sensual representations as parts…" (Kant 1967, p. 59). As for the ideas of space and time, he said that these were not concepts but pure intuitions in this work and that these originate in our sensibility, not in the understanding. This view was never changed by him subsequently, and was in fact reasserted in the section *Transcendental Aesthetic* of the *Critique.*

The distinction of the categories from the basic notion (intuitions) of sensibility being fixed, Kant's next task was to derive the categories from the understanding according to some principle or principles. In his famous letter of 21st February 1772 to Marcus Harz, he expressed the hope that the categories could be derived from the understanding in accordance to a few principles or, as he said, by "following a few fundamental laws of the understanding (Kant 1967, p. 73)." He did not explain, however, what these few fundamental laws or principles were.

But Kant could not remain satisfied with the position reached in 1772. In the *Critique*, he abandoned the idea that categories were to be derived according to a few principles. Here, he insisted on the need for a single principle so that the categories might be reduced to a system (Kant1978, A_{67}/B_{92}) and not merely to classes. As he said in the *Prolegomena*. "There can be nothing more desirable to a philosopher than to be able to derive the scattered multiplicity of the concepts or principles which had occurred to him in concrete use from a principle a priori, and to unite everything in this way in one cognition…. This constitutes comprehension; and only then has he attained a system (Kant 1950, p. 69 f)."

According to Kant, the single principle which should guide the search for the categories is 'the clue to the discovery of the categories' (Kant 1978, A_{66}/B_{91}). Without such a clue, the search would be, he said, haphazard and unsystematic (Kant1978, A_{66}/B_{91}). Aristotle had made an attempt to enumerate the categories, but his attempt ended in failure because he did not proceed according to a single principle (Kant1978, A_{81}/B_{107}). He based his enquiry on empirical observations. But when an enquiry is carried on in this fashion, we can never be sure of its completion. We could never discover why just these concepts, and no others, have their seat in the understanding. Further, the concepts which we discover by empirical observations exhibit no order and systematic unity. Aristotle had based his enquiry on empirical observations with the result that he failed to offer a complete list of the categories. He omitted some fundamental and original concepts. Kant is referring here, we presume, to the category of causality and to the modal categories. Moreover, his list showed no order or a systematic unity. Kant attempted to avoid the defects of Aristotle's list of categories and decided to proceed according to a single principle. This principle, according to him, would necessarily be transcendental (Kant 1978, A_{67}/B_{92}) since the completeness of the table of categories could never be guaranteed by any principle other than transcendental. Kant made a twofold demand upon this principle. First, it must enable us to discover all the pure and original concepts of the understanding and secondly, it

should furnish an exact classification of them exhibiting their inner connexion in a system. This transcendental principle would act as the clue to the discovery of the categories.

Kant claimed that such a clue must be found by analysing the nature of the understanding since understanding, he asserted, was an absolute unity, self-contained and complete. The question that arises is - what was the principle or the transcendental clue that Kant followed?

The specific and clear formulation of the principle, which provided Kant with the transcendental clue to the discovery of the categories, is that to every form of judgment there corresponds a pure basic concept of the understanding. That this is what Kant meant is borne out by a passage where, after presenting his table of categories, he says: "This division is developed systematically from a common principle, namely, the faculty of judgment (which is the same as the faculty of thought) (Kant1978, $A_{80\text{-}81}/B_{106}$)."

Kant has recognized twelve forms of judgment under four heads, namely, quantity, quality, relation and modality. The three kinds of quantitative judgments are universal, particular and singular. The threefold classification of qualitative judgments, on the Kantian list, are affirmative, negative and infinite. The triad of relational judgments, according to Kant, are: categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. Kant's classification of judgments with respect to modality is problematic, assertoric, and apodeictic. To these twelve forms of judgment correspond twelve categories. The twelve categories under the four heads quantity, quality, relation and modality are (1) unity, plurality and totality; (2) reality, negation and limitation; (3) of inherence and subsistence (substance and accident), causality and dependence (cause and effect), and community (reciprocity between agent and patient); and (4) possibility-impossibility, existence-nonexistence, necessity-contingency, respectively.

Kant has presented a threefold subdivision of categories under each of four heads. Kant in his Prolegomena said:

> … the third arises from the first and the second, joined in one concept (Kant 1950, p. 19).

