

The Legacy of Descartes' Skepticism*†

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In a series of writings Barry Stroud construes the refutation of (Descartes's) skepticism (developed in the first Meditation of *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*) as the main concern and aim of Kant's transcendental philosophy, namely the refutation of the thesis that we can know nothing about the world around us. Stroud's assessment of the result of Kant's transcendental philosophy so understood is that it fails to achieve its goal. However, apart from whether or not it fails, I am very skeptical of Stroud's conception itself in the first place. In this paper I will try to show how problematic Stroud's conception is.

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In a series of writings Barry Stroud construes the refutation of (Descartes's) skepticism (developed in the first *Meditation* of *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*) as the main concern and aim of Kant's transcendental philosophy, namely the refutation of the thesis that we can know nothing about the world around us. Stroud's assessment of the result of Kant's transcendental philosophy so understood is that it fails to achieve its goal. However, apart from whether or not it fails, I am very skeptical of Stroud's conception itself in the first place, and I am not the only one who is.

As far as I know, it is "Transcendental Arguments" (1968) in which Stroud for the first time connected Kant's transcendental philosophy with the problem of skepticism. Or, to be precise, there he connects Kant's transcendental deduction and the Refutation of Idealism in a wholesale way with the problem of skepticism. And the way Stroud does it is very remarkable. Stroud first delivers a very brief summary or interpretation of the introductory part of the transcendental deduction, then immediately introduces a passage from a footnote of the *Preface* of the second edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, a passage which, I think, began to attract attention of many analytic philosophers since Moore's paper "Proof of an external world," and then, lastly, without further ado, relates these two things in a wholesale way to the problem of skepticism by saying this: 'The transcendental deduction (along with the Refutation of Idealism) is supposed to provide just such a proof [of the existence of things outside us] and, thereby, to give a complete answer to the skeptic about the existence of things outside us'. (p. 242)¹⁾ What is very remarkable-let me emphasize this- is that there (and in fact everywhere

1) From now on, all the references to "Transcendental Arguments" will be made just by giving the page number.

else in his writings as well) Stroud does never seem to *try* to connect Kant's transcendental philosophy with the problem of skepticism at all, but he does seem to *just do* it as if it went without saying. But, even granted that it could be possible for the Refutation of Idealism -by its face value alone- to lead us to associate it with the problem of skepticism, it is, I believe, beyond any imagination, maybe except for Stroud's, that this could be possible for the transcendental deduction as well. In fact, as we will see, it is very difficult to comprehend and follow the idea of combining the transcendental deduction even with the Refutation of Idealism, let alone with the problem of skepticism.²⁾ For this reason I will here try to show how problematic Stroud's conception understood in that way is, by doing the following two things.

First, Stroud's summary or interpretation of the introductory part of the transcendental deduction is full of obscurities and ambiguities. Therefore, I will try to critically analyze it by comparing it with Kant's original text. This will lead us to the consequence that, in Kant's transcendental deduction as it stands, there is nothing at all that allures us to relate it to the problem of skepticism. Second, I will see whether it is possible to combine the transcendental deduction even with the Refutation of Idealism. This will draw our attention to the ambiguity and obscurity of the phrase 'along with' in the parenthesis of the quotation above. This just because there is no way to combine the transcendental deduction as it stands with the Refutation of Idealism as it stands. All these considerations would be enough to show that the way Stroud has arrived at his conception of Kant's transcendental deduction must be by reading or interpreting it exclusively in the light of the aim of the Refutation of

2) Bird also thinks so. For this and further problems of Stroud's approach, see Bird, "Kant's Transcendental Arguments", 1989, p. 23 and p. 22.

Idealism. If so, his conception of the transcendental deduction can be said to be nothing other than dogmatic and even pointless. I will now take on the above two tasks, one after the other.

