



Revista de  
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## Artículos

# The current status of research on Kant's Transcendental Deduction

DENNIS SCHULTING<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

In this paper I provide an overview of the latest research on Kant's Transcendental Deduction, from the last 20 years or so, including a non-exhaustive bibliography. I also reflect on the question why in that period there has up until now been so little recent book-length work dedicated to the Deduction, on so-called 'analytical' approaches to reading Kant and the Deduction in particular, and on the related issue of the relevance of both evaluative and historical/hermeneutical interpretations of the Deduction. In the latter part of the essay, I consider the most important desiderata for systematic-interpretatively guided research into the Deduction.

**Keywords:** Transcendental Deduction, interpretation, hermeneutics, analytical Kantianism.

## El estado actual de la investigación sobre la Deducción trascendental de Kant

### Resumen

En este artículo propongo una revisión de las últimas investigaciones sobre la Deducción Trascendental de Kant, desde los últimos 20 años más o menos, incluyendo una bibliografía no exhaustiva. Además, voy a reflexionar sobre la cuestión de por qué en este periodo y hasta ahora ha habido tan poco trabajo que culmine en la publicación de libros dedicados a la Deducción, sobre aproximaciones a la conocida lectura analítica de Kant y la Deducción en particular, y sobre la cuestión de la relevancia tanto de la interpretación de la Deducción evaluativa como histórico-hermenéutica. En la última parte del ensayo, voy a considerar la necesidad de llevar a cabo una investigación sistemática-interpretativa sobre la Deducción.

**Palabras clave:** Deducción Trascendental, interpretación, hermenéutica, kantismo analítico.

Whilst working on the first edition of my first monograph on Kant's Transcendental Deduction (Schulting 2012b),<sup>2</sup> during 2011 and early 2012, I was struck by the fact how little important book-length research specifically on the Transcendental Deduction had actually been published, both in German and English, in the ten to fifteen years prior—not counting the numerous overviews in companions and introductory works, of which Paul Guyer's (2010) and Derk Pereboom's (2010) essays are the most important. Compared to this, the spate of high-quality articles and books either specifically on the Deduction or with significant chapters on central topics from it (bar a couple of key German

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<sup>2</sup> A thoroughly revised edition of this book will appear with de Gruyter (Schulting 2018b); the current book published by Palgrave Macmillan is out of print. My second monograph on the Deduction came out recently (Schulting 2017a).



publications,<sup>3</sup> most of these books were not exclusively focused on the Deduction) that appeared in the 1980s and early 1990s, both in Germany and in the States,<sup>4</sup> had brought Kant scholarship on the Deduction to a new level.<sup>5</sup> Very recently, however, and somewhat surprisingly, three big and important books were published that are (for the greater part at least) specifically dedicated to the Deduction, but all three are by established scholars: Henry Allison (2015), Thomas Vinci (2015), and Wayne Waxman (2014), albeit that Vinci is not primarily known as a Kant scholar.<sup>6</sup> None of the younger scholars that are currently making a name for themselves, especially in anglophone scholarship, seem interested in publishing, or have dared (or given the opportunity!) to publish, a book especially on the Deduction.<sup>7</sup> What is the reason for this slump?

Of course, since the height of anglophone and German Kant scholarship in the 1980s and early 1990s, there certainly have been book-length publications that, among other themes, centrally address fundamental issues raised in the Deduction, but not all of them are completely successful in their attempts to grasp the central thrust of Kant's thought or as meticulous as would be required for a thorough understanding of the arguments presented in the Deduction, and none of them have proved influential in successive research (so far at least), Collins (1999) perhaps being the exception—two among them are arguably revisions of already earlier established views, but no less important for that (i.e. Bird 2006; Kitcher 2011).

Among the monographs published from the late 1990s onwards that specifically, and in some detail, deal with the central arguments from the Deduction, the following are ones that I know of and am familiar with besides the aforementioned very recent ones by Allison, Vinci and Waxman—not all of these are well-known: Reinhard Heckmann's *Kants Kategoriendeduktion* (1997), Pierre Keller's *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness* (1998), Arthur Collins's *Possible Experience* (1999), James Van Cleve's *Problems from Kant* (1999), A. B. Dickerson's *Kant on Representation and Objectivity* (2004), Mario Caimi's *Leçons sur Kant* (2005), Falk Wunderlich's *Kant und die Bewusstseinstheorien des 18. Jahrhundert* (2005), Gary Banham's *Kant's Transcendental Imagination* (2006), Graham Bird's *The Revolutionary Kant* (2006), Ulrich Seeberg's *Ursprung, Umfang und Grenzen der Erkenntnis* (2006), Matthias Wunsch's *Einbildungskraft und Erfahrung bei Kant* (2007), Anselmo Aportone's *Gestalten der transzendentalen Einheit. Bedingungen der Synthesis bei Kant* (2009), Stefanie Grüne's *Blinde Anschauung* (2009), and especially Patricia Kitcher's *Kant's Thinker* (2011). Robert Greenberg's *Kant's Theory of A Priori Knowledge* (2001), in particular concerning its illuminating account of the Metaphysical Deduction, should also be mentioned. And there is of course Allison's expanded edition of his *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (2004), which addresses the Deduction as well. I do not count Paul Abela's *Kant's Empirical Realism* (2002), which is a philosophically interesting book, but cannot be considered a straightforward scholarly interpretation of Kant—it argues more in the line of McDowell in his important work on Kant's theory of experience

<sup>3</sup> In the space of just a few years, four significant and much-discussed books on the Deduction were published: Hoppe (1983), Becker (1984), Baum (1986), and Hinsch (1986).

