

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF COGNITION IN KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

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For my parents,
without whom my education would not have been possible

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Preface

The transcendental deduction of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* aims to establish that the categories—a priori concepts including “substance” and “cause and effect”—genuinely apply to objects of experience. I argue that Kant's under-investigated notion of empirical cognition is the transcendental deduction's central epistemological notion and that it refers primarily to “rational sensory discrimination”. Kant's focus on empirical cognition is of interest insofar as more familiar epistemological concerns—e.g., about certainty or justification—are secondary to his distinctive task of explaining how it is possible for us to make rational sensory discriminations.

Chapter 1 traces the history—beginning with Descartes but continuing through Leibniz and Wolff—of the epistemological notions of clarity and distinctness. With this historical background, I argue in Chapter 2 that Kant conceives of empirical cognition as clear and discursively distinct representation: the identification or differentiation (whether correct or not) of objects of experience from each other, occurring through a capacity to become aware of and express normative reasons (whether good or not) for those identifications or differentiations. That is, empirical cognition is “rational sensory discrimination”. I show in Chapter 3 that the transcendental deduction's starting assumption is that we have empirical cognition in this sense. Although others have held that Kant assumes we have empirical cognition, I provide fuller evidence for this interpretation over its competitors and show how Kant understood Hume as likewise assuming we have empirical cognition.

Kant's argumentative strategy consists of two intertwined strands: (1) the objective deduction, which aims to show that the categories have objective validity; and, (2) the subjective deduction, whose purpose has been a matter of scholarly debate. I argue in Chapter 4 that the subjective deduction aims to shed light on the conditions for the possibility of empirical

cognition in the sense described above. Namely, it shows how the understanding contributes to empirical cognition via a spontaneous threefold synthesis. In Chapter 5, I focus on the argument of the subjective deduction, that empirical cognition requires an empirical threefold synthesis grounded on three faculties of the mind. My interpretation of empirical cognition sheds light on this argument because Kant's argument is that such an empirical threefold synthesis is required for a cognitive subject to represent normative reasons.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 continue my interpretation of the subjective deduction by explaining why Kant thinks that—in addition to the a priori faculty of sensibility investigated in the Transcendental Aesthetic—there must also be two additional a priori faculties that make possible the empirical threefold synthesis: transcendental apperception and pure imagination. And as I argue in those chapters, Kant's arguments for each of these a priori faculties are not only shared by the subjective and objective deductions, but are also central to the Transcendental Deduction chapter of both editions of the first *Critique*.

In Chapter 6, I argue that Kant holds that transcendental apperception—a faculty that makes it possible for a cognitive subject to have an a priori self-consciousness of her own numerical identity as a cognitive subject—is necessary for empirical cognition insofar as a cognitive subject must be sensitive to the normativity of concepts used in her empirical cognition. I conclude this chapter by sketching how this argument for transcendental apperception provides the basis for the objective deduction's main task of demonstrating the categories' objective validity.

In Chapter 7, I present the A-edition's argument that a faculty of pure imagination is necessary for empirical cognition. This argument is of great importance because it also shows that, by means of the categories, the understanding must legislate a priori laws of nature. This

means that all appearances, even ones that are not directly given to the senses and hence are not directly cognized, must stand under the categories. Nevertheless, the A-edition's argument suffers from a crucial flaw, and I show in Chapter 8 how Kant attempts to correct this flaw by introducing the new notion of "formal intuition". In explaining this new argument, I thereby offer a new answer to Dieter Henrich's famous "problem of the two-steps-in-one-proof", namely, the oddity that the B-edition's argument contains two steps, the second of which seems to be redundant. I argue that the solution to this problem lies in recognizing that whereas the first step attempts to establish that the categories have objective validity insofar as any appearance *directly given* and cognized by us must stand under them, the second step appeals to our formal intuitions of space and time in order to show that *all appearances*—even those that are not directly presented to our senses—must stand under the categories. Kant attempts to demonstrate the latter thesis by showing that, insofar as all appearances are in space and time, they must be subject to a priori laws of nature legislated by our faculty of understanding.

Curtis Sommerlatte

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF COGNITION IN KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

I argue that Kant's primary epistemological concern in the *Critique of Pure Reason's* transcendental deduction is empirical cognition. I show how empirical cognition is best understood as "rational sensory discrimination": the capacity to discriminate sensory objects through the use of concepts and with a sensitivity to the normativity of reasons. My dissertation focuses on Kant's starting assumption of the transcendental deduction, which I argue to be the thesis that we have empirical cognition. I then show how Kant's own subjective deduction fleshes out his conception of empirical cognition and is intertwined with key steps in the transcendental deduction's arguments that the categories have objective validity and that we have synthetic a priori cognition.

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Introduction

One of Kant's major aims in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to explain the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition, i.e., cognition that is not based on any particular experience but that is informative beyond what is analytically contained in our concepts. For Kant, cognition requires both intuitions—representations immediately related to objects and provided by the passive faculty of sensibility—and concepts—representations mediately related to objects and provided by the active faculty of the understanding. Cognition, then, is a form of representation in which concepts are applied to objects given by intuition. Synthetic a priori cognition, then, must involve the application of concepts to objects of intuition.

But the possibility of such cognition is puzzling because it requires that concepts be applied a priori to objects, and hence does not require any particular experience of those objects. Alternatively put: given that sensibility and the understanding are distinct faculties, and given that objects are given to us by sensibility, it does not seem as though there should be any guarantee that the understanding's concepts successfully apply to the particular objects given by sensibility (A88-91/B120-3). For example, given that the understanding gives us the concept of cause, it seems quite possible that we could be presented with objects in experience without ever needing to suppose that there is any actual causal connection among those objects.

Kant recognizes the puzzling nature of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition and the need to offer an “explanation of the way in which concepts can relate to objects a priori” (A85/B117). Kant calls this explanation the transcendental deduction of a priori concepts.¹ More specifically, the transcendental deduction explains how the “categories”—twelve fundamental

¹ I will use “Transcendental Deduction” to refer to the chapter “On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding”. I will append to this “in the A-edition” or “in the B-edition” to refer to the chapter of only one of the two editions. As I contend that each of these chapters presents fundamentally the same argument, I will use “transcendental deduction” to refer to the main argument they share.

and a priori concepts derived from twelve corresponding logical forms of judgment—have an a priori relation to objects. Accordingly, if Kant is to show that we do in fact have synthetic a priori cognition, he needs to discount the possibility that the categories could fail to relate to objects of experience.

Kant attempts to do this in the transcendental deduction, which is supposed to provide a “deduction of [the categories’] entitlement” in being applied to objects of experience (B117). More specifically, it attempts to demonstrate that the categories are necessarily applied to appearances because they make appearances possible as objects (A92/B124). Hence, this deduction—i.e., the demonstration that the categories are legitimately applied to objects of experience—is “transcendental” insofar as it shows that the categories are “a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences” (A94/B126).

The importance of the transcendental deduction for Kant’s philosophical project is clear. Unfortunately, the argument of the Transcendental Deduction chapter of the first *Critique* is a confusing mixture of obscure assertions and opaque inferences. And even though Kant revised the Transcendental Deduction chapter in the second edition of the first *Critique* in order “to remove as far as possible [...] difficulties and obscurities” (Bxxxvii), it can often seem that he at best succeeded only in multiplying the number of difficulties and obscurities. As a result, there has come to be a vast secondary literature on Kant’s transcendental deduction. This dissertation is yet another attempt to gain clarity on the transcendental deduction, but it takes a new perspective. Namely, I approach the transcendental deduction by examining Kant’s notion of empirical cognition [*Erkenntnis*]. My account of empirical cognition is based on a close examination of both Kant’s own texts and books by his early-modern predecessors with which he was well acquainted. My thesis is that a proper understanding of Kant’s notion of empirical

cognition is crucial for understanding all aspects of the argument of the transcendental deduction, including its premises, inferences, and conclusions.

Nevertheless, my dissertation is limited in scope due to the structure of the transcendental deduction. The transcendental deduction, at least in the A-edition of the first *Critique*, is described by Kant as having two sides, one subjective and one objective. As we shall see in Chapter 4, there is much debate about what exactly the subjective side, or the “subjective deduction”, is. Nevertheless, it is clear that the objective side is the argument that directly attempts to show that the categories have what Kant calls “objective validity”, and this amounts to showing that they have an a priori relation to objects. I understand the objective deduction as having the following outline:

(OD1) All experience—empirical cognition of objects—is possible only if the objects given by intuition are thought by means of concepts.

(OD2) The categories are a priori conditions for the thought of the objects given by intuition.

(OD3) Therefore, the categories have objective validity. [OD1-OD2]

The primary aim of my dissertation is to explain what (OD1) means and why Kant asserts it. In Chapter 1, I present the historical context and philosophical terminology relevant for understanding Kant’s notion of empirical cognition. I use these results in Chapter 2, along with an examination of Kant’s own texts, to present my account of what Kant means by empirical cognition and why he is interested in it. Finally, I show in Chapter 3 that Kant does in fact begin the objective deduction by assuming that we have empirical cognition, i.e., by assuming (OD1).

This historical and analytical account of (OD1) and why Kant asserts it, however, differs from Kant’s own attempt to elucidate (OD1). Beginning with Chapter 4, the remainder of my

dissertation aims to provide Kant's own explanation of (OD1). As I argue in Chapter 4, the A-edition's subjective deduction—which corresponds to a brief passage in the B-edition—is Kant's own attempt at elucidating (OD1). Namely, the subjective deduction aims to explain how the faculty of the understanding has a relation to objects in producing empirical cognition. In Chapters 5 through 7, I further attempt to offer a complete account of the A-edition's subjective deduction, and I thereby present Kant's own explanation of (OD1). In Chapter 5, I present Kant's argument that empirical cognition requires a threefold empirical synthesis carried out by the understanding and grounded on three corresponding empirical subjective sources of cognition.

It seems that this might suffice for completing the primary aims of the subjective deduction, but Kant's procedure for carrying out the subjective deduction has a complication. Namely, the subjective deduction identifies not merely three *empirical* subjective sources or faculties that ground the understanding's cognitive relation to objects of experience but also three corresponding *a priori or pure* subjective sources. In effect, this means that Kant's procedure in carrying out the subjective deduction takes the subjective deduction beyond an explanation of (OD1). Namely, the subjective deduction both *overlaps* with the objective deduction in one significant way and *extends* the results of the objective deduction.

In Chapter 6, I show how the subjective deduction overlaps with part of the objective deduction's case for (OD2). The subjective deduction contains an argument that one of the a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition is transcendental apperception, and this same argument for transcendental apperception is used by Kant in making progress toward establishing (OD2). Accordingly, this chapter explains what Kant means by "transcendental apperception" and presents Kant's argument that it is necessary for empirical cognition. This argument, however, is also part of his case for (OD2) insofar as he argues that the categories are

a priori conditions for the transcendental apperception involved in empirical cognition. At the end of Chapter 6, I briefly outline Kant's strategy for showing that transcendental apperception requires the categories.

In addition to overlapping with the argument of the objective deduction, the subjective deduction also *extends* the results of the objective deduction proper. Namely, it contributes to an argument for a conclusion stronger than (OD3). To see how this is so, it is first necessary to clarify what it means to show that the categories have objective validity. As noted above, if the categories have objective validity, then they have an a priori relation to objects of experience and are legitimately applied to those objects. Kant's argument for (OD3) shows that they have objective validity insofar as the empirical concepts involved in empirical cognition stand under or are instances of the categories as meta-concepts. But this leaves open the possibility that we cognize by means of the categories only insofar as we have empirical cognition by means of concepts that are specifications of the categories. That is, even though the categories are a priori concepts that are independent of any specific contents of experience, it might still be the case that they do not afford us with cognition that is independent of the specific contents of experience. That is, the objective deduction's demonstration of (OD3) does not directly entail that we have synthetic a priori cognition through the categories.

As I show in Chapters 7 and 8, both the A- and B-editions of the first *Critique* contain arguments that attempt to show that the categories' objective validity suffices for synthetic a priori cognition.² In Chapter 7, I explain how Kant completes the A-edition's subjective deduction by attempting to show that the imagination is another a priori subjective source of cognition. This is Kant's argument for what he calls "transcendental affinity", which amounts to

² Of course, the transcendental deduction does not aim to specify particular synthetic a priori principles or offer arguments for them one-by-one, as that task is reserved for the *Analytic of Principles*.

a lawful and necessary connection between appearances. Insofar as the imagination makes possible this transcendental affinity by means of the categories, the understanding legislates a priori laws of nature. Since these laws of nature are synthetic a priori, this attempted demonstration of transcendental affinity amounts to showing that the categories not only have objective validity but also suffice for synthetic a priori cognition.

Chapter 7 completes my interpretation of the A-edition's subjective deduction, and it thereby finishes my account of Kant procedure for elucidating (OD1) in the A-edition. Since one of my long-term aims in studying the transcendental deduction is to show that the Transcendental Deduction chapters of the A- and B-editions are more alike than commonly thought, I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 8 by showing how the B-edition contains an argument analogous to the one presented in Chapter 7. In §§15-20 of the B-edition, Kant supplies an argument that he describes as a "transcendental deduction"—which exhibits the categories' "possibility as a priori cognitions of objects of an intuition in general"—but in §26 he further provides a "Transcendental deduction of the universally possible use of the pure concepts of the understanding in experience" (B159). I understand the former argument as aiming to establish the categories' objective validity and the latter argument as aiming to establish further that we have synthetic a priori cognition through the categories.

Although he does not use the phrase "transcendental affinity" in the B-edition, his argument in §26 does try to show that the imagination is an a priori source of cognition insofar as it legislates synthetic a priori laws of nature according to which appearances are connected and combined. Here, we can consider Kant's famous statement in the B-edition that "we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them" (Bxviii). This means that a principle could count as synthetic a priori cognition of appearances only if somehow we "put

into” appearances something by means of that principle. Accordingly, I show how Kant attempts to demonstrate that this necessary condition is genuinely met, and this paves the way for the remainder of the first *Critique*’s investigation of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition.

Chapter 1: The Historical Background of Kant's Notions of Clarity and Distinctness

As I shall argue in the next chapter, Kant's primary epistemological notion of "cognition" [*Erkenntnis*] arises out of an early-modern tradition, beginning with Descartes, that attempts to classify mental states or acts by means of the epistemic distinctions of clarity and distinctness. Put roughly, my main interpretive thesis will be that an empirical cognition for Kant is a clear and conceptually distinct representation. This is put roughly, since we shall see in this chapter that the notions of clarity and distinctness undergo various transformations in Kant's German-philosophical heritage—primarily Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, and Meier—and not everyone understands the notions of clarity and distinctness the same way. Nevertheless, we shall find that the notions are characterized in roughly similar manners across all these thinkers in ways that are relevant for understanding Kant's notions of clarity, distinctness, and empirical cognition.

1.1 Descartes

The notions of clarity and distinctness are familiar from Descartes' *Meditations*, but it is tricky to understand what Descartes means by them. Moreover, he himself suggests that clarity, distinctness, obscurity, and confusion are all "more easily learned from examples than from rules" (*Meditations, Reply to Second Set of Objections*, AT VII, 165). Nevertheless, Descartes does attempt a more general characterization of them later in his *Principles of Philosophy*. In §45, entitled "What a clear and distinct perception is", he writes:

There are even a number of people who throughout their lives perceive nothing so correctly as to be capable of judging it properly. For the knowledge upon which a certain and indubitable judgment can be formed should be not only clear but also distinct. I call a perception clear when it is present and apparent to an attentive mind, in the same way as we say that we see objects clearly when, being present to the regarding eye, they operate upon it with sufficient strength. But I call a perception distinct when it is clear and so different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear. (*Principles*, AT IXb, 21-2)

Descartes' conception of clarity in this passage is opaque, and I suggest that we work our way to understanding it by first considering distinctness. The above passage quite plainly defines distinctness in terms of clarity: a perception is distinct if two conditions are met:

- (i) "it is clear"; and,
- (ii) it is "so different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear".

Both conditions appeal to clarity, which Descartes does not define in any straightforward way.

But by considering his example of a clear but indistinct perception, we can work our way toward a characterization of clarity.

In §46 of the *Principles*, Descartes gives this example:

When, for instance, a severe pain is felt, the perception of this pain may be very clear, and yet not always distinct, because people usually confuse the perception with the obscure judgment they form about its nature, assuming as they do that something exists in the affected part similar to the sensation of pain, even though it is only the sensation they perceive clearly. In this way perception may be clear without being distinct, and cannot be distinct without also being clear. (*Principles*, AT IXb, 22)

Descartes does not claim that the perception of a severe pain is always indistinct or confused.

Rather, he describes here the lack of distinctness as the result of an avoidable error. He thinks people often err because they "usually *confuse* the perception with the *obscure* judgment they form about its nature" (my emphases). Note how Descartes' language here relates to clarity and distinctness: for Descartes, the opposite of clarity is *obscurity*, whereas that of distinctness is *confusion*. So, to put Descartes' claim in other words, the failure to have a distinct perception of the severe pain is the result of *confusing* two different perceptions or ideas, namely the following two:

- (P) the *clear perception* of the pain itself; and,

- (J) the *obscure judgment* that something similar to the sensation of pain exists in the affected part of the body.

We shall return shortly to what makes (J) obscure. But for now note Descartes' use of the term "confusion"—i.e., the fusing together of two things—as well as his language describing what is required for distinctness. Both suggest that the case he describes is one in which multiple perceptions are combined together into one. I suggest we consider the following to be the *overall representation*, (O), which results from the mistaken fusing together of (P) and (J):

- (O) the perception that *clearly* presents severe pain but *confuses* it with something corresponding in one's body, which confusion arises from an *obscure judgment*

According to Descartes, a subject who has perception (O) has a perception that is overall clear yet indistinct. In virtue of component (P), such a subject meets the condition (i) of distinctness given above, which holds that a distinct representation must be clear. But in virtue of component (J), such a subject fails to meet the condition (ii). For the overall perception (O) *both* fails to differentiate the pain from all other objects—namely, some part of the body—and contains something unclear—namely, the obscure judgment (J).

The failure of (O) to be distinct ultimately resides, then, in the obscurity of (J). And this brings us back to the question how Descartes understands the notions of clarity and obscurity. If we look again at §45 of the *Principles*, we find that he associates the clarity of a perception with the following features:

- (a) a perception's being *present* to a subject;
- (b) a perception's being *apparent* to a subject; and,
- (c) the subject's being *attentive* to or *regarding* the perception.

So, if we want to understand what makes a perception clear, it seems worthwhile to consider how a perception might fail to possess these features and hence be obscure. But one complication here is that Descartes denies the possibility of unconscious perceptions or mental operations. Due to this, it is difficult to see how he might distinguish between a subject's being *conscious* of a perception and (a) that perception's being *present* to a subject. Nevertheless, it seems quite possible to distinguish a subject's being conscious of a perception from its being apparent to a subject (b) and from the subject's being attentive to a perception (c). But how exactly might Descartes distinguish either apparent from unapparent perceptions or attentive from non-attentive consciousness? Another way to frame this question: how might Descartes use (b) or (c) to explain how a perception is conscious yet unclear?

I suggest that passages from the *Meditations* can help with answering these questions.

First, consider how Descartes describes various secondary properties:

But as for the remaining items, such as light and colors, sounds, odors, tastes, heat and cold, and other tactile qualities, I think of these only in a very confused and obscure manner, to the extent that I do not even know whether they are true or false, that is, whether the ideas I have of them are ideas of things or ideas of non-things. (*Meditations* AT VII, 43)

Descartes claims that the ideas we have of these secondary qualities are both obscure and confused, but he unfortunately does not distinguish for us wherein the obscurity lies from wherein the confusion lies. But one way in which a perception can lack distinctness is by lacking clarity, and as a working hypothesis I suggest that we understand this case in that manner. For I believe that doing so will make most sense of the above passages and those to come. If this hypothesis is correct, then the ideas of secondary qualities in Descartes' list all are *obscure* to a subject "to the extent that [the subject] does not know whether [those ideas] are true or false". For us, it might be peculiar to characterize ideas, rather than judgments or propositions, in terms of truth or falsity, but Descartes elaborates on this:

For although a short time ago I noted that falsity properly so called (or “formal” falsity) is to be found only in judgments, nevertheless there is another kind of falsity (called “material” falsity) which is found in ideas whenever they represent a non-thing as if it were a thing. (*Meditations* AT VII, 43)

Thus, we have two kinds of truth and falsity for Descartes: whereas judgments are *formally* true or false, ideas are *materially* true or false. And *an idea is materially true* just in case the thing it represents is really a thing, but *materially false* just in case it represents a non-thing as a thing.

Hence, on my hypothesis, *a subject’s idea is obscure* for a subject if that subject cannot determine whether the idea is materially true, i.e., cannot tell whether what she represents is a thing or a non-thing. Accordingly, *a subject’s idea is clear* just in case it is not obscure.³

My tentative account of clarity and obscurity so far applies only to ideas but not judgments. But a parallel analysis applies to judgments, as the following passage from the *Meditations* indicates:

For I am indeed of such a nature that, while I perceive something very clearly and distinctly, I cannot help believing it to be true. *Nevertheless, my nature is also such that I cannot focus my mental gaze always on the same thing, so as to perceive it clearly. Often the memory of a previously made judgment may return when I am no longer attending to the arguments on account of which I made such a judgment.* Thus, other arguments can be brought forward that would easily make me change my opinion, were I ignorant of God. And thus I would never have true and certain knowledge about anything, *but merely fickle and changeable opinions.* (*Meditations* AT VII, 69, my emphases)

Descartes suggests that it is in our nature that we sometimes fail to perceive clearly, namely when one does not focus one’s mental gaze always on the same thing. This fits with the claim in the *Principles* that clear perception requires an attentive mind. But this passage also makes a

³ Descartes elaborates on this by going on in the following manner: “For example, the ideas I have of heat and cold *fall so far short of being clear and distinct* that I cannot tell from them whether cold is merely the privation of heat or whether heat is the privation of cold, or whether both are real qualities, or whether neither is. And because ideas can only be, as it were, of things, if it is true that cold is merely the absence of heat, then an idea that represents cold to me as something real and positive, will not inappropriately be called false. The same holds for other similar ideas.” (*Meditations* AT VII, 43-4, my emphasis)

connection between attention and my hypothesis about clarity and obscurity in the previous paragraph. For Descartes suggests here that when a subject's attention is deficient with respect to a judgment, and hence when her judgment is obscure, she is less capable of telling whether that judgment is true. Descartes emphasizes this point again after providing a mathematical example.⁴ These passages suggest, then, that *a subject's judgment is obscure* just in case that subject is inattentive to it, and she is inattentive to it just in case she is not able to tell whether the judgment is true. And accordingly, *a subject's judgment is clear* just in case it is not obscure.

By drawing on the *Meditations*, I have attempted to explain the nature of how the notions of clarity and obscurity apply to ideas and to judgments. Recall from earlier that Descartes presents two types of truth and falsity, one applying to ideas and the other to judgments. By using those distinctions, I can sum up and offer a unified account of clarity and distinctness, which covers both ideas and judgments:

A subject has a **clear** perception—either an idea or a judgment—just in case she is able to tell whether that perception is true. Specifically:

- (i) if the perception is a mere idea, then she can tell whether it is materially true, i.e., whether it represents a thing or non-thing; and,
- (ii) if the perception is a judgment, she can tell whether it is formally true.

A subject has a **distinct** perception—either an idea or a judgment—just in case

- (i) it is clear; and,

⁴ “But no sooner do I turn the mind's eye away from the [mathematical] demonstration, than, *however much I still recall that I had observed it most clearly, nevertheless, it can easily happen that I entertain doubts about whether it is true*, were I ignorant of God. For I can convince myself that I have been so constituted by nature that I might occasionally be mistaken about those things I believe I perceive most evidently, especially when I recall that I have often taken many things to be true and certain, which other arguments have subsequently led me to judge to be false.” (*Meditations* AT VII, 69-70, my emphasis)

- (ii) it contains nothing but what is clear, thereby allowing the subject to differentiate the represented thing from all other things.

I can now clarify why condition (ii) of distinctness states two apparently non-equivalent requirements, namely that the perception contains nothing but what is clear and that the subject be able to differentiate the object from all other objects. For it seems plausible that a subject could differentiate the object of a perception from *all* other objects only if she also perceives the true and essential features of that object. But in order for her to do that with certainty, she must perceive all of those features clearly. And hence, if a perception is to be differentiated from all other objects, a subject must perceive “nothing but what is clear” in the features of the original perception.

I offer the following passage from Descartes’ *Reply to the Second Set of Objections* as a last piece of textual evidence in favor of my interpretation:

But a concept is said to be obscure or confused only because something unknown is contained in it. (AT VII, 147)

Descartes here claims that containing something unknown is sufficient for both obscurity and confusion. But if it is sufficient on its own for obscurity, this would likewise account for its confusion, as we have seen in the earlier surveyed characterization of distinctness. Following my interpretive hypothesis, I suggest that being “unknown” amounts to not being able to tell the truth of something, whether an idea or a judgment. Hence, the obscurity of a subject’s perception ultimately resides in that subject’s incapacity to determine the truth, whether material or formal, of that perception.

To conclude my interpretation, I now suggest how it explains the initial example from the *Principles*. Recall that Descartes asserts that (J)—the judgment that something similar to the sensation of pain exists in the affected part of the body—is obscure. This judgment is obscure

because the people who make this judgment are thereby incapable of attending to whether it is really true that a sensation of pain is located in a body part. And of course, as Descartes holds, attention to this issue would reveal that whereas pain is something unextended, the injured body part corresponding to that pain is extended. That is, appropriate attention would reveal the falsity of (J). With this account of the obscurity of (J), we can now consider why (O) is clear but confused. Recall that (O) is a complex perception that clearly presents the sensation of severe pain but presents something similar as being located in the body. This complex perception contains (P), the perception of the sensation of severe pain. (P) itself is clear insofar as pain is not a privation but a real thing. But in having the perception (O), people not only have the perception (P) but also affirm (J), the judgment that a sensation of pain is located in the physical location of an injury. But unlike (P), (J) is obscure. For if they were to attend to (J), they would recognize its falsity on account of the fact that whereas the bodily injury is extended, the pain is not. This lack of attention to (J) entails the obscurity of (J). Since (O) contains (J), (O) itself contains something obscure. But since the distinctness of a perception requires that it contains nothing but what is clear, it follows that (O) is indistinct. Nevertheless, since what is represented overall by (O) is the clear perception of the sensation of severe pain, (O) is overall clear.

Before moving on, I would like to note one difficulty with this interpretation. Recall that Descartes affirms as a general rule that “that everything I very clearly and distinctly perceive is true” (*Meditations* AT VII, 35). He nevertheless thinks that this general rule needs to be supported by argument, as he explicitly states in his synopsis (AT VII, 15) and sets out on at the start of the Second Meditation. Presumably, the point in affirming this general rule and offering an argument for it is to establish that clarity and distinctness can be relied on with certainty to find the truth. If that is so, then it seems that clarity and distinctness should be capable of

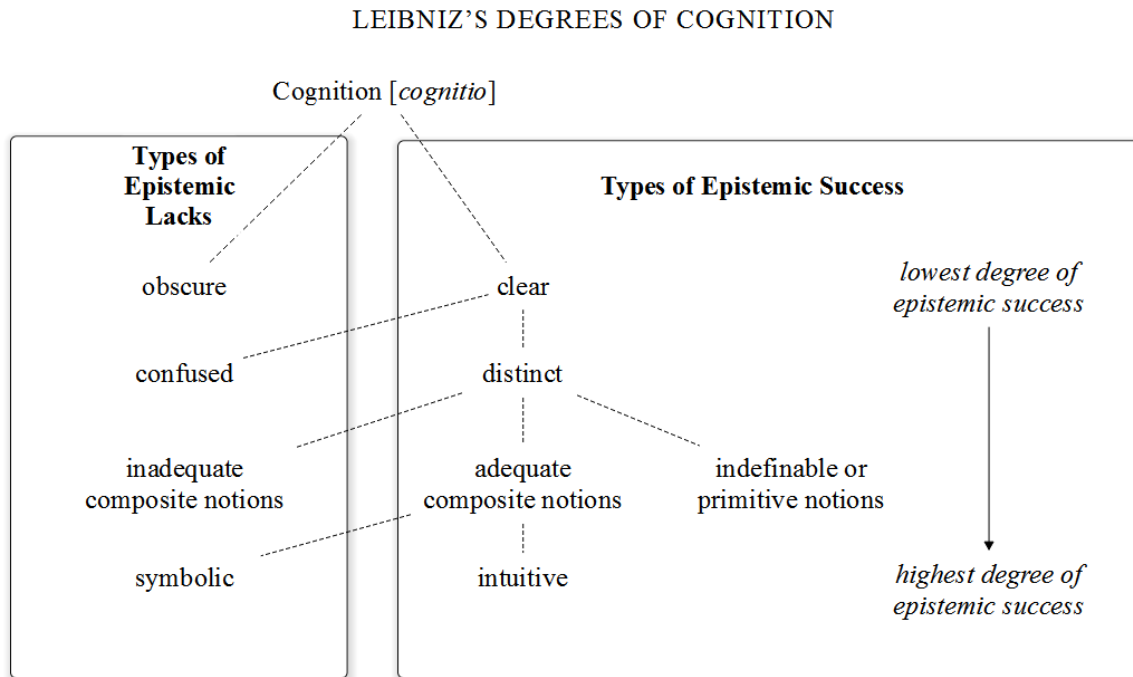
characterization independently of the notion of truth; for otherwise stating that clarity and distinctness guarantee truth is uninformative. Yet it seems that my account is uninformative in just this way, for my characterizations of clarity and distinctness involve the notion of truth. But they are not completely uninformative. Rather than characterizing the clarity and distinctness of perceptions in terms of *whether they are true*, my account characterizes these notions in terms of *whether a subject has a capacity for determining the truth of perceptions*. This still might not be all that informative for a subject who wants to know whether particular perceptions are clear and distinct; but it is still informative for us in understanding how Descartes uses these notions.

Regardless of this difficulty, there are three historically-significant aspects of Descartes' account of clarity and distinctness. First, he will be followed in taking the clarity of a representation to relate to the existence of the thing represented. Second, the capacity for distinguishing objects from one another—which Descartes appeals to in his characterization of distinctness—will be of primary significance for later philosophers' understanding of both clarity and distinctness. Third, some these later philosophers will also follow Descartes in defining distinctness in terms of clarity, but they will do so in more nuanced ways. But it needs to be emphasized that whereas Descartes affirms the “general rule that everything I very clearly and distinctly perceive is true” (*Meditations* AT VII, 35), these later philosophers use the notions only for characterizing and categorizing various mental states, acts, or content. Let us now turn to these later thinkers, beginning with Leibniz, with whose texts Kant was familiar.

1.2 Leibniz

In his first published philosophical essay, “Meditations on Knowledge [*cognitio*], Truth, and Ideas” of 1684, Leibniz proposes several “distinctions and criteria that relate to ideas and knowledge [*cognitio*]”, which it seems he hoped would mediate disagreements between Arnauld

and Malebranche. Although that debate is not of so much interest for present purposes, the following diagram gives an overview of how Leibniz grades knowledge or cognition [*cognitio*] (1989: 23):



Although Leibniz does not describe or define what cognition is in general, he does characterize and give examples of the various types of cognition that fall under it, as I have depicted in my diagram. Despite introducing these distinctions as applying to cognition, Leibniz soon starts applying them to notions and propositions, particularly the former. This suggests that notions and propositions are forms of cognition. But as we shall see, Leibniz applies his distinctions to ideas as well. It is important to note that although Leibniz applies his distinctions to propositions, he and his followers generally apply them to non-propositional mental states such as notions and representations generally. My present goals require an account of only the first two degrees of

epistemic success, clarity and distinctness, although Kant was clearly familiar with the other degrees.⁵

According to Leibniz, cognition is “*clear* when I have the means for recognizing the thing represented” (1989: 24). He calls the failure to be clear obscurity, and his example of obscurity is helpful:

A notion which is not sufficient for recognizing the thing represented is *obscure*, as, for example, if whenever I remember some flower or animal I once saw, I cannot do so sufficiently well for me to recognize that flower or animal when presented and to distinguish it from other nearby flowers or animals (1989: 23-4).