Therefore, totality means only plurality considered as unity. However, what Kant called a predicable, as distinguished from a category, may also result from the combination of one category with another. Kant in the second edition of his critique (Kant 1978, B111) clearly said that the combination of the first and second categories yielding the third in each group requires a special act of understanding which is different from the act that is exercised in the case of the first or second category. Hence, it must not be supposed, that the third category is not primary. The point is more clearly stated in Kant's original reply in his letter to Johann Schultz. Kant said:

> For although the third category does certainly arise out of a uniting of the first and second, it does not arise out of their mere conjunction but rather out of a synthesis whose possibility itself constitutes a concept, and this concept is a particular category (Kant 1967, p. 111).

Kant presented arguments at two different stages in support of this principle serving as the transcendental clue: one, in the section titled *The Logical Employment of Understanding* in $A_{67\text{-}69}$/ $B_{92\text{-}94}$ and the other in the section titled *The Pure Concepts of the Understanding, or Categories* in $A_{76}/B_{102\text{-}105}$ of the *Critique*. The arguments in these two sections are of the highest importance for metaphysical deduction.

The argument at the first stage seeks to show that the basic function of understanding finds expression in and through the logical forms of judgment. The implication is left to be drawn that the basic concepts of the understanding, therefore, must be in accord with the logical forms of judgment.

The argument at the second stage refers the logical forms of judgment to the same operations of the understanding which are involved in the categorical synthesis of the intuitions. The argument thus serves to buttress up the view that the categories and the forms of judgment must be in accord with one another.

Kant's Argument in $A_{67\text{-}69}/B_{92\text{-}94}$ of the Critique

The passage embodying Kant's argument to be considered here is too long to quote. Prichard who quoted the passage at length remarked: It is not worthwhile to go into all the difficulties of this confused and artificial passage (Prichard 1909, p. 146).

This is a harsh criticism; but it must be admitted that the passage requires the most patient examination if the obscurities are to be cleared. Fortunately for us, the obscurities have already been largely cleared by Paton. We may analyse Kant's argument in the passage into five steps following Paton's contention, as shown below:

1. Understanding is a power of knowing by means of concepts.
2. To know by means of concepts is to judge.
3. To judge is essentially to unite our ideas.
4. The different ways in which judgement unites our ideas are the forms of judgement… independently of the nature of the ideas themselves.
5. Consequently, the complete list of the forms of judgment is a complete list of the different ways in which understanding unites ideas by means of judgment; that is to say, it is a complete list of the functions of the Understanding (Paton 1936, p. 248)".

Kant's Argument in $A_{76}/B_{102\text{-}105}$ of the Critique

Kant's argument at the second stage may be briefly stated as follows: According to Kant, the general function of the understanding performs two types of unification. The 'function' which is referred to here is 'the work proper to understanding, namely, thinking or judging.' Kant disclosed these kindred operations of the understanding in the transition from his table of judgments to the table of categories in $B_{104/105}$ (Kant1978, $B_{104\text{-}105}$). The general function of thinking performs two kinds of unification at two different stages. It imposes unity on the

different ideas in a judgment as well as on the mere synthesis of different ideas in an intuition. Further, Kant elaborated his observation by saying that the understanding, in its use of concepts by means of analytic unity, brings into being the logical forms of judgment, and by means of synthetic unity of manifold of intuition in general, it introduces a transcendental content into its ideas. By disclosing these functions of the understanding, he has shown that there is an intimate relationship between the forms of thought and the pure concepts of the understanding.

The Functions of the Understanding and Types of Unity

Understanding Kant's argument at the second stage, necessitates a clarification of his view that the general function of the understanding performs two types of unification.

In thinking or judging we unite different ideas under one concept. Kant believed that all judgments are functions of unity in our ideas. Paton reckoned that what Kant really meant by saying that judgments unify ideas is that judgments unify our intuitions. In other words, while making judgments we hold different individuals before our minds by means of their common characteristics. These individuals 'are united in the sense that they are thought together in virtue of their common characteristics' (Paton 1936, p. 282). The concept of these common characteristics is considered to be the predicate of the judgment which comprehends, under it, all the individuals referred to by the subject-concept. In this way many possible cognitions are gathered into one. The whole judgment may be said to unify the individuals to whom it refers, and in the different forms of judgment the individuals referred to are united in various ways. This procedure of bringing different ideas under a concept has been described as analytic. The analytic aspect is present in all forms of judgment.