<sup>4</sup> And of course in France, with Béatrice Longuenesse's undeniably formidable classic *Kant et le pouvoir de juger* (Longuenesse 1993), arguably not a book specifically dedicated to the Transcendental Deduction, but it nonetheless addresses a central topic of the B-Deduction, namely the role of judgement and figurative synthesis, and how the metaphysical deduction is to be considered as integral to the story of the Deduction (it came out in English translation in 1997).

<sup>5</sup> To mention the most important monographs from this period, apart from those already referenced in note 3: Allison (1983; 1996ab), Aquila (1983; 1989), Brook (1994), Carl (1989a; 1992), Guyer (1987), Kitcher (1990), Klemme (1996), Mohr (1991), Thöle (1991), Waxman (1991), Howell (1992), Longuenesse (1993; 1997), and for specialist accounts of the Metaphysical Deduction, Brandt (1991) and Wolff (1995) (see also Grünwald 1986), as well as four essential edited volumes dedicated to the Deduction, Tuschling (1984), Robinson (1986), Blasche et al. (1988) and, in part, Förster (1989). See also the recently compiled essays on the Deduction by Hans Wagner (Wagner 2008ab), of which (2008b) also appeared in Tuschling (1984).

<sup>6</sup> I discuss all three in a separate review essay "New Work on the Transcendental Deduction" (MS). In another forthcoming essay (Schulting 2019), I discuss Caimi (2014), which is a translation from the earlier French edition (Caimi 2005).

<sup>7</sup> A sole exception is Dickerson (2004). Allais (2015) dedicates one chapter to the Transcendental Deduction, but her account is primarily focused on the connection with Kant's idealism in particular. Kaye (2015) seems aimed at entry-level students of Kant and in my view does not offer any new insights.

published after his *Mind and World* (1996), most of it collected in *Having the World in View* (2009), in which McDowell expounds more in detail on his philosophical reading of Kant's Deduction.<sup>8</sup> Van Cleve's philosophical acumen notwithstanding, his account of the Transcendental Deduction is, I believe, the least successful part of an otherwise outstanding book, but still important enough to take account of.<sup>9</sup> Of all these monographs, only those by Heckmann, Keller, Dickerson, Caimi, and Kitcher can be considered books wholly and specifically on the central arguments of the Transcendental Deduction. As far as I know, however, none of these, bar Kitcher, have been discussed much since<sup>10</sup>—I should note that perhaps this says more about the exigencies and fashions of today's academia than about the quality of these books.

As to articles (in English and German), the tally is fortunately somewhat better, especially in the last couple of years, but at the same time with articles the scope is naturally less comprehensive than with monographs, and often the approaches to various topics from the Deduction are piecemeal rather than synoptic—which with an argument such as the Deduction is especially problematic—a welcome exception to this being Conant (2016) (see further below). Without trying to be exhaustive, let me give a few examples of the best and most relevant contributions to the interpretation of the Deduction of the last 10 to 15 years. In my opinion, Ian Proops's article on the legal metaphor that Kant employs in §13 of the Deduction (Proops 2003)<sup>11</sup> should get the status that has been accorded to Dieter Henrich's famous and influential article on the proof-structure of the B-Deduction (Henrich 1969) as well as to Henrich's own well-known and oft-cited reading of the juridical metaphor (Henrich 1989), but it seems that in the context of the Deduction, apart from Allison no one else has really taken notice of Proops's essay.<sup>12</sup> Also, mandatory reading is Pollok (2008) and, though his dismissive view of the Deduction is diametrically opposed to mine—he sees it as a failure—I would also recommend Hanna (2011) for a paradigmatic 'strongly nonconceptualist' view on the Deduction. Further, Derk Pereboom's (2001) review article on Robert Howell's 1992 book on the Deduction is a valuable contribution in its own right (recapitulating views first formulated in Pereboom 1995). Also recommended, although I largely disagree with his arguments, are John Callanan's articles (2006; 2011; 2013), which mainly address issues of normativity (i.e. the *quid juris* question),<sup>13</sup> Barker (2001), Dyck (2008), Bauer (2010), and Moledo (2015), on structural issues concerning the A-Deduction; and Deppermann (2001), who focuses on the analyticity of the apperception principle. Further, Anil Gomes's articles on the Deduction (Gomes 2010; 2014; 2018) are essential reading for coming to grips with its central argument, namely the Kantian idea that the subjective conditions of thought are also at the same time the objective conditions of experience of objects.<sup>14</sup>

Very recently—and it is encouraging to see this exponential increase in interest in the Deduction in the last three years alone, if only by way of articles rather than monographs—noteworthy contributions on aspects of the Deduction have been published by Aquila (2013), Engstrom (2013ab),

<sup>8</sup> See also very recently McDowell (2017).