To use a different example that will help us later: my parents’ pet dog Duke has a clear notion or cognition of me insofar as he is in some way able to recognize me and differentiate me from a stranger (as indicated by his growling at the stranger but not at me). We can characterize clarity and obscurity in the following manner: a subject’s cognition of something is *clear* just in case that subject—by means of that cognition—can (i) recognize the object as the same; and, (ii) distinguish it from other things. Accordingly, a subject’s cognition of something is *obscure* just in case the cognition is not clear.

Let us now turn to the contrast between distinct and confused cognition. First of all, it is to be noted that distinctness is a possibility only for a cognition that is clear (as indicated by my diagram above). This view is shared by all the philosophers of present concern. Leibniz goes about explicating ‘distinctness’ by explaining how distinctness might be lacking in a clear cognition. According to Leibniz, my cognition is confused “when I cannot enumerate one by one marks sufficient for differentiating a thing from others” or when I distinguish objects “not by way of explicit marks” (1989: 24). This has the result that one cannot explain the thing in

⁵ For the degree of ‘adequacy’ or ‘completeness’, see for example FS 2: 58-59, ID 2: 393-394, and R1678. And for ‘symbolic’ and ‘intuitive’ cognition, see for example, MD 28: 674.

question to others, make the thing clear to others, explain one's judgments about the thing, or reply to questioning about the thing (1989: 24). In other words, even if a subject is successful in recognizing and distinguishing a thing to oneself, thereby having clear cognition of that thing, she might be incapable of explaining to others what it is in virtue of which she recognizes that thing and distinguishes it from other things.

In Leibniz's logical terminology, I have the capacity for explaining wherein objects are differentiated from one another in virtue of representing *marks* by which I recognize that thing and distinguish it from other things. For example, unlike Duke, I distinctly represent my friend Stefanie because I not only can recognize her and differentiate her from others but also can make and express judgments to communicate the marks (e.g., blond hair, glasses, German accent, etc.) by which I recognize and differentiate her from others. To summarize, a subject's cognition of something is *distinct* just in case that subject—by means of that cognition—can (i) recognize the object as the same; (ii) distinguish it from other things; and, (iii) enumerate the marks possessed by that thing, by which the subject recognizes and distinguishes it. Likewise, a subject's cognition of something is *confused* just in case the cognition is not distinct. And since (i) and (ii) are conditions for clarity, it follows on Leibniz's view that all obscure cognition is likewise confused.

Although—as my diagram above indicates—Leibniz outlines several further degrees of knowledge or cognition, those of clarity and distinctness are of primary relevance for my purposes. Leibniz was satisfied with his characterizations of these two degrees much later in his career, as attested by his presentation of them in his *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1996: 254-6), a work which Kant read soon after its posthumous publication. Although Leibniz in the *New Essays* refers back to his earlier article, he no longer applies these

distinctions primarily to cognition or knowledge but rather to *ideas* [*Idées*]. Although this later work was not available to the general philosophical public until 1765, it is clear that Leibniz's distinctions were influential earlier than that date, as attested by the works of Christian Wolff, Georg Friedrich Meier, Johann Heinrich Lambert, and others. By looking at some of their works, we are given evidence that Kant was quite familiar with these distinctions. Moreover, we shall see that these distinctions need not, unlike what Leibniz's "Meditations on Truth, Knowledge and Ideas" suggests, pertain only to that which counts as full-blooded cognition.

1.3 Wolff

We find Leibniz's distinctions drawn in nearly the same way by Christian Wolff in both his *German Logic*, first published in 1713, and his *German Metaphysics*, first published in 1720. But Wolff did not follow Leibniz completely in either of these two works, since he does not take cognition [*cognitio* or *Erkenntnis*] to be the genus to which the distinctions of clarity and distinctness are applied. In Chapter 1 §§9-13 of the *German Logic*, Wolff applies the distinctions to concepts, which are a subspecies of thoughts. He gives a quite general definition of what a thought [*Gedanke*] is: "that activity of the soul through which we are conscious" (§2; Cf. *DM* §194). Following this, he defines 'a concept' [*Begrif*] as "a representation of a thing [*einer Sache*] in our thoughts" (§4). Thus, although Wolff does not present the distinctions of clarity and distinctness in terms of cognition [*Erkenntnis* or *cognitio*] like Leibniz, he nonetheless presents them as applying to conscious mental states or acts that have objects, and these representations can be non-propositional. Similarly, despite focusing more generally on thoughts rather than on concepts, Wolff's *German Metaphysics* provides characterizations and examples of the same distinctions all in terms of objects (§§198-214).

Although Wolff's account of the distinctions largely follows Leibniz's, there are three differences worth highlighting. First, he offers a more detailed presentation of distinctness. Like Leibniz, he holds that a subject has a distinct mental state or act of a thing only if one can recognize and differentiate that thing by means of that thing's marks (GL §13, §19; GM §206). But he goes further than Leibniz in using the notion of clarity itself to explain how distinctness is possible:

When we then think of something, and [when] our thoughts are clear with respect to that thing's parts or to the manifold—which manifold is to be encountered in one thing—then there arises out of this clarity distinctness. When we receive clear thoughts from the parts—so that we can distinguish them from one another, whether or not we are indeed capable of determining the actual difference [between them]—then we have a distinct thought of the whole. (GM §207)

Thus, a distinct thought of a thing is one that not only represents clearly that thing as a whole but also represents that thing's parts clearly. As we shall see shortly, Meier follows Wolff in this account of distinctness. But its significance will become apparent only once we finally return to Kant's views. For now, let us consider the additional two ways in which Wolff goes beyond Leibniz.

The second difference between Leibniz and Wolff is that the latter explicitly grounds the capacity for distinct representations in the faculty for understanding [*Verstand*]. He defines the understanding as “[t]he faculty to represent the possible distinctly” (GM §277). Although this definition pertains specifically to the representation the possible [*das Mögliche*], it is clear that the understanding is responsible for *any* distinct representation. For he continues by claiming that the faculties of the senses [*Sinnen*] and imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] are distinguished from the understanding insofar as the representations of the former two faculties all by themselves alone are never distinct.

Third, in both the *German Logic* and the *German Metaphysics*, the notions of clarity and distinctness ultimately apply to thoughts, which are inherently *conscious*. This does not mean that Wolff takes everything mental to be conscious. For he explicitly claims, following Leibniz, that some operations of the mind can be unconscious (GM §§193-194). But despite Wolff's following Leibniz's views about the possibility of non-conscious mental operations, it is not clear whether Leibniz intended the notions of clarity and distinctness to apply only to conscious ones or to unconscious ones as well. What is more significant for Kant, however, is that Wolff makes even closer ties between consciousness, thought, and clarity. For Wolff claims that "we are conscious of things when we differentiate them from one another" (GM §729). But likewise, Wolff also claims the converse: "[w]hen we do not notice the difference between things that we encounter, we are then not conscious of what falls to our senses" (GM §729). As we have already seen, a clear thought is one the object of which is differentiated from other things. So it follows from the two previous quotations that we are conscious of things if and only if we clearly represent them. This allows for the possibility of a subject's having unconscious representations in the following sense: a subject has unconscious representations just in case that subject has those representations but does not differentiate them from one another.

In the last paragraph, we have learned that clarity and consciousness are coextensive. But Wolff does not stop there with his discussion of their relationship:

Yet since clarity arises from the observation of the difference in the manifold, and distinctness from the clarity of the parts, it can thus in this manner be comprehended that clarity and distinctness of thoughts ground consciousness (GM §732).

The key claim here is that clarity and distinctness *ground* consciousness, i.e., make consciousness possible.⁶ Wolff continues by arguing that reflection [*Ueberdencken*] and memory [*Gedächtnis*] are two additional necessary conditions for consciousness, since both are necessary conditions for the differentiation of things (GM §§733-734). That leads him to the conclusion that “memory and reflection bring forth consciousness” (GM §735). Although memory and reflection are like clarity and distinctness insofar as they make consciousness possible, the former notions bear different ties to consciousness than the latter ones do. For Wolff, plausibly enough, does not treat every act of consciousness as at the same time an act of memory or reflection. In contrast, he never gives a gloss of what consciousness amounts to in terms other than what he claims is constitutive of clarity. This suggests, then, that for Wolff clarity is *constitutive* of consciousness and that differing degrees of clarity correspond to degrees of consciousness. Indeed, we shall see that Meier follows him in this and that Kant understood this to be his predecessors’ view.

To sum up the above discussion of Wolff’s views, we have seen that he goes beyond Leibniz in the following respects. First, whereas Leibniz characterized distinctness in terms of how a thing’s parts or marks are represented, Wolff adds that distinctness requires that such representations’ parts/marks must themselves be clear. Second, Wolff gives an explanation of how distinctness comes about: only the understanding—and neither the senses nor imagination on their own—can produce distinct representations. Third, Wolff holds that representations are

⁶ This claim seems stronger than what Wolff’s argument up to this point has established. The preceding passages (GM §§729-31) suggest only that consciousness requires and is grounded on the differentiation of things, i.e., clarity. But nothing in those passages suggests that distinctness, the clear representation of a things’ parts, is necessary for consciousness. Yet perhaps what Wolff has in mind is the following. Since distinctness amounts to a clarity of the marks or parts of the things one differentiates, a distinct representation has a higher overall level of clarity than does a merely clear but indistinct representation. And so perhaps Wolff’s thought is that the higher level of clarity of distinct thoughts brings about a higher degree of consciousness.

clear if and only if they are conscious, and he holds more strongly that clarity is constitutive of consciousness.

1.4 *Baumgarten*

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* does not treat the distinctions of clarity and distinctness in nearly as much detail as do the other philosophers discussed here. He characterizes clarity and distinctness in terms very similar to Wolff (§520-522). He likewise follows Wolff in holding that the understanding, which he also calls the higher cognitive faculty, is responsible for distinct cognition (§624). But Baumgarten formulates a corollary of this claim much more clearly than Wolff does:

A REPRESENTATION that is not distinct is called SENSIBLE. Thus the power of my soul represents sensible perceptions through the lower faculty [of cognition]. (§521)

As we shall see in the next chapter, Kant quite explicitly disagrees with this way of distinguishing between the higher and lower cognitive faculties, i.e., between sensibility and understanding.

1.5 *Meier*

Kant was familiar with Wolff's works, but perhaps even more with Meier's *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* of 1752, the aforementioned work that Kant used as his logic textbook, as well as Meier's *Vernunftlehre* of the same year, which Kant possessed in his library. Here, I shall focus primarily on the *Auszug*. In this work, Meier takes representation [*Vorstellung*] to be the primitive notion (AV §10; cf. V §24), but he soon claims that "one can also, without worrying about any noticeable error, take representations and cognition [*Erkenntniss*] to be the same [*einerlei*]" (AV §11; cf. V §25). And it is with the latter notion, cognition, that Meier distinguishes clarity from obscurity (AV §124; cf. V §155) as well as distinctness from confusion (AV §137; cf. V §168). Despite differing from Wolff in applying the distinctions of

clarity and distinctness to cognition/representation rather than to thoughts, Meier does follow Wolff in some of the modifications to Leibniz's views. Namely, he follows Wolff in the first two points of my summary of the latter's modifications to Leibniz's views. First, like Wolff he holds that a distinct cognition is one in which marks are represented clearly (AV §137; V §168). Second, he agrees with Wolff and Baumgarten that the understanding is responsible for distinctness, and he follows Baumgarten in claiming that the senses are only capable of clarity (Meier 1749: §32 and 1765: §525). But for our purposes, Meier is of interest insofar as he differs from Wolff with respect to the connections between clarity, distinctness, and consciousness.

Early in the *Auszug*, Meier writes:

We are conscious of our representations and our cognition (*conscium esse, adpercipere*) in so far as we differentiate them and their object from other representations and objects. Consciousness is a doubled representation: a representation of the object and a representation of its difference from others. (AV §13; cf. V §27, §146)

As we have seen, for Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff, a clear mental state or act is one that suffices for recognizing and differentiating an object from other objects. The first sentence of the above passage suggests that Meier holds, like Wolff, that consciousness of something is had insofar as there is clear representation of that thing.⁷ But a later passage indicates both a terminological difference as well as a doctrinal one:

A cognition contains either so many marks as are required for consciousness, or not. The former is a clear cognition (*cognitio clara*), which is identical [*einerlei*] with thought and cognition—which cognition we are conscious of (§. 123). The latter is an obscure cognition (*cognitio obscura*), which is thus neither a thought nor connected with consciousness (§. 123). (AV §124)

This passage indicates that Meier also treats clarity as corresponding with consciousness. But note that clarity is defined here differently: no longer is a clear representation one by which a

⁷ And AV §123 expresses Meier's agreement with Wolff about the possibility of non-conscious representations and cognitions.

subject differentiates the represented object from other objects; rather, a clear representation is one with enough marks for consciousness. Whereas Leibniz and Wolff appealed to marks or parts of a thing in their explanations only of distinctness, Meier already does so already at the level of clarity.

The necessity of marks for clarity, along with the association of clarity with consciousness, explains why in §13 Meier describes consciousness as a doubled representation. This becomes clearer when we examine the notion of a “mark”, which Meier characterizes in the following passage:

A mark, a characteristic [*Kennzeichen*] of cognition and of things (*nota, character cognitionis et rei*), is that in the cognition or in the things which, when cognized, is the ground for why we are conscious of them—or they are the distinction-pieces [*Unterscheidungsstücke*] of cognition and its objects. Where then there is consciousness, there is a mark cognized. (AV §115; cf. §122; V §§146-147)

Marks, then, are *both* characteristics or features of a thing that differentiate it from other things *and* the representations of those characteristics or features. Furthermore, this passage suggests that marks are in some sense necessary conditions for both consciousness and clarity.⁸ This view is also seen in the *Vernunftlehre*, where Meier writes that “marks are the source of consciousness” (V §146). His claim that marks are ‘distinction-pieces’ suggests that they are the second of the ‘doubled representation’ that constitutes consciousness, namely the representation of wherein an object differs from other objects. An example from Meier’s *Vernunftlehre* (§146) can help clarify the sense in which consciousness is a doubled representation. Insofar as my representation or cognition ‘island’ is conscious, I must differentiate the island in question from other objects, including other islands. The representation ‘island’ is the first-half of the doubled representation required for consciousness. But insofar as I differentiate the island from other

⁸ But in AV §119 Meier denies that they are sufficient conditions.

things on the ground of a mark, e.g., ‘possessing a mountain’, I also have ‘a representation of its difference from others’. The mark itself is thus the second-half of the doubled representation. We should be careful not to take Meier as committed to holding that consciousness requires an awareness of these marks. For Meier claims that a mark is that which “*when cognized*, is the ground for why we are conscious” of a thing (AV §115, my emphasis). So, when I am conscious of the island, I need only differentiate it on the basis of the mark ‘possessing an island’ but need not at the same time be aware or conscious of the mark itself.

In summary, although Meier holds with Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff that clarity of representations corresponds to the consciousness of those representations, he provides a different account of clarity, and so a different account of consciousness. On Meier’s view, clarity requires that one represent a thing on the basis of some mark. This means that Meier’s view has a more stringent criterion for consciousness: whereas his predecessors held that consciousness required only the mere differentiation of an object from other things, Meier holds that this differentiation must occur on the basis of a mark whereby that object is distinguished from other things.

1.6 *Summary*

Although there are several other discussions of clarity and distinctness among pre-Kantian Germanic philosophers,⁹ this chapter suffices for working out Kant’s conception of cognition. In the next chapter, I shall show that Kant follows his predecessors in treating clarity and distinctness as forms of epistemic success for his most fundamental mental state or act, namely representation. Moreover, I shall argue that the ways in which clarity and distinctness are epistemic successes are what is primarily distinctive of what Kant calls “cognition” [*Erkenntnis*]. But Kant does not merely apply the label ‘cognition’ to what his predecessors called clear and

⁹ See Lambert 1764: §§8-9, as well as Eberhard 1776: 67-72.

distinct. As we shall see, Kant's views of clarity and distinctness are more nuanced—specifically with respect to the nature of consciousness—and are in some ways an improvement over his predecessors. But before turning to these tasks, some remarks on the philosophical terminology are perhaps in order.

We have seen the notions of clarity and distinctness applied to different mental states or acts: perceptions for Descartes, cognition and ideas for Leibniz, thoughts and concepts for Wolff, and representations and cognition for Meier. These differences in terminology ultimately do not amount to much. But in each discussion of clarity and distinctness, the philosopher applies the distinctions to whatever mental state or act is of primary concern in that context. In the “Meditations on Truth, Knowledge and Ideas”, Leibniz applies the distinction primarily to cognitions, whereas in the *New Essays* he applies it to ideas. But this is accounted for by the fact that the former work takes cognition to be of primary interest and the latter work was a reply to Locke, who took an idea to be the most general type of mental state or act. Similarly, in Wolff's *German Metaphysics*, thought is the most basic mental state or act of interest, and so—even though he admits of mental states or acts that are not thoughts, i.e., not conscious—he applies the distinction primarily to thoughts. Likewise, his *German Logic* takes “concept” as a primitive term to which this distinction applies. Finally, Meier treats “representation” and “cognition” interchangeably as the basic or fundamental mental state or act of concern, and he applies the notions of clarity and distinctness to them. So with all of these philosophers, it seems, the distinctions apply to whatever mental state or act is taken as basic or primitive in a particular context. And whatever this basic or generic mental state or act might be, clarity and distinctness count as epistemic improvements over a merely general mental state or act that lacks clarity and distinctness. Furthermore, for all these philosophers, these epistemic improvements pertain to

how the *objects* of mental states or acts are portrayed, depicted, or represented. And we have already seen how Kant's concern with cognition relates to a focus on *objects* of mental states or acts.

Chapter 2: Kant's Conception of Empirical Cognition

In this chapter, I argue that in the sense of greatest epistemological concern for Kant, empirical cognition is “rational sensory discrimination”: the identification or differentiation of sensory objects from each other (whether correctly or not) that occurs through a capacity to become aware of and express judgments (whether correct or not). With this account of empirical cognition, I show how the transcendental deduction of the first *Critique* is most plausibly read as having as its fundamental assumption the thesis that we have empirical cognition, and I provide evidence that Kant understood Hume as granting this assumption.

I provide my account of empirical cognition in five steps. I first show in Section 1 that Kant uses the notion of cognition in a *broad* sense to refer to any mental state that refers to an object. Section 2 shows that there is a conceptual link between a *stricter* sense of empirical cognition—one which is more central to Kant’s epistemological concerns—and the notions of clarity and distinctness. In Section 3, I carefully examine key passages from Kant’s logical works because Kant’s published *Logic* was compiled by someone other than Kant, and this book contains a passage concerning cognition that is widely cited in the secondary literature. I detail in that section the extent to which that passage is representative of Kant’s own thought. In Section 4, I use the preceding sections to present Kant’s stricter conception of empirical cognition. In Section 5, I explain that this notion of empirical cognition expresses an epistemological paradigm of “rational sensory discrimination”.

2.1 *Why a Better Account of Cognition is Necessary*

Surprisingly, one of the essential tasks for interpreting Kant’s thought has rarely been carried out, namely to work out an explicit account of what Kant understands by “cognition”. Although most commentators hold that empirical cognition is an epistemic state that requires

both intuition and concepts, few explain the sense in which empirical cognition counts as an *epistemic success*.¹⁰ Without knowing the type of epistemic success Kant intends to pick out by ‘empirical cognition’, we fail to know *why* both intuitions and concepts are required for it.

In *Kant’s Thinker*, Kitcher stresses that empirical cognition requires concepts that are marks of things, where such marks serve as “grounds of cognition that are recognized as such”.¹¹ What it means to recognize grounds of cognition as such is explained by her claim that for Kant “unlike animals, humans can know the reasons for their cognitions.”¹² That is, for concepts to be not only grounds of cognition but also recognized as such, a subject must be able to use such concepts for giving reasons.

Although I agree with practically everything Kitcher says about cognition, her account is incomplete in one crucial respect: she has not told us the sense in which empirical cognition counts as an *epistemic success*. Rather, all she has done is to state what Kant holds cognition to require, namely concepts and the capacity for being aware of reasons. But without knowing the type of epistemic success Kant intends to pick out by “empirical cognition”, we fail to know *why* he claims that concepts are required for it.

Yet even more problematically, without specifying how empirical cognition counts as an epistemic success, we lack any grounds for evaluating whether Kant is justified in assuming that our experience consists in empirical cognition. Furthermore, without a detailed account of empirical cognition, it is easy to treat it as a type of knowledge that a sceptic could doubt we

¹⁰ Patricia Kitcher has recently given a lengthy and persuasive account of cognition (2011: 118-21), but her account is lacking in this particular respect.

¹¹ 2011: 121.

¹² *Ibid.* Kitcher does not make clear what these are supposed to be reasons for. If she has in mind that these are supposed to be reasons for *belief*, then I think she is mistaken. For as I shall argue, although cognition does indeed require the capacity for giving reasons, these reasons are not directly reasons for belief. Rather, they are reasons for acts of identifying or differentiating objects.

have; it would thus seem to be an improper starting point for the transcendental deduction.¹³ Similarly, an account of how empirical cognition is an epistemic success is required for understanding Kant's grounds for thinking that the first *Critique* responds to "the Humean problem in its greatest possible amplification" (4:261). Given this description of the first *Critique*, it is reasonable to try to make sense of how Kant could have taken his assumptions about experience to be granted by Hume, at least insofar as Kant understood Hume.¹⁴ I shall return to this Humean problem in the next chapter, once we have

2.2 *Kant's Broad Sense of Cognition*

In the first *Critique*, Kant presents a "*Stufenleiter*"—a stepladder or progression of types of representation—that exhibits what I call Kant's broad sense of cognition (A319-20/B376-7). The *Stufenleiter* treats *representation* as a genus with two species: those accompanied with consciousness and those that are not. The former type are *perceptions*, which are in turn classified as subjective—*sensations* referring to the state of the subject—or objective—*cognitions* referring to the object. Hence, according to the *Stufenleiter* (as well as many other passages) a cognition is an objective perception, i.e., a conscious representation relating to an object.¹⁵ Kant perhaps inherited this broad notion of cognition from Meier's logic textbook, which associates cognition with the representation of an object.¹⁶

¹³ For example, see Dicker 2004: 88-90.

¹⁴ In her earlier *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, Kitcher does discuss how the transcendental deduction engages with Hume's views, where she takes the assumption to be granted by Hume as "the ability of cognitive states to represent" (1990: 109). In "Changing the Name of the Game: Kant's Cognitivism Versus Hume's Psychologism", she focuses on Kant's response to Hume in the Second Analogy and claims that all that Kant needs to assume is "thinking B followed A", where such thinking need not be propositional (1991: 225). Nevertheless, Kitcher's fuller account of cognition in *Kant's Thinker* does not address how Kant could have taken himself to respond legitimately to the Humean problem with the assumption that experience consists in empirical cognition.

¹⁵ Bix-x, Bxvii-xviii; R1685, R1693, R2128, R2836, R3055, and R5221.

¹⁶ AV §10-11.

Unfortunately, this characterization of cognition is not particularly helpful for understanding Kant's views in first *Critique*. For the *Stufenleiter* classifies intuitions and concepts *each on their own* as counting as cognitions. This *seems* to clash with the doctrine of the first *Critique* that neither intuition alone nor concepts alone are sufficient for cognition.¹⁷ But in a late work, Kant explains his peculiar use of terminology in the *Stufenleiter*: even though both intuition and concepts are required for cognition, a cognition can be described as either an intuition or a concept 'after that to which I particularly attend on each occasion, as the determining ground [of the cognition]'.¹⁸ Although we have learned from the *Stufenleiter* that a defining characteristic of cognition is that it is a representation relating to an object, that passage fails to shed light on what is distinctive about cognition and exactly how it requires both intuition and concepts. But Kant uses many terms, e.g., "understanding", in broad and stricter senses. I provide in the next subsection two passages that offer clues about a stricter sense of cognition.

2.3 *Kant's Stricter Sense of Cognition*

First, *Reflexion* 2394 gives the following degrees of representations.

The following degrees are to be distinguished:

1. to represent something.
2. to know something. To represent with consciousness. (Later addition: representing to oneself with consciousness. [...])
3. to be acquainted with something. Thereby in comparison to differentiate from others.
4. to understand something. (Later addition: What I am acquainted with and understand, that I cognize. to be able to expound and communicate to others.) to cognize something through the understanding. [...] (R2394, my translation)

Kant introduces the notion of cognition in his presentation of the fourth degree: *to understand something*. There, he claims that acquaintance and understanding are jointly sufficient conditions

¹⁷ A51-2/B75-6.

¹⁸ *WF* 20: 325. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer from the *Kantian Review* for drawing my attention to this passage.

for cognizing something: '[w]hat I am acquainted with and understand, that I cognize'. This claim gestures at Kant's doctrine that cognition requires both intuition and concept. For it seems that while intuition would be required for us to be acquainted with things so as to differentiate them, concepts would be required for us to understand those things.¹⁹

Second, Kant's *Anthropology* relates the notions of clarity and distinctness to cognition:

Consciousness of one's representations that suffices for the differentiation of one object from another is clarity. But that consciousness by means of which the composition of representations also becomes clear is called distinctness. Distinctness alone makes it possible that an aggregate of representations becomes cognition, in which order is thought in this manifold, because such a composition with consciousness presupposes unity of that consciousness, and consequently presupposes a rule for that composition. [...] in every cognition (since intuition and concept are always required for it), distinctness rests on the order according to which the partial representations are combined [...] (A 7: 137-8, my translation; Cf. R2281)

This passage affirms the first *Critique*'s doctrine that both intuition and concept are required for cognition, so it is a good source for understanding the stricter sense of cognition.²⁰ Yet whereas R2394 put forward *acquaintance and understanding* as jointly sufficient for cognition, this passage states that *clarity and distinctness* give rise to cognition.

As I shall argue, R2394's treatment of cognition in terms of acquaintance and understanding can in turn be explicated with the *Anthropology*'s notions of clarity and distinctness. My main interpretive thesis is that empirical cognition in the stricter sense is a clear and discursively distinct representation, where clarity is provided by means of acquaintance and distinctness by means of understanding.

¹⁹ It is widely noted that Kant understands concepts as marks with which we can identify or differentiate things. So it might be thought that acquaintance, which is described here as that by which we differentiate between things, is possible only by means of concepts. But this would be to overlook that Kant also held there to be sensible or intuitive marks. For an illuminating account of the evidence for this and an interpretation of intuition using this evidence, see Smit 2000.

²⁰ Cf. A 7: 140.

Unfortunately, the first *Critique* does not offer much to say on these notions or how they relate to cognition. Kant's characterizations of cognition in that key critical-period work are various and often present the notion in very general terms. For example, we find the following two characterizations in each edition's Transcendental Deduction chapter: 'a whole of compared and connected representations' (A97) and 'a determinate relation of given representations to an object' (B137).²¹ These characterizations prompt many questions: what sort of connections obtain between representations in a cognition, and what sort of determinate relation do representations have to objects? Of course, part of Kant's task in the first *Critique* is to offer a detailed answer to these questions. But many of these answers are arrived at through contentious argumentation. My approach to this problem—namely that Kant's characterizations of cognition are either too vague or too loaded—is to try to understand what he would have taken his potential interlocutors as willing to grant about the nature of our cognitive engagement with the world. Kant's target audience was primarily thinkers with pre-critical views and terminology, and for him to persuade that audience of the critical philosophy, he must assume at least some of those views and use some of that terminology. So, I proceed by investigating how pre-critical Germanic philosophical thought, including that of Kant himself, understood some of the key notions involved in characterizing our experience. Accordingly, I begin by outlining the Germanic-philosophical heritage behind the notions of clarity and distinctness.²²

2.4 *Erkenntnis in Kant's Logical Works*

In this section, I focus on texts pertaining to Kant's thoughts on logic. Although a passage from Kant's *Logic* is widely referred to for understanding Kant's conception of

²¹ The other main characterizations of cognition are at Bxvii-iii, A50/B74, A67-8/B92-3, and A319-20/B376-7.

²² I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer at the *Kantian Review* for offering constructive criticism regarding my use of pre-critical texts.

cognition, this work was not penned by Kant himself but rather compiled by Benjamin Jäsche. So, it is imperative to determine its fidelity to Kant’s thought. I compare the passage with other sources, including *Reflexionen* and students’ lecture notes. I argue that several of the text’s peculiarities stem from Jäsche rather than Kant, but that nevertheless Jäsche largely got Kant’s view right, with one major exceptions. Namely, Jäsche’s text fails to reproduce Kant’s key thesis that acquaintance [*kennen*] and understanding [*verstehen*] are jointly sufficient for cognition.

In the *Logic*, there is a commonly-cited passage for understanding Kant’s conceptions of cognition and other mental states. Many commentators use this passage either without acknowledging that Kant himself did not pen the text or without investigating its fidelity to Kant’s thought. I aim here to begin such an investigation.²³ Jäsche had access to Kant’s personal copy of Georg Friedrich Meier’s *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, and it is clear that he used many of Kant’s *Reflexionen* written in that book for compiling the *Logik*.²⁴ For the passage in question, it is evident that Jäsche used *Reflexion* 2394.²⁵ Here are the two passages side-by-side, through the relevant portions for my purposes:

<i>Jäsche Logic</i> (9: 64-65)	R2394 (16: 342-343, translation modified)
<p>In regard to the objective content of our cognition in general, we may think the following <i>degrees</i>, in accordance with which cognition can, in this respect, be graded:</p> <p>The first degree of cognition is: to represent something [<i>sich etwas vorstellen</i>];</p> <p>The second: to represent something with consciousness or to perceive [<i>wahrnehmen</i>] (<i>percipere</i>);</p>	<p>The following degrees are to be differentiated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to represent something [<i>sich etwas vorstellen</i>]. 2. to know something [<i>etwas wissen</i>]. to represent with consciousness. (<i>Later addition</i>: to represent to oneself with consciousness. perceive <i>percipere</i>. <i>apprehendere</i> grasp: the beginning of <i>percipere</i>.)

²³ See Allais 2009: 392-3n; Keller: 1999: 245n; Kitcher 2011: 19-20; McLear 2011: 5.

²⁴ Ameriks and Naragon 1997: xvi-iii.

²⁵ Adickes gives the following possible dating: 1769? 1769-70? 1764-66?

<p>The third: to be acquainted with something [<i>etwas kennen</i>] (<i>noscere</i>), or to represent something [<i>etwas</i>] in comparison with other things [<i>Dingen</i>], according to both sameness [<i>Einerleiheit</i>] and difference [<i>Verschiedenheit</i>];</p> <p>The fourth: to be acquainted with something with consciousness, i.e., to cognize [<i>erkennen</i>] (<i>cognoscere</i>). Animals also are acquainted with objects [<i>Gegenstände</i>], but they do not cognize them.</p> <p>The fifth: to understand [<i>verstehen</i>] something (<i>intelligere</i>), i.e., to cognize something through the understanding by means of concepts, or to conceive [<i>concipiren</i>]. One can conceive [<i>Concipiren</i>] much, although one cannot comprehend [<i>begreifen</i>] it, e.g., a <i>perpetuum mobile</i>, whose impossibility is shown in mechanics.</p>	<p>3. to be acquainted with something [<i>etwas kennen</i>]. Thereby in comparison to differentiate from others.</p> <p>4. to understand something [<i>etwas verstehen</i>]. (<i>Later addition</i>: What I am acquainted with and understand, that I cognize. to be able to expound and communicate to others.) to cognize something through the understanding. (<i>Later addition</i>: <i>concipere</i>: to cognize through a concept. <i>intelligere</i>: through a judgment.) [...]</p>
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There are several striking differences between the two texts, and these suggest that Jäsche took a bit too much liberty in compiling the *Logik*. Nevertheless, a careful consideration of the differences between the two texts, along with several other texts, will help us better understand Kant's views as well as support many of Jäsche's own modifications. Jäsche's most puzzling modification is to make cognition a degree of itself. In this section, I explain how this can be made sense of and show how it is related to Jäsche's additional modification of treating the degrees as graded in terms of objective content [*objectiver Gehalt*].

Kant's *Reflexion* does not state what these degrees are of, and it includes only six degrees, none of which are labeled as cognition. So it is quite a significant departure for Jäsche

both to describe the degrees as being ones of cognition and to insert cognition as a fourth degree of itself. Given this, it appears that Jäsche is responsible for the confusing view that cognition is itself a degree of cognition. But if we limit ourselves to the above *Reflexion* penned by Kant, we are given no evidence to think of cognition either as a degree or as the overall genus of the degrees. Jäsche's additions raise two important questions: (1) what did Kant himself take these degrees to be degree of, i.e., what is the genus of which the degrees are species? (2) how does cognition relate to these degrees? In this section, I limit my focus to the first of these questions, and I turn to the second in the next section.