Thought more than unites different intuitions under a concept of their common characteristics; it also imposes unity on the 'mere synthesis' of various ideas in an intuition, whereby the given sense- impressions are combined into one intuition or one object. The 'mere synthesis' which is referred to here is the synthesis of imagination (Kant 1978, A_{78}/B_{104}). Imagination is treated by Kant as understanding working at a lower level.

Kant believed that knowledge arose from the joint operation of the sensibility and the understanding. According to him, Knowledge always refers to knowledge of an object. Now, if knowledge is to have objective reality, that is, to relate to an object, the object must be capable of being in some manner given. Kant said that it is only through the sensuous intuitions that objects are given to us. But objects as such are not given to us in intuition. Intuition always presents us with a manifold of the senses, or appearances. The manifold of senses, in order to be the object of possible experience, requires synthesis or unification. It is the task of the imagination to synthesise the manifold of given intuition. The knowledge which results from imaginative synthesis is crude and indistinct and it does not give us knowledge in the proper sense of the term. It requires analysis in order to get clear and distinct. This synthesis must be brought to concepts. This is considered to be the function of the understanding. Kant considered this conceptual synthesis to be

a necessary condition of all knowledge of objects. It is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain knowledge of an object The crude indistinct knowledge which results from imaginative synthesis is brought under a concept which originates from within the understanding itself through the process of analysis. According to Kant, concepts are rules or ways of synthesis or unification (Kant 1978, $A_{106)}$. For example, the concept of a triangle is a rule or direction about how to combine three straight lines to form a closed figure. Kant held that the concepts which originate from within the understanding itself and to which the given manifold of intuitions must conform in order to constitute one complex intuition of an object are called categories. These categories originate and are imposed by the nature of our thought itself, and not by the nature of our given sensations. We combine the *given* as a substance with different accidents, or as a ground which has certain consequences, and so on. According to Kant, every object of knowledge, besides the particular structure which we recognise by our empirical concepts, has a universal or categorical feature which is imposed by our thought. Thought is the ultimate source of unity of the synthesis of our intuition. We have seen that the general function of understanding, namely, thinking, imposes unity on the different ideas in a judgment. So, it can be said that the different forms of judgment which are the manifestations of the different ways of unification of ideas spring from the nature of the thought itself. On the other hand, thought by means of categories, which originate from within itself, unifies the mere synthesis of different ideas in an intuition. Thus, the forms of judgments and the categories both originate from the same source, namely, the function of the understanding. Therefore, Kant argued that the twelve logical forms of judgment provide the clue to the origin of the twelve corresponding a priori concepts or categories. Further, the understanding by means of synthetic unity introduces a 'transcendental content.' to the categories or to those ideas which originate from within itself. It is called 'transcendental' in the sense that it makes knowledge possible. The understanding itself introduces the formal content into each and every idea which originates from within itself by means of synthetic unity. Categories, we have seen, were regarded by Kant as the basic rules of synthesis. The given manifold, in order to be an intuition of an object of knowledge, must be united in accordance with a basic rule of synthesis. The way in which a category synthesises the given manifold is the form of that category. We sometimes, for example, synthesise the given manifold as a 'table' or a 'house.' We recognise the unity of the particular matter combined when we apply the empirical concept of 'table' or 'house'. But there are, according to Kant, certain ultimate principles or basic rules governing such empirical syntheses. These basic rules are imposed by our nature of thought itself, and not by the nature of our given sensation. Before applying the concept of 'house' or 'table' we must combine the given as a substance with different accidents. The way in which a category synthesises the given manifold constitutes the form of that category. Since it is a concept of synthesis, this formal content is introduced by the nature of thought by means of the function of synthesis. The formal content is called 'transcendental' in the sense that the categorical synthesis is the necessary condition of knowledge regarding an object.

Critique of an Objection to the Principle, act as Clue to the Discovery of the Categories

It is a widely accepted view that for Kant the forms of judgment are the forms of analytic judgments only. The view is so widely accepted that Paton is led to call it 'the orthodox view' or 'the orthodox theory' (Paton 1967, pp. 249, 268). This view has been made popular by Kemp Smith. He said, in his interpretation of Kant, that there are 'just as many categories as there are forms of the analytic judgment.' He insisted - 'This is how the principle of the metaphysical deduction must be interpreted' (Kemp Smith 1918, p. 183).