<sup>9</sup> See Ameriks's (2003) review of his account of the Deduction, and my account of central elements of it in Schulting (2017a), chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> To my knowledge, Patricia Kitcher's book received author-meets-critics discussions in the pages of *Kantian Review* in January 2014, and earlier in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* in the summer of 2013. Keller and Dickerson were reviewed in various outlets (for Dickerson see e.g. Schulting 2005), Wunsch and Heckmann were reviewed in *Kant-Studien*, but apart from that neglected, it seems.

<sup>11</sup> See also the aforementioned book-length treatment by Seeberg (2006), which I discuss in Schulting (2012b; 2018b), chapter 3, together with Proops's article.

<sup>12</sup> But see very recently Ypi (2017), who references Proops in the context of her discussion of the deduction of ideas in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic.

<sup>13</sup> See Schulting (2012b; 2018b), chapter 3, for commentary on the first two articles mentioned.

<sup>14</sup> I discuss Gomes (2010) in detail in Schulting (2017a), chapter 4, and aspects of Gomes (2014) in Schulting (2015b); see also my reply to Gomes's commentary (Gomes 2018) in Schulting (2018a). See also Dyck (2014), Quarfood (2014) and Stephenson (2014), who discuss central aspects of my reading of the Deduction in Schulting (2012b), and Watt (2017) who discusses central aspects of Schulting (2017a).

Land (2015ab), Golob (2016), Gomes and Stephenson (2016), Onof (2016), Allais (2017), Watt (2018), and especially Alexandra Newton's (2016) review article on Lucy Allais's book (2015), which itself dedicates a chapter to one central line of argumentation in the Deduction.<sup>15</sup> Just last year, Barry Stroud published a somewhat disappointing paper on the Deduction (Stroud 2017), which mainly rehearses the criticisms that he famously raised against Kantian transcendental arguments in general half a century ago (Stroud 1968), but given the persistence of the kind of objection initiated by Stroud in the current anglophone literature, it is certainly worthwhile to reconsider Stroud's arguments. The articles by Dyck (2017), Mösenbacher (2017), Motta (2017a), Schulting (2017c), and Wunderlich (2017)—all appearing in an important volume on Kant's notion of the unity of consciousness edited by Giuseppe Motta and Udo Thiel (2017)—address central topics in the Deduction, specifically relating to the principle of apperception. Guyer published a longer commentary in *Kant-Studien* on Allison's latest book on the Deduction (Guyer 2017). In a forthcoming article (Friedman 2018), Michael Friedman offers his latest take on the B-Deduction in a commentary on Allison's Deduction book (2015). Lastly, in a long article Onof and Schulting (2015) extensively discuss the ramifications for Kant's theory of space of the notorious footnote to B160–1, which is of course a crucial passage for understanding Kant's argument in the concluding section of the Deduction.

Obviously, there is more,<sup>16</sup> but quite a few of those other articles that have appeared recently, I have found unconvincing or undercooked and adding nothing much to the existing literature, which surely is one of the parameters of solid Kant scholarship.<sup>17</sup> In fact, often many wheels from past (or even very recent) scholarship are being reinvented with only tiny adjustments, in much more formulaic a way and rather short-sightedly, conveniently omitting the older (or even all, most or some of the very recent) literature altogether so as to make it seem as if what these younger folks are writing were novel and groundbreaking. It is especially worrying that, presumably under the pressure of being seen to cite the right journal articles and drop the right names (status signalling),<sup>18</sup> newer generations of anglophone Kant scholars simply fail to read and refer to the vast German literature!<sup>19</sup> I am not saying that one should take notice of every piece that has ever been published on the Deduction, but one should at least be familiar with, and indeed reference when the material requires it, the most important German literature on the topic before one has a right to join the chorus.

It is somewhat puzzling to notice, by the manifest lack of dedicated monographs, this regression in the study of Kant's Deduction in book form, with so much obvious talent otherwise invested in Kant scholarship more broadly—in both Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy, and now even also increasingly Kant's philosophy of religion and, contemporaneously with an influx of covert Leibnizians in American Kant scholarship, the remote deeply metaphysical themes of Kant's

<sup>15</sup> I discuss Allais's views in detail in Schulting (2017a), chapter 4; see also Allais (2011; 2013).

<sup>16</sup> I have not mentioned here the many articles and essays by Robert Pippin, which address central themes from the Deduction. As with the later McDowell (2009; 2017), Pippin, who is not a Kant scholar strictly speaking, is often much more interesting and illuminating than many a Kant scholar in his take on the Deduction. I discuss Pippin's as well as McDowell's views in this regard in detail in Schulting (2016ac; 2017a) and Schulting (forthcoming b).

<sup>17</sup> See the bibliography for further references. I might of course have overlooked some startlingly brilliant recent article written in another language than German and English. I'm broadly familiar with the French and Italian Kant literature, but to my knowledge also here no recent dedicated research has been published on the Deduction in book form at least, one rare exception being Sacchi (1995) in Italian, and Caimi (2005) in French. As to Spanish, I must admit I am even less au fait, but, for example, Fernando Moledo has recently worked and published on the development of Kant's deduction argument in the silent decade (Moledo 2014), and see also Nakano (2008; 2009).