In “Transcendental Arguments” Stroud declares that he will try to identify some conditions which an argument must fulfill if it is to be called ‘transcendental.’ He asks, ‘What exactly is a transcendental argument?’, and purports to give an answer by relying on Kant. The conclusion he arrived at is this:

A sound transcendental argument therefore would show that it is wrong to think (with the conventionalist) that the only possible justification of our ways of thinking is “pragmatic” or practical, and equally wrong to think (with the skeptic) that they can be justified only by collecting direct empirical evidence of their reliability. Although these look like difficult demands to meet, they represent the minimum conditions that Kant set for the success of a transcendental argument. (p. 244)

I think we would have no difficulty understanding the condition given in the first part of the first sentence of this quotation as it stands, while it is not so for the other one given in its second part. This is precisely what makes for trouble here. So let’s first try to critically trace the way Stroud might have arrived at the second condition by relying on Kant. Stroud’s first step towards it is taken by saying:

(SI) Kant recognized two distinct questions which can be asked about concepts. The first—the “question of fact”—amounts to “How do we come to have this concept, and what is involved in our having it?”. This is the task of the “physiology of the human understanding” as practiced by Locke. But even if we knew what experiences or mental operations had been required in order for us to have the concepts we do, Kant’s second

question-the "question of right" -would still not have been answered, since we would not yet have established our *right* to, or our *justification* for, the possession and employment of those concepts. Although concepts can be derived from experience by various means, they might still lack "objective validity," and to show that this is not so is the task of transcendental deduction. (p. 241)

Kant's text to which (SI) refers is 'A84 ff.' I think, however, it is safe to take it that the reference made by Stroud at least covers the whole *First Section of Der transzendentalen Analytik Zweites Hauptstueck Von der Deduktion der reinen Verstandesbegriffe* (of the *Second Chapter On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding of the Transcendental Analytic*). And it is also safe to hold that the *First Section* is meant to be an introduction to the *Second Chapter On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding of the Transcendental Analytic*. As I said above what (SI) as it stands means is not clear at all.

According to (SI), Kant's text under consideration says: SI1) there is a distinction between the two questions of fact and of right concerning concepts we have; SI2) the former question can be answered by the 'physiology of the human understanding' and it is Locke who gave an answer to it; SI3) even though the first question is answered in that way, there still remains the other question of right or justification, that is, not just of the possession, but also of the employment of the concepts thus possessed; SI4) since concepts which are derived from experience by the physiology of the human understanding might still lack 'objective validity', it is the task of the transcendental deduction to show their 'objective validity'.

Apart from the excessive shortness of (SI) compared to Kant's text of which it seems intended to be an interpretation or summary, it is very

surprising that Stroud uses the term ‘concept(s)’ without making the distinction between ‘empirical’ concept(s) and ‘pure’ concept(s) which is very important and decisive in Kant’s original text.³⁾ First impressions, however, can be misleading. First of all, to be fair, we should take it that Stroud means ‘pure concept(s)’ by the term ‘concept(s)’ in (SI) since it is inconceivable that Stroud might have overseen the distinction made by Kant. Furthermore, it is impossible for him to have overseen the title of the *Second Chapter On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding of the Transcendental Analytic* which alone is enough to show the necessity of the distinction since, without it, the *First Section* as an introduction to the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding of the Transcendental Analytic* would become pointless. So let’s replace ‘concept(s)’ in (SI) by ‘pure concept(s)’ to understand it and see what problems it in that version would cause. I think: (SI1) is incorrect; if (SI2) is to be correct, it needs, as will now be shown, some qualification; both (SI3) and (SI4) are not correct; consequently, (SI) as a whole must be said to be incorrect.

Let me begin with (SI2). Why can (SI2) not be correct as it stands? Why does it need some additional explanation to be rendered correct? To answer this question and see what is required for rendering it correct, we have to turn to Kant’s text which (SI) is meant to be about. As Stroud shows himself acknowledges in (SI), that text must be understood in the

3) More surprising is that Stroud’s use of the term does not seem to be just a slip due to some negligence or carelessness on his part, nor to his expectation of or confidence in the reader’s familiarity with Kant’s text, but rather is consciously intended. He seems to intend to represent Kant as intending to draw a general line between the question of fact and that of right with regard to all concepts *regardless* of whether they empirical or non-empirical. This is indeed the case, as we will see later.

context of Kant's attempt to differentiate his transcendental deduction from Locke's physiology. This attempt is originally due to the principal difference in their position on alleged non-empirical ideas or concepts.