Now the most serious objection to Kant is that the categories, cannot in principle, be derived from the forms of judgment, because these forms, being the forms of the analytic judgments only, cannot furnish any clue to the categories which are principles of synthesis.

The orthodox view – namely, the view that for Kant, the forms of judgment are the forms of analytic judgments only - has been examined in detail and refuted decisively by Paton. The various arguments that have been presented by Paton in his different writings cannot and need not be repeated here. What we propose to do here is to emphasise the main points that go to show that orthodox view or interpretation is erroneous.

Kant has never said, as Kemp Smith would make us believe, that there are as many categories as there are forms of analytic judgments. While making a transition from the table of judgments to the table of categories, Kant said that '… there arise precisely the same number of pure concepts of the understanding which apply *a priori* to objects of intuition in general, as, in the preceding table, there have been found to be logical functions in all possible judgments. … These concepts we shall, with Aristotle, call *categories*, … (Kant 1978, A_{79}/B_{105}).' Evidently, Kant made it very clear in this passage that there are as many categories as there are logical functions (i.e., forms) in all possible judgments. The expression 'in all possible judgments' must be noted. It shows, without the least ambiguity, that the logical forms of judgments listed in Kant's table of judgments are the forms, not of analytic judgments only, but of all possible judgments and hence of synthetic judgments as well.

Kant said in the *Prolegomena* that a category is "… a concept of that synthetical unity of intuitions which can only be represented by a given logical function of judgments" (Kant 1950, p. 52). Paton, with reference to this passage, argued that a form of judgment cannot represent the synthetic unity of intuitions unless it is the form of synthetic as well as of analytic judgments (Paton 1967, p. 260). This shows that a form of judgment to which a category corresponds, according to Kant, cannot be the form of analytic judgments only. We may say, therefore, that the orthodox view championed by Kemp Smith is erroneous. The most serious objection to Kant's principle that act as the clue to the discovery of categories does not stand up to scrutiny.

Conclusion

We have discussed Kant's notion of categories at length with and how he derived his categories according to a single principle. As categories could not be defined without perpetrating a circle, he did not put forward any definition of categories. Instead of proposing a definition, he began with a kind of characterisation of categories in the *Critique.* We have examined Kant's own statement regarding categories that they are 'original pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself a priori.' Kant also pointed out that there was a system in the procedure adopted by him in selecting those concepts.

According to Kant, categories are concepts of synthesis, because they represent, or correspond to, the basic ways in which certain (categorematic) concepts are united or synthesised into judgments. Therefore, Kant's categories are syncategorematic concepts. Moreover, they represent the ways in which the given indeterminate manifolds of sense are necessarily organised or synthesised into determinate objects of knowledge. Both the matter (i.e., the content) and the form of the categories are due to the understanding. This is why Kant said that the understanding contains them within itself. Categories are a priori, because they come to be known only through reflection on the ways in which any given concepts are used in judgments, and not by appealing to empirical observations. Kant's categories, on the other hand, are original concepts in the sense that they are underivative. Endowed with these qualifications, they are doubtless good enough candidates for categorical status. However, to prove that candidate categories are categories in the strong sense, it is necessary to show that they necessarily apply to all objects of knowledge. We are not concerned with this problem in the present paper. Kant has nevertheless shown that categories do apply to all objects of knowledge in his Transcendental Deduction and Analytic of Principles. As for the present work, we are concerned with pure concepts or categories of the understanding and not with schematised categories.

Kant's notion of categories would not be clear if we do not explain how those categories were derived by him. Kant's objective was to trace the pure concepts of the understanding or categories in the nature of the understanding according to a single principle in the metaphysical deduction of the categories in the *Critique*. Kant referred to the single principle which guides the search for the categories as 'the clue to the discovery of the categories.' The specific and clear formulation of the principle which served for Kant as the transcendental clue to the discovery of the categories is that to every form of judgment there corresponds a pure and basic concept of the understanding. We have noticed that the forms of judgments and the categories both originate from the same source, namely the function of the understanding, which is thinking. Accordingly, Kant argued that the twelve logical forms of judgments provided the clue to the origin of twelve corresponding a priori concepts or categories. Kant presented his arguments at two different stages in support of the principle that served as the transcendental clue. These arguments have been explained in detail in the present work.

A criticism against the principle which acts as the clue to the discovery of the categories has been discussed and an attempt has been made to answer the criticism.

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