<sup>18</sup> See the astute sociological analysis of analytic philosophy's current citation practice as one of four of its characteristics in Schliesser (2015). Schliesser writes: «Among the established, citation is a means of establishing one's approved conversation partners; not citing X is part of the game—the insiders can track the moves that have been made opaque, while the barriers to entry (which require figuring out these moves) have been increased. Among the not established, citation practices are aspirational; they signal which club one wishes to belong to. [I have lost track of the many times when, as a referee, I pointed an author to anticipations of their ideas (no, not by me) in fairly recent scholarship—most of which happily ignored in final publication]».

<sup>19</sup> I suspect that a lot of the professional younger anglophone Kant scholars do not master the German language, but that is simply inexcusable: no professional scholar of Plato or Aristotle would be taken seriously if he could not read them in the original language.

pre-Critical *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund*. Other topics in Kant scholarship are currently very much en vogue, such as, still, the doctrine of transcendental idealism and, more surprisingly, Kant's putative noumenalist commitments, enduring questions concerning naturalism, the alarmingly persistent interest in Kant's alleged anti-scepticism and his perceived transcendental strategy to deal with scepticism (or the Humean Problem),<sup>20</sup> Kantian nonconceptualism,<sup>21</sup> and of course the continuing solid position of Kantian philosophy in ethics and aesthetics, which appears more robustly influential than his influence in contemporary epistemology (bar the work by McDowell and Strawsonianism), let alone in metaphysics (though that seems to be changing, what with, as noted, the growing interest in the pre-Critical Kant). But these particular interests seem more often than not driven by the author's general philosophical specialism rather than being informed by any primarily scholarly desideratum and historical-systematic interest in the arguments themselves as we find them in Kant's text. We should expect Kant scholars to interpret the text, not to anachronistically foist their own or contemporary philosophical ideas on Kant and selectively look for support for them in Kant's text, and then to dismiss or at least question Kant's arguments if they are found to be incompatible with those ideas. Unfortunately, all too often one encounters this historical fallacy among contemporary, so-called 'analytical', Kantians, as if the analytical approach—however defined—is the only viable, or even rightful, one.<sup>22</sup>

The ease with which some professed scholars of Kant approach a historical text thoroughly ahistorically, or mix a quasi-historical approach with a contemporary approach resulting in a compound that is neither fish nor fowl, is disconcerting and bad for hermeneutical scholarship, and therefore bad for philosophy. Notwithstanding the intrinsic value of contemporary straightforwardly analytic interpretations of the Deduction (work by the aforementioned Abela and McDowell, and of course Strawson's inimitable *Bounds of Sense* come to mind—but for each Strawson, there is always also a Bennett!),<sup>23</sup> one of the deleterious effects of this trend is that such modish 'analytically' retrofitted readings crowd out more traditionally scholarly interpretative work in the top journals' and publishing houses' reviewing processes—original, non-conformist work in the latter vein is increasingly discouraged and/or punished, or an ideological division of labour between 'purely' philosophical and 'purely' historical work is strictly imposed.

However, while it has an important place in Kant scholarship, I believe that the historical approach to the Deduction is, on its own, not going to be very helpful in understanding its core arguments, given the Deduction's revolutionary character.<sup>24</sup> I agree with Karl Ameriks that we should «move Kant scholarship sharply away from the tendency to present either a 'merely historical' restatement of his words or a hasty ahistorical critique or expropriation of his presumed doctrines for contemporary analytic purposes» (2001: 13). Ameriks advocates «a thoroughly hermeneutical approach to Kant—one that insists on going back and forth between history and system, part and whole, reconstruction and assessment» (2001: 16). Likewise, I would recommend a return to a more traditional German approach and break a lance for a precise, systematic-interpretative approach that looks

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Landy (2015), Sommerlatte (2016) and Gomes (2017a) for recent readings that link anti-scepticism/'the Hume Problem' to the Deduction. See also the recent discussion between Gomes and Landy on the latter's book published in the online journal *Critique* (Gomes 2017b; Landy 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Here, I myself plead guilty (see Schulting 2016b).

<sup>22</sup> The label 'analytical' is pretty vague in itself; there does not seem to be one clear methodology that differentiates the analytical approach to Kant from other approaches, but scholars professing to espouse such an approach do appear to be able to decide on, if only tacitly, which article or book on Kant is granted its imprimatur all the same. The label seems more ideological or technocratic than philosophical.

<sup>23</sup> Despite the high regard it gained among analytical Kantians, I have always found Jonathan Bennett's book *Kant's Analytic* (Bennett 1966) a less than ideal guide to the first part of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially with respect to the Deduction. Bennett's book is typical of the analytical approach that I lament here.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Dyck (2011) for a recent historical reading of the Deduction.

hermeneutically at the arguments in their own immediate textual context,<sup>25</sup> without either reducing them to their historical context or origin (if that is at all possible) or pre-framing them in analytical or formal-logical style reasoning. This is not to say that with such a systematic-interpretative reading the arguments should not be rigorously described and parsed, when necessary with the help of formal logic.