As is well-known, it is one of the most important aims for Locke in his *Essay* to provide an alternative to the theory of alleged innate ideas or concepts, which is meant to explain the origin of some of ideas or concepts (I.ii.1; II.i.1). Locke's alternative explanation is offered within a larger program (even though his original program is much larger than this): to empirically explain the origin of all the ideas or concepts we *have*. Locke starts from the assumption that experience, namely, sensation and reflection, is the only origin of all simple ideas and simple ideas directly obtained from those two sources provide all fundamental materials necessary for having all other sorts of ideas (complex ideas) (II.i.2-4) What Locke then attempts to do throughout the following part of the second book of the *Essay* is to show how simple ideas or concepts are obtained from experience and how all the other kinds of ideas are formed by the exercise of the faculties of the understanding, faculties to abstract, combine, and compare simple ideas thus obtained.⁴⁾ Since the subject matter we consider here is specifically those ideas or concepts which Kant thinks are pure and which he calls 'categories' and since

4) How can or should Locke show this? It cannot be done piecemeal, one by one. Instead, he adopted the following strategy: he selects some (abstract) ideas or concepts which it seems very hard to think of as being derived from experience. We might think of Kant's provocative examples, such as fortune, fate, and the like. Locke then attempts to explain how it is possible to acquire such ideas by the faculties of the understanding to manipulate simple ideas. The basic idea which lies behind this strategy is very simple and clear: if it could be possible for the origin of such concepts to be empirically explained, it is not necessary to empirically explain how we have acquired those other ideas or concepts which we might without further ado think of as having arisen from experience.

Kant in this introductory part of the transcendental deduction restricts his discussion with Locke and Hume to the most important one of the categories, namely that of causality as an example which is representative of all of them, I will restrict my attention to the way in which Locke tried to empirically explain the origin of the concept of causality.

As is well-known, Locke (*Essay*, II.xxi.1-4) makes a distinction between the ideas or concepts of active power meant to be the ‘cause’ and of passive power meant to be the ‘effect’, and says that what we can get from our observation of similar changes of one sort of material things made by another sort of them is at most the concept or idea of passive power. Those changes are in reality due to nothing more than communications of motion by impulses from the first to the second, and, further, the motion of the first communicated to the second is on their parts communicated to them from other material things, and so on. So, according to Locke, our observations of similar changes cannot provide us with the idea of a power of the beginning or stopping of motion, namely that of an active power. Now, the fact that Locke calls the concept of power which can be provided by observations of similar changes ‘that of passive power’ can be taken as a kind of confession on the side of Locke that we could not explain the origin or source or basis of the concept of an active power or cause through sensation. Sensation is, however, not the only source of experience for Locke: there is another one, namely reflection. Consequently, it is reflection from which we can, according to Locke, get the concept of active power: from reflection on the exercise of our will, for example, to move our hands and the subsequent movement of our hands as its effect. So far, we have briefly considered how Locke answers the question of fact with regard to the origin of the pure concept of causality and (SI2) doesn’t seem to require

any qualification to be rendered correct at all since it is indeed the case that Locke gave an answer of his own to the question of fact. On the other hand, (SI2) at first sight seems to be nicely connected with (SI3). (SI3) says that since the question of fact is answered by Locke, what now remains is the question of right. Nevertheless, there is a serious problem in this way of reading Kant.

First of all, note some curious thing in (SI3). It does speak not just of the right or justification of the employment of the pure concept of causality whose origin is thus explained, but also of that of our possession of it while Kant does not say even one word about the latter in the text under consideration.⁵⁾ So let's consider (SI3) by asking two simple-minded questions: if the question of fact were in fact correctly answered, or more precisely, if the way in which we come to have the pure concept of causality were correctly empirically explained by Locke which it isn't, why did we in addition need a justification of our possession of it? And why is not the correct empirical explanation of the way in which we come to have the concept sufficient to guarantee our right to employ it? How can Stroud let Kant answer these questions? In order to give answers to them which might accord with (SI3) as it stands, we have to see how Kant, relying on Hume, assesses Locke's explanation.

As is well-known, Hume goes one step further than Locke and consequently criticizes him. Hume does not acknowledge the possibility for those observations to provide us with the idea or concept even of a passive power: it provides us only with that of succession of two sorts

5) Frankly speaking, I believe that this alone is enough to suggest that (SI) taken as a summary or interpretation of Kant's text in question cannot be said to be based on that very text itself, or, in other words, that if (SI) is meant to be such an interpretation or summary it could not be a correct one. For the sake of argument, however, let me ignore this.

of similar events, i.e., to speak in Hume's terminology, with the idea of 'constant conjunction' only (Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 90-91; pp. 156-7). And it is precisely this conception on which Hume based his criticism of Locke's explanation of how we got to the idea or concept of active power. On that conception, what we can be said to get from those reflections is nothing more than a constant conjunction between our wills to move our hands and the subsequent movements of our hands (*An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 64-67.). Kant must share this criticism with Hume. Locke, to speak with Kant, misconstrued showing 'the first occasion for' exercising the pure concept of causality as explaining its origin (A86/B118; see also A66/B91 and A95/B127). Then we must say that, according to Kant, even though it is a fact that Locke gave his answer to the question of fact with respect to the pure concept of causality, his answer is wrong. So if (SI2) is meant to say that Locke's answer to the question is right, this cannot be a correct interpretation. If (SI2) is meant to say just that it is a fact that Locke gave an answer to it on his part, it can be said to be a correct interpretation.