Let us consider first the textual evidence concerning what Kant might have taken to be the genus of the degrees. As far as I have been able to determine, there are only three other writings penned by Kant himself that give similar lists of degrees.²⁶ Unfortunately, none of these attribute a genus to the degrees, and these lists also differ from each other in what are counted as degrees. In students' notes of Kant's lectures on logic, we find similar but nevertheless varying lists of degrees. There are at least six different descriptions of what the degrees are of: (1) "cognition" (LBI 24: 132); (2) "human cognition" (LBI 24: 134); (3) "our cognition" (LBI 24: 136); (4) "concepts" (LPh 24: 418); (5) "distinctness" (LW 24: 845); and, (6) 'different manners of representing things' (LBU 24: 636). Thus, explicit textual evidence concerning the genus of the degrees is inconclusive.

Nevertheless, Kant's well-known *Stufenleiter* (A319-20/B376-7) gives us a hint for explaining Jäsche's choice to characterize the degrees as being of cognition. According to the *Stufenleiter* what is distinctive about cognition is that it relates to an object. R2394 fits this insofar as each of the degrees it gives pertains to representing *something* [*etwas*]. In addition to

²⁶ R 16: 81-2, 536-7, 538-9.

the *Stufenleiter*, Jäsche had access to many other passages that suggest that what is distinctive about cognition is its having a relation to an object.²⁷ If Jäsche consulted these texts, he quite reasonably would have taken cognition in general to be a mental state or act that relates to an object. And since Kant’s handwritten note portrays different degrees or manners in which objects are represented, we can see why Jäsche might have taken their genus to be cognition.

Furthermore, Kant’s logic textbook itself, Meier’s *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, seems a likely additional ground for Jäsche to treat Kant’s degrees as being of cognition. Near the beginning of his work, Meier treats “*Vorstellung*” as identical with the Latin terms “*repraesentatio*” and “*perception*”.²⁸ Following this, he characterizes *Erkenntnis* in the following manner:

Cognition (*cognitio*) is either an inclusive concept [*Inbegriff*] of many representations or that action whereby a representation of a thing is effected. One can take, without producing any notable error, representations and cognition to be the same. (AV §11)

This passage likely explains not only why Jäsche might have used the notions of representation and cognition interchangeably but also why Kant often does so. Moreover, Kant’s handwritten note occurs around §140 of his copy of Meier’s *Auszug*, in the middle of a discussion of varying types of clearness and distinctness of *cognition*. Moreover, Meier classifies and grades cognition in these passages according to the manner of sophistication in which it represents *an object*. Hence, if Jäsche were to have consulted Meier’s work, he would have been given reason to take Kant’s own degrees as being of cognition. Finally, Christian Wolff’s *Deutsche Metaphysik*—a significant influence for Meier—treats cognition as a mental state or act that relates to an object.²⁹

²⁷ Bix-x, Bxvii-iii; R 16: 83, 85, 246, 538.

²⁸ Meier 1752a: §10.

²⁹ Wolff 1751: §278.

Jäsche's recognition of the intimate tie between cognition and objects is likely the source of his grading the degrees according to "objective content" [*objectiver Gehalt*]. Although this is a phrase which as far as I can tell Kant himself *never* uses, Jäsche's use of it seems to be on the right track. For unlike the *Stufenleiter*, Kant's logical grading is not meant to be a categorization or ranking of our mental states *in general*; rather, it ranks only those mental states *that relate to an object*. Accordingly, whereas the *Stufenleiter* starts with representation *in general*, the *Logic* passage starts with representation *of something*. Although the *Stufenleiter* passage suggests that representations do not necessarily have an object—as that only comes in at the level of cognition in the *Stufenleiter*—his use of "Vorstellung" sometimes does treat representations as having objects merely in virtue of being representations. But again, given that Meier treats representations and cognition as equivalent, as well as Kant's familiarity with Meier, this is not so surprising. This does not mean that Kant assumes that all representations have objective content; rather, it means that Kant often considers only those representations that have objective content. Even if the notion of objective content comes ultimately from Jäsche, it nevertheless seems an apt way of expressing how each higher degree in Kant's list at R2394 presents an object in a more sophisticated manner than the last.

We can now address what exactly Kant's degrees are of and how they are graded. The overall list is one of mental states or acts that relate to objects, and these come in degrees insofar as a mental state or act can portray an object in more or less sophisticated manners. This seems clear enough, whether or not we want to follow Jäsche in characterizing all the degrees either *as cognition* or *as having objective content*.

Although we have seen reasons why Jäsche was warranted in treating the degrees as being of cognition, it is still peculiar why he would add cognition itself as a fourth degree,

thereby making the characterization of cognition circular. Out of all of Kant's own various lists of degrees and students' lecture notes, only two list cognition [*cognitio*] as a distinct degree of its own.³⁰ But in R2394 quoted above, Kant introduces the notion of cognition in his presentation of the fourth degree: "to understand something" [*etwas verstehen*]. This degree is represented in most of the various lists of degrees to be found in Kant's *Reflexionen* and in students' lecture notes. Kant claims in R2394 that "whatever I am acquainted with and understand, that I cognize". This suggests that cognizing something is distinct from understanding something. Accordingly, Jäsche makes each its own degree. But he seems mistaken not only in treating understanding as a higher degree than cognition but also in defining the former in terms of the latter. For in the passage just quoted Kant defines the latter in terms of the former. Jäsche's presentation makes it seem as if understanding is one special form of cognition, whereas R2394 treats it as a condition for cognition.

Furthermore, Jäsche's reworking of Kant's text fails to reproduce the claim that that acquaintance together with understanding suffice for cognition. This is unfortunate because that claim gestures at Kant's important doctrine that cognition requires both intuition and concepts (A51-2/B75-6). For there is good reason to take acquaintance to occur through intuition and understanding to occur through concepts. To be acquainted with something [*etwas kennen*] is to represent an empirical object as identical to or different from other things, and intuition makes this possible insofar as identical or different characteristic marks of empirical objects are represented by means of intuition. To understand something [*etwas verstehen*] further allows for that thing to be distinctly represented, such that a characteristic mark of a thing is "cognized as a characteristic mark of the thing" (FS 2: 58). Hence to understand something is not only to

³⁰ R 16: 81, 538.

represent that thing as identical to or different from other things but also to be capable of becoming aware of one's reasons for such discriminations between things. Understanding in this sense occurs by means of concepts because an awareness of such reasons requires that one make judgments (FS 2: 58.27), which for Kant always use concepts. I suggest, then, that *if* we are to place cognition as a degree of its own on Kant's list, it should come after understanding rather than before, as in Jäsche's text.

We have seen that Kant himself does not characterize cognition circularly, but rather that Jäsche ended up with this result in trying to flesh out Kant's handwritten note. Jäsche correctly perceived both that "*Erkenntnis*" for Kant designates a mental state or act that relates to an object and that Kant's own handwritten degrees are graded in terms of the sophistication of the manner in which an object is represented. Nonetheless, Jäsche's text is misleading in two ways because it mistakenly treats understanding as a species of cognition, where Kant clearly maintains that understanding is a condition for cognition.

2.5 *Kant's Conception of Empirical Cognition in Terms of Clarity and Distinctness*

I now argue that in Kant's stricter sense, empirical cognition is a clear and discursively distinct representation, where those notions are to be understood in roughly Leibnizian-Wolffian terms. I do so by showing how acquaintance and understanding are respectively to be understood in terms of clarity and distinctness.

Let us first consider acquaintance and clarity. There are two reasons to identify acquaintance with clear representation. First, several of Kant's characterizations of acquaintance fit the Leibnizian-Wolffian model of clarity, which requires that one be aware of something by differentiating it from other things.³¹ For example, in R2394, Kant writes that when one is

³¹ See R2394 as well as LBI 24: 134-5 and LPh 24: 418-9.

acquainted with something, one is ‘thereby to differentiate in comparison from others’.³² Second, this conception of acquaintance also fits Kant’s own characterizations of clarity across many works. For example, the *Logik Blomberg* and the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* both discuss what it means to represent clearly and distinctly the Milky Way and its parts (its constitutive stars).³³ When we fail to represent clearly the stars of the Milky Way—i.e., when we represent them “obscurely”—we fail to differentiate the stars from one another. Hence, a failure to represent something clearly amounts to a failure to be acquainted with that thing. Accordingly, there is good reason to say acquaintance and clear representation are equivalent.³⁴

Let us now consider understanding and distinctness. There is good textual support showing that distinctness is made possible by the understanding. Recall that Wolff explicitly grounds the capacity for distinct representations on the faculty of understanding. As exhibited in the *Anthropology* passage cited earlier, Kant too views the distinctness required for cognition as arising by means of three things: thought, unity of consciousness, and a rule for composition. The understanding, however, is responsible for all three: thought (in the form of judgment), unity of consciousness (in the form of apperception) and rules (in the form of concepts).³⁵ Furthermore, in a pre-critical essay, Kant claims that the capacity to judge, i.e., the

³² Cf. LPh 24: 418-9; LBl 24: 132-5.

³³ LBl 24: 41, 119 and MM 29: 879-80.

³⁴ It is important to note that Kant differs from Wolff in how clarity relates to consciousness. For Wolff, we are conscious of something if and only if we differentiate it from other things (GM §§729ff.). Hence, clarity and consciousness ultimately amount to the same thing, and Meier follows him in this characterization of consciousness (AV §13). But in the B-edition of the first *Critique*, Kant holds that a representation can be conscious without being clear, and he states that all clear representations are conscious (B414-5n.). Presumably, he has in mind here only the clear representations of human beings. For in some places Kant attributes clear representations to non-human animals (FS 2: 59), and there is evidence he denies them consciousness (MD 28: 689-90; ML2 28: 594; MM 24: 845-7; PE 29: 44-5). For my purposes here, empirical cognition involves clarity insofar as it involves identifying or differentiating objects. I leave for another occasion a more detailed discussion of Kant’s views of consciousness and its relation to clarity and cognition.

³⁵ See, respectively, A69/B94, A119, and A132/171.

understanding, is what distinguishes us from mere animals, and his explanation appeals to the view that the understanding provides us with distinct representations.³⁶ He claims that it is possible for non-human animals to differentiate things “physically” by having something like a clear representation of the characteristic marks of things. Presumably, to differentiate physically is to act through “instinct”, which Kant elsewhere describes as the principle of animal life and is the faculty for performing actions without consciousness.³⁷ Hence, for animals to differentiate physically is for them to act out of non-conscious physical impulse in response to clear representations of the characteristic marks of things. We, in contrast, are also able to differentiate things “logically” with distinct representations. Kant claims that a distinct representation requires that a characteristic mark of a thing be cognized *as a characteristic mark* of the thing.³⁸ So unlike animals, we can be aware of *why* characteristic marks differentiate things. We can do this because we have the capacity to judge.³⁹ In other words, the understanding provides us with distinct representations.

We have good reason, then, to interpret Kant as identifying understanding something with distinctly representing something. But there is an important qualification. Namely, Kant mentions in several places that there is both intuitive or sensible distinctness as well as conceptual or discursive distinctness.⁴⁰ This view is distinctive because philosophers preceding Kant recognized only one form of distinctness, namely that which comes from the understanding. I here pass over what intuitive or sensible distinctness is or why Kant introduces

³⁶ FS 2: 59-60.

³⁷ MD 28: 689-90.

³⁸ FS 2: 58, my emphasis.

³⁹ FS 2: 59.

⁴⁰ A 7: 135; B1 24: 42; R1690, R1709, R1821, and R2363.

it. But the evidence above indicates that understanding requires *discursive distinctness*, i.e., a distinctness arising from the use of concepts in judgments.

Let us now use the proceeding to shed light on the notion of empirical cognition. Recall Kant's claim from R2394 that '[w]hat I **am acquainted with** and **understand**, that I cognize'. From this we know acquaintance and understanding are jointly sufficient for cognition. If we take acquaintance and understanding to give rise respectively to clarity and distinctness, the passage from the *Anthropology* suggests that acquaintance and understanding are also jointly necessary for empirical cognition: '[d]istinctness *alone* makes it possible that an aggregate of representations [which aggregate is clearly represented] becomes **cognition**' (A 7: 137-8, my italics). If my account is correct, then a subject has empirical cognition just in case she has a representation that is both clear and discursively distinct—i.e., distinct by means of logical or conceptual differentiation. Formulated with less jargon, this means that a subject empirically cognizes an object just in case she identifies that object or differentiates it from other things (whether correctly or not) through a capacity to become aware of and express judgments (whether correct or not).

2.6 *Kant's Epistemological Paradigm*

This account shows the sense in which empirical cognition counts as an epistemic success. Namely, it can be described as “rational sensory discrimination”: we have empirical cognition insofar as we discriminate between objects given through the senses and insofar as those discriminations are based on judgments (and hence sensitive to reasons). The significance of this account is that it makes explicit Kant's epistemological paradigm. For example, we can understand better why his paradigm is not knowledge in the sense of justified true belief. This is important for three reasons. First, many Kant scholars still misleadingly use the terms

“knowledge” and “cognition” interchangeably.⁴¹ Doing this is especially problematic if Kant scholars are to make themselves clear to non-specialists. Second, although some have explicitly asserted that cognition is not justified true belief or noted that his *Wissen* is more akin to the notion of knowledge,⁴² until recently hardly any have provided a detailed account of what cognition consists in.⁴³ Third, an explicit and accurate account of cognition can help us avoid bringing false assumptions to bear on Kant, as we shall see in Section 3.4.

⁴¹ See, for example, recent entries in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, including the following: Hogan 2010: 26; Anderson 2010: 79; and, Guyer 2010. This mistake can be found even in more recent works, e.g., Guyer 2013: 495-8.

⁴² See George 1981: 241; Hanna 2006: 6fn.; and, Van Cleve 2003: 95. For the notion of *Wissen*, see A820-1/B848-9.

⁴³ See Schafer forthcoming; and, Watkins and Willaschek forthcoming.

Chapter 3: The Transcendental Deduction's Starting Point and Kant's Humean Problem

With the last chapter's account of Kant's notion of empirical cognition, I show in this chapter how the transcendental deduction of the first *Critique* is most plausibly read as having as its fundamental assumption the thesis that we have empirical cognition, and I provide evidence that Kant understood Hume as granting this assumption.

In Section 1, I outline the various ways in which the secondary literature has interpreted Kant's starting point. In Section 2, I turn to the text of the A- and B-editions of the Transcendental Deduction and show that Kant's fundamental assumption is that we have empirical cognition. In Section 3, I provide evidence—partly from the eighteenth-century German translation of Hume's *Enquiry*—that Kant read and understood Hume as granting the assumption that we have empirical cognition. In Section 4, I defend the interpretation advanced here against an objection raised by Paul Guyer.

3.1 The Problem: What is Kant's Starting Point?

The transcendental deduction of the first *Critique*, at least in the A-edition, consists of two intertwined strands of argument (Axvi-ii). The first strand is the objective deduction, which aims to show that the categories—a priori concepts including “substance”, “cause”, and “effect”—have “objective validity”. This would show, in effect, that we are justified in applying them to objects of experience. The second strand is the subjective deduction, the purpose of which has been a matter of scholarly debate. I focus here on the objective deduction, which Kant takes to achieve the essential task of the transcendental deduction. Complicating matters is that Kant rewrote nearly entirely the Transcendental Deduction chapter for the B-edition. Nevertheless, this chapter generally focuses on what is common to both editions.

Both editions of the Transcendental Deduction chapter share a nearly-identical first section, On the Principles of a Transcendental Deduction in General (A84-94/B117-129). This section presents an explanation of the need for a transcendental deduction (A84-92/B117-124) and contains a subsection, Transition to the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories (A92-4/B124-9). In the Transition, Kant clarifies as follows his argumentative strategy for showing the categories have objective validity.

The transcendental deduction of all a priori concepts therefore *has a principle toward which the entire investigation must be directed*, namely this: that they must be recognized as a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, *or of the thinking*) (A94/B126, my emphasis)

According to the principle Kant presents here, the transcendental deduction's task of demonstrating the categories' objective validity can be accomplished if those concepts are shown to be a priori conditions for the possibility of experiences. He provides two routes by which a priori concepts can be shown to be a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences: to show they are a priori conditions for *either* the intuition *or* the thinking encountered in experiences. Neither of these routes pertains to intuition or thinking *generally* but to intuition or thinking *encountered in possible experiences*, i.e., to either the intuitive aspect or the conceptual aspect of experience.

As stated at A87/B119-20, the concepts of space and time were given a transcendental deduction. This refers to the Transcendental Aesthetic, which can be understood as taking the first route suggested in the above passage: it begins with the intuitive aspect of our experience (its spatiotemporal character) and shows this is possible only if space and time are a priori forms of our intuition. In contrast, I suggest the transcendental deduction of the categories takes the second route mentioned in the above passage. It demonstrates the categories' objective validity

by showing they are a priori conditions for the possibility of the thinking involved in our experiences.

It is possible to interpret the transcendental deduction in another way: namely, that it demonstrates the categories' objective validity by showing they are a priori conditions for *both* intuition and thought encountered in experience. This might be seen in Kant's beginning with "unity of intuition" in the A-edition (A99) and in his footnote in the B-edition suggesting that the unity of intuition is made possible by the understanding or the faculty of thought (B160-1). Even if the categories are shown to be a priori conditions for the unity of intuition, the transcendental deduction of the categories should be taken as following the second route described in the passage at A94/B126. This is because Kant begins each edition's transcendental deduction by arguing that the basic unity had by intuition is conceptual insofar as it is made possible by the understanding. From A98-100, Kant argues that intuition's unity is made possible by the synthesis of apprehension, an activity of the understanding. Similarly, from B129-31 he argues that all combination of the manifold of intuition, and with it any unity it has, cannot come from intuition alone but requires the understanding. These passages suggest that Kant takes the second route insofar as he first argues that the unity of intuition encountered in experience is made possible by the understanding and then goes on to argue that this activity of the understanding requires the categories. Hence, the categories would apply universally to all intuition encountered in experience.⁴⁴

This raises an important interpretive question. Across all his formulations concerning the strategy of the transcendental deduction, it is clear Kant consistently assumes that we have experience and that this experience involves thought. Ultimately, he claims that all experience

⁴⁴ I am thankful to both of my reviewers at the Kantian Review for pressing me to make my interpretation clearer on the matters discussed in this paragraph.

consists in the empirical cognition of objects.⁴⁵ But it is not clear whether he *argues* that our experience is a cognition of objects or whether he *assumes* that it is such. Taking this to be an open question, there are two ways Kant can be interpreted on this issue:

- (I) Kant assumes experience in a *weak sense*, as involving *thought but not cognition of objects*. Accordingly, the principle of the transcendental deduction is that the categories are to be recognized as a priori conditions for the *thought* encountered in any possible experience.
- (II) Kant assumes experience in a *stronger sense*, as involving not merely thought but *also cognition of objects*. Accordingly, the principle of the transcendental deduction is that the categories are to be recognized as a priori conditions for the *thought contained in any cognition of objects* encountered in any possible experience.⁴⁶

There are representatives of both of these interpretations in the secondary literature.

Let us first consider those who hold interpretation (I), who would likely take the latter passage quoted above (from A94/B126) as evidence that Kant assumes that all experience involves thought but not necessarily cognition. I take Kant to use the verb “to think” [*denken*] and all of its derivatives almost always to refer to conceptual mental activity or judgment.⁴⁷ But in order for proponents to make sense of the latter passage above, they would likely be committed to interpreting “thought” more broadly as referring to any conscious or self-conscious

⁴⁵ See B147; A 7: 141; R5661; and, MM 29: 804, 816. See also instances in which Kant claims that experience involves both concepts and objects: A93/B126 and MM 29: 804.

⁴⁶ For other ways of dividing up possible argumentative strategies or starting points of Kant’s transcendental deduction, cf. Guyer 1987: 84-5; Henrich 1976/1994 and, Van Cleve 2003: 74-6.

⁴⁷ See A68-9/B93-4, B428; FS 2: 59; LB1 24: 42; MM 29: 771, 834; MV 28: 448-50; and, R2142, R2287.

mental activity of rational beings.⁴⁸ This allows such commentators to interpret Kant's argumentative strategy in terms of consciousness or self-consciousness, yielding the following two variants of interpretation (I):

- (IA) Kant assumes experience in the *weakest* sense, and the principle of the transcendental deduction is that the categories are to be recognized as a priori conditions for the *consciousness* encountered in any possible experience.
- (IB) Kant assumes experience in a *weak* sense, and the principle of the transcendental deduction is that the categories are to be recognized as a priori conditions for the possibility of *self-consciousness, transcendental apperception, or empirical self-knowledge* encountered in any possible experience.

Shared alike by both (IA) and (IB) is the denial that Kant—at least when most persuasive—assumes that our experience involves cognition of objects. Interpreters espousing (IA) include Norman Kemp Smith and Robert Paul Wolff.⁴⁹ Some, however, interpret Kant's text along the lines of (IB) or hold that it is the most promising strategy that Kant has at his disposal. This perhaps characterizes most interpretations of the transcendental deduction, including those of Henry Allison, Jonathan Bennett, Wolfgang Carl, Paul Guyer, and Dieter Henrich.⁵⁰

A minority of commentators hold interpretation (II), including Karl Ameriks, Patricia Kitcher, and H. J. Paton.⁵¹ There are several reasons that have caused most interpreters to reject (II). One troubling matter is whether an assumption of empirical cognition could be accepted by

⁴⁸ For example, concerning the notion of thought in Kant's discussion of apperception, Bennett writes parenthetically that "[d]espite the word 'think', Kant's concern here is with representations generally" (1966: 104). But it seems that the view that Kant uses "thought" in such a generic sense is gradually fading. See, for example, Longuenesse 1998: 65-7.

⁴⁹ Kemp Smith 1918: 168, 222-3; and, Wolff, *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity* 1963: 93-4, 147, 159.

⁵⁰ Allison 2004: 163; Bennett 1966: 100-7; Carl 1989b: 9-11; Guyer 1987; and, Henrich 1976/1994.

⁵¹ Ameriks 1978: 273, 282, 283, 286-7; Ameriks 2000a: 45, 55-63; Ameriks 2000b: 6-7; Kitcher 2011: 86, 89-90, 96-7; and, Paton 1936: 329-44, 571.

a Humean skeptic of some sort. Ameriks recognizes that assuming we have empirical cognition does not seem suitable for responding to various forms of skepticism, which other interpreters have held that Kant aimed to refute. Although Ameriks himself thinks that this is not a problem for (II), interpreters who see Kant as addressing skepticism are likely not to be satisfied with (II).⁵² Second, some proponents of interpretation (I) explicitly target and reject (II). For example, Guyer devotes Chapter 4 of his *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* to showing the untenability of Kant's versions of the deduction that assume we have knowledge or cognition of objects.⁵³ Likewise, Carl offers various reasons for taking Kant not to assume that experience consists in empirical cognition.⁵⁴

Thus, one of the central issues for interpreting Kant's transcendental deduction is determining whether he *argues* that our experience is a cognition of objects or whether he *assumes* that it is such.⁵⁵ I aim, then, to provide an account of cognition that shows how Kant takes Hume as conceding the assumption that experience consists in empirical cognition. Moreover, my account also allows us to see why Guyer's primary objection to interpretation (II)—an objection to which Kitcher does not respond—is not well-founded. Recognizing that empirical cognition amounts to rational sensory discrimination also helps us see how Kant assumes in the transcendental deduction that our experience consists in empirical cognition.

⁵² For commentators who see Kant's transcendental deduction as answering at least some form of skepticism, see the following: Bennett 1966: 101-2; Guyer 2008: 95-107; Forster 2008: 6-12, 21-32, 40-3; Kitcher 1995: 293-7; and, Wolff 1963: 55-6.

⁵³ Guyer 1987: 91-129.

⁵⁴ Carl 1989b.

⁵⁵ With regard to synthetic a priori cognition, Kant states pure mathematics and pure physics "are supposed to determine their **objects a priori**" (Bx), and hence both would count as bodies of synthetic a priori cognition. The *Prolegomena's* analytic method assumes the actuality of such synthetic a priori (4: 279; cf. 4: 263, 4: 276 fn.). I interpret the first *Critique's* synthetic method as assuming only empirical cognition, and on this basis the *supposed* synthetic a priori cognition of pure mathematics and pure physics will later be shown to be actual.

3.2 *Interpreting Kant's Starting Points*

As we have seen, many prominent commentators have taken Kant's fundamental starting point in the transcendental deduction to be consciousness or some form of self-consciousness, from which starting point he later derives that we have empirical cognition. In this section, I show that the text of both the A- and B-editions of the first *Critique* more plausibly supports interpreting Kant as starting with the more basic assumption that we have empirical cognition.

Although Kant conceives of empirical cognition as having both consciousness and a form of self-consciousness (namely, transcendental apperception) as necessary conditions, his primary arguments in the Transcendental Deduction chapters begin with the assumption that we have empirical cognition.⁵⁶

3.2.1 *A-Edition Evidence*

In the A-edition, Kant presents what seem to be two versions of the objective deduction, the so-called "argument from above" and "argument from below". Let us consider each in turn.

Kant begins the argument from above as follows:

Now *if* we wish to follow the inner ground of this connection of representations up to that point in which they must all come together *in order first to obtain unity of cognition for a possible experience*, then we *must begin with pure apperception*. All intuitions are *nothing for us* [*für uns nichts*] and *do not in the least concern us* [*gehen uns nicht im mindesten etwas an*] if they cannot be taken up into consciousness, whether they influence it directly or indirectly, and *through this alone is cognition possible*. (A116, my italics)

On a cursory reading, it might *seem* as if this passage supports interpreting Kant as starting from the assumption that we have self-consciousness, namely pure apperception. But that semblance is mistaken, for Kant claims 'we must begin with pure apperception' *if* we want to know what's

⁵⁶ Edgar 2010 interprets the transcendental deduction not as an argument but rather as an explanation. If that is indeed the best way to interpret the transcendental deduction, I would maintain that Kant attempts to explain the categories' objective validity by means of an investigation starting with the fact that we have empirical cognition.

necessary for the ‘unity of cognition for a possible experience’. Kant claims that pure apperception is a necessary condition for cognition, and this suggests that he assumes we have cognition. This is reinforced by how he continues: intuitions must be ‘taken up into consciousness’ for cognition to be possible; otherwise, they ‘are nothing for us’. There is much evidence that representations being “nothing for us” or “nothing for me” means for Kant that they fail to count as cognition or objects of cognition. This is most explicit in a letter from 1789 to Markus Herz:

if intuitions (of objects of appearance) did not agree with these conditions, those objects would be *nothing for us* [*für uns nichts*], that is, not objects of **cognition** at all (Br 11: 51, my italics).⁵⁷

The ending of the argument from above also indicates that Kant’s starting assumption is that we have cognition:

Now since this relation of appearances to possible experience is likewise necessary (since without it we could not obtain any cognition at all through them, and they would thus not concern us at all [*sie uns mithin gar nichts angingen*]), it follows that the pure understanding, by means of the categories, is a formal and synthetic principle of all experiences, and that appearances have a **necessary relation to the understanding**. (A119, my italics)

Here, Kant parenthetically remarks that the relation of appearances to possible experience is necessary because otherwise neither would we have cognition nor would appearances concern us (presumably, Kant does not draw a distinction between not concerning us and being nothing for us). So again, the text indicates that Kant’s basic assumption is that we have empirical cognition.

Kant begins his so-called ‘argument from below’ with the following:

Now we will set the necessary connection of the understanding with the appearances by means of the categories before our eyes *by beginning from beneath*, namely with what is empirical. *The first thing that is given to us is appearance*, which, if it is combined with consciousness, is called perception (without the relation to an at least possible consciousness *appearance could*

⁵⁷ Other uses of this or similar phrases can be found in numerous places, including A105, A111, A116, A119-20; B131-2; PRO 4: 336; UE 8: 249; R4634, R4681, R5461; N 23: 19.

never become an object of cognition for us [würde Erscheinung für uns niemals ein Gegenstand der Erkenntnis werden können], and would therefore be nothing for us [für uns nichts], and since it has no objective reality in itself and exists only in cognition it would be nothing at all). (A119-120, my italics)

The argument from below *seems* to begin with the assumption that our experience consists in appearances, as Kant claims ‘[t]he first thing that is given to us is appearance’. Kant then notes that he is concerned with appearances insofar as they are combined with consciousness, i.e., with what he calls ‘perceptions’. Hence, this might further *seem* to support interpreting Kant as beginning with the assumption that we have consciousness.

These semblances are misleading. Kant begins the argument from below with appearances or perceptions because his argumentative strategy is to assume we have empirical cognition, which itself requires perceptions.⁵⁸ There are several reasons for preferring this interpretation. First, Kant’s parenthetical remark explains why perceptions—in the sense of appearances combined with consciousness—are worthy of being examined for his present purposes. An appearance without consciousness—i.e., one that is not a perception—would be ‘nothing for us’ *because* it ‘could never become an object of cognition for us’. For this reason, appearances without consciousness are not of present interest.

One might still take this passage as beginning with the assumption that we have perception. But if that were so, I can see no reason why Kant would have included this parenthetical remark. More importantly, better sense is made of how the arguments from above and from below cohere if we interpret Kant’s primary assumption as being that we have empirical cognition, rather than the assumption that we have consciousness or perceptions. For we already saw evidence that Kant begins the argument from above by assuming we have empirical cognition. And in beginning each of the arguments, he sets aside what is ‘nothing for

⁵⁸ Cf. R2394, R2836, LW 24: 845-7, LJ 9: 64-5.

us' to consider what is relevant for empirical cognition. Finally, with my interpretation of empirical cognition, we can see why Kant is able to offer both an argument from above and an argument from below. For on this interpretation, empirical cognition requires both a higher cognitive faculty for discriminating between objects (the understanding) and material given by a lower cognitive faculty (perceptions). This makes it possible for Kant to assume that we have empirical cognition and then to carry out on the basis of this assumption two arguments: one investigating the conditions for the higher cognitive faculty (the argument from above) and the other investigating the conditions for being given material from which that higher cognitive faculty can make discriminations of objects (the argument from below).

If one were to interpret the argument from below's primary assumption as being that we have perceptions, then it is hard to see how the arguments from above and from below are supposed to cohere. But if we take the assumption of perception as being based on the deeper assumption that we have empirical cognition, then a more unified account of the two arguments is possible. Hence, the argument from below's appearance of assuming that we have consciousness or perceptions is explained by Kant's concern with the necessary conditions of cognition, one of which is consciousness.

So far, I have shown that the arguments from above and below are more plausibly read as beginning with an assumption of empirical cognition, rather than an assumption of self-consciousness or consciousness. One could object to my reading of these passages by claiming that even if these passages show that Kant relies on the thesis that we have empirical cognition, Kant nevertheless arrives at this thesis by means of other more fundamental assumptions and argumentation. I, however, cannot find any place in the arguments from above or below in which

Kant offers an argument with the conclusion that we have empirical cognition based on the alternative assumptions of self-consciousness or consciousness.

Consider first the possibility that in the A-edition Kant offers an argument for empirical cognition based on the assumption that we have consciousness. The best place to find such an argument would likely be the earlier subjective deduction. In fact, Robert Paul Wolff, who advances the interpretation that Kant's fundamental assumption is that we have consciousness, finds that the subjective deduction is essential to understanding the transcendental deduction's argument for the categories' objective validity.⁵⁹ But the subjective deduction does not begin with the assumption of consciousness. Kant's first mention of 'consciousness' comes only in the third stage of the subjective deduction (A103), and this indicates that Kant did not assume in the earlier stages anything about consciousness. Furthermore, Kant introduces the subjective deduction as an investigation preparing the reader for the transcendental deduction's 'deep penetration into the primary grounds of the possibility *of our cognition* in general' (A98, my emphasis). Thus, Kant's primary concern in the subjective deduction is cognition and not consciousness.

Consider now the possibility that the A-edition offers an argument for empirical cognition based on the assumption that we have some form of self-consciousness. This is implausible because Kant first introduces a notion of self-consciousness in his argument that we have transcendental apperception because it is a necessary condition for empirical cognition (A106-7). Hence, the assumption of cognition is more fundamental than one of self-consciousness. Now it might be thought that the B-edition gives evidence to the contrary. I now

⁵⁹ Wolff 1963: 80.

turn to that evidence and show that it can be plausibly read as indicating that Kant's deeper assumption is that we have empirical cognition.