By contrast, the typical analytical approach is often either not at all very precise and far too programmatic or overly meticulous in its analytic parcelling out or formal-logical translation—the unwitting effect of this latter strategy is an element of obfuscatory esotericism, which is very much antithetical to the exotericism that Kant stipulated is one of the prerequisites for Critical philosophy.<sup>26</sup> The analytical approach is often also marked out by its use of stock rhetorical devices, whilst it is highly conventionalist, so that it is easily recognisable to the general (non-Kantian) reader (i.e. the analytic philosopher!), and easily formattable (this holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for the formal-logicist interpretation, too, albeit for a much smaller audience).<sup>27</sup> The conventional format in which many analytic texts are written obeys a particular, strictly regimented «intellectual economy» (Horkheimer 1974: 23), for which mathematics and science serve as models. But, as Max Horkheimer already noted 70 years ago, the way «[c]omplex logical operations are carried out» can in itself become a «fetish», «a magic entity that is accepted rather than intellectually experienced» (1974: 23). More traditional Kant scholars are often accused, typically by analytic philosophers, of the use of jargon, by which is meant mirroring or repeating Kant's jargon;<sup>28</sup> it is ironic that those who make these accusations do not see that their own style conventions produce typically jargon-laden work that is only intelligible to those familiar with a highly particular contemporary way of doing philosophy.

A strategy also frequently employed by analytic philosophers with a token interest in Kant is to say that one is not so much interested in what Kant 'actually' said and how one should interpret it, but that one rather wants to pursue a 'Kantian' line of approach to certain topics in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics or aesthetics—but this is a tactic that barely masks the contempt for philosophical hermeneutics and a dismissal by fiat of what is often disparagingly referred to as 'Kant exegesis', and is thus also patently (un)philosophical. Moreover, how do you decide how much Kant there is in 'Kantian' if one does not care to take account of what Kant 'actually' said?

The analytical approach thus prohibits a progressive understanding of the central Kantian philosophical issues at stake, since on account of this approach Kant's arguments always have to be

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Schönecker (2001). Generally, I share Schönecker's sentiments, though I find that he distinguishes between interpretation (what he calls *komentarische Textinterpretation*) and philosophical evaluation too sharply. But see Schönecker (2001: 170–2).

<sup>26</sup> Kant wrote about the distinction between esoteric and exoteric philosophy in his polemic against J. G. Schlosser (see my short article "On a Recently Adopted Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy", forthcoming in *The Cambridge Kant Lexicon*).

<sup>27</sup> Most logicians are not interested in Kant (Achourioti and van Lambalgen 2011 being a lone exception), while most Kant scholars are not able to grasp the logic, or more precisely, to determine whether the logic that is put to use is any good. What I am saying is that it is one thing when trained logicians take an interest in Kant (see the above reference), but quite another when Kant scholars who dabble in formal logic resort to rampant formalism to make their point in a text geared to an audience of Kant scholars.

<sup>28</sup> For example, in a recent review of Henry Allison's recent book on the Deduction, A. B. Dickerson unreasonably complains that «[f]ar too much of this lengthy work is mere paraphrase, in that it makes essential use over and over again of the very jargon terms that need to be explained [...]; where we need philosophical investigation, he ultimately offers us only repetitions of Kantian jargon» (2016: 507). But often there is precisely a need for careful paraphrase as a way of clarifying Kant's text, rather than to immediately go on and redescribe what Kant says in a completely different idiom, as the latter runs the greater risk of losing sight of Kant's argument (this is the problem of loss of meaning through translation, also and particularly formal translation). How far does Dickerson want interpreters of Kant to go? Philosophers who are not conversant with the secondary literature on Kant might not know e.g. the fairly standard terminology of 'transcendental unity of apperception'. But does a Kant scholar like Allison, who after all writes for a specialist crowd (!), then need to describe 'transcendental unity of apperception' in a different idiom, before going on to lay out Kant's arguments for his theory of apperception? There is no more reason to redescribe 'transcendental unity of apperception' as there is for redescribing the *de dicto/de re* distinction or the term 'modal', say, if one specialises in contemporary metaphysics. One has to learn the language if one wants to play the Kantian game, as much as this is the case for any specialism in philosophy, or philosophy generally. A certain amount of jargonology or basic insider knowledge is unavoidable and unexplainable in Kant scholarship, as are certain background assumptions, but not more so than in philosophy in general. And it should be noted that even within contemporary analytic philosophy, there is no one *lingua franca*, given the variety of narratives across subdisciplines.

retranslated into the digestible, clearly flagged parcels of a more customary analytical rundown of what, on the face of it, Kant seems to be saying—you will often notice the almost excusatory rhetorical style of writing with which Kant's text is addressed, as if Kant was not fully capable of saying what he was trying to say,<sup>29</sup> or that he claimed things we now 'clearly' know are 'clearly' mistaken, and the writer wanted to reassure the reader that he, the writer, is as confounded as anyone else. One also notices the often circumspectly tentative, global mode of reasoning, an unwillingness to engage with the minutiae of Kant's arguments, whilst one of course simultaneously heeds the formal requirement of analytical rigour at all times in one's own text.