Is it then perhaps because Stroud knows that Kant thinks Locke's answer is false that (SI3) does not just speak of the right or justification of the employment of the pure concept of causality, but also of that of the possession of it? If this were the case, Stroud would seem to be able to let Kant answer the two simple-minded questions raised above in the following way. First, it is true that we don't originally need any additional justification of the employment of the pure concept of causality if a correct empirical explanation of the way is given in which we have acquired it. In other words, the justification of the employment of the concept automatically follows from the correct empirical explanation of its origin. Second, the answer which is given by Locke is not correct.

Third, for that very reason, another attempt must be made to empirically explain the origin of the pure concept of causality which must then be the reason why (SI3) does speak of the justification of the possession of it as well. But this line of thoughts is resisted by (SI4) and, first of all, - this is the most important point- by Kant himself.

According to that line of thoughts, Kant should have to think that the right explanation of the origin of the concept of causality could *in principle* be given from within the 'physiology of the human understanding' so that Locke's failure is just an *accidental* one made in the process of giving such an explanation. Accordingly, Kant should then have to consider his transcendental deduction as offering such an explanation. On the contrary, (SI4), however, says that it is not the task of the transcendental deduction to offer such an empirical explanation of the origin of the pure concept of causality, but rather to provide it with 'objective validity.' And it goes without saying that it is not what can empirically be done at all. So (SI4) very strongly suggests that Locke's answer is correct-which it isn't for Kant. For this reason, it directly brings us back to our simple-minded questions. We should have to ask Stroud once again how he will let Kant answer them. The only hint at a way out of this difficulty, if there is any, seems to lie in the term of 'objective validity' which is introduced in (SI4) for the first time by Stroud. Now, I believe that here is then the place where the distinction between pure concepts and empirical concepts must come into play substantially.

Before we consider it, let me make some general remarks on Kant's way of explaining the peculiar character of his transcendental deduction. First of all, I want to emphasize that it is nobody but Kant himself who felt the need to do this. And it is also Kant himself who explained the way to do it by differentiating his transcendental deduction from Locke's

physiological project. To this purpose, he introduces the two questions of fact and of right. Kant seems to believe that the distinction between the question of fact and the question of right can serve to clarify his own task. Accordingly, we must always keep two things in mind: it is not Locke, but Kant himself who introduces the two questions of fact and of right; it is also Kant himself who tries to make the distinction between his transcendental deduction and Locke's project by adjusting Locke's project and his transcendental deduction to the distinction between the two questions of fact and of right. Let's see then how Kant does this. Kant says:

(KI) We make use of a multitude of empirical concepts without objection from anyone, and take ourselves to be justified in granting them a sense and a supposed signification even without any deduction, because we always have experience ready at hand to prove their objective reality. (A84/B116-117; translations by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood here and throughout, except for the two passages KV-a and KV-b below)

(KI) can be understood as the first step towards adjusting Locke's physiological project to the distinction of the two questions of fact and of right. As we can see here, Kant starts with the assumption that we use empirical concepts in experience, and the question with which he is *exclusively* concerned here is that of the possibility of justifying our use of empirical concepts in experience. This has to be so. How could it be otherwise if we think about what the deduction is supposed to do according to Kant? (KI) says that, as regards empirical concepts, we are not in need of any deduction for the justification of our employment of them since we are always able to prove their objective reality.⁶⁾ This corresponds exactly to the assumption on the basis of which the second