3.2.2 *B-Edition Evidence*

The following passage is often read as evidence that Kant's starting point in the transcendental deduction is transcendental apperception:⁶⁰

The **I think** must **be able** to accompany all my representations; *for otherwise* something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be *impossible* or else at least would be *nothing for me* [*für mich nichts*]. (B131-2, my italics)

It is often overlooked that Kant's first proposition here—that the “I think” must be able to accompany all my representations—is supported by an argument. Kant's argument is that this proposition must be true or else some of my representations ‘could not be thought at all’, and such representations would ‘be impossible’ or ‘at least would be nothing for me’. Although this argument *blatantly seems* to be about the nature of representations in general, or at least ‘my’ representations, I shall argue that it is better made sense of by interpreting Kant as assuming both that we have cognition and that cognition requires thought.

Consider first the following claim from the above passage: if it is not necessary that the “I think” be able to accompany all my representations, then ‘something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all’. This means that Kant treats transcendental apperception as a necessary condition for thought,⁶¹ where ‘thought’ is to be understood for Kant—as evidenced by the earlier metaphysical deduction (A69/B94)—as a mental activity that applies concepts in judgments.

⁶⁰ Allison 2004: 163; Bennett 1966: 100-7; Carl 1989: 17-9; Henrich 1976/1994: 71-4; and, Merritt 2009: 63.

⁶¹ Cf. A103-7; MM 29: 888-9.

Consider now Kant's next claim: the representing of something in me without thought is equivalent to that representation's being either 'impossible' or 'nothing for me'. If we read this passage in isolation, then it *seems* that Kant refers here to either representations in general or representations in me. Neither interpretation is plausible. First, if we consider representations in general, then we must note that Kant himself describes animals as having representations but neither transcendental apperception nor thought.⁶² Hence, Kant holds that it is not only possible but actual that there are representations without thought. Of course such representations without thought might in some sense be 'nothing for me', but this would not ground an argument for the claim that it is necessary for "I think" to be able to accompany all my representations. Second, consider representations in me. Kant admits that human beings have unconscious representations, so this makes it likely that he holds it to be possible that a representation is in me without being thought.⁶³ Perhaps then Kant means to talk about only those representations in me that are not 'nothing for me'. But what exactly does that mean? As I have already pointed out above, there is evidence that Kant describes representations as 'nothing for me' when those representations are not part of cognition. This suggests, then, that the above passage ought to be taken as pertaining to cognition.

Accordingly, let me now show how the passage can be made understandable by interpreting Kant as having in mind empirical cognition. Recall that Kant's argument runs as follows. If it were not the case that the "I think" must be able to accompany my representations, then there would be a representation in me that could not be thought. But such a representation—

⁶² For evidence that animals lack understanding or thought, see FS 2: 59-60; KU 5: 464; MD 28: 689-90; ML1 28: 276; MM 29: 878-9, 906-7; MV 28: 448-50. For evidence that they lack transcendental apperception, see A 7: 127 and MM 29: 878-9.

⁶³ This is suggested by A319-20/B376-7 and MD28: 702, and it is stated explicitly at A 7: 135 and MM 29: 879-80.

one in me that could not be thought—is either impossible or nothing for me. On my interpretation, we can make sense of why Kant offers this disjunction. Namely consider whether the representation in question—the one in me but not able to be thought—counts as cognition or not. First, suppose this representation counts as a cognition. Such a representation is impossible, as my account of empirical cognition shows. For, insofar as empirical cognition requires discursive distinctness, it requires thought, i.e., judgments that apply concepts. Second, suppose the representation in question does not count as cognition. As we have seen, Kant describes representations as ‘nothing for me’ to indicate that a representation does not contribute to cognition. And accordingly, Kant states the same about the representation in question here: if it does not count as cognition, then it is nothing for me.

As we have just seen, interpreting Kant as assuming we have cognition makes sense of his claim that a representation that is not thought is either impossible or nothing for me. On this interpretation, the opening of §16 aims to show that cognition has as its necessary condition transcendental apperception. Kant shows this by relying on the theses that cognition requires thought and that thought requires transcendental apperception.

Given this reading of the opening of §16, we can understand better why it is preceded by the remarks of §15, in which Kant discusses ‘the possibility of a combination in general’. Kant discusses this because he is assuming that all our experience involves the combination of a manifold, and it is natural for him to make this assumption if he understands experience in terms of empirical cognition. For as interpreted here, empirical cognition requires bringing diverse representations together to compare, connect, and judge them. And if we understand Kant to be considering this type of combination, then we see why it is not a *non sequitur* for him to argue as follows:

Yet the **combination** (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in general *can never come to us through the senses*, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; *for it is an act of spontaneity* of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination [...] is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title **synthesis** (B129-30, my italics).

It might seem as if a combination of a manifold obviously does come to us through the senses sometimes, e.g., when I receive a diverse array of sensory impressions all at once in the same spatial field. But Kant is not referring to such minimal combination; rather, he is concerned with our capacity to represent things ‘as combined in the object’ (B130). And he is concerned with this insofar as he assumes we have cognition. For cognition requires we identify and differentiate objects on the basis of marks possessed by those objects.

If the combination under concern in §15 is the one involved in cognition so understood, we can see why it requires ‘an act of spontaneity’ from the understanding. For cognition requires not merely the passive intake of representations but also the capacity to be aware of one’s grounds for discriminating objects, and this requires that a subject possess a faculty of understanding through which she can give and evaluate reasons for her judgments. Such acts of judgment come from the subject herself and hence are spontaneous rather than passive.

The opening passages of §§15-6 are the strongest support for reading the B-edition’s deduction as beginning by assuming we have transcendental apperception. I have shown these passages are more plausibly read as providing an argument—or at least the outline of one—moving from the assumption that we have empirical cognition to the thesis that transcendental apperception is required for cognition.

3.2.3 *Summary of the Textual Evidence for Kant’s Starting Assumption*

In this section, I have canvassed the passages in the text of the Transcendental Deduction chapters in which Kant indicates his starting assumptions for the objective deduction. Each such

passage is most plausibly read as indicating that Kant's fundamental assumption is that we have empirical cognition, rather than some form of self-consciousness or consciousness.

3.3 *Cognition and the Humean Problem*

In this section, we are not concerned with what Hume actually thought but rather with how Kant understood Hume, whether correctly or not, and with how he might have taken himself to have responded to Hume. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant claims the first *Critique* is 'the *elaboration* of the Humean problem in its greatest possible amplification' (4: 261). Ultimately, Kant saw Hume as challenging not merely our knowledge of causality but the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition in general (4: 277). Accordingly, we can call "the Humean Problem" the question whether we have cognition of synthetic a priori principles that ground our experience. Synthetic a priori cognition expresses the transcendental conditions necessary for the possibility of experience.⁶⁴ Given my interpretation of empirical cognition, synthetic a priori cognition expresses the conditions that make possible empirical cognition, i.e., that make possible rational sensory discrimination. Since the transcendental deduction is an essential part of Kant's answer to the question of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition, it seems he ought to have used premises he would have taken Hume to concede.

There are reasons to think that Kant would have interpreted Hume as conceding that we have empirical cognition. It is known that Kant was more familiar with Hume's *Enquiry* than the *Treatise*, despite some acquaintance with the latter via Beattie, Hamann, and Tetens.⁶⁵ Despite this acknowledgment, little emphasis has been given in the secondary literature to the German translation of Hume's *Enquiry* that Kant read. The German translation was edited by Johann

⁶⁴ See Kant's characterizations of synthetic a priori cognition or principles at A156-8/B195-7 and PRO 4: 313.

⁶⁵ See Wolff 1960 and Beiser 2002: 45-7.

Georg Sulzer and was based on the second edition of Hume’s work.⁶⁶ The second edition’s title was *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*, and the translation of this title is noteworthy: *Philosophische Versuche über die Menschliche Erkenntniß*. The translated title replaces understanding (*Verstand*) with cognition (*Erkenntnis*), and this suggests the Hume read by Kant was expressly concerned with cognition.

We have, moreover, reasons to think Kant read Hume as granting that we have empirical cognition. In Essay 4 of the *Enquiry*, Hume presents his skeptical challenge about causality. A key claim Kant would have read in the German translation is the following:

Hume’s 1751 Original	1755 German Translation
I SHALL venture to affirm, as a general Proposition, which admits of no Exception, that the Knowledge of this Relation of Cause and Effect is not, in any Instance, attain’d by Reasoning a priori; but arises entirely from Experience, when we find, that particular Objects are constantly conjoin’d with each other. (1751: 50)	Ich will erkühnen, als einen allgemeinen Satz, welcher keine Ausnahme zuläßt, zu behaupten, daß <i>diese Erkenntniß der Ursache und Wirkung</i> in keinem einzigen Beyspiele, durch Vernunftschlüsse a priori erlanget werde; sondern gänzlich aus der Erfahrung herkomme, kraft deren wir finden, daß besondere Gegenstände beständig, einer mit dem andern vereinigt sind. (1755: 68, my emphasis)

Kant was often not a close reader of other philosophers’ texts, and I suggest passages such as the above could have been read by Kant as admissions by Hume that we have empirical cognition of cause and effect. Perhaps Kant might not have understood Hume’s use of “*Erkenntnis*” as equivalent to the strict sense of empirical cognition presented above. In whatever way Kant understood Hume to use the notion of cognition, passages such as the above match Kant’s understanding of Hume’s specific challenge about cognition. The *Prolegomena* states that Hume did not question whether the concept of cause is right, useful, or indispensable for cognition of nature (4: 258-9). Rather, the challenge is to determine the *sources* of our cognition in general,

⁶⁶ For more information about the publication, editing, and translation of Hume’s *Enquiry*, see Kuehn 2005: 106-7.

including that of cause and effect. The above passage suggests that this is Hume's concern, since in it Hume denies that rational inferences a priori are the source of our cognition of cause and effect. Later, Hume extends this by claiming that the source of our experience of cause and effect is also not the understanding.⁶⁷ Kant's "Humean Problem", then, is that our empirical cognition—particularly of cause and effect, but also more generally—does not have a priori sources in the understanding or reason.

Kant's assumption of empirical cognition is well-suited for responding to this challenge. This is because Kant likely understood Hume as granting each of the two components of my definition of cognition. Recall first that cognition requires a subject discriminate between objects. Throughout Hume's presentation of his skeptical doubts, he admits our experience is of objects [*Dinge* or *Gegenstände*]. Of course, in using the term "objects", Hume is not committed to the existence of anything mind-independent. Likewise, although for Kant empirical cognition is of objects, this does not mean that those objects are mind-independent. Hume also grants that objects of experience are connected and combined in time through laws of association. This would seem to require that such objects are identified and differentiated from one another, as occurs with Kant's empirical cognition. This can be seen by considering Hume's treatment of causality in terms of constant conjunction. Hume admits that we do find particular objects are constantly conjoined with others. For us to do this, we must recognize that the first set of objects are the same in some way, that the second set of objects are likewise the same in some way, and finally that the two sets of objects are different in some way. Thus, Hume's analysis of causality requires that he grant us the ability to identify and differentiate objects, i.e., to be acquainted with objects or to represent them clearly.

⁶⁷ 1755: 78.

Hume also seems to be committed to holding that we can become aware of the judgments on the basis of which we treat objects as the same or different. This is a pretty minimal requirement. For it requires only that a subject be capable of judging why things seem to her to be the same or different, and it does not matter whether or not those judgments are correct, i.e., it does not matter whether a subject is justified. It would be implausibly extreme for Hume to deny that we have such capacities, and in fact he himself notes that we are capable of giving reasons for believing matters of fact.⁶⁸ Hence, Hume also can be read as granting us the ability to understand objects or to represent them distinctly.

We have good reason, then, to think Kant would have taken Hume to grant that we have empirical cognition. If this is correct, then we should take more seriously the possibility that the transcendental deduction is capable of responding to skeptical challenges, a reading that has been repeatedly challenged in Kant scholarship.⁶⁹ My interpretation of empirical cognition and examination of Kant's understanding of Hume provides evidence that the argument can respond to at least one particular skeptical challenge, "the Humean problem".

3.4 *Response to Guyer*

To finish my case for interpretation (II), I respond in this section to an objection raised by Paul Guyer in *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* and restated in his most recent essay on the transcendental deduction.⁷⁰ As far as I can tell, no adherent of interpretation (II) has responded to this important objection.

Guyer's objection applies to both the metaphysical deduction by itself and to any version of the transcendental deduction beginning with the assumption that we have empirical cognition

⁶⁸ 1755: 67-8.

⁶⁹ Most notably by Ameriks 1978 and Engstrom 1994.

⁷⁰ Guyer 1987: 98, 128-9; 2010: 128.

of objects. It runs as follows: even if empirical knowledge or cognition requires *some* of the logical forms of judgment, it is not clear why it should require *all* the logical forms of judgment. More specifically, although the categorical form of judgment might be necessary for “[t]he possibility of empirical knowledge understood as combination of representations”, it is not clear why either the hypothetical or disjunctive forms of judgment are necessary for such knowledge.⁷¹ This is because the categorical form of judgment is necessary for “judgments which link particular representations which are not themselves judgments”, whereas “the hypothetical and disjunctive forms of judgment link only other judgments, not particular representations themselves”.⁷²

To see why Guyer’s objection is misguided, I shall first make clear how Guyer mistakenly assumes that cognition is something along the lines of justified true belief. Guyer takes empirical cognition as individuated in terms of individual judgments or propositions, i.e., he identifies cognition with a single judgment. But this is a mistake, as my account makes clear. As explained above, cognition need not be belief because cognition is primarily of objects rather than propositions or judgments. To be sure, cognition of an object requires that a subject make judgments, e.g., judgments of similarity or difference between objects, as well as of wherein similarities or differences lie. But cognition of an object ought not to be identified with any *single* judgment; rather, to cognize an object requires a *plurality* of interconnected judgments. For example, for my friend Victoria to cognize me, she must not only make a judgment such as “this is Curtis” but others such as “Curtis has freckles” and “that [other person or thing] is not Curtis because it does not have freckles”. Moreover, since cognition requires she be able to become aware of her reasons for identifying or differentiating things, she must link her judgment

⁷¹ Guyer 1987: 128.

⁷² Ibid.

“this is Curtis” with judgments that provide her with such reasons, e.g., “this has freckles”, “this has brown hair”, “that does not have freckles”, and so on.

We can now see why Guyer’s objection is misguided. Guyer holds that, because they link judgments together rather than particular representations, it is not clear why hypothetical and disjunctive—unlike the categorical—forms of judgment are necessary for cognition. Guyer implicitly assumes cognition is to be identified with a single judgment that combines particular representations, which is a natural assumption to make if one is treating cognition as something like justified true belief. But cognition requires multiple interconnected judgments, and not just a single belief, let alone one that is true.⁷³ Hence, Guyer is too quick in thinking the hypothetical and disjunctive forms of judgment are not necessary for cognition.

I have only claimed that cognition requires judgments be linked with one another, and I have not shown why cognition requires judgments be linked specifically in hypothetical and disjunctive forms. But by showing this, Guyer’s critical thought becomes less of an objection and more of a demand for further explanation: given cognition requires judgments be linked to one another, why does cognition require judgments be linked by means of hypothetical and disjunctive forms?⁷⁴

3.5 *Summary*

In this chapter, I hope to have accomplished three tasks: (i) to show that the text of the transcendental deduction is most plausibly read as using that assumption as its starting point; (ii) to clarify how an assumption of such cognition is one that Kant could have legitimately made in

⁷³ This is so even if a single cognition is to be identified with a single judgment, as Kant affirms at 20: 266.

⁷⁴ An answer to this question does not commit Kant to the absurd position that any particular use of a particular logical form of judgment always involves the application of the corresponding category. Henry Allison (2004: 150) and Béatrice Longuenesse (1998: 78) have explained why this objection of Guyer’s is mistaken.

responding to what he understands as the Humean Problem; and, (iii) to respond to Guyer's main objection to the interpretation I have defended.

Chapter 4: The Subjective Deduction and Kant's Copernican Revolution

In the preface to the A-edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes between subjective and objective sides of the transcendental deduction (Axvi-ii). The distinction between these two sides has remained obscure, as indicated by the lack of consensus in the secondary literature concerning the nature of the subjective deduction. My contributions here are twofold. First, I provide much-needed desiderata for a satisfactory interpretation of the subjective deduction. Second, I provide a new interpretation that meets these desiderata. Namely, the subjective deduction is an elucidation of the objective deduction's starting assumption that our cognition requires thought or understanding, and this elucidation serves to help the reader to understand Kant's Copernican Revolution—the hypothesis that objects must conform to our cognition rather than the other way around—as it applies to the faculty of understanding. This prepares the reader for Kant's extension of this revolution in his objective deduction.

4.1 *Importance of Interpreting the Subjective Deduction*

The standard view of the subjective deduction identifies it with Kant's discussion of the “threefold synthesis”, which can be understood roughly as ways in which the mind processes what is given to us through our senses. This activity is threefold insofar as it:

- (i) runs through and gathers together the representations of a manifold of intuition (“the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition”);
- (ii) reproduces (in accordance with rules of association) both past representations of present objects as well as past representations with which those objects are associated (“the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination”); and,
- (iii) brings representations under concepts for a cognitive subject to recognize both that the reproductions of representations are the same as what they reproduce and

that such representations are connected in certain ways (“the synthesis of recognition in the concept”).

The threefold synthesis has a peculiar status in Kant scholarship. On the one hand, some scholars understand the threefold synthesis as crucial for Kant’s aims in the transcendental deduction. Despite Kant’s claim that the subjective deduction is inessential for showing the objective validity of the categories, some scholars hold it to be a more illuminating or persuasive argument than the objective deduction proper in either edition’s Transcendental Deduction chapter.⁷⁵ Even more extreme, Nathan Bauer holds that Kant himself understood the discussion of the threefold synthesis as constituting the objective deduction rather than the subjective one.⁷⁶

On the other hand, most scholars downplay the importance of the threefold synthesis and the subjective deduction. For most examine primarily the B-edition’s Transcendental Deduction chapter, which contains no discussion of the threefold synthesis. Moreover, there is skepticism about the status of the threefold synthesis, as it seems to indulge in a “transcendental psychology”, the highly speculative nature of which transgresses Kant’s own critical spirit.

Finally, recent scholarship has approached the subjective deduction and the threefold synthesis in provocative and interesting ways.⁷⁷ Despite this, further work is still needed to provide a satisfying interpretation of the subjective deduction. I show why this is so in the next two sections, in which I first provide desiderata for a satisfactory interpretation of the subjective deduction and then show how the secondary literature fails to satisfy the desiderata.

⁷⁵ See especially Wolff 1967.

⁷⁶ Bauer 2010.

⁷⁷ Most notably Dyck 2008.

4.2 *Desiderata for a Satisfactory Interpretation*

In the preface to the A edition, Kant writes the following concerning the Transcendental Deduction chapter:

This inquiry, which goes rather deep, has two sides. One side refers to the objects of the pure understanding, and is supposed to demonstrate and make comprehensible the objective validity of its concepts a priori; thus it belongs essentially to my ends. The other side deals with the pure understanding itself, concerning its possibility and the powers of cognition on which it itself rests; thus it considers it in a subjective relation, and although this exposition is of great importance in respect of my chief end [*Hauptzwecks*], it does not belong essentially to it; because the chief question [*Hauptfrage*] always remains: "What and how much can understanding and reason cognize free of all experience? and not: "How is the **faculty of thinking** itself possible?" Since the latter question is something like the search for the cause of a given effect, and is therefore something like a hypothesis (although, as I will elsewhere take the opportunity to show, this is not in fact how matters stand), it appears as if I am taking the liberty in this case of expressing an **opinion**, and that the reader might therefore be free to hold another **opinion**. In view of this I must remind the reader in advance that even in case my subjective deduction does not produce the complete conviction that I expect, the objective deduction that is my primary concern would come into its full strength, on which what is said at pages [A] 92-93 should even be sufficient by itself." (Axvi-ii)

I shall now summarize the many interesting and odd claims made in the above passage concerning the subjective deduction. Kant writes that the objective deduction aims to demonstrate and make comprehensible the objective validity of the categories (Axvi-xvii). The subjective deduction, in contrast, aims to explain how the pure understanding or faculty of thought is possible. He claims that this latter aim is not essential for his chief goals, which are twofold: first, to demonstrate that the categories have objective validity; and, second, to show that they provide cognition only within the limited realm of experience. Kant then makes two remarks concerning the method or procedure of the subjective deduction. First, it is to be carried out by considering the understanding "subjectively", i.e., by considering how the understanding *rests on* various powers of cognition. Second, he compares the subjective deduction to "the search for the cause of a given effect", making it "something like a hypothesis".

Kant then raises the concern that this might be received poorly. Namely, it might seem to the reader as if he is offering merely an opinion. As such, Kant recognizes that he might “not produce the complete conviction that [he] expect[s]”. On its own, Kant’s earlier admission that the subjective deduction is inessential for his chief goals makes it puzzling why he included it in the Transcendental Deduction chapter. But this additional remark makes its inclusion even more puzzling. If the subjective deduction might give the appearance of being merely hypothetical or an opinion, and if it is not essential for his purposes, then it seems that Kant would have been better off not including it. But Kant claims that these issues will be addressed, as he states that he will elsewhere show that the subjective deduction is not in fact hypothetical. Likewise he claims that A92-93 should suffice to ensure that the objective deduction “would come into its full strength”, thereby producing the requisite conviction in the reader.

These are Kant’s only explicit remarks concerning the subjective deduction, so a satisfactory interpretation ought to make sense of them all, meeting the following desiderata:

- (D1) To clarify what it means to explain how a faculty, and specifically the understanding, is possible.
- (D2) To explain the sense in which the inquiry is “subjective” and count’s as (being a side of) a “deduction”.
- (D3) To specify Kant’s assumptions and method for carrying out the subjective deduction, and thereby to explain why the subjective deduction is (i) “like the search for the cause of a given effect”; (ii) “like a hypothesis”; and, (iii) something seeming like an opinion.
- (D4) To account for how Kant attempts to remedy the apparent problems resulting from the method described by the Third Desideratum.

(D5) To explain why the subjective deduction's aim or goal is inessential yet nevertheless of interest to Kant in the Transcendental Deduction chapter.

4.3 *Outline of the Objective Deduction*

To set up my view of the subjective deduction, I need to explain how I interpret the objective deduction. I hold that Kant assumes for the objective deduction that all experience consists in empirical cognition of objects and that this requires thought from the faculty of understanding. Let me note the following two considerations in support of this perhaps contentious interpretation of the objective deduction.

First, in the A edition, Kant clearly describes the objective deduction as assuming that our experience is one of objects:

Passage A

[C]oncepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as a priori conditions; consequently the objective validity of the categories, as a priori concepts, rests on the fact that through them alone is experience possible (as far as the form of thinking is concerned). (A93/B126)

Accordingly, he prefaces the argument of the threefold synthesis in the A edition, which argument seems to pertain to experience in a quite minimal sense, by describing what is necessary for *cognition* (A97).

Second, in both editions, Kant presents his argumentative strategy for the objective deduction in the "Transition" section of the Transcendental Deduction chapter (a passage to which he refers the reader in his explicit remarks concerning the subjective deduction). Although I cannot go into detailed textual analysis here, I provide the following reconstruction of the argument outline provided in the Transition:

(OD1) All experience—empirical cognition of objects—is possible only if the objects given by intuition are thought by means of concepts.

(OD2) The categories are a priori conditions for the thought of the objects given by intuition.⁷⁸

(OD3) Therefore, the categories have objective validity. [OD1-OD2]

4.4 *Preview of My Interpretation*

Although my interpretation agrees with the standard view in *identifying* the discussion of the threefold synthesis as the subjective deduction, it is nevertheless original regarding its *point*. Namely, I argue that its point is twofold. First, it elucidates the objective deduction's starting assumption that our cognition requires the faculty of the understanding. The subjective deduction elucidates this by showing that our cognitive relation to objects is made possible only by means of a spontaneous synthesis of representations carried out through conceptual and judgmental activities of the understanding. By means of this elucidation, Kant hopes to help his reader understand his Copernican Revolution as it applies to the faculty of understanding. This revolution was already illustrated in the Transcendental Aesthetic, but its scope there was limited to human sensibility and its pure intuitions of space and time. The transcendental deduction begins Kant's extension of this revolution to the understanding and its concepts. The subjective deduction prepares the reader for Kant's extension of this revolution in two ways. On the one hand, the subjective deduction shows why we ought not to take our thought or cognition as conforming to objects inasmuch as the objects of our cognition do not come prepackaged for thought and cognition. On the other hand, it shows why we must take objects as conforming to

⁷⁸ See especially the following from A94/B126: "The transcendental deduction of all a priori concepts therefore has a principle toward which the entire investigation must be directed, namely this: that they must be recognized as a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, or of the thinking). Concepts that supply the objective ground of the possibility of experience are necessary just for that reason."

our thought and cognition inasmuch as the understanding is required to constitute objects for cognition by means of an epistemically prior spontaneous synthesis.

This elucidation of the Copernican Revolution in the subjective deduction helps prepare the way for the objective deduction because the latter extends the Copernican Revolution by advancing the stronger claim that the synthesis required for constituting objects of cognition must involve a priori concepts, the categories. With my interpretation, we can see why Kant thought it helpful but inessential to include the subjective deduction in the A edition. Moreover, I shall suggest how §15 of the B-edition is meant to prepare the reader in a similar way as the A-edition's subjective deduction, showing that the Transcendental Deduction chapters of the two editions are more alike than commonly thought.

4.5 *Identification and Outline of the Subjective Deduction*

I now analyze a passage that outlines the subjective deduction, and with this analysis I demonstrate how the subjective deduction prepares the reader for the objective deduction by elucidating the latter's starting point, (OD1) in my reconstruction above.

After Passage A, which states that the objective deduction can be accomplished by establishing (OD2), in the A edition Kant immediately notes the need for an elucidation:

Passage B

But since in such a thought there is more at work than the single faculty of thinking, namely the understanding, and the understanding itself, as a faculty of cognition that is to be related to objects, also requires an elucidation of the possibility of this relation, we must first assess not the empirical but the transcendental constitution of the subjective sources that comprise the a priori foundations for the possibility of experience. (A97)

This passage begins with the claim that objects cannot be thought merely through the single faculty of the understanding, presumably because the understanding cannot provide on its own the material for its thought. This leads to the need of a particular *elucidation*, namely one that

clarifies the possibility of the relation between objects and the understanding as a faculty of cognition.⁷⁹ The passage goes on to suggest that this elucidation is to be achieved by an *assessment*, namely of the “transcendental constitution of the subjective sources that comprise the a priori foundations for the possibility of experience”.

I suggest that we understand the subjective deduction as carrying out this assessment, thereby elucidating (OD1). I now provide textual support for this claim. As asserted in the A Preface, the subjective deduction concerns the powers of cognition and aims to explain how the faculty of thought is possible. On the basis of Passage B, I suggest that we understand this aim as equivalent to explaining how the faculty of thought is possible *insofar as it is a faculty that contributes to cognition*. The subjective deduction ought to explain, then, just how the understanding can relate cognitively to objects.

The task referred to in Passage B is to be performed by an assessment of “the transcendental constitution of the subjective sources that comprise the a priori foundations for the possibility of experience” (A97). Again, we find here both remarks analogous to those in the preface as well as more specificity. The preface describes the subjective deduction both as subjective and as concerning the powers of cognition on which the understanding rests. And in accord with this in Passage B, we find that these two aspects are to be treated together, as the proposed assessment is concerned with subjective sources of experience.

The paragraph immediately following Passage B outlines Kant’s account of the transcendental, subjective sources of cognition that make possible the faculty of thought’s contribution to cognition. It is worth spending some time with this paragraph because it will help us see the point of the later detailed discussion of the threefold synthesis.

⁷⁹ Note that the categories are not explicitly mentioned here, suggesting that the required elucidation does not pertain particularly to the categories and their objective validity.

First, Kant begins the paragraph with an elucidation of the premise that cognition is “a whole of compared and connected representations”:

Passage C: Sentence 1

If every individual representation were entirely foreign to the other, as it were isolated and separated from it, then there would never arise anything like cognition, which is a whole of compared and connected representations.

Second, Kant goes on to explain that the manifold of representations required for cognition requires not merely a contribution from our passive faculty of sensibility but also a contribution from our spontaneous faculty of understanding:

Passage C: Sentence 2

If therefore I ascribe a synopsis to sense, because it contains a manifold in its intuition, a synthesis must always correspond to this, and **receptivity** can make cognitions possible only if combined with **spontaneity**.

Taking these first two sentences together, we see that cognition requires spontaneity. The next sentence explains that this spontaneity takes the form of a threefold synthesis:

Passage C: Sentence 3

This is now the ground of a threefold synthesis, which is necessarily found in all cognition: that, namely, of the **apprehension** of the representations, as modifications of the mind in intuition; of the **reproduction** of them in the imagination; and of their **recognition** in the concept.

Hence, according to these first three sentences, cognition requires a spontaneity that takes the form of the threefold synthesis described later in the A edition’s Transcendental Deduction chapter. The fourth and last sentence adds that these three syntheses direct us to corresponding subjective sources of cognition, which are to provide the elucidation demanded in Passage B:

Passage C: Sentence 4

Now these direct us toward three subjective sources of cognition, which make possible even the understanding and, through the latter, all experience as an empirical product of understanding.

As we shall learn later in Kant's text, these are intuition, imagination, and transcendental apperception. Likewise, as Passage B indicates, Kant will assess "not the empirical but the transcendental constitution of the subjective sources that comprise the a priori foundations for the possibility of experience" (A97).

Passage C provides the following answer to Passage B. The elucidation of how the understanding has a cognitive relation to objects is that the understanding relates to objects by means of the three subjective sources and their corresponding syntheses. This might seem to come out of nowhere, as the earlier sentences of the passage do not mention the understanding. Yet this is implicit, for Kant has already associated the spontaneity of our faculties involved in cognition with the understanding: "the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the **spontaneity** of cognition, is the understanding" (A51/B75; Cf. A50/B74; A69/B93; A77/B102). Thus, this suggests that the spontaneity mentioned in the paragraph ought to be identified with the understanding.

But note that Kant draws an additional conclusion in the Passage C's fourth sentence. Not only is the possibility of the understanding explained, but also "all experience as an empirical product of understanding". This makes sense if we acknowledge that by "experience" Kant means empirical cognition. The first two sentences make clear that the concern of the argument is empirical cognition in the sense of a whole of compared and connected representations given in a manifold of sensible intuition. Hence, what Kant outlines in this paragraph is an explanation of the necessary conditions for the possibility not only of the understanding but also of empirical cognition.

To sum up Passage C, I offer the following as an outline:

- (C1) Empirical cognition, or a possible experience, is a whole of compared and connected representations given in a manifold of sensible intuition.
- (C2) The representations of a manifold of sensible intuition, given through our receptive faculty of sensibility, can be compared and connected to produce empirical cognition only through the spontaneity of the understanding.
- (C3) This spontaneity of the understanding takes the specific form of a threefold synthesis, which is made possible by three corresponding a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition.
- (C4) The understanding's cognitive relation to objects, as well as experience itself (empirical cognition) is made possible by three a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition.

I have had two aims in spending so much time on Passage C. First, Passage C provides evidence concerning the issue of *identifying the passage containing* the subjective deduction. Despite Nathan Bauer's recent rejection of identifying it with Kant's detailed discussion of the threefold synthesis, he overlooks Passage C as a strong piece of evidence in support of doing so.⁸⁰ Near the end of the paragraph, Kant states that we are pointed "toward three subjective sources of cognition, which make possible even the understanding". This tells us that the task discussed is the same as that of the subjective deduction described in the preface. And from this we must infer that the subjective deduction is to be identified with the discussion of the threefold synthesis. For Passage C states that the task at hand is to be accomplished by considering the threefold synthesis and its grounds. The second reason I have spent so much time on Passage C

⁸⁰ Bauer 2010.

instead of the later detailed discussion of the threefold synthesis is that we gain clarity for *interpreting the point* of the subjective deduction and how it relates to the objective deduction.

4.6 *The Point of the Subjective Deduction*

I shall now argue that the point of the subjective deduction is twofold. First, the subjective deduction elucidates the truth of the starting assumption of the objective deduction. Second, it prepares the reader for comprehending the objective deduction's new way of conceiving the understanding in terms of the Copernican Revolution.