One sees that there is a certain impatience with Kant, especially with the Deduction, and its alleged obscurity is habitually used as a pretext to ride roughshod over it. But a disdainful reader makes for a bad philosopher. Instead of immediately imposing a frame on the text, putting to use the jargon and argumentative schemata borrowed from analytic philosophy or formal logic, which is utterly foreign to the Kantian way of thinking (of course it is, since it is anachronistic to do so), one should try and understand, in the proper hermeneutical manner and with interpretative exactitude, what Kant is 'actually' saying. I am not saying that using an argumentative schema typically employed in analytically styled work will never be helpful in understanding Kant. This way of working might be considered fruitful when dealing with more straightforwardly formulated philosophical arguments in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, e.g. the Antinomies, Kant's critique of the arguments for God's existence, and perhaps the Refutation, as these sections are relatively independent of Kant's transcendental solution for securing the grounds of knowledge (since they appear, not in the Analytic, but in the *Dialectic* of pure Reason); that is to say, more precisely, the arguments presented there are not premised, *prima facie* at least, on the typical mode of thought—transcendental reflection—that Kant invokes in the Deduction, and which apparently makes the Deduction look like what to many is at best unforgettably obscure or just a wretched piece of gibberish unworthy of a rigorous philosopher.<sup>30</sup>

But to start off interpreting the Deduction by immediately reconstructing or redescribing the arguments in ostensibly more clearly presented premise-conclusion style arguments, with which one—and one supposes the reader—is more familiar, is both interpretatively and philosophically arrogant and will get you nowhere; one in fact risks ending up begging Kant's transcendental question entirely. Notice again that I am not saying that such formally constructed arguments cannot ever profitably be used even in the context of an interpretation of the Deduction, but one should be extremely cautious in using this method. More often than not, formalisations conceal paucity of real, substantive understanding.

I should like to emphasise that I am not arguing that a clear separation between the «historical/hermeneutical» and the «philosophical/evaluative» (Pippin 2015: 3) can be made.<sup>31</sup> Recently, Robert Pippin cast some interesting light on these methodological issues in the history of philosophy. He writes that for philosophers who consider the history of philosophy a way of «doing philosophy», understanding «what a philosopher meant to say», includes «understanding why the

<sup>29</sup> Dieter Henrich has a habit of doing this (see Henrich 1976), justifying it with the slightly condescending idea that revolutionary thinkers are never themselves very clear about their own revolutionary ideas. More recently, A. B. Dickerson repeats this idea in a review of Allison (2015): «The obscurity of the transcendental deduction is not a result of wilfulness, or Kant's ineptness in exposition. It comes from the sheer newness and richness of the ideas that he was grappling with—ideas that in many ways exceed Kant's own understanding of what he was doing, and constantly break beyond the constraints of his own arguments and terminology» (2016: 507–8).

<sup>30</sup> See for example the hackneyed claims apropos of Kant in general that Eric Schwitzgebel, who is not a Kantian, made a few years ago, which are actually nothing out of the ordinary, as they reflect what many others, even Kantians, think or profess. Schwitzgebel writes: «With apologies to Kant enthusiasts, it seems to me that despite his creativity and vision, Kant's arguments are often rather poor or gestural, requiring substantial reconstruction by sympathetic (sometimes overly charitable?) later commentators» (<http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.de/2013/02/was-latter-half-of-20th-century-golden.html>, accessed 20 June 2017). Schwitzgebel has a rather facile tendency to slate Kant (see also e.g. <http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.de/2013/03/against-one-true-kant.html>, accessed 20 June 2017).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. again Ameriks (2001) and note 25 above.

philosopher felt entitled to claim what he claimed»; «there is no separation between assessment and understanding» (Pippin 2015: 3). Pippin says about history of philosophy as «doing philosophy»:

This involves trying to reconstruct a philosopher's arguments with some charity and respect (often very hard to do, perhaps because one might have to fill in gaps in an argument when they are seen to occur), or in effect "philosophizing along with" the philosopher. The German Romantics, especially Friedrich Schlegel in his *Gespräch über die Poesie*, even invoked a kind of term of art for this and argued it was essential for philosophy, not just explicative: *symphilosophieren*, philosophizing with or together. [...] [T]o treat the philosophers as living interlocutors in philosophy (or to bring them back to life), not as dead figures of mere historical interest [...]. These ghosts of the past will not speak to us unless we "revivify" them with such a genuinely philosophical mode of address. We must be so invested in this encounter that we are willing to admit that some of our most deeply held philosophical convictions can be challenged by these ghosts (Pippin 2015: 3).