of our simple minded question above arises. So the term 'objective reality' is a technical term for Kant which characterizes the status of empirical concepts by which their employment in experience is justified. How could empirical concepts acquire such a status? For Kant this question is the very question of fact and can be answered by Locke's physiology. If their objective reality is said to be always readily proved on the basis of experience at hand, it is just because we got them from experience, or, to speak from an ontological perspective, from what is given in experience. Kant should then think that if we succeed in showing how we come to have concepts from what is given in experience-sensation or reflection-, we thereby automatically guarantee our right for using them in experience. And Kant uses, I think, two ways of expressing this idea within the distinction between the questions of fact and of right. One is to say that with respect to empirical concepts whose origin can be empirically explained by Locke's physiology the question of right does not arise at all as in (KI). The other way is to say that the question of right is the same as the question of fact in the case of empirical concepts; and so the question of right is automatically answered by answering the question of fact. Kant seems to have the latter in mind when he calls the answer to the question of fact concerning empirical concepts an 'empirical deduction.'⁷⁾ Anyway, I want emphasize that if Kant did not

6) The only thing which might at first sight seem to create some trouble for this reading is the phrase 'even without deduction'. Does Kant thereby mean that empirical concepts originally need a deduction, but that it can be omitted? If the reason why it can be omitted is just because we are always in a position to show the objective reality of empirical concepts, then it is difficult to see whether such a reading can add, or brings, anything new to, or against, my understanding of (KI) presented above.

7) He does so to emphasize the difference between empirical concepts and the pure concepts of the understanding in the way of "justifying" their employment in

think so about empirical concepts, then we cannot explain why Kant introduces Locke's physiological explanation with regard to the question of fact concerning empirical concepts in the very place where what matters *exclusively* is the question of right; furthermore, we cannot explain why Kant appreciates Locke's contribution to the explanation of the origin of empirical concepts in recourse to the faculties of the understanding either. Kant says, for example, 'Such a tracing of the first endeavors of our power of cognition to ascend from individual perceptions to general concepts is without doubt of great utility, and the famous Locke is to be thanked for having first opened the way for this' (A86/B118-9). This is part of Kant's answer to our simple-minded questions asked above, at least with respect to empirical concepts. This consideration and its result can be corroborated by what follows.

There is, according to Kant, something Locke did not do correctly, however. It is that he thought that it is possible to empirically explain the origin of all sorts of concepts. Kant says:

(KII) Once in recent times it even seemed as though an end would be put to all the controversies, and the lawfulness of all the competing claims would be completely decided, through a certain **physiology** of the human understanding (by the famous Locke); but it turned out that although the birth of the purported queen was traced to the rabble of common experience and her pretensions would therefore have been rightly rendered suspicious, nevertheless she still asserted her claims, because in fact this **genealogy** was attributed to her falsely. (Aix-x; cf. Axvi; B6/ A2-3)

What I want to drive attention to here is Kant's use of the term

experience as we shall see soon.

'lawfulness,' and his description of the situation to the effect that the problem of 'lawfulness' seems to have been taken to be completely decided by Locke's physiology. Now, the point is the question why the problem of lawfulness could have been taken in that way. The reason is simply because people thought that Locke achieved success in his physiology so that there remained nothing at all that has to be done to show their objective validity. I think that Kant would have shared this opinion if Locke had indeed achieved success, and for the present issue it is decisively important to note precisely what it is to which Kant attributes the failure of Locke's physiology. It is not its being unable to provide objective validity to ideas or concepts whose origin it purported to have successfully empirically explained at all, but only and completely to its attributing a false genealogy to a certain sort of ideas or concepts, namely metaphysical ideas or concepts. This shows unambiguously that Kant thinks that the two questions of fact and of right become one in respect of any concept for whose origin it is possible to be correctly empirically explained, namely the question of fact. But Kant thinks there are concepts such as metaphysical ones whose origin for this very reason cannot be explained empirically, and that it is Locke's mistake to have tried to explain their origin empirically. Since they are non-empirical concepts, there is nothing given in experience from which they could be derived, and accordingly, their employment in experience cannot be expected to be justified by appealing to what is given in experience. So the genuine question of right arises only concerning the use in experience of metaphysical concepts. Even after we have explained their origin in a non-empirical way, it does not change the situation since what matters is not just the question of how we come to have them but rather -and this is decisive- that of how we are justified in using them in experience.