4.6.1 *Elucidation of the Starting Point of the Objective Deduction*

On my view, the objective deduction begins with the assumption that any possible human experience—to which he thinks even empiricists must admit—consists in an empirical cognition of objects, wherein objects are discriminated from one another by means of judgments and concepts. More simply put, the assumption is that our empirical cognition requires thought or the understanding. On my interpretation, the subjective deduction elucidates this starting point by addressing the question of how the faculty of thought is possible. As passage C indicates, this question is equivalent to the question of how it is possible for the understanding—the faculty responsible for concepts and judgments—to have a cognitive relation to objects. Kant's subjective deduction answers this question by showing how it is not only possible, but in fact *necessary* for the possibility of any cognition whatsoever. This is indicated by how Kant ends Passage C. By making the understanding possible, he claim, the three subjective sources of cognition make possible “all experience as an empirical product of understanding”. This suggests an intimate connection between the subjective deduction and (OD1). For if all experience is an empirical product of the understanding—i.e., the faculty of thought—then, just as (OD1) asserts, all experience requires thought.

In my outline of Passage C, (C2) is essentially a stronger version of the objective deduction's premise (OD1). (C2) is supported and elucidated by (C3) and (C4). Kant provides his case for (C3) in his discussion of the threefold synthesis. That passage supports (C2) by showing how specific syntheses attributable to the understanding are required for empirical cognition, namely the syntheses of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition. In accomplishing (C4), Kant elaborates on the necessary conditions for those syntheses themselves, namely the subjective sources of intuition, imagination, and transcendental apperception. Hence, although the bulk of the work of the subjective deduction is carried out in (C3) and (C4), this is in service of showing why (C2)—and hence likewise the starting assumption of the objective deduction—is true.

Hence, the discussion of the threefold synthesis not only elucidates how the *understanding in general* is necessary for cognition but also contributes to Kant's overall case in the transcendental deduction that *particular types of activity of the understanding* are necessary for cognition as well. Namely, Kant holds that the thought or judgment required for empirical cognition cannot merely consist in or rest on mental activities of the understanding to which empiricists might admit, e.g., comparison, association, and abstraction. It is clear enough how the objective deduction is supposed to show that something more is required, namely it attempts to demonstrate that such experience is possible only by means of the categories' role in constituting experience. But the subjective deduction too shows that something more is required, namely that empirical cognition requires that the understanding contribute a spontaneous threefold synthesis, where each form of synthesis has a corresponding subjective, a priori, and transcendental ground. But even if a strict empiricist is not onboard with these results of the subjective deduction, that is suitable for Kant's purposes. For the subjective deduction is primarily an *elucidation of* rather

than an *argument for* the starting assumption of the objective deduction. For the objective deduction, all that Kant needs from a strict empiricist is the admission that some types of mental activity attributable to the understanding—e.g., such minimal activities as comparison, association, and abstraction—are necessary for cognitive experience.

4.6.2 *Elucidation of the Copernican Revolution*

So far, I have explained how the point of the subjective deduction is to elucidate the starting assumption of the objective deduction. Specifically, I have explained how it elucidates the *manner* in which the understanding relates to objects of cognition. But Kant's elucidation in the subjective deduction goes further, for it helps prepare the reader to understand the radically new idea offered by the objective deduction. Kant begins the A edition's transcendental deduction by noting that he has

found it more advisable to prepare than to instruct the reader in the following four numbers, and only then to represent the exposition of these elements of the understanding systematically in the immediately following third section. (A98)

I suggest that what Kant prepares the reader for is his application of the Copernican Revolution to the faculty of understanding. By "Copernican Revolution", I mean Kant's hypothesis that objects must conform to our cognition rather than the other way around (Bxx). The objective deduction exhibits the Copernican Revolution insofar as its main conclusion is that object must conform to a priori concepts of the understanding, the categories. The subjective deduction prepares the reader for thinking in terms of the objective deduction's Copernican Revolution by setting aside the categories and showing how the understanding *in general* is something to which objects of cognition must conform.

To clarify this thought, I draw on Melissa McBay Merritt's helpful contrast between two different models of thinking. The "attention model of thinking" holds that thinking is "dependent

upon the existence of objects of [...] attention” and merely “registers given content”.⁸¹ In contrast, the “synthesis model of thinking” holds that “thinking is an activity of synthesis, or *combining* representations”.⁸² This contrast is helpful for understanding Kant, but I’m not fully satisfied with Merritt’s account of it. For I think she is mistaken that the transcendental deduction offers an argument for a synthesis model of thinking *in general*. This is because Kant seems to assume without argument such a model of thinking in the Metaphysical Deduction (A76-9/B102-5).

Nevertheless, I believe that the subjective deduction offers an elucidation or argument for something similar to Merritt’s synthesis model of thinking, namely a *radical* synthesis model of *cognition*. By asserting that Kant’s model in the subjective deduction concerns *radical* synthesis, I mean that synthesis is something that does more than combine representations in judgments. And by asserting that it pertains to *cognition* rather than thought, I mean that the model indicates something important about the relation of thought to intuition. This radical synthesis model of cognition can be elucidated by contrasting it with what I shall call the “attend-and-judge model of cognition”. On this model, a subject cognizes when she observes objects, compares them, notices their similarities and differences, and then connects representations in judgments to express what she observes. On this conception, synthesis is required *only* at the level of judgment, and the syntheses that make judgment possible are attentive mental activities such as comparison, abstraction, and association. Importantly, this model treats the objects of cognition as prepackaged for us, and our mind needs only to attend to those objects to achieve a cognitive relation with them.

⁸¹ Merritt 2009: 65.

⁸² *Ibid.* 66.

But on the radical synthesis model of cognition presented in the subjective deduction, the objects of cognition do not come prepackaged for us such that cognition is produced by first attending to them and by then manipulating them in judgments. Rather, the object of cognition itself is something that is possible only by means of a spontaneous threefold synthesis, and this synthesis is an epistemic condition for our capacity to attend objects in a cognitively significant way. The subjective deduction elucidates the radical synthesis model of cognition by showing how cognition requires forms of synthesis in addition to that of judgment. For it is only by means of the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction that the diverse representations of a manifold of intuition can be gathered up and presented to the mind so that an act of judgment can be made upon those sensible contents. And the synthesis of recognition does more than combine representations in judgments, as it is by means of that synthesis that we also can represent something *as an object* (A104-106).

Whether or not one accepts the subjective deduction's particular synthetic activities of the understanding, they give us a sense of the way in which it could be the case that objects must conform to our cognition, i.e., the way in which the understanding constitutes objects of cognition. By seeing how that could be so, we are then in a better position to see how the objective deduction's result could be true. For the objective deduction's conclusion is that the categories have objective validity insofar as they provide rules for the a priori synthesis involved in producing cognition from a manifold of intuition. This conclusion clearly embodies the Copernican Revolution, but it is so abstract that it might not be clear how objects must conform to our thought. But in providing a detailed discussion of various ways in which the understanding constitutes objects of cognition, the subjective deduction prepares the reader for understanding this new way of conceiving the relationship between thought and its objects.

4.7 *Meeting the Desiderata*

I explain now how my interpretation meets three of the interpretive desiderata, and I will return to (D3) and (D4) in Sections 7.5 and 7.6.

4.7.1 *Satisfying (D1)*

My answer to (D1) is that the subjective deduction's primary aim of showing how the faculty of thought is possible amounts to an elucidation of the first premise of the objective deduction. In other words, the subjective deduction is an inquiry that explains how it is possible for the understanding to have a cognitive relation to objects.

4.7.2 *Satisfying (D2)*

To answer (D2), I must explain the sense in which Kant's inquiry is *subjective* and a *deduction*. It is *subjective* because it explains how the understanding's cognitive relation to objects is made possible by a threefold synthesis grounded on three a priori and subjective sources of cognition. In other words, the inquiry uncovers subjective conditions necessary for experience, and these conditions count as subjective insofar as they specify what a cognizing subject must be like. In contrast, the objective deduction uncovers objective conditions necessary for experience—the categories—and these conditions count as objective insofar as they specify what the objects of cognition must be like.

Kant characterizes a *deduction* as an inquiry that concerns what is lawful, rather than what is a matter of fact, and such an inquiry "is to establish the entitlement or legal claim" of something (A84/B116). The subjective deduction is a deduction in this sense because it shows how the a priori subjective sources of imagination and transcendental apperception have a legitimate use or entitlement in making possible a subject's empirical cognition. This applies only to the faculties of imagination and transcendental apperception because, given the argument

of the Transcendental Aesthetic, we already know that we have a faculty of pure intuition that makes experience possible. This explains in part, then, why Kant calls the Transcendental Aesthetic a transcendental deduction (A87/B119-120).

4.7.3 *Satisfying (D5)*

I conclude now by addressing (D5). On my interpretation, there are at least four reasons why the subjective deduction is inessential and four corresponding reasons why it is nevertheless of interest to Kant specifically within the Transcendental Deduction chapter. We have already seen the first two reasons why the subjective deduction is relevant within the Transcendental Deduction chapter. First, it elucidates the starting assumption of the objective deduction, and second it prepares the reader for comprehending the objective deduction's Copernican Revolution.

The third reason can be seen by considering Kant's definition of the transcendental deduction as "the explanation of the way in which concepts can relate to objects a priori" (A85/B117). According to Kant, objects can be given to us only through our spatiotemporal intuition. The subjective deduction shows cognition can be generated out of this spatiotemporal intuition only by means of the understanding's radical synthetic activities, which include its application of concepts to objects of intuition. Since such an application or relation of concepts to objects of intuition is necessary for any cognition independent of the particular contents of our spatiotemporal intuition, it counts as an a priori relation between concepts and objects. Thus, the subjective deduction explains part of what a transcendental deduction in general is supposed to explain.

Finally, the fourth reason for Kant's interest in the subjective deduction within the Transcendental Deduction chapter is that one of its steps shows that transcendental apperception

is one of the transcendental sources on which the cognitive relation of thought to objects rests. But the argument for this claim must also be an essential part of the objective deduction. For, put quite roughly, the objective deduction's argument is that empirical cognition requires the categories because empirical cognition is grounded on transcendental apperception, which in turn is possible only by means of a priori synthesis through the categories. This means that the argument for transcendental apperception is shared by both the subjective and objective deductions. Since the two inquiries overlap in this significant way, this warrants Kant's characterization of the transcendental deduction in the A edition's preface as an inquiry with two sides (Axvi).

Now that we have seen four reasons for Kant's interest in the subjective deduction within the context of the Transcendental Deduction chapter, we should consider why it is nevertheless inessential. First, even though the subjective deduction clarifies the objective deduction's starting point—that empirical cognition requires thought—this starting point is something that Kant takes to be an *assumption*. Kant makes its status as an assumption clear in his Transition to the deduction, and this is why in the A edition's preface he refers the reader to A92-3.

Second, even if the subjective deduction helps the reader comprehend the Copernican Revolution offered by the result of the objective deduction, this is not required for the soundness of the argument of the objective deduction. Rather, it is something that prepares the reader to understand that argument and its significance.

Third, even though the subjective deduction fits Kant's characterization of a transcendental deduction in general, it does not fit his characterization of the primary task of the latter: to show the objective validity of the categories.

Fourth, I asserted above that the subjective deduction contains an argument for transcendental apperception, and this might seem to make it essential for the objective deduction because such an argument is essential for the latter. But even if *part* of the subjective deduction is essential for the objective deduction, it still makes sense for Kant to claim that the *overall task* of the subjective deduction is inessential. For the overall task of the subjective deduction is to show what is required for the understanding to have a cognitive relation to objects, and not all of these requirements are appealed to in the objective deduction.

4.8 *Secondary Literature*

In this section, I discuss the secondary literature that identifies the subjective deduction with Kant's discussion of the threefold synthesis. One scholar, Nathan Bauer, disputes this identification, and I have already addressed his view earlier in Section 4.5. My aim here is to show that the other interpretations of the subjective deduction fail to meet one or more of the interpretive desiderata.

Patricia Kitcher and Andrew Brook both take its point to be fundamentally psychological in explaining how the understanding relates to its objects.⁸³ My interpretation agrees in many ways with these, but the greater specificity of my account allows my account, unlike theirs, to answer (D5). Hua Terence Tai, following a suggestion of Kitcher's, takes the subjective deduction's goal to be to deduce transcendental apperception.⁸⁴ Although I agree that something like a deduction for transcendental apperception is given in the subjective deduction, this cannot its *sole* point. For then it would not make sense for Kant to claim that it is inessential to the main purposes of the objective deduction. Thus, Tai's account fails to satisfy (D5).

⁸³ Kitcher 1990: 65, 91-116; Brook 1994: 105-21.

⁸⁴ Tai 1995.

Corey W. Dyck also takes the point to be psychological, but his account is much more specific and historical.⁸⁵ Insofar as the subjective deduction uncovers three subjective sources of representations, Dyck takes the point to be rebut the Wolffian view that there is only a single representational force responsible for our cognition. I find this reading to be persuasive. But if the point of the subjective deduction is *solely* what Dyck's account holds, there is no clear reason why Kant would have taken the Transcendental Deduction chapter to be the proper place for the argument Dyck finds. So even if Dyck is correct, his account needs to be supplemented by an interpretation that answers (D5), such as mine.

Wolfgang Carl argues that the subjective deduction assumes that we have transcendental apperception and aims to show with this assumption that concepts and thought are required for experience.⁸⁶ But as I have indicated above, the Transition section provides strong reason to think that Kant *assumes* that concepts and thought are required for experience. Moreover, in both versions of the Transcendental Deduction chapter, we find that Kant argues in the opposite direction. At A106-107, Kant argues for transcendental apperception by explaining how it is the "transcendental ground" for the syntheses of the understanding. Likewise, in the B edition Kant claims that "[t]he **I think** must **be able** to accompany all my representations" *because* "otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be *thought* at all" (B131-132, my emphasis). Even if Carl had an alternative reading of these passages, his account would still fail to meet (D5). For on Carl's account the subjective deduction is *necessary* for establishing a premise of the objective deduction. This fails to make sense of Kant's claim that the subjective deduction is inessential.

⁸⁵ Dyck 2008: 152-79.

⁸⁶ Carl 1989: 3-20.

Most recently, Henry E. Allison has emphasized that the subjective deduction aims to explain how the understanding is possible, which explanation is carried out by an investigation into the three subjective sources that make it possible.⁸⁷ Allison views this as important for the transcendental deduction because it would “explain how a real use of the understanding is possible”, i.e., a use that contributes to cognition of objects of possible experience.⁸⁸ Although I agree with these claims, Allison too has trouble with satisfying (D5). For he claims that the subjective deduction is not essential to answering the objective deduction’s “chief question” [*Hauptfrage*], namely, “What and how much can understanding and reason cognize free of all experience?” (Axvi).⁸⁹ Allison correctly points out that this is the chief question for the first *Critique* as a whole, and not just for the objective deduction. Recognizing this, Allison interprets the A-edition’s Preface as asserting that, unlike the objective deduction, the subjective deduction is not essential for answering the chief question. This seems correct so far, but Allison then states that the “the subjective side of the Deduction is an *indispensable complement* to its objective side”.⁹⁰ This additional claim, however, seems to make Allison’s interpretation inconsistent: if the subjective deduction is indispensable for completing the objective deduction, and if the latter is indispensable for answering the chief question of the first *Critique*, then the subjective deduction also would have to be indispensable for answering the chief question of the first *Critique*. This inconsistency is easily avoided if we interpret the subjective deduction not as an indispensable complement to the objective deduction, but rather as a mere complement. And on my interpretation, it complements the objective deduction primarily by elucidating the latter’s initial premise or starting point.

⁸⁷ 2015: 201.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 203.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: 199.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

4.9 *The Subjective Deduction in the B-Edition*

Nowhere in the B-edition does Kant mention a subjective deduction, but Kant's remarks in §15 can be read as preparing the reader in a manner similar to the A edition's subjective deduction. In §15, he begins the B-edition's transcendental deduction with an argument for the thesis that combination—something required for empirical cognition—cannot come from the senses:

[T]he **combination** (*conjunction*) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition (B129-30)

He argues for this claim as follows:

[f]or [combination] is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not [...] is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title **synthesis** in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves (B130)

In brief, Kant's argument is that the understanding is required for combination because it is responsible for an act of spontaneity. Interpreting this in light of my account of the subjective deduction in this chapter, we can understand Kant's point to be that the senses do not provide us with prepackaged objects inasmuch as the senses do not ensure that a bundle of representations is represented *as* combined. Instead, we ought to treat objects as conforming to our cognition, i.e., we ought to take the activity of the understanding as what makes it possible for us to represent combination as such. If this reading is correct, then the B-edition's transcendental deduction begins by offering brief elucidations of the A-edition's subjective deduction's two primary points. First, §15 elucidates the starting point of the objective deduction with a brief argument that the understanding is necessary for empirical cognition insofar as the latter requires a spontaneous synthesis for its combination. Second, it also prepares the reader for the

transcendental deduction's extension of the Copernican Revolution to the understanding; for it briefly suggests that "we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves" (B130).

4.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, I interpret the subjective deduction as showing how it is possible for the understanding to have a cognitive relation to objects, and the point of this is to elucidate the objective deduction's starting assumption and to prepare the reader for the objective deduction's Copernican Revolution.

Chapter 5: The Empirical Threefold Synthesis and Transcendental Sources of Cognition

In the previous chapter, I began my interpretation of the subjective deduction by carrying out the following tasks: (i) providing desiderata for a satisfactory interpretation of the subjective deduction; (ii) analyzing the key passages in which Kant characterizes the subjective deduction's overall aims; (iii) arguing that the subjective deduction has the twofold aim of elucidating the starting point of the objective deduction and of expanding the Copernican Revolution to the understanding; and, (iv) explaining how my account meets some of the interpretive desiderata. In this chapter, I begin interpreting the details of the subjective deduction by presenting Kant's argument for an empirical threefold synthesis carried out on the basis of three subjective sources of cognition. In Kant's text, he also argues in various places for a *pure* threefold synthesis grounded on a priori subjective sources of cognition. Given the special difficulties that Kant himself recognizes in arguing for pure syntheses, I shall delay an interpretation of that until the next chapter. Overall, however, I hope that the previous chapter and the ones following are mutually reinforcing. The previous chapter should provide a framework for the ones that follow, and the latter chapters should provide further evidence for the overall interpretation of the subjective deduction's aims.

Before proceeding, it will be useful to summarize some of the results offered in the previous chapter. To begin, recall that I interpret the objective deduction as follows:

Objective Deduction Argument Outline

- (OD1) All experience—i.e., empirical cognition—is possible only if intuition is thought by means of concepts.
- (OD2) The categories are a priori conditions for the thinking encountered in possible experience, i.e., for the thinking of intuition by means of concepts.

(OD3) Therefore, the categories are a priori conditions for all experience, and so have objective validity. [OD1-OD2]

On my interpretation, the objective deduction begins with (OD1) as a starting assumption, so its main task is to offer a demonstration of (OD2). But the subjective deduction offers what I have called an “elucidation” of (OD1) by showing how the understanding has a cognitive relation to objects of experience. Recall the following outline of the subjective deduction’s procedure:

Subjective Deduction Outline

- (SD1) Empirical cognition, or a possible experience, is a whole of compared and connected representations given in a manifold of sensible intuition.
- (SD2) The representations of a manifold of sensible intuition, given through our receptive faculty of sensibility, can be compared and connected to produce empirical cognition only through the spontaneity of the understanding.
- (SD3) This spontaneity of the understanding takes the specific form of a threefold synthesis, which is made possible by three corresponding a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition.
- (SD4) The understanding’s cognitive relation to objects, as well as experience itself (empirical cognition) is made possible by three a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition.

The subjective deduction begins with the assumption (SD1), viz., that we have empirical cognition. I have already discussed this assumption at length in the previous chapters. Unlike (OD1), (SD1) does not mention anything about the understanding’s role for empirical cognition. (SD2) advances that the understanding necessarily has a cognitive relationship to objects, and

(SD3) explains what makes possible that relationship. On this basis, the main aim of the subjective deduction, (SD4), can be asserted.

Kant does not, and perhaps cannot, proceed to carry through the above outline—based on Section 4.5 above—linearly. This is because showing that empirical cognition requires the spontaneity of the understanding, asserted by (SD2), and showing that it requires a threefold synthesis, asserted by (SD3), ultimately amount to the same task in Kant's procedure. Furthermore, carrying out (SD3) is not needed for Kant to advance (OD1), which does not refer to these a priori sources of cognition. This means that the subjective deduction goes beyond what he needs to elucidate the truth of (OD1). I explained in the last chapter that this further endeavor is to be understood as preparing the reader for the transcendental deduction by providing an elucidation of how the Copernican Revolution applies to the understanding. More fundamentally, the subjective deduction as a whole is inessential for Kant's main purpose because Kant needs only to assume (OD1) and not argue for it. Nevertheless, the subjective deduction is obviously relevant and crucial for Kant's aims in the transcendental deduction as a whole, which concern the a priori requirements of empirical cognition. In fact, we shall see that some arguments of the subjective deduction are shared by the objective deduction, such that the two deductions overlap. Or, to use Kant's description, there are two *sides* of the transcendental deduction. So later on I shall attempt to make clear which parts of the subjective deduction overlap with the objective deduction.

Before getting into the details of Kant's subjective deduction, it will help to consider two passages that frame the subjective deduction, one preceding it and one following it. These not only give us a sense of what to expect but also prove useful for clarifying what exactly Kant

means by “a priori and transcendental subjective source of cognition”. Here are the two passages:

There are, however, three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul), which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of the mind, namely **sense**, **imagination**, and **apperception**. On these are grounded 1) the **synopsis** of the manifold a priori through sense; 2) the **synthesis** of this manifold through the imagination; finally 3) the **unity** of this synthesis through original apperception. In addition to their empirical use, all of these faculties have a transcendental one, which is concerned solely with form, and which is possible a priori. We have discussed this **with regard to the senses** in the first part above, however, we will now attempt to understand the nature of the two other ones. (A94-5)

The possibility of an experience in general and cognition of its objects rest on three subjective sources of cognition: **sense**, **imagination**, and **apperception**; each of these can be considered empirically, namely in application to given appearances, but they are also elements or foundations a priori that make this empirical use itself possible. **Sense** represents the appearances empirically in **perception**, the **imagination** in association (and reproduction), and **apperception** in the **empirical consciousness** of the identity of these reproductive representations with the appearances through which they were given, hence in **recognition**. (A115)

It is important to note first of all that the three subjective sources are sense, imagination, and apperception. Thus, although much of what Kant discusses in the subjective deduction is directed at the threefold synthesis of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition, each of these syntheses is ultimately grounded on sense, imagination, and apperception, respectively. As we shall see later, the latter are “transcendental grounds” of the threefold synthesis, and this terminology is suggested by Kant’s claim in the former of the two passages above that the three sources have not only an empirical use but also a transcendental one. That is, each of the three subjective sources is transcendental insofar as it makes empirical cognition possible. Kant also claims that

this transcendental use “is possible a priori”. As we shall see in this chapter, showing that a subjective source is transcendental does not entail that it is also a priori.⁹¹

5.1 *Preliminaries*

Before seeing the details of the subjective deduction, it will be helpful to have a summary of Kant’s own titles and sectioning of the main body of the subjective deduction, viz., the Second Section of the Transcendental Deduction chapter. Then, three preliminary remarks are needed to frame Kant’s investigation.

5.1.1 *Kant’s Division of the Text*

The subjective deduction is presented in the A-edition’s Second Section, titled “On the a priori grounds for the possibility of experience”.⁹² Given my interpretation so far, “a priori grounds” likely refers to the three subjective sources with which the subjective deduction is concerned and which Kant goes on to refer to in their transcendental roles as “transcendental grounds”: (pure forms of) sense, (transcendental) imagination, and (pure) apperception.

The Second Section begins with five paragraphs before a “Preliminary reminder”. The first four of these paragraphs summarize various claims from the Metaphysical Deduction as well as some of the remarks from the Transition concerning Kant’s argumentative strategy. The fifth and last paragraph presents the outline of the subjective deduction, which I discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

⁹¹ Cf. Kant’s discussion of the relationship between the transcendental and the a priori at A56/B80. My point here is not that the subjective deduction explicitly draws a contrast between the transcendental and the a priori; rather, it is that drawing such a contrast will help clarify for us what he is up to.

⁹² The Third Section is titled “On the relation of the understanding to objects in general and the possibility of cognizing these a priori”. I interpret this title to refer to the two tasks to be undertaken in the objective deduction: while “the relation of the understanding to objects in general” refers to the task of showing that the understanding’s categories have objective validity by relating to objects of empirical cognition, “the possibility of cognizing these a priori” refers to the task of showing that we have synthetic a priori cognition through the categories.

The remainder of the Second Section consists in a “Preliminary reminder” followed by four numbered subsections: “1. On the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition”, “2. On the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination”, “3. On the synthesis of recognition in the concept”, and “4. Provisional explanation of the possibility of the categories as a priori cognitions”. The first three of these numbered subsections contain most of the subjective deduction, but as I have already claimed and will support further, the subjective and objective deductions overlap with respect to what Kant writes about apperception. Thus, the third of these numbered subsections also contains part of the objective deduction. Similarly, the fourth numbered subsection contains material relevant to both the objective and the subjective sides of the deduction.

5.1.2 The Preliminary Reminder

Kant’s “Preliminary reminder” consists of the following:

The deduction of the categories is connected with so many difficulties, and necessitates such deep penetration into the primary grounds of the possibility of our cognition in general, that in order to avoid the long-windedness of a complete theory and nevertheless not to omit anything in such a necessary inquiry, I have found it more advisable to prepare than to instruct the reader in the following four numbers [i.e., the four numbered sections I mentioned above], and only then to represent the exposition of these elements of the understanding systematically in the immediately following third section. For this reason the reader should until then not be deterred by the obscurity that is initially unavoidable in a path that is thus far entirely unexplored, but which will, as I hope, be completely illuminated in that section.

The most important points to note here are Kant’s claims 1) that he is not presenting a complete theory; 2) that he is not omitting anything; 3) that in virtue of the difficulty of the task along with (1) and (2) he has “found it more advisable to prepare than to instruct the reader” with the four numbered subsections; 4) that the Third Section will present “the exposition of these elements of the understanding systematically”; and, 5) that the unavoidable obscurity of the Second Section is supposed to be illuminated in the Third Section.

Given that Kant writes of “the deduction of the categories”, (1) and (2) presumably refer to the transcendental deduction as a whole, not just one or the other of the subjective or objective deductions. This makes it surprising that Kant advances (1) because it threatens the status of the objective deduction. Even worse, it seems that he contradicts (1) by also asserting (2). Nevertheless, the apparent contradiction between (1) and (2) is likely best resolved by understanding (2) as meaning that he will not be omitting anything *essential*. Furthermore, (1) likely refers not to the transcendental deduction’s incompleteness with regard to showing that the categories have objective validity, but rather to the Transcendental Deduction chapter’s incomplete account of *how* the categories relate to intuition. Such a complete account requires at least the rest of Transcendental Analytic.

Claim (3) can be understood in light of the interpretation of the subjective deduction advanced in the previous chapter. Part of the “preparation” consists in giving the subjective deduction, which will help elucidate the first premise of the objective deduction and will show how the Copernican Revolution can be extended to the understanding. But given that the subjective and objective deductions overlap in the third subsection of the Second Section and that subsection four of the Second Section also contains materials pertaining to the objective deduction, part of the preparation must consist in remarks that go beyond accomplishing the subjective deduction. All of this preparation is for the heart of the objective deduction, referred to by (4).

Given the many obscurities within the Second Section of the Transcendental Deduction chapter, (5) might just refer to the general preparatory and elucidatory nature of the Second Section. But as I shall argue in Section 7.2 below, this claim might also refer especially to one

specific issue that arises within the subjective deduction, viz., the lack of a proof or demonstration for one of the subjective deduction's key theses.

5.1.3 *Kant's General Remark*

After the Preliminary Reminder, Kant begins his first numbered subsection, but even this contains a further preliminary remark whose scope includes all of the subjective deduction. In Kant's own words, it is a "general remark on which one must ground everything that follows":

Wherever our representations may arise, whether through the influence of external things or as the effect of inner causes, whether they have originated a priori or empirically as appearances — as modifications of the mind they nevertheless belong to inner sense, and as such all of our cognitions are in the end subjected to the formal condition of inner sense, namely time, as that in which they must all be ordered, connected, and brought into relations. (A98-9)

Put more briefly, Kant's claim here is that all our representations are "subjected to the formal condition of inner sense, namely time". This is a claim that Kant makes elsewhere.⁹³ The basic thought is that there are two types of objects that we can cognize: objects of inner sense—i.e., our own representings insofar as they are taken as objects—and objects of outer sense—i.e., objects that appear external to us in space, as well as in time. This claim serves as a premise for 'everything that follows' in two senses. First, when taken with other premises, it will entail that any empirical cognition had through a manifold of our sensible intuition requires a synthesis of apprehension. Since the synthesis of apprehension presupposes the need for the following two syntheses of reproduction and recognition, the claim grounds the *overall* argument for the threefold synthesis. Second, the claim will again be appealed to explicitly in the *specific* arguments for each of the three syntheses. Hence, "everything that follows" includes both the overall argument for the threefold synthesis and the specific arguments for each of the three syntheses.

⁹³ A34/B51, A138/B177, A142/B181, A155/B194.

5.2 *The Synthesis of Apprehension in Intuition*

With these preliminaries out of the way, we can now consider the argument of the subjective deduction, which begins with the aforementioned synthesis of apprehension in intuition.⁹⁴

5.2.1 *The Representation of a Manifold of Intuition*

Kant begins as follows:

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for **as contained in one moment**, each representation can never be anything other than absolute unity. (A99, translation slightly modified)

Kant does not make explicit here why it must be the case that “[e]very intuition contains a manifold in itself”, rather than some single sensible representation. But recall that in Kant’s own outline of the subjective deduction (explained in Section 4.5 above), he describes it as concerned with cognition as a whole of compared and connected *representations*. Obviously, multiple representations, i.e., a manifold, is required for genuine comparison and connection.⁹⁵ Hence, Kant’s opening premise is that empirical cognition requires intuition that contains a manifold of representations in itself.

It is crucial to note that although Kant makes an inference from this initial premise, he does so by stating that the manifold be “represented as such”. That is, the cognitive subject must represent the manifold of intuition as manifold, i.e., be aware that she is presented with a multiplicity of elements. Hence, Kant’s first premise is more precisely formulated as holding that empirical cognition requires that every intuition contains a manifold in itself, *which manifold is*

⁹⁴ Other detailed discussions of the synthesis of apprehension can be found in Allison 2015: 206-12, Brook 1994: 125-7, Longuenesse 1998: 36-8, and Paton 1936: 359-363.

⁹⁵ This also makes sense on my account of empirical cognition as rational sensory discrimination: in order for a subject to make identifications or differentiations, she must be presented with multiple things.

represented as such. Furthermore, Kant's argument also appeals to a manifold whose multiple elements are successively presented in time, i.e., a diachronic manifold, rather than a manifold whose multiple elements are presented simultaneously, i.e., a synchronic manifold.⁹⁶ Thus, the first premise of the argument here can be formulated as follows:

- (A1) Empirical cognition requires intuition that contains a diachronic manifold in itself, which is represented as manifold.

Even if it is clear that Kant begins with this premise, Kant's text here does little to answer two questions. First, why are we concerned with a manifold that is represented as such? Second, why are we concerned with a diachronic rather than a synchronic manifold?⁹⁷ With regard to the first question, it is not clear that cognition considered merely as "a whole of compared and connected representations" would require representing a manifold as such. With regard to the second question, it seems quite possible that one could represent simultaneously a whole of compared and connected spatial representations given all at once. So, it seems that there is no reason that Kant should limit his focus to diachronic manifolds.

Let us consider these questions in reverse order. It might be thought that an answer to the second question could be given by appealing to Kant's initial "general remark" that all our representations belong to inner sense and are thus subjected to time. Henry Allison makes such an appeal in responding to roughly the same question.⁹⁸ With the general remark noted, he answers the question by distinguishing "between a manifold being given successively and being

⁹⁶ Kant later reiterates the view that the manifold of intuition at issue for apprehension is diachronic: "The apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive. The representations of the parts succeed one another. Whether they also succeed in the object is a second point for reflection, which is not contained in the first." (A189/B234, cf. A198/B243; cf. R5661)

⁹⁷ The only discussions of this latter, but crucially important, question in Anglophone scholarship I can find are in Allison 2015: 208 (who also notes much older French- and German-language scholarship on the issue) and Brook 1994: 126-7.

