

Developing Cognition From Its Original Seeds: Kant's Conception of the Synthetic Method in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

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Abstract

In the *Prolegomena*, Kant contrasts the synthetic procedure employed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the analytic procedure carried out in the *Prolegomena* itself. Given the tangle of analyses, arguments, and alleged proofs that make up the *Critique* itself, however, it is hard to relate Kant's remarks on the method to the way he actually proceeds in this work. Unlike Merritt, and Gava, among others, I argue that Kant's innovative use of the synthetic method consists not in the unification of two previously separated elements, but in the act of generating a sum total of cognitions without relying on anything given. Even though Kant in the *Critique* does not proceed synthetically in all regards, he arguably develops sets of synthetic a priori cognitions from a consideration of the functions of the pure understanding and pure reason *per se*. I support this reading by clarifying how the *Critique* proceeds synthetically as regards (1) the thrust of the Transcendental Analytic as a whole and (2) the metaphysical deduction of the categories.