Accordingly, Kant says directly after (KI):

(KIII) But here are also concepts that have been usurped, such as **fortune** and **fate**, which circulate with almost universal indulgence, but that are so occasionally called upon to establish their claim by the question *quid juris*, and then there is not a little embarrassment about their deduction because one can adduce no clear legal ground for an entitlement to their use either from experience or from reason. (A84/B116-117)

(KIII) can be taken as a transitional step towards the explanation of what a transcendental deduction of categories is supposed to do. Looked at that way, it is not at all by chance that Kant first makes a distinction between empirical concepts which we might without further ado think of as having come from experience on the one hand, and such concepts as fortune and fate which it is very hard for us to think of as having derived from experience on the other hand, -immediately after he introduced and adopted the distinction between the two questions of fact and of right and the term 'deduction.' Apart from this, there is not just such a sort of difference between concepts, however. There is also as much a substantial difference between non-empirical concepts: that between the pure concepts of the understanding on the one hand and all the rest on the other hand. Although the pure concepts of the understanding, namely the categories, share the same fate with terms such as 'fate' and 'fortune' to the effect that it is hard for us to think of them as having derived from experience, there is an essential difference between them in the possibility of justification of their use in experience. The last sentence of (KIII) readily suggests this, and this is why Kant directly goes on to make a distinction between empirical concepts and the pure concepts of the understanding:

(KIV) Among the many concepts, however, that constitute the very mixed fabric of human cognition, there are some that are also destined for pure use *a priori* (completely independently of all experience), and these always require a deduction of their entitlement, since proofs from experience are not sufficient for the lawfulness of such a use, and yet one must know how these concepts can be related to objects that they do not derive from any experience. I therefore call the explanation of the way in which concepts can be related to objects *a priori* their **transcendental deduction**, and distinguish this from the **empirical** deduction, which shows how a concept is acquired through experience and reflection on it, and therefore concerns not the lawfulness but the fact from which the possession has arisen. ⁸⁾ (A85/B117)

Kant has already identified which of our concepts are the pure concepts of the understanding in recourse to 'the logical functions of the understanding in judgments'. However, he knows that although it is a fact that we have them and use them in judgments, this fact does not automatically justify our use of them in experience since there is nothing given in experience from which they can be derived: they have no 'objective reality.' So there must be some other way than empirical deduction in which the employment in experience of the pure concepts can be justified. Naturally, Kant thinks that there is such a way and he calls it 'a transcendental deduction' in contrast to the empirical deduction explained above (see also A86-7/B119). It consists in showing how the pure concepts can be *a priori* related to objects in experience. The status which the pure concepts will be provided with is called by Kant

8) What Kant especially has in mind when he speaks of 'proofs of experience' must be 'a regularity of appearances' in relation to the concept of causality (see A89-91/B122-124).

‘objective validity.’ The term ‘objective validity’ in that technical sense appears for the first time in his general explanation about the *Transcendental Deduction* in the *Preface* (A xvi). Therefore, we can say that (SI4) is simply incorrect.

The reason why (SI1) is incorrect can be given by delivering a brief summary of the previous considerations: within Kant’s distinction of the questions of fact and of right the question of right concerning empirical concepts does not arise. If it arises, it can be answered by answering the question of fact, and this can be simply done by empirically showing how we come to acquire these empirical concepts. This provides empirical concepts with the status of ‘objective reality.’ And this is why it is called by Kant ‘the empirical deduction’ in contrast to ‘the transcendental deduction.’ On the other hand, concerning the pure concepts of the understanding Kant does not raise the question of fact at all. The reason is simply because it can and does not help to answer the question of right which only matters to him. The latter can and is not answered simply by showing how we come to have the pure concepts we have. Rather, Kant attempts to show *a priori* how the pure concepts we have can be related to objects in experience. This provides the pure concepts of the understanding with the status of ‘objective validity.’ And this is why it is called by Kant ‘the transcendental deduction’ in contrast to ‘the empirical deduction.’ So (SI1) is also incorrect.

I think that all the considerations so far are sufficient to show that (SI1), (SI2), (SI3), and (SI4) are not correct; and so we have to say that our version of (SI) as a whole in which the term ‘concept(s)’ is replaced by ‘pure concept(s)’ reveals itself as a totally incorrect interpretation of Kant’s text in question. Worse for Stroud is the fact that it would not do to read (SI) as it stands, namely without making the distinction between

empirical and pure concepts. The reason is simply because such a reading must in any case assume that Locke's physiology is able to successfully explain the origin of all concepts, even that of the pure concepts, which it isn't for Kant. We can conclude that (SI) as it stands is an incorrect summary or interpretation of what it is meant to be about, and so cannot even provide room for the main discussion about whether Kant's transcendental deduction can be understood in the light of the problem of skepticism.