⁹⁸ 2015: 208.

given as successive”, and he argues that only the former but not the latter is entailed by the general remark.⁹⁹ That is, in claiming that a manifold need not be given *as* successive, I take it that Allison means that empirical cognition in general does not require a representation of something diachronic, so that Kant’s argument is applicable to even synchronic manifolds. Allison’s view is that, according to the general remark, even a synchronic manifold must be given successively, and this requires a temporal process of the mind—e.g., of running through and holding together the manifold items—in order for the mind to compare and connect representations.

Although I agree that the general remark is important for resolving the issue at hand, more needs to be said beyond what Allison states. For the general remark requires merely that a synchronic manifold be presented at some time, successive to other representations and succeeded by still others. In other words, it is consistent with the general remark that a merely synchronic manifold of intuition be presented to the mind, just so long as this manifold is presented at some moment in time. All that this would require is that what is given successively are three things: the representations preceding the manifold, the manifold, and those following the manifold; but this does not require that the representations of the manifold of intuition are themselves given successively. But if this is so, it is not clear that the mind must engage in successive acts to represent the synchronic manifold considered merely by itself.

What will help resolve this issue is a proper understanding of what is required for *cognizing* such a synchronic manifold, as opposed to the *mere representing* of it. Empirical cognition is the discrimination of sensory objects on the basis of normative reasons. Such a discrimination, however, cannot be achieved by the mere presentation of a synchronic manifold

⁹⁹ Ibid.

to the cognitive subject. This is because the senses are passive and therefore do not present data to the mind in which representations are already processed as compared, connected, identified, or differentiated. Thus, if two geometric figures are contained in a synchronic manifold of intuition, the mind must at some point carry out mental acts of distinguishing them from their background as geometric figures, identifying them as geometric figures of particular sorts, differentiating them from each other, and doing so on the basis of a normative reason accessible to the cognitive subject. Furthermore, even supposing that in our everyday experience we sometimes can be presented with a synchronic manifold in which we immediately identify or differentiate its elements on the basis of normative reasons, this is possible only because of previous experience in which similar representations were processed.¹⁰⁰ In this last example, even though the cognitive subject is in one sense given a synchronic manifold that is cognized immediately, what makes this cognition possible is that this synchronic manifold is part of an even greater manifold of intuitive representations, and this latter manifold must be diachronic. In Allison's terms, the manifold of intuition must be given as successive. Thus, we can see that, in light of my account of empirical cognition, Kant has good reasons for advancing (A1).¹⁰¹

Let us now consider why a manifold needs to be represented as manifold in order for empirical cognition to be possible. This can also be clarified by my account of empirical

¹⁰⁰ In this connection we can consider Kant's claim that even the categories, despite their a priori status, are not innate but acquired (MM 29: 763, ML2 28: 542-3). I take it that this means their application requires that a cognitive subject have a succession of experiences in time before being able to use the categories.

¹⁰¹ Brook offers a similar view, arguing that "in order to distinguish different representations in simultaneous intuitions, we have to use the more discriminating kind of synthesis that Kant called recognition in a concept" (1994: 126). I agree that ultimately, even my proposed answer to the question entails that further syntheses of the mind, including reproduction and recognition, are required. But Brook's point is ultimately true for *any* manifold of intuition, including not just synchronic but also diachronic manifolds. More problematically for Brook's response is that Kant's claim in the opening sentence of the subjective deduction is that we must distinguish the time in any manifold of intuition, and appealing to the later synthesis of recognition does not explain why Kant holds this view.

cognition as rational sensory discrimination. For a rational sensory discrimination to be made, a cognitive subject must, on the basis of normative reasons, either identify something or differentiate things from each other. The mere capacity to identify or differentiate things does not require that a subject represent a manifold as such. For example, a computer program can identify a string of code within a manifold of code without having a representation of the manifold of code as being a manifold. Rather, it is because rational sensory discriminations are made on the basis of reasons that a cognitive subject must represent a manifold of intuition as manifold. Namely, any reason that a cognitive subject might be able to give for identifying or differentiating things must appeal to a plurality of representations, including both representations of the things identified or differentiated and representations of wherein those things are alike or dissimilar. A normative reason, then, is a representation of a manifold *as manifold*.

5.2.2 *The Mind's Distinguishing of Time*

Now that we have the first part of the first sentence analyzed, we can consider the first argument that Kant himself presents in the passage. Recall that the first sentence in full runs as follows:

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for [*denn*] **as contained in one moment**, each representation can never be anything other than absolute unity. (A99)

Kant's inference in this sentence is from (A1) to the following conclusion (C):

- (C) Empirical cognition requires distinguishing the time in the succession of impressions on one another (presumably these impressions are the representations in the manifold).

This conclusion means that the distinguishing of time is necessary for empirical cognition to represent a diachronic manifold as manifold. As indicated by the word “for” [*denn*], Kant makes

this inference by advancing the claim that “as contained in one moment, each representation can never be anything other than absolute unity”. This is a particularly opaque assertion, even for Kant, because the notions of “one moment” and “absolute unity” are not elaborated upon.

In attempting to tease out an understanding of Kant’s opaque assertion, several interpreters hold that Kant maintains that it is possible for a representation to be contained in one moment and be an absolute unity.¹⁰² But this fails to make intelligible the opaque assertion’s context within the argument for (C). For consider what would be the case if time were *not* distinguished in the succession of impressions on one another. In that case, we could consider each of the representations of a manifold of intuition *only* “as contained in one moment”. That is, any representation would not be related in time to any other representations. This can clue us in to what it would mean for such a representation to be an “absolute unity”. Recall from above that a cognitive subject’s representations can be related to one another only by means of time. So if each of the representations of a manifold of intuition is not related in time to any other representations, then it would not be related at all to any other representations. Hence, no such representations could be united to one another. This means that each such representation could constitute only a unity with itself, i.e., in Kant’s terms “can never be anything other than absolute unity”.

Accordingly, by “absolute unity” in this context, I understand Kant to mean something that constitutes a unity without being dependent on—and hence, in one sense, relative to—anything else. Furthermore, in claiming that a representation “can never be anything other than absolute unity”, I understand Kant to mean that such a representation can constitute *merely* or *only* an absolute unity, and so cannot also constitute a unity with other representations. Based on

¹⁰² See Allison 2015: 208-12 for an example and a discussion of several views, along with Kitcher 1990: 149.

the analysis above, we can conclude that if time were *not* distinguished in the succession of impressions on one another, then none of those representations—each being contained in one moment and constituting merely an absolute unity—could be related to one another by a cognitive subject. But it is clear that cognition requires that representations be related to one another, whether cognition be rational sensory discrimination or a whole of compared and connected representations. It follows that, if cognition is to be possible, time must be distinguished in the succession of impressions on one another.

Accordingly, we can formulate Kant's argument as follows:

- (A1) Empirical cognition requires intuition that contains a diachronic manifold in itself, which is represented as manifold.
- (A2) If time were not distinguished in the manifold of intuition, then each of the representations in the manifold of intuition would be contained in one moment.
- (A3) If a representation were contained in one moment, then it would be nothing other than absolute unity, i.e., it would constitute merely a unity all by itself without being dependent on anything else.
- (A4) Representations that are nothing other than, i.e., merely, absolute unities cannot be united with or related to one another.
- (A5) If time were not distinguished in the manifold of intuition, then it would not be possible for the mind to relate to one another each of the representations contained in the manifold of intuition. [from A2-A4]
- (A6) If the mind could not relate representations to one another, then it could not represent those representations as manifold, and so it could not have empirical

cognition involving an intuition containing a diachronic manifold in itself, which is represented as manifold.

- (C) Empirical cognition requires distinguishing the time in the succession of impressions on one another. [A1, A5, A6]

Going forward, what is most important here is the starting assumption (A1) and the conclusion (C). That is, what Kant has established so far is that empirical cognition requires:

- (i) an intuition that contains a diachronic manifold in itself;
- (ii) the representation of this diachronic manifold as manifold; and,
- (iii) the distinguishing of time in the succession of the representations in the manifold of intuition.

5.2.3 *The Empirical Synthesis of Apprehension*

With these results, Kant's next step is to argue for the synthesis of apprehension. He writes:

Now in order for **unity** of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then to take together this manifoldness, which action I call the **synthesis of apprehension**, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained **in one representation**, without the occurrence of such a synthesis. (A99)

This passage indicates another requirement of empirical cognition in addition to (i)-(iii), namely:

- (iv) the manifold of intuition must be represented *as a unity*.

Just as the requirement for representing intuition as manifold follows from Kant's account of empirical cognition, so too the requirement for representing it as united is required by that account of cognition. In terms of my interpretation of empirical cognition, when a cognitive subject makes a rational sensory discrimination, she must do so on the basis of normative reasons. This means that the cognitive subject not only must have a representation of a single

thing that she discriminates but also a single or united representation of how that thing is similar or dissimilar to other things.

Let us consider an example that will help us with the above point and throughout our discussion of Kant's subjective deduction. Suppose I visit a pet shelter holding my cat Bella with several other cats, and I take myself to have discriminated her as distinct from the other cats. Empirical cognition requires that I have made this discrimination on the basis of a normative reason, i.e., a rationale that I could offer if I asked why I made my discrimination. Suppose in this case that I discriminate what I take to be Bella by noticing a cat with a distinctive white spot of fur on its forehead. Thus, the possession of this distinctive spot is my normative reason for my discrimination. Now both my identification of Bella and my normative reason for that identification could be faulty: it could be that Bella no longer has the distinctive spot and some other cat has one, thereby making my discrimination incorrect; and it could be that the color of a cat's fur changes often enough to make this basis for discrimination a faulty one. Whether or not the discrimination is correct and whether or not the normative reason is a good one, my identification of what I take to be Bella counts as an empirical cognition.

Now consider how in this case a diachronic manifold of intuition must be represented both as manifold and as united. There must be manifold representations both diachronically, e.g., various representations of Bella and her parts over time, and synchronically, e.g., representations of multiple cats and their parts at the pet shelter. As we have already seen above, in order to have available a normative reason for discriminating Bella, these manifold representations must be represented as manifold. For example, in order to have a normative reason I must have separate representations of Bella earlier in time, Bella later in time, her parts earlier in time, her parts later in time, other cats and their parts, and so on. The further point now is that I must also represent

manifold representations as united in order to have available a normative reason for discriminating Bella. There must be a minimal unification of diachronic representations and a representation of that unity as such. For example, my normative reason must represent as a unity the earlier representations of Bella and her parts along with later representations. Likewise, there must be a minimal unification of synchronic representations and a representation of that unity as such. For example, my normative reason must unite together the multiple representations of cats at the cat shelter in order to identify or differentiate the cats.

More abstractly, insofar as empirical cognition requires a sensory discrimination based on normative reasons, a cognitive subject's normative reason must represent a manifold of intuition both as manifold and as a unity. Therefore, even if a manifold of intuition could perhaps be *given* without being united, a subject can have *cognition* through what is given to her only if she represents those manifold representations as minimally united.

Given requirements (i)-(iv), we can see why the synthesis of apprehension in intuition is required for empirical cognition. According to the above passage, the synthesis of apprehension in intuition is the act of running through and taking together the manifoldness [*Mannigfaltigkeit*] provided by the manifold of intuition. The cognitive subject's mind must run through the manifoldness of intuition in order to meet requirements (ii) and (iii); for without running through the various representations, the cognitive subject could neither represent the manifold of intuition as manifold nor distinguish the time in the succession of those various representations. Likewise, the cognitive subject's mind must take the representations together in order to meet requirement (iv); if the mind only were to run through the representations but not bring them together, then there would be no overall unity for the subject to represent. Put all together, the running through of representations makes for the possibility of a representation of a manifold as such and the

taking of those representations together makes for the possibility of representing that manifold as a unity.

Hence, in addition to the receptivity of being given a manifold of sensible intuitions, empirical cognition requires that there be at least this one form of spontaneous action on the part of the mind itself, namely, a synthesis through which that manifold is apprehended as manifold in a united intuition. Kant defines a synthesis as “the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition” (A77/B103), and this indeed characterizes the mind’s action here.¹⁰³ Kant calls this the synthesis one of “apprehension” because “it is aimed directly at the intuition” (A99). I take it that Kant’s thought with this naming is based on the literal meaning of “apprehend”: to grasp or seize physically. Just as a physical grasping *directly* touches the object(s) grasped, so too the synthesis of apprehension *directly* works on intuition. As we shall see, this directness of the synthesis of apprehension distinguishes it from the syntheses of reproduction and recognition, which operate only indirectly upon intuition via the direct activity of the synthesis of apprehension.

5.2.4 *The Pure Synthesis of Apprehension and Its Transcendental Ground*

So far, Kant takes the above argumentation to suffice to establish that empirical cognition requires a synthesis of apprehension. Recall from the introduction of this chapter that the subjective deduction must further show two things about this synthesis. First, it must show that it is exercised a priori. Second, a transcendental ground of the synthesis needs to be identified.

Kant carries out the first of these two tasks by arguing that we have a pure or a priori synthesis of apprehension:

¹⁰³ Cf. the following description of synthesis: “Only the spontaneity of our thought requires that this manifold first be gone through, taken up, and combined in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it. I call this action synthesis” (A77/B102).

Now this synthesis of apprehension must also be exercised a priori, i.e., in regard to representations that are not empirical. For without it we could have a priori neither the representations of space nor of time, since these can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides. We therefore have a **pure** synthesis of apprehension. (A99-100)

Kant's argument here relies on the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic, namely that we have a priori intuitions of space and time. Recall that at A94-5, Kant claimed that "[w]e have discussed [the a priori use of a faculty] **with regard to the senses** in the first part above, however, we will now attempt to understand the nature of the two other ones." (A94-5). In the Transcendental Aesthetic, he argued that space and time are pure or a priori forms of our sensible intuition, through which we can have a priori mathematical cognition. Thus, sense, considered as a source of our representations of space and time, has already been shown to be an a priori subjective source of cognition.

Since space and time are represented by us as unities of a manifold of points and instants, respectively, we can apply Kant's earlier argument concerning the representation or cognition of something as manifold and as united. Namely, they require the action of running through and taking together manifold representations, i.e., they require a synthesis of apprehension. But since space and time are pure or a priori representations, this synthesis of apprehension must itself be pure and a priori.

Kant ends here his discussion of the synthesis of apprehension in order to move on to the synthesis of reproduction. Thus, he does not explicitly identify the transcendental ground, and hence the subjective source, of the synthesis of apprehension. But recall that he identifies this at A94-5 and A115 with *sense*. To understand this, consider what *source of representations* is required for the *activity* of representing something both as manifold and as unity, which activity is carried out in the form of the synthesis of apprehension. It is clear that the representations of

space and time are required here, as they provide the most fundamental forms of manifold representations (points and instants) that are united (in the wholes of space and time). Thus, the transcendental ground for the synthesis of apprehension is sense insofar as it has the pure forms of space and time.

5.3 *The Synthesis of Reproduction in Imagination*

We have seen much obscurity in Kant's discussion of the synthesis of apprehension, but things do not get any easier. To understand the details of his discussion of the synthesis of reproduction, it is helpful to consider where he intends to end up. Accordingly, I shall begin by summarizing the final conclusions Kant asserts.

5.3.1 *Three Conclusions*

The final paragraph of the subsection runs as follows:

The synthesis of apprehension is therefore inseparably combined with the synthesis of reproduction. And since the former constitutes the transcendental ground of the possibility of all cognition in general (not only of empirical cognition, but also of pure a priori cognition), the reproductive synthesis of the imagination belongs among the transcendental actions of the mind, and with respect to this we will also call this faculty the transcendental faculty of the imagination. (A102)

Kant advances here three conclusions. First is the thesis that the synthesis of apprehension is “inseparably combined with” the synthesis of reproduction. This might mean one of two things: a) if the synthesis of apprehension is to produce empirical cognition, then the synthesis of reproduction must also occur; or, b) the synthesis of apprehension all on its own presupposes the synthesis of reproduction. It is common for interpreters to advance (b), which is a natural reading if we look ahead and see that Kant holds that the synthesis of reproduction “would be in vain” without the synthesis of recognition (A103). Interpretation (b) would thus hold that each synthesis has as its necessary condition the next one, setting aside the issue of how each might contribute to empirical cognition: the synthesis of apprehension presupposes that of

reproduction, which in turn presupposes the synthesis of recognition. Alternatively, I suggest that interpretation (a) makes better sense of Kant's argument. As we have already seen, I have shown that Kant's extremely obscure opening sentence of the subsection on the first synthesis is made intelligible if we understand Kant as presupposing that we have empirical cognition with the aim of investigating what makes it possible. Furthermore, we shall see that Kant's argument for holding that the synthesis of apprehension requires the synthesis of reproduction works only if it is supposed that the synthesis of apprehension is supposed to produce empirical cognition.

The second sentence of the above passage provides a brief argument for the passage's second conclusion, namely, the thesis that "the reproductive synthesis of the imagination belongs among the transcendental actions of the mind". The reproductive synthesis of the imagination is transcendental insofar as it is necessary for the possibility of empirical cognition. Kant's brief argument here is easy enough to summarize if we recall what Kant purported to have achieved in the previous subsection. As argued in the previous subsection, the synthesis of apprehension is transcendental insofar as it is necessary for the possibility of empirical cognition. But if this thesis is joined with the previously stated conclusion that the synthesis of apprehension is inseparably combined with the synthesis of reproduction, then the second conclusion that follows is that the synthesis of reproduction is transcendental by likewise being necessary for the possibility of any cognition. The success of this argument depends crucially, therefore, upon Kant's case for the first conclusion.

The third conclusion given in the above passage is that we have a "transcendental faculty of imagination". As we shall see Kant's analysis of the synthesis of reproduction shows that such a synthesis must be carried out by what Kant calls "imagination". Accordingly, the imagination is the transcendental ground of the synthesis of reproduction, and it is therefore one of the

subjective sources of cognition that is the concern of the subjective deduction. Insofar as Kant shows the imagination makes possible empirical cognition by means of an empirical synthesis of reproduction, it is clear that Kant is warranted in calling it transcendental.

But recall that Kant's ultimate aim is to show that the three subjective sources of cognition are not merely transcendental in this way but also a priori, i.e., they furnish a priori representations for the synthesis of reproduction to be exercised a priori. In the above paragraph, Kant does not mention these further claims, although he does imply them earlier in his discussion of the synthesis of reproduction. As we shall see, however, this is a particularly vexing issue. But before we come to that, let us first consider what exactly the synthesis of reproduction does and how Kant attempts to establish that it is inseparably combined with the synthesis of apprehension.

5.3.2 *The Need for a Synthesis of Reproduction*

Kant begins this subsection with the following sentence:

It is, to be sure, a merely empirical law in accordance with which representations¹⁰⁴ that have often followed or accompanied [*begleitet*] one another are finally associated [*vergesellschaften*] with each other and thereby placed in a connection [*Verknüpfung*] in accordance with which, even without the presence of the object [*die Gegenwart des Gegenstandes*], one of these representations brings about [*hervorbringt*] a transition of the mind to the other in accordance with a constant rule. (A100)

Just as Kant began the previous subsection with an obscure first sentence, so too he continues here by bringing in several considerations whose relevance is quite opaque. The crucial notion here is that of association, but nothing in the previous subsection (let alone anything else that

¹⁰⁴ I read Kant's initial use of the term "representations" here as referring to what is represented rather than the act of representing. The relevance of this will be considered in a later section.

came before in the *Critique*) made any reference to that notion. Our first task, then, is to work out what Kant means by association and why Kant is concerned with it.¹⁰⁵

First, it is necessary to specify what is associated. What are associated are “representations that have often followed or accompanied one another”. Thus, representations that are contiguous in time or space are associated with one another.¹⁰⁶ Second, it is necessary to specify what sort of connection there is between associated representations. Kant describes association as not merely putting contiguous representations into any sort of connection, but more specifically into “a connection in accordance with which, even without the presence of the

¹⁰⁵ Kant offers his most helpful and succinct characterization of association in the *Anthropology*: “The law of **association** is this: empirical ideas that have frequently followed one another produce a habit in the mind such that when one idea is produced, the other also comes into being” (7:176). Other discussions of association include: R5203, R5619, Brief 11:52; AF 25: 511-4; ML1 28:236, MM 29:883, ML2 28:585, and MD 28:674. Given that Kant, as I have held, includes Hume as an interlocutor in the transcendental deduction, one might be tempted to think that Kant’s mention of association (via the Germanic verb “vergesellschaften” at A100 and the more frequently used Latin-based noun “Assoziation” at A112-3, A115, A116, A121-5.) is a direct reference to Essay III of Hume’s *Enquiry*. But although the final edition of Hume’s *Enquiry* that we usually read both has “Of the Association of Ideas” as the title for Essay III and uses the word “association” three times, this version of the *Enquiry* was not the one read by Kant. Kant read a German translation of the *Enquiry* that was based on Hume’s second-edition text. In the second edition, Hume’s title for Essay III is “Of the Connexion of Ideas”. Likewise, the word “association” does not appear a single time therein, but instead Hume consistently uses the word “connexion” throughout. Furthermore, the notion of “association” could not have been introduced to Kant via the German translation of the *Enquiry*, which consistently translates “connexion” as “Verknüpfung”. Thus, unless the sparse translations of Hume’s *Treatise* contain any mentions of association, it is doubtful that Kant’s references to association in the A-edition of the first *Critique* directly refer to Hume. Elsewhere, however, Kant does describe Hume as appealing to association (B127, PRO 4:258). Nevertheless, there is good reason to think that Kant’s mentions of association *indirectly* refer to Hume. For, Kant carefully read Tetens’s *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung* [*Philosophical Essays about Human Nature and its Development*], which contains several mentions of “Association” and “Ideenassociationen” in its discussion of Hume on the concept of a causal connection (in “Section IV: On the concept of a causal connection” of the “Fourth Essay: On the Power of Thought and on Thinking”, 313, 316-7, 318, 320, 322, 323). Tetens treats association as a lawful connection—that is, based on a law of the mind—of representations (impressions or ideas), and the faculty he holds responsible for such connections is the imagination. But in presenting his principles of connection or association, Hume identifies not only imagination but also memory as playing a role in the association of ideas. Tetens does not mention memory, and Kant follows him in not mentioning a role for memory in making associations. Finally, the primary case of such an association is between things that temporally succeed one another, e.g., cause and effect.

¹⁰⁶ In addition to contiguity, Hume’s *Enquiry* specifies two additional principles of connection or association: resemblance and cause or effect.

object, one of these representations brings about a transition of the mind to the other in accordance with a constant rule”. Since this description is quite complex, we may break it up into parts so as to characterize association as an act of the mind that i) takes up contiguous representations; ii) places those representations in a connection in virtue of which the mind makes a transition from one representation to another, even if the object is not present; and, (iii) this transition occurs in accordance with a constant rule.

In the following sentence, Kant describes the constant rule of (iii) as a “law of reproduction”. This helps shed light on the relationship between association and reproduction. Since the constant rule mentioned is what guides the mind in making a transition from one representation to another representation associated with the first, it is the transition of the mind that counts as reproduction.¹⁰⁷ And since this transition is required for there to be association, reproduction is a necessary condition for association. And since this reproduction must operate in accordance with a constant rule, a law of reproduction is necessary for association.

Kant moves on after this first sentence to elaborate—in the remainder of the first paragraph and the start of the second paragraph—on the necessary conditions for (iii), i.e., the necessary conditions for a law of reproduction. But this still leaves unclear why and how exactly reproduction in general, whether it has a law or not, is involved in empirical cognition. That is, we might want to know the cognitive role played by association involving (i) and (ii). In the second half of the second paragraph, Kant describes some examples that illustrate more concretely what the synthesis of reproduction does to contribute to cognition, just before he presents the earlier-discussed concluding remarks of the final paragraph.

Kant’s illustrations run as follow:

¹⁰⁷ Kant discusses reproduction at several other places, including MD 28:674, ML2 28:585, MM 29:884, ML1 28:236, MV 28:448-50, Loses Blatt B 12 (23:18-20).

Now it is obvious that if I draw a line in thought, or think of the time from one noon to the next, or just [*auch nur*] want to represent a certain number to myself, I must necessarily first grasp [*fassen*] one of these manifold representations after another in my thoughts. But if I were always to lose the preceding representations (the first parts of the line, the preceding parts of time, or the successively represented units) from my thoughts and not reproduce them when I proceed to the following ones, then a whole representation would never, and none of the previously mentioned thoughts, not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, be able to arise. (A102)¹⁰⁸

For all three examples, Kant claims that “[he] must necessarily first grasp one of these manifold representations after another in [his] thoughts” (A102), which grasping activity is clearly performed via the synthesis of apprehension. Kant’s next sentence asserts that if the synthesis of apprehension is carried out without any reproduction of representations, then no “whole representation” could arise, e.g., the whole representations of “a line in thought”, of “the time from one noon to the next”, or of “a certain number”. Recall that the synthesis of apprehension was required for empirical cognition in order to represent a manifold of intuition both as manifold and as a unity. The synthesis of reproduction is necessary for the production of something further: a *whole* representation.¹⁰⁹ Recall that Kant’s characterization of cognition given just before the subjective deduction states that cognition is *a whole* of compared and connected representations.¹¹⁰ Thus, in this way, the synthesis of reproduction is a necessary condition for empirical cognition.

This summary of Kant’s view prompts several questions. First, what is it to have a *whole* representation, over and above a representation of a manifold of intuition as a *unity*? Second,

¹⁰⁸ I have modified the translation slightly. Notice that of the three examples, the first and third concern a priori representations: drawing a line in thought, which is an a priori spatial-geometrical representation, and representing a certain number to oneself, which is an a priori temporal-arithmetical representation. But the second example, thinking of the time from one noon to the next, is empirical in character. Thus, despite the surrounding material, the second example indicates that Kant is not merely concerned here with a priori representation or cognition—pace Allison 2015: 215-6—but also empirical cognition.

¹⁰⁹ As we shall see, the synthesis of reproduction is not sufficient; for the synthesis of recognition is also necessary.

¹¹⁰ Kant also asserts the necessity of a whole representation for cognition at R5221, MM 29: 800.

why is this required for empirical cognition? Third, why is a synthesis of reproduction necessary for producing a whole representation?

With regard to the first question, recall that the synthesis of apprehension makes possible a united representation, so a whole representation must involve something more. The basic idea is that, whereas representations that form a unity might not have any further connections to one another besides being brought together, representations that form a whole must bear further connections to one another. An illustration of this thought can be found in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*:

All objects of experience have their nature, for without this no experience is possible. Experience is not an aggregate of perceptions, but rather a whole of perceptions connected according to a principle. Consequently there must be a principle in every thing, according to which the perceptions are connected and this is — nature. (29: 934)

A mere aggregate counts as a unity, but it does not count as a whole in the sense that Kant is concerned with in analyzing experience or empirical cognition: a unity of representations that are connected to one another in regular ways.

One might object that the quoted passage does not fully support this way of distinguishing between a unity and a whole. For perhaps Kant is not drawing a distinction between an aggregate and a whole in general but rather between an aggregate and a whole, *the representations of which are connected according to a principle*. This objection is bolstered by another passage found in *Metaphysik L₁* (28: 266).¹¹¹ According to this passage, a whole

¹¹¹ Although this claim is made in the context of a discussion of the simplicity of the soul, the point here seems to be more general. Here is the passage in full: “One and precisely the same simple thought can take place only in one simple subject. For if the parts of the representations should be divided among many subjects, then each subject would have only one part of the representation, therefore no single subject would have the whole representation. But for the whole representation to be wholly in a subject, all parts of the representation must also be in the one subject. For if they are not connected together in the one subject, then the representation is not whole.”

representation must be a representation in which parts of a representation are connected together in one thing, and this means that a whole representation requires only that various partial representations be connected together into one, but not that they be connected according to a principle. Thus, I suggest that we understand a unity as the mere joining together of manifold representations into one representation and a whole representation as a unity whose partial representations bear connections to one another besides that of being united.

Although the direct textual support so far for this reading is somewhat weak, we shall see that this reading will help us make sense of both why the synthesis of apprehension suffices for forming a unity but not a whole representation and why the synthesis of reproduction is required for constructing a whole representation.

We can see why Kant is concerned with a whole representation, rather than a merely united one, by considering again that Kant is attempting to explain what is necessary for empirical cognition. Specifically, a whole representation is required for a cognitive subject to have a normative reason for making sensory discriminations. To count as a normative reason, a representation must represent both the thing(s) identified or differentiated and the mark(s) in virtue of which that thing is (or those things are) identified or differentiated. For as Kant claims in several *Reflexionen*, “[w]e cognize things only through marks” (R2279, R2281; cf. R2282-8), and this is because a mark is “[a] partial representation [that is] a ground of cognition for the whole representation” (R2282). But to represent a mark (or marks) as a ground for identifying or differentiating a thing (or things) requires not merely representing conjointly the mark(s) and the thing(s). In order for a mark to be a partial representation that is a *ground* of empirical cognition, i.e., a basis for a normative reason for sensory discrimination, it must have some connection to

whatever is discriminated, and this connection must be something more than that of being united in an aggregate with the thing discriminated.

As an example, consider again my rational sensory discrimination of Bella at the pet shelter. Recall that I discriminate her on the basis of the distinctive white spot of fur on her head. In this case, the ground of my cognition, i.e., my normative reason, is a mark that is a part of a larger whole, namely it is a part of Bella. Thus, in order to have a normative reason for making rational sensory discriminations, i.e., in order to have empirical cognition, one must have a whole representation in which representations are connected in determinate ways.

We have just seen why having a whole representation is necessary for empirical cognition. Given this explanation, we can see why Kant is concerned in this context with association. In order for a cognitive subject to have a whole representation in which marks are represented that can serve as normative grounds for cognition, there must be association. This is because the representation of a normative reason is itself a connection of multiple representations allowing for the mind to make a transition from one representation, e.g., a white spot on a cat's head, to another, e.g., Bella.

Unlike with the synthesis of apprehension, Kant does not give a direct characterization of the synthesis of reproduction. But on the basis of the above interpretation, we may offer one on his behalf. First, note that a synthesis of reproduction must do something more than merely reproduce representations, viz., it must synthesize or put together representations in some way. Thus, the synthesis of reproduction is the putting together of a whole representation by means of reproduction, which is carried out on the basis of laws of association, in order to bring back past representations in connection with each other or with present representations.

5.3.3 *The “Inseparable Combination”*

We can see finally why the synthesis of apprehension must be supplemented by the synthesis of reproduction. The synthesis of apprehension does not suffice for establishing associations or whole representations. Recall that the synthesis of apprehension grasps a diachronic manifold—in which manifold representations are given successively in time through inner sense—by running through and taking together the manifold representations. This allows for the manifold of intuition to be represented both as manifold and as a unity, but only insofar as they are *originally* given in succession, i.e., sensed. But a whole representation is one that requires *past* representations to represent marks that serve as grounds for discriminating something. For these past representations to contribute to forming a whole representation, they must be reproduced. But since the senses are passive, the representations in a manifold of intuition do not reproduce themselves, and so it is necessary that reproduction be carried out through an active or spontaneous synthesis. Hence, there must be a synthesis of reproduction.

Thus runs Kant’s argument for his conclusion that “[t]he synthesis of apprehension is therefore inseparably combined with the synthesis of reproduction” (A102). I take it that Kant’s claim that they are “inseparably combined” is meant to emphasize that the two syntheses are not to be understood as two temporally distinct operations; rather, these syntheses necessarily occur jointly in the operation of the mind that produces empirical cognition.

5.3.4 *Imagination as the Transcendental Ground of the Synthesis of Reproduction*

Finally, this synthesis of reproduction requires that the imagination be a second transcendental source of cognition. Kant does not make clear how this is so, but it becomes clearer when we consider his definition of the imagination. In the B-Deduction, Kant defines the imagination as “the faculty for representing an object even without its presence in intuition”

(B151). Since reproduction produces a representation of what was once present in intuition but is now no longer so, it is clear that this must occur through the faculty of imagination. Since imagination must ground any reproduction, and since cognition requires a synthesis of reproduction, it follows that the imagination is a transcendental source of cognition in that it makes possible the synthesis of reproduction necessary for cognition. Although Kant holds that the imagination is also a priori or pure, there are many difficulties with his argument for that further view. We will return to them in Chapter 7.