The last sentence in this quotation is particularly important: We must approach the text as readers willing to listen and learn from past philosophers, not to «ventriloquize [one's] own ideas in the historical figure's, importing an alien, incompatible framework, and contorting the historical figure's ideas until they fit ours» (Pippin 2015: 3–4). This goes against the typical 'analytical' retrofitting approach that I described above, but Pippin also cautions against the overly reverent attitude of those who think history of philosophy is «intellectual history, not philosophy» (Pippin 2015: 1). I agree with Pippin's proposal (which he carries out in the book that I have been quoting from) that «interpreting (and even criticizing) a historical figure can be a way of advancing, working through, coming to understand better, and defending a philosophical position» and that this «project is possible without anachronism, on the basis of sound scholarship and solid textual knowledge, but animated by more philosophical than historical intentions» (2015: 5). Philosophical understanding of a historical text is what should be aimed for, but such understanding should not be divorced from knowledge about what a philosopher 'actually' said.

The Deduction is difficult, no doubt. But the onus is on the reader to patiently try and grasp what is being asserted. Its revolutionary character resides partly in the way it is presented (similarly to Descartes' *Meditations*), even though Kant realised, on having published what we now call the A-edition of the *Critique*, that there was room for improvement of the presentation—and I believe that Kant indeed improved on the first version of the Deduction. Kant might not be the best stylist, as so many complain, but I suspect that those complaints also reveal a laziness on the part of the reader him- or herself. One needs to show a willingness to properly engage with Kant on his own terms, but «animated by more philosophical than historical intentions», as Pippin quite rightly suggests (2015: 5); not just to take from the text what one can use for one's own purpose (2015: 3). A humble effort to understand the philosophical problems presented in the text studied should be the guiding principle for any student of Kant, or any historical figure in philosophy for that matter.

Summarising, and to return to my original question, why—if we look at the last 10 years or so of Kant scholarship—is there so little in terms of dedicated monographs specifically on the topic of the Transcendental Deduction, and arguably very little work in any format that can be considered to have an added value in comparison to the seminal work produced in the preceding period? I can think of three main reasons: i) the majority of scholarly publishing houses no longer endorse book projects in which one engages at length with Kant's arguments in the Deduction, which is impossible to do within the confines of an article, projects for which the existing market is admittedly extremely small—but this is belied by the fact that Oxford University Press published three major monographs between 2014 and 2015 alone, albeit books by established scholars, who I reckon do not have to defend

themselves against the bias and subpar quality reporting from today's peer reviewers;<sup>32</sup> ii) the Deduction is generally considered to be too difficult, problematic and/or contentious to address it in any serious way, so given all sorts of contextual reasons—such as getting one's career off the ground as soon as possible (!)—one tends to avoid it; iii) there is an increasing tendency—partly due to the demands placed on the career of an academic philosopher (the 'publish or perish' mantra), partly due to the growing but mistaken belief that philosophy is science and so should also emulate scientific practices—to publish articles rather than books, books historically being favoured in the broader humanities. To put it simply, writing books simply costs too much time and has low ROI; articles can be produced more quickly in the time that is left for research in the ever more demanding world of universities, which for the most part are run like education businesses.

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What are the desiderata for new systematic-interpretatively guided research on Kant's Transcendental Deduction? As James Conant, in his excellent programmatic recent essay (Conant 2016)—in my opinion, one of the best articles on the Deduction of the last twenty years or so—delineates in detail in terms of what he calls 'exegetical puzzles', there is, first, the issue of the relationship between the Transcendental Deduction and the Transcendental Aesthetic, secondly, the relation between the A- and B-Deduction, and thirdly, the relation between the so-called 'first' and 'second steps' of the B-Deduction. Some aspects of these 'puzzles' have recently been debated more intensely than before; for example, a spate of articles on Kant's notion of space in relation to the role of the understanding (Friedman 2012; 2018; Land 2014; Messina 2014; McLear 2015; Onof and Schulting 2015; Blomme 2017; Williams 2018; Roche 2018; see also Vinci 2015) have brought to light the difficulties in assessing the first exegetical puzzle. In addressing this puzzle in the context of interpreting the structure and argumentative thrust of the Deduction, the results of this newer research must be taken into account. Conant fails to do this, however, when he discusses the relevant issues concerning space and intuition.

There is also, I think, a fourth exegetical puzzle—which Conant does not mention—that needs more investigation, namely the relation between the Transcendental Deduction and the so-called Metaphysical Deduction. Kant refers to the sections that precede the actual Transcendental Deduction only once as the Metaphysical Deduction at B159 (at the start of §26, which concerns the pivotal 'second step' argument), but those sections have in the literature long been referred to as such. There have been three major studies of the Metaphysical Deduction, but the three existing studies (Reich 1932; 1986; 1992; 2001; Brandt 1991; Wolff 1995)<sup>33</sup> have not gone beyond suggestions as to how the Metaphysical Deduction is related to the Transcendental Deduction. Klaus Reich has gone furthest by suggesting that the derivation question is really only solved by looking at the role of the objective unity of apperception, which is summarily dismissed by Reinhard Brandt—I made an attempt to build upon Reich's suggestion in Schulting (2012b; 2018b), in which I claim that the categories are effectively derivable from the unity of apperception, that is, from the 'I think' as the premise of the deductive argument.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps there is even a fifth desideratum, although not directly related to the argumentative structure of the Deduction; there is also the risk, here, of the old patchwork theory, namely the prevalence of historical reconstruction of the text over philosophical interpretation of the arguments.