Nevertheless, for the sake of the main discussion of this paper, let's ignore this problem and take (SI) to be correct as it stands. Let us assume that what Kant's transcendental deduction is aimed at is providing all concepts, whether they are empirical or pure, with objective validity in terms of justifying their employment in experience. However, this cannot, unfortunately, change the situation at all either since there is, even on this conception, nothing in sight on the basis of which the transcendental deduction can be related to the problem of skepticism. Naturally, Stroud must think otherwise. He namely seems to think that we can find it when we see in what the transcendental deduction consists. He says:

(SII) Transcendental arguments are supposed to demonstrate the impossibility or illegitimacy of this skeptical challenge by proving that certain concepts are necessary for thought or experience. (p.242)

Let's ignore what Stroud says transcendental arguments are supposed to do since the question of whether or not this is so for Kant is precisely what matters here, and instead concentrate exclusively on what Stroud says the transcendental deduction consists in. As Stroud correctly explains, it is the core of the transcendental deduction to provide categories with their objective validity by showing that they are necessary

for the possibility of experience or thought in general. If so, can Stroud say that the transcendental deduction thereby provides empirical concepts with their validity as well?⁹⁾ I think it depends. It can in a wholesale way be said to do so by being a necessary condition for the possibility of experience in general. But it cannot be said to do so by proving ‘the existence of things outside us’. To take a precaution against a possible misunderstanding, I must emphasize that by saying the latter I do not mean to say that the transcendental deduction is already concerned with the problem of skepticism and fails for that very reason, but rather just to say that the theme of the proof of the existence of things outside us does not come up at all since it is pursued against the background that they are given. But once again Stroud seems to have something to say against it.

‘Precisely what is given then?’ is, I believe, the question Stroud must have asked. ‘Nothing other than appearances dependent on us’ must have been his answer to it. Let’s set aside the important question of how in Kant’s transcendental philosophy ‘appearances’ should be taken. And let’s just take, for the sake of discussion, his answer as what it says at face value. This would not, however, help him in any sense either. The reason is simply that the objective validity with which the categories are provided by the transcendental deduction has its validity only within appearances. Accordingly, it is pointless to say that the transcendental

9) What we have discussed so far is obvious. But exactly this reminds us of the first impressions which we have set aside as we started examining (SI): Stroud’s use of the term ‘concept(s)’ in (SI) without the distinction between ‘empirical’ concepts and ‘pure’ concepts does not seem to be just a slip due to some negligence or carelessness on his part, but rather consciously intended. He really represents Kant as intending to draw a general line between the question of fact and that of right with regard to all concepts regardless of whether they are empirical or non-empirical.

deduction has to do with the problem of skepticism since it does, from the start, declare that it has nothing to do with a proof of the existence of things outside us as opposed to appearances dependent on us: proving the objective validity of the categories means nothing more than proving their objective validity within appearances only. So far I have tried to find (on the side of Stroud) possible ways in which (SI) might be taken to be related with the problem of skepticism, and I think that I have failed to find anything. There is simply no such a way.

This result, however, immediately forces us to ask the question of how it could be possible for Stroud to interpret the introductory part of the transcendental deduction of which (SI) is meant to be a summary or interpretation in the way he does. This leads us to the second task that I proposed to take on in this paper. I will close this paper by trying to answer this question.

As we have seen -let me emphasize it once more-, it is not possible to do so if we read it as it stands. If so, the reason for which Stroud came to his conception must be found outside the transcendental deduction itself, and, as we will see soon, this is indeed the case. Let's look first at the following passage:

(SIII-a) Kant thought that he could argue from the necessary conditions of thought and experience to the falsity of "problematic idealism" and so to the actual existence of the external world of material objects, and not merely to the fact that we believe there is such a world, or that as far as we can tell there is. (p.256)

As we can see here, Stroud first connects the transcendental deduction with the Refutation of Idealism and thereby further with the problem of skepticism. This shows what Stroud has originally in mind by 'along with

the Refutation of Idealism' while saying 'the transcendental deduction (along with the Refutation of Idealism) is to provide ...' (p.242) in the introductory part of this paper. But this can be done in this way only if there is a possible way in the first place in which the transcendental deduction can be brought in connection with the Refutation of Idealism. And whether or not there is such a way is what matters here. Nevertheless, as I emphasized in the introductory part of this paper, Stroud never seems to try to connect the transcendental deduction with the Refutation of Idealism, but rather just to do it as if it were self-evident. Directly after delivering (SI), Stroud introduces the following passage from a footnote of the *Preface* of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Let me quote the passage from Stroud's paper:

(KV-a) ... a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us . . . must be accepted merely on faith, and that if anyone thinks good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof (B xl).