5.4 *The Synthesis of Recognition in the Concept*

Kant next aims to show that yet another synthesis is required for empirical cognition, the synthesis of recognition, and he will go on to show that this synthesis must be grounded on another subjective source of cognition, what he calls “apperception”. In this section, we consider that subjective source of cognition only empirically, what Kant calls “empirical consciousness”, and we shall return to its a priori status in Chapter 6.

5.4.1 *Why the Synthesis of Recognition Is Necessary for Empirical Cognition*

Kant begins by noting that, just as the synthesis of apprehension presupposes that of reproduction in order to produce empirical cognition, so too the synthesis of reproduction presupposes another synthesis:

Without consciousness that that [*das*] which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain.¹¹² For it [*es*, i.e., that which we think] would be a new representation in our current state, which would not belong at all to the act through which it had been gradually generated, and its manifold [*das Mannigfaltige derselben*, i.e., the manifold of the new representation in our current state] would never constitute a whole, since it would lack the unity that only consciousness can obtain for it. (A103)

¹¹² In light of what I argued in Section 3.2.1, it is notable that this is Kant’s first use of the term “consciousness” in the A-deduction.

Without using the term itself, Kant begins this passage by describing recognition, characterized as a “consciousness that that which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before”. Unfortunately, Kant is clear about neither what is recognized nor the sense in which something is recognized as the same.

Kant goes on to offer an example that sheds some light on both of these issues.

If, in counting, I forget that the units that now hover before my senses were successively added to each other by me, then I would not cognize the generation of the multitude through this successive addition of one to the other, and consequently I would not cognize the number; for this concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of the synthesis. (A103)

Before explicating this example, it should be noted that it is somewhat misleading for Kant’s main aim, since it describes neither an example of *empirical* cognition nor an example in which empirical reproduction is involved. Nevertheless, the example can apply to empirical cognition insofar as the act of recognition involved in counting is similar to the one involved in empirical cognition. Kant is clear in the counting example that what is recognized is not any of the numbers, i.e., not the cognized objects. Rather, cognition of a counted number requires that one must remember or recognize “that the units that now hover before my senses *were successively added* to each other by me” (my emphasis). That is, what is recognized is the act of synthesis, which is in this case an act of successive addition. Kant elaborates this point by claiming that the concept of the counted number “consists solely in the consciousness *of this unity of the synthesis*” (my emphasis). Kant’s thought is that consciousness of the unity of the synthesis is a consciousness that there is one synthesis—viz., successive addition—that has been carried out throughout the process of generating the counted number.¹¹³ In other words, consciousness of the

¹¹³ As Allison observes, the type of recognition involved is not one in which two things are represented as (numerically) identical (2015: 218-9).

unity of the synthesis just is a recognition of there being one and the same synthesis throughout the entire process of generating the counted number.

In his preview summary of the threefold synthesis, Kant had already claimed that original apperception—which grounds the synthesis of recognition—is responsible for the unity of synthesis, specifically the synthesis *of reproduction* through imagination (A94). Much later in the A-edition’s Transcendental Deduction chapter, Kant indicates why the synthesis of reproduction needs a unity and how the synthesis of recognition provides such a unity:

if representations reproduced one another without distinction, just as they fell together, there would in turn be no determinate connection but merely unruly heaps of them, and no cognition at all would arise; their reproduction must thus have a rule in accordance with which a representation enters into combination in the imagination with one representation rather than with any others. (A121)

As we saw earlier, the synthesis of reproduction is necessary for producing connections between the representations of a cognized manifold of intuition. But such connections would not be *determinate* if reproduction were not guided by a rule. Thus, although the synthesis of reproduction on its own suffices for producing connections, it does not suffice for producing determinate connections, which Kant indicates is necessary for cognition. What is further necessary is a rule that guides the synthesis of reproduction, and this rule is provided by a concept.

After presenting the counting example, Kant indicates the need to appeal to concepts:

The word “concept” itself could already lead us to this remark. For it is this **one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation. [...] [O]ne consciousness [i.e., the empirical consciousness of recognition] must always be found [...] without that concepts, and with them cognition of objects, would be entirely impossible (A103-4).

Kant’s point here is that a concept provides for the unity of the whole process of synthesizing a manifold of intuition in order to produce cognition. The above passage does not make clear how

this is so, and Kant moves on to discuss the meaning of the expression “an object of representations”. But after that detour (the importance of which will be discussed in Section 6.3), Kant returns to the topic of how cognition requires concepts:

All cognition requires a concept, however imperfect or obscure it may be; but as far as its form is concerned the latter is always something general, and something that serves as a rule. (A106)

I suggest that Kant’s thought is that a concept makes possible a consciousness that a representation is the same as what came before—i.e., makes possible recognition—by providing a rule that serves two purposes or functions: 1) a rule that governs or guides the synthesis of reproduction in order to produce determinate connections; and, 2) a rule that enables a cognitive subject to represent those determinate connections as marks or as normative reasons.¹¹⁴

My account of empirical cognition as rational sensory discrimination makes clear the need for both of these functions of concepts to be fulfilled. Rational sensory discrimination requires that a cognitive subject have a representation of a normative reason for her identification or differentiation of things. As we have seen, such a representation must portray connections between the thing(s) identified or differentiated, and Kant describes these connections as marks. But the representation of a connection would not be a ground for discrimination if it did not represent a *determinate* connection between the mark and the thing(s) discriminated; otherwise the connection would not be reliable or constant and could not be intelligibly represented as grounding a normative reason for discrimination. The connections made by the synthesis of reproduction can be made determinate if they are made in accordance with rules that serve to make the connections reliable or constant. Thus, concepts serve the first of the two functions given above insofar as they serve as rules of synthesis.

¹¹⁴ This distinction is indebted to, but not identical with, one made by Longuenesse 1998: 46-50.

But the representation of a normative reason must not only represent determinate connections but also represent marks as normative reasons. A mark is either a concept of a thing or a part of a thing (R2282), or more generally “a partial representation, which as such is a ground of cognition” (R2286). If the mark is a concept of the discriminated thing, then the discriminated thing is connected to the mark in virtue of being *subordinated* under the latter.¹¹⁵ In order for a cognitive subject to represent a normative reason, not only must she have a representation of a mark as part of a whole, but also she must be able to represent a mark as a ground for her sensory discrimination. This is captured by Kant’s statement that “the understanding can make no use of [...] concepts than that of judging by means of them” (A68/B93). That is, a concept contributes to representing a normative reason by being used within a judgment. Put simply, normative reasons just are judgments, representations in which concepts are subsumed under other concepts.

Returning to our example, if I discriminate Bella on the basis of representing the distinctive white spot on her head, this representation would not count as a normative reason unless it served as a ground of cognition. For example, I must be able to cite or express it as a normative reason if I am asked for the basis of my sensory discrimination. For Kant, the representation that serves this function is a judgment—e.g., “Bella has a distinctive white spot on her forehead”—and this judgment deploys a mark that is conceptualized, viz., “distinctive white spot on her forehead”.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For more on this notion of subordination in Kant, see A 7: 138 and LB 24: 108.

¹¹⁶ The appeal to judgment allows Kant to avoid restricting empirical cognition to what we directly observe. For example, suppose that I were to tell a friend to go to the pet shelter to pick up Bella and that, because the friend has never seen Bella, I tell the friend about the distinctive spot of fur. In this case, when the friend discriminates and identifies a cat as Bella—again, whether correctly or not—he does so on the basis of a mark that is a concept, “having a distinctive white spot of fur on the head”, which concept is a partial concept of his whole concept of “Bella”. In this way, my friend can be said to have

Each of the two uses of concepts involves recognition. Insofar as a concept is a rule of synthesis (the first function of concepts), it guides the process of generating a representation of a reliable or determinate connection over time, and this involves a synthesis of recognition because there must be a consciousness of one and the same synthesis that produces a determinate connection. Insofar as a concept is a rule of judging (the second function of concepts), it enables one to represent a reason for discrimination, and this involves a synthesis of recognition because there must be a consciousness that the marks contained in the concept are the same marks found in the sensible object(s) discriminated.

With these two functions of rules, we are now in a position to understand Kant's two reasons for asserting that if the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction were to take place without recognition, it "would be in vain" (A103), i.e., not contribute to empirical cognition.¹¹⁷ His first reason is that without a synthesis of recognition, an unrecognized reproduced representation "would not belong at all to the act through which it had been gradually generated" (A103). The synthesis of recognition enables a cognitive subject to use concepts as rules for synthesis by means of which she recognizes or is conscious of the unity of the synthesis of reproduction. Thus, without the synthesis of recognition, there would not be such a consciousness of the unity of the synthesis, i.e., reproduced representations would not be guaranteed to be related in rule-governed connections. In that sense, they "would not belong at all to the act through which [the reproduced representation] had been gradually generated". And as I argued above, determinate or rule-governed connections are necessary for empirical cognition insofar as a normative reason represents such connections. Thus, without the synthesis

empirical cognition even though the ground for his discrimination is not something that he directly observed.

¹¹⁷ Allison treats this phrase in the same way (2015: 218).

of recognition insofar as it involves the use of concepts as rules for synthesis, the earlier syntheses would be in vain insofar as they would not produce cognition.

Kant's second reason that the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction would be in vain without a synthesis of recognition is that the manifold of a reproduced representation "would never constitute a whole, since it would lack the unity that only consciousness can obtain for it" (A103). The synthesis of recognition enables a cognitive subject to use concepts as rules for judging, by means of which she recognizes marks of things as normative reasons. Thus, without the synthesis of recognition, a reproduced representation could not be relied upon to represent a normative reason, and hence it could not be represented as part of a whole representation, viz., a judgment, in which a mark is represented as a ground for discrimination. Thus, without the synthesis of recognition insofar as it involves the use of concepts as rules for judging, the earlier syntheses could not produce empirical cognition and would in that sense be in vain.

5.4.2 *Empirical Consciousness as the Transcendental Ground of Recognition*

Insofar as the empirical synthesis of reproduction deploys concepts, it is not possible through the passivity of the senses; rather, it must be carried out by the active or spontaneous understanding. For earlier in the Metaphysical Deduction, Kant asserted:

Concepts are [...] grounded on the spontaneity of thinking, as sensible intuitions are grounded on the receptivity of impressions. (A68/B93)

For each spontaneous synthesis of the understanding, Kant identifies a subjective source as its ground. The subjective source that grounds the empirical synthesis of recognition is, as Kant summarizes later, "**apperception** in the **empirical consciousness** of the identity of [...] reproductive representations with the appearances through which they were given" (A115). It is important to emphasize that although Kant identifies the source as apperception, the argument so

far has not yet referred us to *pure* apperception. Rather, all that is required for the *empirical* synthesis of recognition is *empirical* consciousness. Insofar as the faculty of apperception makes empirical cognition possible—by providing the empirical consciousness required for the empirical synthesis of recognition—the faculty can be considered to be *transcendental*. But as we shall consider in Chapter 6, Kant thinks that transcendental apperception is also pure, but that will take us beyond empirical synthesis to pure synthesis.

5.5 *Summary*

To conclude this chapter, I offer a brief summary of the roles played by each of the parts of the empirical threefold synthesis. I then shall take a step back and reflect on what sort of investigation Kant is engaged in. Finally, I shall state what still needs to be accomplished by Kant.

The synthesis of apprehension runs through a diachronic manifold of intuitive representations and takes them together, and in so doing the mind can represent the manifold of intuitive representations as manifold (in virtue of the act of running through the representations) and as united (in virtue of taking together all those representations). Representing the manifold of intuition as manifold and as united is necessary for empirical cognition because in order for a cognitive subject to have normative reasons for her sensory discriminations, she must have a representation that unites the manifold things of which she makes discriminations.

But the representation of a united manifold still does not suffice for a cognitive subject to have normative reasons. This is because those normative reasons must not merely represent the discriminated things together at once but also represent the marks in virtue of which the things are discriminated. Accordingly, the cognitive subject must have a whole representation in which marks are connected to objects. In order for this to happen, the synthesis of apprehension must be

accompanied by the synthesis of reproduction. The latter synthesis generates this whole representation *both* by creating copies of past representations that the mind has associated with the manifold representations contained in the united manifold represented through the synthesis of apprehension *and* by combining these copied representations with the representations with which they are associated.

But again, the twofold synthesis of apprehension and of reproduction would not suffice for the representation of a normative reason, and hence empirical cognition, if it were not carried out with a synthesis of recognition. This is because the representation of determinate connections between things, required for a whole representation, can be determinate only if those connections are made by the mind in accordance with a rule. Thus, concepts as rules of synthesis are needed for representing determinate connections. But concepts as rules of judging are also needed for representing determinate connections or marks as normative reasons and hence as communicable to others. Thus, a cognitive subject can represent a normative reason only if she forms a judgment in which the discriminated thing(s) and marks are conceptualized.

As should be clear, I have relied heavily on my interpretation of empirical cognition to make sense of Kant's arguments for the empirical threefold synthesis. More specifically, I have shown how each part of the threefold synthesis is necessary for empirical cognition insofar as the latter requires that sensory discriminations be made *on the basis of normative reasons*. Namely, a cognitive subject would not be able to represent normative reasons for her sensory discriminations if her mind did not perform the threefold synthesis. This, I believe, helps us to understand better the nature of Kant's investigation of the mind's cognitive faculties. Many commentators have balked at what seems to be the abstract psychological theorizing that fails to be informed by any empirical investigation. Strawson famously described the transcendental

deduction as “an essay in the imaginary subject of transcendental psychology”.¹¹⁸ This charge seems particularly apt of Kant’s theory of the threefold synthesis. But I think that this worry loses its force if we recognize that Kant is concerned not so much with explaining the conditions for the possibility of representations *in general* as with making clear what is necessary for representing *normative reasons*. That is, Kant’s inquiry is primarily epistemological, and it engages in psychological theorizing only to the extent that it is needed for making intelligible the representation of normative reasons.

That is surely not the last word on that subject, but I have also not yet stated my last word on Kant’s subjective deduction. For the subjective deduction aims to identify three transcendental *and a priori* subjective sources of cognition, along with the *a priori* syntheses based on each. In discussing the synthesis of apprehension, I have already indicated how the Transcendental Aesthetic provided Kant with the resources for identifying our sensibility as an *a priori* subjective source of cognition, on the basis of which an *a priori* synthesis of apprehension is carried out. Likewise, we have seen that the faculty of imagination’s empirical synthesis of reproduction and empirical consciousness’s (or empirical apperception’s) synthesis of recognition are necessary for empirical cognition. To that extent, the imagination and empirical consciousness are transcendental faculties. But we have not yet seen why there must be either an *a priori* synthesis of reproduction or an *a priori* synthesis of recognition, and hence why we must have *a priori* faculties of imagination and apperception. This is because Kant’s arguments for these further views are exceedingly complex. In the next chapter, I present Kant’s argument for apperception as an *a priori* subjective source of cognition. I do so prior to discussing the

¹¹⁸ 1966: 32.

imagination's a priori status because Kant's argument for pure imagination crucially relies on his theory of pure apperception. Thus, we shall return to the imagination in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Transcendental Apperception as an A Priori Subjective Source of Cognition

In the previous chapter, we saw how an empirical synthesis of recognition is necessary for empirical cognition, and we saw that that this empirical use is grounded on empirical consciousness. But to complete his aim in the subjective deduction, Kant needs to uncover the *pure* subjective source of cognition that grounds a pure synthesis of recognition and thereby makes possible a cognitive connection between the understanding and objects. It might seem as if the answer should be obvious based on a parallelism with the synthesis of apprehension. Just as the synthesis of apprehension *in intuition* is grounded on the subjective source of *pure intuition*, so too the synthesis of recognition *in the concept* might seem to be grounded on the subjective source of *pure concepts*, viz., *the pure understanding*. And since the Metaphysical Deduction was supposed to show that we do have pure concepts and a pure understanding, it thus might seem as if there is no further task to carry out.

But these semblances are incorrect. The parallel with the synthesis of apprehension cannot work because the aim of the subjective deduction is to identify three subjective sources of cognition that make possible the understanding's cognitive relationship to objects, and so the understanding cannot be one of those sources. Likewise, the Metaphysical Deduction cannot suffice for the subjective deduction's task because the mere fact that we possess a priori concepts does not guarantee that they have a cognitive relation to objects. Instead of attempting to identify the subjective source of pure concepts, Kant's procedure is to try to identify the capacity that enables a cognitive subject to recognize by means of concepts.

This, then, calls for a revision in how we view the earlier subjective sources. The subjective deduction does not aim to identify *the sources for various types of representations*; rather, the task is really to identify *the sources for activities (i.e., syntheses)* that use those

different types of representations. The former task would be redundant with other parts of the *Critique*: the Transcendental Aesthetic, the Metaphysical Deduction, and the Schematism each investigate how, respectively, our faculties of sensibility, understanding, and imagination provide pure representations. Accordingly, in identifying the pure subjective source of cognition for the synthesis of recognition, the task is to determine the source, not of concepts, but rather the a priori source or capacity that enables the mind to recognize by means of concepts in order to bring unity to the combined synthesis of apprehension and reproduction.¹¹⁹

In this chapter, I show why Kant thinks that merely empirical consciousness does not suffice for the synthesis of recognition, but that what is needed is not only a form of a priori consciousness but also *self*-consciousness. Kant calls this “transcendental apperception”. Accordingly, this chapter presents Kant’s argument for transcendental apperception as the ground of the synthesis of reproduction.

6.1 *The Overall Argument for Pure Apperception*

Kant’s strategy to show that transcendental apperception is a pure subjective source of cognition is most clearly outlined in the following passage, which follows a discussion of how a concept represents a “necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions”:

Every necessity has a transcendental condition as its ground. A transcendental ground must therefore be found for the unity of the consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions, hence also of the concepts of objects in general, consequently also of all objects of experience, without which it would be impossible to think of any object for our intuitions; for the latter is

¹¹⁹ A parallel is easy enough to make with the synthesis of reproduction: the imagination enables the activity of reproduction by being “the faculty for representing an object even **without its presence in intuition**” (B151). But it is harder to see how a parallel with the synthesis of apprehension could work. Since the senses are supposed to be a passive faculty, it seems that all they could do to enable the activity of apprehension is to be a source of representations that are united manifolds, viz., space and time. Perhaps this difficulty accounts for Kant’s opaque references to the senses being responsible for a “synopsis”, which seems to grant them with an active and not merely passive role. For more on the notion of synopsis, see Allison 2015: 201.

nothing more than the something for which the concept expresses such a necessity of synthesis. (A106)

After this passage, Kant goes on to argue that the necessity of a concept, insofar as it is a rule legislating necessary reproduction, has transcendental apperception as its transcendental ground. Since transcendental apperception is an a priori faculty, this amounts to showing that transcendental apperception is the pure subjective source of cognition that makes possible the synthesis of recognition. Schematically, the argument runs as follows:

- 1) The synthesis of reproduction is carried out by means of a concept that represents the necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions (this is the element of necessity of “the unity of the consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions”).
- 2) This necessity is possible only if grounded on transcendental apperception.
- 3) Transcendental apperception is the pure subjective source that makes possible the synthesis of reproduction.

In what follows I consider each premise in turn. Before doing so, I shall note a few reasons why this argument is of further importance beyond its contribution to the subjective deduction.

First, Kant’s argument here is, on my interpretation, one that is shared with the objective deduction. Namely, Kant begins by assuming that we have empirical cognition involving thought, i.e., judgments made by means of concepts. The above argument shows that transcendental apperception is a necessary condition for the understanding’s use of concepts for empirical cognition. And this is a crucial move for the objective deduction because Kant will go on to argue that transcendental apperception itself is possible only if the categories apply to objects of experience, i.e., have objective validity. Second, although Kant elsewhere (in the “argument from above” at A117, in the “argument from below” at A121-2, and in the B-

deduction at B131-2) presents similar arguments or considerations to show that empirical cognition presupposes transcendental apperception, none are as detailed or as illuminating as the argument presented in the subsection concerning the synthesis of recognition. Accordingly, our present task will shed light on one of the crucial steps of the objective deduction. Third, we shall see further reason to think that my account of empirical cognition is significant, for that account helps clarify the present argument under consideration.

6.2 *The Structure of Kant's Discussion of the Synthesis of Recognition*

In the subsection on the synthesis of recognition, we seem to find a patchwork of discussions that are hard to follow. I have managed so far to avoid discussing these complexities. But it is now suitable to give a layout of the subsection to clarify my approach in explaining Kant's support for Premises 1 and 2. The subsection can be roughly split up into the following parts:

- α) Paragraph 1: presents the need for the synthesis of recognition.
- β) Paragraph 2: links concepts with the synthesis of recognition and gives a brief account of what concepts are.
- γ) Paragraphs 3-5: shift to an explanation of the expression "an object of representations".
- δ) Paragraph 6: picks up where β seemed to leave off, namely by describing, in light of γ, how cognition requires concepts.
- ε) Paragraphs 7-9: present an argument for transcendental apperception as the ground of the necessity pertaining to concepts, and consequently as a necessary condition for cognition.

- ζ) Paragraphs 10-11: conclude the subsection by laying out how transcendental apperception is the source of an a priori synthetic unity, and this further determines the object of our representations (thereby following up on γ).

In explaining the empirical synthesis of reproduction, I appealed already to α , β , and δ , but I largely skipped γ . That discussion of “an object of representations” is dense and likely serves several purposes, but in the next section I focus on how it supports Premise 1 by showing how concepts involve an element of necessity. Then, in the following section I examine ϵ and various resources Kant has at his disposal for supporting Premise 2.

6.3 *Premise 1*

In the third through fifth paragraphs of the subsection on the synthesis of recognition, there are roughly five main theses Kant advances about the meaning of “an object of representations”:

- (i) an object of our representations “must be thought of only as something in general = X ” (A104);
- (ii) the thought of such an object involves necessity insofar as the object is regarded as not being determined merely “at pleasure or arbitrarily” (A104);
- (iii) this necessity is made possible insofar as our representations of the object “necessarily agree with each other in relation to it [*auf diesen*, i.e., the object or “*Gegenstand*”], i.e., they must have that unity that constitutes the concept of an object” (A104-105);
- (iv) this unity is “nothing other than the formal unity of the consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations” (A105); and,

- (v) to produce such a unity, this synthesis of the manifold of intuition must be carried out “in accordance with a rule that makes the reproduction of the manifold necessary a priori and a concept in which this manifold is united possible” (A105)

Most important for present purposes is (v), and it is clear that what provides the rule mentioned therein is a concept. Recall from the previous chapter that the synthesis of recognition in a concept is necessary for empirical cognition because a concept serves as a rule in two ways. First, as a rule of synthesis, a concept generates a whole of determinate connections between representations, specifically between the thing(s) discriminated and their mark(s). Second, as a rule of judging, a concept is a subject’s means of representing a mark as a normative reason for her sensory discriminations. For our present purposes, what needs to be clarified further is the manner in which concepts involve a kind of necessity, viz., how a concept represents a “necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions” (A106).

This necessity is something involved with all concepts, not just a priori ones. This is shown in δ , just before Kant discusses apperception directly, with an example of the empirical concept of body:

All cognition requires a concept, however imperfect or obscure it may be; but as far as its form is concerned the latter is always something general, and something that serves as a rule. Thus the concept of body serves as the rule for our cognition of outer appearances by means of the unity of the manifold that is thought through it. However, it can be a rule of intuitions only if it represents the necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions, hence the synthetic unity in the consciousness of them. Thus in the case of the perception of something outside of us the concept of body makes necessary the representation of extension, and with it that of impenetrability, of shape, etc. (A106)

Kant does not make it clear here that he is referring to an empirical concept of body, but this is entailed by his treatment of the concept as containing the mark of impenetrability, which Kant claims elsewhere to be empirical (B5, A173/B215). Insofar as a manifold of intuition is cognized by means of this empirical concept, the concept “represents the necessary reproduction of the

manifold of intuitions” (A106). The necessity here is a conditional one: if something is cognized as a body, then a cognitive subject must represent that thing as extended, impenetrable, having shape, etc. Some of what is necessarily reproduced are the marks analytically contained in the concept, such as extension, impenetrability, and shape (A8/B12). But some of what is necessarily reproduced are marks that are synthetically entailed by the concept but not analytically contained in the concept, i.e., not part of the concept’s meaning.¹²⁰ For example, if a cognitive subject holds that all bodies have weight, then she must reproduce the concept of weight in representing something as a body, even though the concept of weight is not analytically contained in the concept of body (A8/B11-2). Accordingly, the reproduced representations must display those combinations, features, or marks that are both necessary for something to count as a body and necessary insofar as we hold them to be constantly conjoined with (but not analytically contained in) the concept.¹²¹

Furthermore, this conditional necessity is a normative necessity, and this point is essential for Kant’s Premise 2. It is not merely a logical necessity because part of what is necessitated is the use of marks that are not analytically contained in the concept.¹²² But it is also not a causal necessity because Kant holds that a cognitive subject’s use of concepts via the understanding is spontaneous, i.e., not causally determined by a source independent of the subject (A68/B93).¹²³ By a “normative necessity” I mean roughly the following: something is normatively necessary if and only if it is required for a cognitive subject to be epistemically responsible.¹²⁴ A

¹²⁰ My discussion here is indebted to Allison 2015: 221-6 and Keller 1999: 51.

¹²¹ This form of necessity also means that some marks are necessarily not reproduced, e.g., those marks that it would be contradictory to join.

¹²² Cf. Allison 2015: 226.

¹²³ Cf. Allison 2015: 221-2.

¹²⁴ Allison’s closest attempt to characterize directly normative necessity appeals to the notion of “epistemic right”, but that seems too weak for necessity (2015: 268; cf. 365, 442). Allison also rightfully notes the connection between normative necessity and universal validity as discussed in the *Prolegomena*,

reproduction of representations is normatively necessary insofar as a cognitive subject would not be epistemically responsible (or even worse, would be epistemically unintelligible) if she did not perform that reproduction. Two examples can illustrate this. First, consider a cognitive subject who fails to reproduce the mark of extension in deploying the concept of body. Since extension is analytically contained in the concept of body, either it would be epistemically unintelligible to say that she deployed the concept of body or she would be epistemically irresponsible in deploying that concept. Second, consider a cognitive subject who holds the synthetic proposition that all bodies have weight. It is normatively necessary that she reproduce the mark of weight when she deploys the concept of body, and if she does not do so, she is epistemically irresponsible. This means only that she necessarily reproduces the mark of weight, not that she always has to be *conscious or aware* of the mark of weight when using the concept of body.¹²⁵

6.4 *Premise 2*

Let us now consider Premise 2, the thesis that transcendental apperception is the transcendental ground of the necessary reproduction of concepts just discussed. The essential features of the faculty of pure or transcendental apperception are provided in the following passage:¹²⁶

All possible appearances belong, as representations, to the whole possible self-consciousness. But from this, as a transcendental representation, numerical identity is inseparable, and certain a priori, because nothing can come into cognition except by means of this original apperception. (A113)

but that latter notion will not directly help us to define normative necessity because Allison himself notes that the two notions do not share the same meaning but instead merely reciprocally imply each other (Allison 2015: 295).

¹²⁵ Nevertheless, as we shall see, if she uses the concept, she *must be able* to become conscious of it.

¹²⁶ Note that sometimes Kant uses “apperception” to denote things other than faculties, e.g., mental acts. Cf. Kitcher 2006: 186-96.

There are three main features that characterize transcendental apperception. First, it is what makes possible a form of *self*-consciousness, on which empirical consciousness in concept use is grounded. Second, it also involves the cognitive subject's numerical identity, and I shall argue that Kant's view is that transcendental apperception makes possible a form of self-consciousness through which a subject is conscious of its own numerical identity. Third, this consciousness of the numerical identity of the self cannot be empirical but instead *a priori*. In what follows, I shall show how each is necessary for grounding the normative necessity of the synthesis of reproduction, and so is necessary for empirical cognition.

6.4.1 *Self-Consciousness from Normativity*

First, let us consider why the synthesis of recognition requires the possibility of self-consciousness. I will argue that Kant holds that concepts contribute to a cognitive subject's cognition only insofar as she is conscious of the normative standards according to which those concepts are to be applied, and that this in turn requires that it be possible for her to become conscious of herself.

Recall that the cognitive subject under consideration by Kant is one that not merely reproduces and recognizes representations in accordance with concepts but also on the basis of the rules that concepts provide. What needs to be explained is how a cognitive subject is able to recognize something *as* instantiating a concept that contains a normative necessity. Whether intuition instantiates a concept is not something that is simply read off intuition on its own because intuition by itself is non-conceptual. Thus, some additional faculty is needed for recognizing things as instantiating concepts, and this faculty must be sensitive to the normative standards supplied by concepts. This does not require that the subject always be explicitly conscious of those rules, but it rather requires a "sensitivity" to rules' normative standards. By a

“sensitivity to rules’ normative standards”, I mean that a cognitive subject is sensitive to rules’ normative standards if she is capable of becoming conscious of and applying those normative standards in making sensory discriminations, e.g., in discovering that a concept had been applied incorrectly or without warrant. In other words, a cognitive subject must be able to evaluate whether things possess features warranting the application of a concept or not. This, I suggest, is how we are to make sense of Kant’s description of a cognitive subject’s understanding as “spontaneous”: it does not merely have sense content presented before it, but it also is capable of evaluating whether a concept applies to something in virtue of the concept’s rules.¹²⁷ Since, as Kant claims, concepts are to be used by the understanding only for judgment, the application of a concept can always be expressed in the form of a proposition, and so we can also understand the cognitive subject as one that is sensitive to *reasons* that ground possible judgments.

So far, I have shown why the type of consciousness involved in the synthesis of recognition is what might be called a “normative consciousness”, i.e., one sensitive to normative standards for applying concepts and making judgments. Having such normative consciousness, I suggest, is what provides Kant reason to think that possible self-consciousness grounds or makes possible the synthesis of recognition.

Although not directly stated in the text, which is opaque concerning why Kant brings in *self*-consciousness, one line of reasoning for this view runs as follows. To be conscious of a concept’s rule as a normative standard requires that a cognitive subject apprehend her own conceptual activity as spontaneous, i.e., not causally necessitated. That is, she must be able to recognize that a concept does not apply itself, and hence recognize the possibility of misapplying

¹²⁷ Cf. Keller 1999: 11.

a rule. To be conscious of the possibility of misapplying a rule requires consciousness that *something* misapplies the rule. As Kant writes in a *Reflexion*:

One does not turn directly from error toward truth, but first to consciousness of one's ignorance and suspension of judgment. (R2269 16: 292)

Since the application or misapplication of a rule is spontaneous, this means that what could misapply a rule could not be represented as something in intuition. Rather, it must be oneself that applies or misapplies a rule, and a consciousness of the possibility of misapplying a rule thus requires self-consciousness. That is, one must be conscious of one's own capacity to make judgments, evaluate reasons for them, and revise them if necessary. In considering a possible judgment, I consider implicitly whether I should adopt it. Furthermore, insofar as I can use my judgments to make further inferences, I treat them as *mine*, in the sense that I take them up and do something with them.¹²⁸

It is important to note that Kant's view is that this self-consciousness is one that is *necessarily possible*. It is not *necessary* that one always actually be self-consciousness when using concepts or making judgments. Kant's view leaves open the possibility that a cognitive subject can make a judgment without actual self-consciousness. Nevertheless, it is *necessary* that such a subject *be able to* become self-conscious, insofar as she must be able to consider how she made that judgment with respect to normative standards. Otherwise, that subject would not have made the judgment on the basis of rules.

¹²⁸ Here, I agree with Keller, who writes: "At least some implicit consciousness of self is built into the normative commitment that a judge takes on for her-, him-, or itself. To judge is to place oneself in the space of reasons and thus to take on a commitment to offer reasons for what one judges to be the case. But this means that, in making a judgment, the judge implicitly takes her-, him-, or itself to be not just conforming to rules but also tacitly or overtly obeying rules" (1999: 7).

6.4.2 *Self-Consciousness of Numerical Identity*

It is fairly straightforward why there must be a numerically identical subject of representations. The subjective deduction begins with an examination of what is necessary for a single cognitive subject to represent a manifold of representations as a whole of compared and connected representations. For both those manifold representations and their processing by the threefold synthesis to be cognitively relevant for that cognitive subject, there must be a single subject of all those representations. Of course, Kant emphasizes, especially in his discussion of the Paralogisms, that this subject must not be understood as a substance or as possessing personal identity, but is rather to be taken as merely “the constant logical subject of thinking” (A350) and its numerical identity is a “logical identity of the I” (A363).