<sup>32</sup> Another problem of book publishing today (certainly in philosophy) is that, unlike with journals, reviewing is not double-blind. Reviewers know who the author is, but the privilege is not vice versa.

<sup>33</sup> See also the helpful study of Kant's logic of concepts by Prien (2006).

<sup>34</sup> Also Longuenesse (1998; 2005ab) has used arguments from the Metaphysical Deduction to propound her reading of the centrality of figurative synthesis in the B-Deduction argument. See also Schulting (2017e).



This fifth desideratum concerns the relation between the Transcendental Deduction and the historical development of its argument over the course of Kant's so-called pre-Critical career, in particular during the so-called 'silent decade'. In the 1980s, especially Wolfgang Carl (1989ab) and Paul Guyer (1987) have written extensively about the Deduction in the *Duisburg Nachlass*, but on the basis of their analyses of the textual evidence of the *Nachlass*, they came to rather negative conclusions about the philosophical tenability of the arguments in the Deduction. Latterly, Allison (2015) has devoted quite some space to the historical development of Kant's arguments in the Deduction, including the *Duisburg Nachlass*, in his new book on the Deduction, and recently also in Spanish Moledo (2014) revisited the discussion on the role of Kant's *Duisburg Nachlass* for the interpretation of the Deduction.

By characterising four possible interpretative 'choice-points', as he calls them, which decide on the way in which the three relationships or exegetical puzzles that he distinguishes are taken, I believe that Conant (2016) has at any rate provided us with a clear and helpful methodology for interpreting the arguments of the Deduction. Each choice-point reflects the way in which as an interpreter one is committed to a certain view of how the argument of the Deduction proceeds, and thus decides on the specific route that as an interpreter one takes in approaching the Deduction as a whole. This mainly concerns the question of how one reads the relationship between the 'first' and 'second steps' of the B-Deduction, but it goes beyond Henrich's stipulation that the Deduction be read as consisting of two clearly definable argumentative steps. Conant differentiates the following four choice-points:

- i) Restrictive vs. nonrestrictive conceptions of subjectivity
- ii) Two-Stage vs. anti-two-stage readings of the relation between the Aesthetic and the Analytic
- iii) Two senses of the term 'intuition'
- iv) The relation between the subjective and objective unities of consciousness

One may of course beg to differ about the particular choices Conant himself makes at each of these choice-points, in particular with a view to the ways in which he aims to dismantle what he aptly calls the «layer-cake conception of human mindedness», according to which the conditions of our sentience and sapience are separately intelligible and yield absolutely independent and separable forms of cognition—and I myself critically discuss these choices in Schulting (2017d).

There is however at least one other element that Conant does not regard as a separate exegetical puzzle or choice-point, though he does discuss an aspect of it in the context of his second and fourth choice-points. What I mean is the formal role of 'apperception' or the 'I think' in the proof-structure of the argument of especially the B-Deduction (but, *mutatis mutandis*, also in the A-Deduction). This is of course related more to the internal logic of Kant's argument than to the relation between text parts (the issue from which Conant's analysis of exegetical puzzles takes its cue), although one could say, if we look at the B-Deduction, it concerns the relation between §16, in which Kant argues for the transcendental conditions of self-consciousness, and §17, where he argues for the transcendental conditions of the cognition of an object, with §18 as a corollary of those arguments. Structurally, this is an important issue, especially since many interpreters have in the past flagged fundamental problems with Kant's reasoning from the conditions for self-consciousness (the principle of apperception) to the conditions for consciousness of objects, or indeed the conditions of the knowledge of objects. These problems can generically be termed the problem of 'the Gap' (see Schulting 2017ac, Schulting 2018a, and Gomes 2018). This is a serious problem for Kant if these

commentators are right, for it directly undermines the central claim of the Deduction, namely the argument that the subjective conditions of cognition are also the objective conditions of cognition (A89; B122). Apperception is the premise of this argument. Evaluating apperception is therefore of paramount importance for assessing the argument. In various publications<sup>35</sup> I have argued that the criticism against Kant's argument that the subjective conditions are also the objective conditions, namely, the objection that there is a gap in Kant's central argument, is based on a fallacious, metaphysically intemperate reading of the principle of apperception as an analytic principle (B135). None of the existing interpretations, including Strawson's, is free from this fallacy. This, I think, is one of the most significant failures of research on the Deduction, despite the continued interest in Kant's theory of apperception (see e.g. the most recent essays by Henning 2010; Merritt 2011; Engstrom 2013a; Aquila 2013; Caimi 2017; Dyck 2017; Kitcher 2017ab; Longuenesse 2017),<sup>36</sup> which I have tried to remedy in my own work on apperception and the Deduction.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See Schulting (2012b; 2018b; 2017acd). See also latterly Wunderlich (2017).

<sup>36</sup> Kitcher's latest article (2017b) is the most helpful among these. See also my review of Longuenesse's newest book (Schulting, forthcoming a).

<sup>37</sup> Thanks to Christian Onof for helpful comments on an early draft of this article. Jacco Verburgt proofread the penultimate version.

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