From (SI) and (KV-a) he comes without further ado to the conclusion which has already been quoted in the introductory part. Let me quote it once more for the sake of convenience:

(SIII-b) The transcendental deduction (along with the Idealism) is supposed to provide just such a proof and, thereby, to give a complete answer to the skeptic about the existence of things outside us. (p.242)

As I said, Stroud seems to think of it as nearly self evident to come to (SIII-b) from (SI) and (KV-a). Bird does not think so, but he thinks that it is nevertheless not easy to separate (SI) and (KV-a). Bird says:

The most obvious of these [difficult issues] is the connection between the argument of the deduction and that of the Refutation of Idealism. It is in that latter passage that Kant plainly and explicitly addresses the issue of skepticism about 'outer experience,' and so provides a clear transcendental argument against Idealist skeptics about a certain kind of objectivity or publicity. But if Kant is doing the same thing in the transcendental deduction it is puzzling that he thought it necessary to introduce the Refutation of Idealism into the second edition of the Critique, particularly when he had so extensively rewritten the deduction itself for that edition. In fact, of course, it is quite clear that the two arguments are not identical, and should not be confused with, or assimilated to, each other, even though it is no doubt not a simple matter to specify the differences between them. (1989, p.23)

Although I agree with Bird that the transcendental deduction and the Refutation of Idealism must be separated from each other since they are meant to accomplish different things, I cannot follow Bird's thought that 'it is no doubt not a simple matter to specify the differences between them'. If it is true that they are supposed to accomplish different things, why should it be so difficult to specify their differences? I cannot understand Bird in this respect at all. But I can, nevertheless, explain why Bird cannot think otherwise. It is just because Bird on his part could only find and give circumstantial evidence for his belief as we can see in the quotation above. If this so, then the differences between the transcendental deduction and the Refutation of Idealism must, if there are any, be found in them themselves, and I acknowledge that in this case it must be really a hard job to do it, if at all possible. But, fortunately, there is evidence which directly and in a straightforward way shows that the transcendental deduction and the Refutation of Idealism are meant to do different things, and which both Bird and Stroud have overseen.¹⁰⁾ In order to show what it is, let me quote a passage directly before (KV-a)

from the translation by Kemp Smith which Stroud used:

(KV-b) The only addition, strictly so called, though one affecting the method of proof only, is the new refutation of psychological idealism (cf. below, p. 244), and a strict (also, as I believe, the only possible) proof of the objective reality of outer intuition ...

(KV-b) shows what the Refutation of Idealism is meant to accomplish, namely to prove the objective reality of what is given in outer intuition. Therefore, in the Refutation of Idealism there might be a sense in which what it is supposed to do can be taken as the refutation of skepticism. And in what sense it is supposed to do this is explained in (KV-a).

However, there is something decisive Stroud neglected so that it had to be unavoidable for him to falsely connect the transcendental deduction with the Idealism of Refutation. It is this. As said above in recourse to (KV-b), the target of the proof of the Refutation of Idealism is the *objective reality* of outer intuition, i.e. a proof that what we intuit is what is given from outside. On the other hand, the transcendental deduction is pursued against the background that experience provides empirical concepts with their objective reality as we saw in (KI) above. Let me - for the sake of convenience- present (KI) here once again:

(KI) We make use of a multitude of empirical concepts without objection from anyone, and take ourselves to be justified in granting them

10) I am very puzzled about how this could not have caught the attention of scholars who attack Stroud's conception of Kant's transcendental deduction in the same way as I do. Amongst many see, e.g., besides Bird, Carl, *Der schweigende Kant*, 1989, pp. 10-12.

a sense and a supposed signification even without any deduction, because we always have experience ready at hand to prove their objective reality. (A84/B116-117)

Therefore, there is no room in the transcendental deduction for the theme of the proof of the objective reality. Consequently, the transcendental deduction cannot raise the problem of idealism for the same reason that it cannot raise the problem of skepticism either.

If I am right in the considerations made so far, there is no way of connecting the transcendental deduction with the problem of skepticism or even with the Refutation of Idealism either.

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