But transcendental apperception requires not only that there *be* a numerically identical subject, but also that a cognitive subject must be able to become *conscious of herself as numerically identical*.¹²⁹ As Kant puts it in the B-Deduction, “it is possible for [a subject] to represent the identity of the consciousness in [a manifold of given representations] itself” (B133). In the A-Deduction, he writes that there must be a “standing or abiding self in [the] stream of inner appearances” (A107). This is because, as we have seen in the subjective deduction, empirical cognition arises out of a *manifold* of representations, and concepts are essential for synthesizing determinate connections among them. Insofar as thought employs concepts, it involves a function, which Kant defines as “the unity of the action of ordering

¹²⁹ To be sure, there is much contention in the secondary literature concerning this point. For a perspicuous overview and discussion of this and related issues, see Allison 2015: 121-9. But a discussion of that secondary literature would draw us away from seeing how transcendental apperception—whether it requires either a numerically identical subject or also a consciousness of a numerically identical subject—is a pure subjective source of cognition.

different representations under a common one” (A68/B93, my emphasis). Thus, a cognitive subject must be able to become conscious of all of these representations *together or collectively*.

So, insofar as a cognitive subject is to be normatively sensitive to how she synthesizes representations together, she must be conscious of her own numerical identity across all of her acts of representing. For example, consider a cognitive subject who is committed to the judgment that all bodies have weight and who later cognizes an object by means of the concept of body. For such a cognitive subject to be normatively sensitive to the concept of body as necessarily united with that of weight, she must be capable of becoming aware not only of herself as spontaneous in applying the concept of body but also as committed to the judgment that unites the concepts of body and weight. But for her to take herself as genuinely committed to that judgment requires that she must represent herself as numerically identical in making that judgment and in applying the concept of body in cognizing an object.

6.4.3 *Apperception as A Priori*

So far, I have explained why concepts’ normative necessity requires the possibility of both self-consciousness and self-consciousness of a numerically identical cognitive subject. To explain each of these points, the text of first *Critique* unfortunately does not offer much by way of explicit argumentation. Thankfully, the text has more to offer regarding why transcendental apperception must be not merely empirical but a priori. For Kant argues that a merely empirical consciousness is insufficient for the possible consciousness of one’s own numerical identity. He writes:

The consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of our state in internal perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can provide no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances, and is customarily called **inner sense** or **empirical apperception**. That which should **necessarily** be represented as numerically identical cannot be thought of as such through empirical data. There must be a condition that precedes all experience and makes

the latter itself possible, which should make such a transcendental presupposition valid. (A107)

Kant's argument here does not aim to show that all possible self-consciousness is a priori, but only that which is the transcendental ground of the synthesis of recognition. Kant expresses two ways in which empirical self-consciousness, which he calls "inner sense" and "empirical apperception", is deficient to ground the synthesis of recognition. First, it fails to provide a "standing or abiding self". Second, empirical data do not suffice to account for the necessity that a subject be able to represent itself as numerically identical. I suggest that ultimately these amount to the same reason for why empirical consciousness is deficient: insofar as empirical data do not suffice for representing oneself as numerically identical, this means that a standing or abiding self cannot be represented. But as we just saw in the previous subsection, such a representation of numerical identity is essential to the self-consciousness that transcendental apperception affords. Hence, our present task is to determine why Kant holds that empirical data do not suffice for representing oneself as numerically identical.

Kant characterizes cognition as a priori if it is independent of—but not necessarily temporally prior to—all experience insofar as it neither has as its source particular contents of experience nor requires a particular experience to be produced (B1-B2). A representation of numerical identity based on empirical data would be one that requires particular experience, and so it would have to be evaluated whether given empirical data provide evidence that warrants a judgment that there is such an identity, e.g., that the various mental episodes in question fit together in a single causal history of a subject. A representation of numerical identity on this basis, though, is not guaranteed; for, it is possible that the empirical data do not warrant such a representation.

But the possible self-consciousness of numerical identity that grounds the synthesis of recognition is one that must be valid in *all* experience. For, insofar as it grounds the necessity of concept application in the synthesis of recognition—which is necessary for any possible empirical cognition, i.e., experience—that self-consciousness cannot depend on the particular contents of any particular empirical cognition or experience. In other words, a cognitive subject must be able to represent itself as numerically identical no matter the particular content of its experience, and this requires that the possible self-consciousness be a priori.

6.4.4 *Summary of the Argument for Transcendental Apperception*

To sum up, concepts' necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions presupposes an a priori self-consciousness of one's numerical identity, i.e., presupposes transcendental apperception. First, a possible self-consciousness is presupposed because the thought or judgment involved in all cognition involves an element of normative necessity, and this normativity requires that a cognitive subject be able to become conscious of itself as thinking those representations. Second, since the use of concepts involves bringing multiple representations together, this form of self-consciousness must involve an awareness of oneself as numerically identical across all those representations. Third, this form of self-consciousness must also be a priori because, if it were based on particular contents of experience, then a cognitive subject would not be guaranteed to be aware of something numerically identical.

6.5 *Conclusion*

Kant's argument for transcendental apperception, recall, runs as follows:

- 1) The synthesis of reproduction is carried out by means of a concept that represents the necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions.
- 2) This necessity is possible only if grounded on transcendental apperception.

- 3) Transcendental apperception is the pure subjective source that makes possible the synthesis of reproduction.

We have now seen what can support Premises (1) and (2). But it is important to see that Premise (1) can be made more general:

- 1)* The use of concepts in judgments for empirical cognition involves a normative necessity.

It is important to see this because the B-edition's transcendental deduction does not explicitly appeal to the synthesis of reproduction. Nevertheless, as I argued above in Section 3.2.2, the B-edition provides an argument for transcendental apperception, and this argument operates on the assumption that empirical cognition requires judgment or thought. Premise (1)* thus helps fill in why judgment or thought is supposed to require transcendental apperception.

Although outside the scope of this dissertation, Kant uses transcendental apperception to make a key move in the objective deduction of the categories. We can see how by filling out the previously-given Objective Deduction Argument Outline:

Transcendental Deduction Argument Outline

- (OD1) All experience—i.e., empirical cognition—is possible only if intuition is thought by means of concepts.
- (OD2) This thought by means of concepts presupposes transcendental apperception.
- (OD3) Transcendental apperception is possible only if an a priori synthesis through the categories is applied to the contents of experience.
- (OD4) Therefore, the categories are a priori conditions for all experience, and so have objective validity. [OD1-OD3]

In this chapter, I have shown how Kant can support (OD2), but (OD3) is a crucial step in both editions (A108-10, B133-43). I shall conclude this chapter by suggesting a rough, schematic way for reading Kant's support of (OD3).

For Kant, empirical cognition requires multiple interrelated judgments (see Section 3.4 above). Hence, a cognitive subject's consciousness of itself with respect to one judgment requires its consciousness of itself as committed to other judgments that are inferentially connected to the first judgment. However, these inferential connections between judgments must themselves be capable of being expressed as judgments, and insofar as these inferential connections pertain to judgments of objects, they must be capable of being expressed as synthetic judgments. That is, these inferential connections amount to a synthetic unity, one that is made possible through the subject's own acts of judgment. However, given that it is an a priori necessity that a subject be able to become conscious of itself in any act of judgment, and given that any act of judgment presupposes a synthetic unity of the sort just described, it follows that this synthetic unity must itself be grounded a priori. That is, there must be an a priori element in all synthetic judgments in order to ensure that there are synthetic inferential connections between those judgments. For only such an a priori synthetic unity can ensure that it is a priori intelligible for a subject to take its judgments as an inferentially connected whole that informs any individual judgment, and only the latter can ensure the possibility of a subject's a priori self-consciousness with respect to each of its judgments. In other words, transcendental apperception demands an a priori synthesis through the act of judgment itself. Kant takes the categories to be the logical forms of judgment insofar as they provide rules for a priori synthesis, i.e., the logical forms of judgment are the basis of the necessary synthetic inferential connections of all possible judgment. Hence, insofar as experience requires that any manifold of intuition be thought, and

thus subject to transcendental apperception, it follows that the categories must apply to any given manifold of intuition insofar as they provide rules for all a priori synthesis that occurs through the logical forms of judgment.

Chapter 7: The A-Edition on Imagination as an A Priori Subjective Source of Cognition

In Chapter 5, we saw how empirical cognition requires an empirical threefold synthesis based on three transcendental subjective sources of cognition: the senses, imagination, and empirical consciousness or apperception. Recall that it is a further step to show why each subjective source also has a pure or a priori form. The Transcendental Aesthetic shows that our sensibility provides an a priori manifold of intuition, so this shows that the senses count as a pure subjective source of cognition. In Chapter 6, I skipped imagination to show why Kant thinks that transcendental apperception is a pure or a priori subjective source of cognition insofar as it makes possible the synthesis of recognition in the concept. In the present chapter, I shall return to the imagination. Kant's argument that it is a pure subjective source of cognition is quite complex, and I shall explain how some of this complexity makes sense of Kant's cryptic remarks about the subjective deduction in the A-edition's preface. To begin, I shall return to Kant's discussion of the synthesis of reproduction, in which Kant explains his argumentative strategy for showing that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition.

7.1 *The Necessity of Empirical Regularities*

Recall that Kant describes association as involving a *constant rule* in accordance with which the mind makes a transition from one representation to another. At first in his discussion of the synthesis of reproduction, Kant claims that it is “a merely empirical law” that the mind makes particular associations (A100). The empirical law Kant has in mind is a psychological one, and his point is that it is contingent and due to empirical factors—both the mind's inputs and empirical-psychological makeup—that the mind associates some representations rather than others.

But as is no surprise, Kant does not think that empirical factors are the whole story. He leads into describing the non-empirical factors with the following elaboration on what it means for the mind's associations to be "in accordance with a constant rule":

This law of reproduction, however, presupposes that the appearances themselves are actually subject to such a rule [the constant rule in accordance with which the mind makes a transition between associated representations],¹³⁰ and that in the manifold of their representations an accompaniment or succession takes place according to certain rules; for without that our empirical imagination would never get to do anything suitable to its capacity, and would thus remain hidden in the interior of the mind, like a dead and to us unknown faculty. (A100)

As we saw in Section 5.3.2 above, association requires that there be some reliable, specifiable relationship between the associated representations because otherwise the mind's passing between representations would be a mere play. But Kant's further point in the passage quoted above is that this constant rule must be applicable not merely to our representations but also to appearances. The distinction here becomes clear if we recall two things. First, Kant defines an appearance as "[t]he undetermined *object* of an empirical intuition" (A20/B34, my emphasis). Second, Kant uses the term "representation" sometimes to refer to *the act of representing something* and at other times to denote *the thing that is represented*. His point in the above passage, then, is that the constant rule of association applies not merely to our acts of representing but also to the things that we represent, i.e., appearances.

Kant goes on to offer several examples to support the claim that appearances themselves are subject to a rule:

If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light, now heavy, if a human being were now changed into this animal shape, now into that one, if on the longest

¹³⁰ It is important to note here the sense in which Kant takes the appearances to be "themselves" subject to rules. I take it that the claim is not that these rules for appearances are independent of *all* spontaneous activity of the mind. Rather, it is that these rules are independent of and prior to that spontaneous activity of the mind *that reproduces*. The importance of this remark will become clearer when we later see Kant's account of how there can be a guarantee that appearances are subject to such rules; for, Kant's account is that the mind itself is responsible for such rules.

day the land were covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow, then my empirical imagination would never even get the opportunity to think of heavy cinnabar on the occasion of the representation of the color red; or if a certain word were attributed now to this thing, now to that, or if one and the same thing were sometimes called this, sometimes that, without the governance of a certain rule to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves, then no empirical synthesis of reproduction could take place. (A100-101)

After the examples, Kant repeats his claim that reproduction requires that appearances, the objects that we represent, must be subject to a constant rule. We can see why this is so by considering what an empirical law of reproduction is. An empirical law of reproduction counts as *a law* in virtue of carrying out reproduction on the basis of a rule that expresses a regular connection between acts of representing, and it counts as *empirical* in virtue of that regular connection's being derived from what is represented in experience. It follows that if there were no regularities in what is experienced, e.g., if cinnabar had no stable properties, the mind could not derive any rule from experience. In such a case, reproduction could still be carried out, but it would not be reproduction on the basis of an association and would not genuinely synthesize representations.

Earlier in Section 5.3, we saw that it is possible for the synthesis of reproduction to contribute to empirical cognition only if our representations (our mental acts of representing) are associated and reproduced in accordance with rules. In this section so far, we have seen that the latter, i.e., association and reproduction in accordance with rules, is possible only if appearances (what we represent) are in themselves subject to rules.

7.2 *Kant's Promissory Note for an a Priori Ground*

At this point in the argument, Kant's discussion concerns only what is empirically the case. Namely, what is required for the synthesis of reproduction to occur is that there be *empirical* regularities of what is given to us in experience, e.g., that cinnabar have stable

properties. But the importance of this point is that it leads Kant to claim further that such empirical regularities are possible only through an “a priori ground”:

There must therefore be something that itself makes possible this reproduction of the appearances by being the a priori ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them. (A101)

This might come as a shock to the reader, since it seems that the discussion, examples, and argument so far have only shown that empirical regularities or rules are necessary, and nothing a priori seems to be on the table. Kant himself claims that the rule on which the synthesis of reproduction operates “is, to be sure, a merely empirical law” (A100). To get a grasp on the above surprising claim, it will help first to specify what Kant means by the “synthetic unity of appearances”. As we saw above, in order for what is represented to be subject to rules of reproduction, the manifold things that the mind represents must have regular or constant connections among each other. This is presumably what Kant’s expression “synthetic unity of appearances” refers to, viz., the appearances forming not just any unity but one in which they have constant or regular connections to one another. Thus, we can formulate Kant’s claim in the previously quoted passage as follows: since a synthetic unity of appearances is necessary for the mind to acquire an empirical law for reproducing appearances, then there must be an a priori ground for this synthetic unity of appearances. Recall that in his discussion of the normative necessity pertaining to concepts, Kant claims that “[e]very necessity has a transcendental condition as its ground” (A106). Hence, it seems that Kant’s thought here is that there must be a transcendental and a priori condition for the necessity that there be a synthetic unity of appearances.¹³¹

¹³¹ Kant does not claim in the above passage that the necessary synthetic unity of appearances is itself a priori but rather grounded on something a priori. So we can just take this to refer to how appearances are necessarily united with one another by being accompanied and succeeded in accordance with rules, rules which at this point might only be empirical.

Even if this last claim seems doubtful, Kant's argument need not depend on it. For skipping a sentence that we shall soon come back to, Kant goes on to assert the following conditional claim:

Now *if* we can demonstrate that even our purest a priori intuitions provide no cognition except insofar as they contain the sort of combination of the manifold that makes possible a thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction, *then* this synthesis of the imagination is grounded even prior to all experience on a priori principles [...] (A101, translation slightly modified, my emphases)

It is worth clarifying three things about this conditional claim. First, the antecedent of the above conditional claim is a promissory note insofar as the antecedent concerns whether “we can demonstrate” the thesis that our pure intuitions lead to cognition only if they contain the right sort of combination that makes possible the synthesis of reproduction. Henceforth, I will refer to the antecedent as the “Promissory Note”. The promissory nature of Kant's claim here helps make more palatable Kant's earlier claim that there must be such an a priori ground. This is because that earlier claim should be treated as merely problematic, i.e., as not something that has been demonstrated but rather as something which would be true if Kant can make good on his Promissory Note.

Second, the antecedent here does *not* state “if we can demonstrate that our pure intuitions provide cognition only if they *are subject to a synthesis of reproduction*” but rather “if we can demonstrate that our pure intuitions provide cognition only if they *contain a combination that makes possible* a synthesis of reproduction”. It is important to note that the antecedent is not the former because Kant goes on after the above claim to provide examples of how cognitions through pure intuitions—viz., drawing a line in thought or representing a certain number to oneself—require a synthesis of reproduction. But Kant's discussion of the examples does not indicate anything about how our pure intuitions contain a *combination* that makes synthesis of reproduction possible. Thus, the examples do not constitute any sort of support for the

antecedent.¹³² Kant's reference here to "a combination that makes possible a synthesis of reproduction" is initially very opaque. But in context of the A-edition's Transcendental Deduction chapter as a whole, it is clear that this phrase refers to what Kant later calls "affinity", which roughly amounts to an objective correlate of association. That is, whereas association is a connection of representations in a cognitive subject, affinity is a combination or connection in one or more objects. And insofar as there is an affinity that "makes possible a synthesis of reproduction", this affinity can be called "transcendental affinity". Hence, the antecedent promises to demonstrate that there is such a transcendental affinity, from which the consequent is supposed to follow.

Third, the consequent of the conditional is the thesis that the synthesis of reproduction, which is carried out by the imagination, is grounded on a priori principles. In other words, the consequent holds that there are not merely empirical laws of reproduction but also a priori laws of reproduction. Furthermore, this seems to be connected to the above claim that there must be an a priori ground of the synthetic unity of appearances: this a priori ground is just whatever it is that provides the mind with a priori principles or laws of reproduction.

As already noted above, Kant does not follow the Promissory Note with any sort of grounds for the antecedent but instead offers illustrations of how reproduction is required for cognition through our pure intuitions, and it is left open whether that reproduction must operate in accordance with a priori laws. Kant also has not written anything earlier that straightforwardly demonstrates the antecedent, even if some of what came earlier might offer resources that Kant could use. The closest that Kant comes to supporting the antecedent—but which still clearly does not amount to a demonstration of it—is in the sentence we skipped (it appears just after Kant

¹³² *Pace* Allison 2015: 215-6. Nevertheless, Allison does recognize the status of the conditional claim as a promissory note of sorts.

asserts that there must be an a priori ground for the necessary synthetic unity of appearances and just before the Promissory Note):

One soon comes upon this [the a priori ground of a necessary synthetic unity of appearances] if one recalls that appearances are not things in themselves, but rather the mere play of our representations, which in the end come down to determinations of the inner sense. (A101)

Kant appeals here to his Transcendental Idealism, the view asserted in the Transcendental Aesthetic that objects of experiences are appearances and not things in themselves. It is unclear how this invocation of Transcendental Idealism is supposed to help.¹³³ For the time being, I suggest that Kant's appeal to Transcendental Idealism should be understood as the suggestion that Transcendental Idealism will help us in understanding how appearances can be conditioned by a priori rules.

We might wonder what the significance of the Promissory Note is and why Kant wants to establish the consequent of the conditional claim. Kant gestures at its significance in how he concludes the sentence containing the conditional claim and Promissory Note:

[...] *one must assume* a pure transcendental synthesis of this power [i.e., of the imagination, as the source of the synthesis of reproduction], which grounds even the possibility of all experience (as that which the reproducibility of the appearances necessarily presupposes). (A101-2, my emphasis)

Without making good on the Promissory Note, it is not yet shown, according to the above passage that the imagination's synthesis of reproduction operates on the basis of a priori principles. This is of significance because, without a demonstration of this claim, it can only be assumed that there is a pure transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Ultimately, this assumption amounts to the consequent of the conditional claim. For the imagination carries out a *pure* transcendental synthesis of reproduction (the assumption) if and only if there are *a priori*

¹³³ But as we shall see later in Section 8.7 below, there is in fact a connection between Transcendental Idealism and issues relating to the Promissory Note.

principles according to which the imagination carries out that synthesis (the consequent of the conditional). The significance of this comes to light if we recall Kant's procedure concerning the synthesis of apprehension. For recall that after Kant had shown that the senses are *transcendental* subjective source of cognition insofar as they make possible empirical cognition, he then explains how the senses are a *pure or a priori* subjective source by bringing in the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic. Put more generally, showing that a synthesis is transcendental is not sufficient on its own to show that it is also pure. With respect to the synthesis of reproduction, Kant's discussion so far has shown only that the imagination is a transcendental subjective source of cognition. But he has not yet shown that it is also a pure subjective source, and doing so is necessary for completing the subjective deduction.

7.3 *Transcendental Affinity and its Significance*

The Promissory Note states that a demonstration of transcendental affinity will entail that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition. Before considering Kant's attempted demonstrations for transcendental affinity, it will be helpful to clarify further what transcendental affinity is and why its importance goes beyond completing the subjective deduction.

Kant defines an affinity of the manifold—whether empirical, a priori, or transcendental—as “[t]he ground of the possibility of the association of the manifold, insofar as it lies in the object” (A113) and as the “objective ground of all association of appearances” (A122). In claiming that an affinity “lies in the object” or is an “objective ground”, Kant does not mean that it pertains to things in themselves. Instead, I suggest that we understand an affinity to be a connection between *what is represented*, whereas an association is a connection between *acts of representing*. Insofar as an affinity pertains to objects of representations it is “objective”, and insofar as an association pertains to a cognitive subject's mental acts of representing it is

“subjective”. Although an affinity can be merely empirical, Kant holds that there is also a “transcendental affinity”, which he defines as “a thoroughgoing connection according to necessary laws” (A113-4). What makes this more than an empirical affinity is that it connects the objects of representations by means of *necessary laws*, in contrast to an empirical affinity whose connections are merely *contingent rules*. This suggests that a transcendental affinity is also a priori, and this point is reinforced by Kant’s claim that “the **empirical** affinity is the mere consequence” of transcendental affinity (A114). Hence, although he did not use the term, Kant clearly was referring to transcendental affinity in his earlier discussion of the synthesis of reproduction. For it is both what “makes possible [the] reproduction of appearances by being the a priori ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them” (A101) and “the sort of combination [contained in our purest a priori intuitions] of the manifold that makes possible a thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction” (A101). The latter characterization comes from Kant’s Promissory Note, and it is what needs to be demonstrated to show that the imagination is an a priori subjective source of cognition. Hence, the completion of the subjective deduction requires demonstrating that there is a transcendental affinity.

The demonstration of transcendental affinity, furthermore, is crucial for Kant to extend the results of the *objective* deduction. In one version of the objective deduction, the so-called “argument from above” in the A-edition (A116-9), Kant’s main thesis is that transcendental apperception is possible only if there is an a priori synthesis that produces a synthetic unity for “the manifold in all possible intuition” (A117) or of any possible appearance. For present purposes, I shall not examine Kant’s argument for that thesis, which is probably the most crucial argument within the objective deduction, for he goes on to argue that the a priori synthesis must occur by means of the categories, which thereby legitimizes their application to any possible

appearance. In his discussion of transcendental affinity, Kant similarly appeals to transcendental apperception in order to establish that there is a synthetic unity of some sort. He summarizes that argument as follows.

But we can never encounter [affinity] anywhere except in the principle of the unity of apperception with regard to all cognitions that are to belong to me. In accordance with this principle all appearances whatever must come into the mind or be apprehended in such a way that they are in agreement with the unity of apperception, which would be impossible without synthetic unity in their connection, which is thus also objectively necessary. (A122)

The synthetic unity mentioned here is between appearances “in their connection” (A122).

Although the argument from above is said to pertain to any manifold of intuition and to any possible appearance, Kant never mentions within it anything about the *connection between appearances*.¹³⁴ Recall that a connection between appearances is precisely what characterizes transcendental affinity:

All appearances therefore stand in a thoroughgoing connection according to necessary laws, and hence in a transcendental affinity. (A113-4)

But transcendental affinity grounds not just any connection between appearances, but specifically a lawful connection:

There must therefore be an objective ground [i.e., which Kant goes on to identify as an affinity], i.e., one that can be understood a priori to all empirical laws of the imagination, on which rests the possibility, indeed even *the necessity of a law* extending through *all appearances* (A122, my emphases).

¹³⁴ In the argument from above, Kant’s scope is described in various terms: “connection of representations” (A116), “possible experience” (A116), “all intuitions” (A116), “all representations that can ever belong to our cognition” (A116), “all the manifold of our representations” (A116), “the unity of the manifold in a subject” (A116), “the manifold in all possible intuition” (A116-7), “the connection of the manifold” (A118), “all objects of possible experience” (A118), “all possible appearances” (A119), “all objects of the senses” (A119), “all appearances as data for a possible experience” (A119), “appearances” (A119). Naturally, Kant uses all these phrases for different purposes and in different contexts. Nevertheless, those differences are not relevant for noticing that this list does not contain any mention of a *connection* between appearances.

The essential point here is that Kant is concerned with two different kinds of synthetic unity: a synthetic unity of a manifold of intuition of any appearance, and a synthetic unity of the connection between all appearances. The argument from above focused on showing that the former type of synthetic unity is made possible by the categories, and thereby shows that the categories apply to any object of experience. But even if the categories apply to any appearance's manifold of intuition, it is not guaranteed to apply to appearances *for which we are not given a manifold of intuition*. For example, there are some appearances that are "remote", including for example, those that are too far away or too minuscule to be sensed directly, as well as parts of a directly sensed object that are not directly sensed (e.g., sides of a cube that are outside of my perspective).¹³⁵

If Kant's argument from above has shown that the categories apply to any appearance whose manifold we are *given*, it would not yet be demonstrated that the categories apply to an object we represent "even **without its presence** in intuition" (B151), i.e., an object whose representation requires the faculty of imagination. This is a problem if Kant wants to say that we have synthetic a priori cognition through the categories of all appearances, including remote ones whose representation requires the imagination. If it were shown, however, that we have cognition of synthetic a priori laws that connect all possible appearances (whether near or remote), then the categories could legitimately be said to apply to all appearances.

Accordingly, the significance of demonstrating transcendental affinity is that it leads to Kant's following thesis:

Thus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call **nature**, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there. For this unity of

¹³⁵ I borrow the term "remote" from Kant's discussion of transcendental affinity, which he describes as applying to "all appearances (near or remote)" (A123).

nature should be a necessary, i.e., a priori certain unity of the connection of appearances (A125)

In other words, the demonstration of transcendental affinity contributes to Kant's support for the thesis that the cognitive subject legislates a priori laws of nature. And this thesis, also asserted in the B-edition's Transcendental Deduction chapter (cf. B163-5), is stronger than the objective deduction's primary stated aim of demonstrating the categories' objective validity. For even if the categories are necessarily and hence legitimately applied to objects of experience, that is consistent with the categories being used in making possible empirical cognition of *only given appearances*, e.g., empirical cognition of a particular empirical change as being the effect of a particular empirical cause. But if the categories are not used merely in that way and are further the basis of a priori laws of nature, then this means that they are used not only for empirical cognition but also for synthetic a priori cognition of *all appearances*, e.g., that every possible alteration in experience is an effect of some cause.

There are three arguments for transcendental affinity found across the two editions of the first *Critique*. In the A-edition Transcendental Deduction chapter, one is presented in his subsection "Provisional explanation of the possibility of the categories as a priori cognitions" at A112-4 and another is presented in his so-called "argument from below" at A121-3. Since the former is part of his "provisional explanation" and since the latter is obviously more fleshed out, I shall focus on the latter argument. But as we shall see, the A-edition's basic argument for transcendental affinity is unsatisfying. In the next chapter, I shall show that, even though it has not been obvious to commentators, Kant in fact returns to this issue in the B-edition's Transcendental Deduction chapter. Whether or not successful, the B-edition does at least address one main weakness of the A-edition's argument for transcendental affinity.

7.4 *The A-Edition's Attempt to Fulfill the Promissory Note*

After the “argument from above”, in which Kant attempts to offer an objective deduction of the categories’ objective validity, Kant’s “argument from below” returns to the task of the subjective deduction, viz., by attempting to show that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition. The reason Kant returns to the task after the argument from above is that his argument for transcendental affinity crucially relies on what the argument from above demonstrates about transcendental apperception. Before getting to that matter, I first provide a general outline of the argument from below and then consider each of its steps in turn.

The argument from below begins with “perception”, which Kant defines as an appearance combined with consciousness, and which Kant states is a necessary condition for empirical cognition (A119-20). It then presents an argument that such perception, and hence empirical cognition, requires both apprehension and reproduction, the latter of which makes possible an association of appearances (A120-2). That argument is largely similar to the one I presented earlier in Section 5.3, so we need not go into the details of it here. Finally, the argument from below goes on to explain why a transcendental affinity is needed for grounding the associability of appearances.

The first step is to assert that if there were no transcendental affinity, then it would be contingent whether appearances are associable:

But now if this unity of association did not also have an objective ground, so that it would be impossible for appearances to be apprehended by the imagination otherwise than under the condition of a possible synthetic unity of this apprehension, then it would also be entirely contingent whether appearances fit into a connection of human cognitions. For even though we had the faculty for associating perceptions, it would still remain in itself entirely undetermined and contingent whether they were also associable (A122).

This first step is straightforward enough given both Kant’s definition of transcendental affinity and his treatment of the a priori as interchangeable with the necessary. Since transcendental

affinity is defined as an *a priori* ground for association, it is a *necessary* condition for the possibility of association. Without such an *a priori* ground, then it would be merely contingent whether association is possible.

Kant's second step is more contentious. He argues that if perception were not associable, then a cognitive subject would not have transcendental apperception, i.e., would not be able to become aware of her numerical identity across representations:

and in case [perceptions] were not [associable], a multitude of perceptions and an entire sensibility would be possible in which much empirical consciousness would be encountered in my mind, but separated, and without belonging to **one** consciousness of myself, which, however, is impossible. For only because I ascribe all perceptions to one consciousness (of original apperception) can I say of all perceptions that I am conscious of them. (A122)

Since association just is the mind's connections between its various acts of representing, the lack of associability of acts of representing, such as perceptions, would mean that the mind would fail to connect those acts of representing in any way. But if the mind does not connect those acts *in any way*, then it does not even connect them as belonging to one consciousness. Thus, a lack of associability of acts of representing entails that the mind could not become aware of its own numerical identity across its acts of representing. Since transcendental apperception just is the necessity of the possibility that the cognitive subject become aware of its own numerical identity, this means that the lack of associability entails that transcendental apperception is not possible.

From the first two steps, Kant concludes:

There must therefore be an objective ground, i.e., one that can be understood *a priori* to all empirical laws of the imagination, on which rests the possibility, indeed even the necessity of a law extending through all appearances, a law, namely, for regarding them throughout as data of sense that are associable in themselves and subject to universal laws of a thoroughgoing connection in reproduction. I call this objective ground of all association of appearances their **affinity**. (A122)

The conclusion is that there must be a transcendental affinity, an a priori objective ground of association that legislates a law for connecting universally all appearances. This conclusion presumably is supposed to follow from the earlier two steps in virtue of transcendental apperception's being a necessary condition for empirical cognition. Accordingly, when Kant said in the earlier passage that it is "impossible" for acts of representing not to belong to one consciousness, this is true if we are considering empirical cognition: if we have empirical cognition, then it is impossible for us not to have transcendental apperception. But according to the first two steps, if there were no affinity, then perceptions would not be guaranteed to be associable, and if they are not associable, then transcendental apperception would not be possible. But since transcendental apperception is necessary for empirical cognition, and since we do have empirical cognition it follows that there must be an affinity for this empirical cognition.

The argument, in brief, runs as follows:

- 1) If there were no affinity of appearances (i.e., no objective ground for the association of the objects of perceptions), perceptions would not be guaranteed to be associable.
- 2) If perceptions are not associable, then there would be no transcendental apperception (no necessity that it be possible for a cognitive subject to become aware of her own numerical identity).
- 3) For empirical cognition to be possible, transcendental apperception must be possible.
- 4) Therefore, there must be transcendental affinity if empirical cognition is to be possible.

There are two problems with this argument. First, the consequent of the first premise concerns whether or not perceptions are *guaranteed* to be associable. But the second premise, which reflects the second step discussed above, concerns whether or not perceptions are *in fact* associable. Thus, the argument works only if Kant can support something like the following version of the second premise:

2*) If perceptions are *not guaranteed to be* associable, then there would be no transcendental apperception.¹³⁶

But (2*) is not nearly as defensible as (2). For consider the following counterexample: representations could fail to be guaranteed to be associable while at the same time some are in fact associated with one another while others are not (this latter class could include non-conscious representations that do not contribute to cognition, which Kant holds to exist). Since Kant is concerned with explaining the possibility of experience understood as empirical cognition, this means that not all perceptions have to be associable; for representations that are not associated with one another simply would not contribute to cognition. But this is still consistent with there being both empirical cognition and transcendental apperception; for as long as there are some perceptions that are associable and associated with one another, then those could be joined together in transcendental apperception in order to produce empirical cognition.

The second and more serious problem with the above argument is that the conclusion does not validly follow from the premises. For the conclusion introduces a much stronger notion of affinity than that with which the argument began. It begins with an affinity of appearances that is an objective ground for association, but it concludes with a transcendental affinity that is an a

¹³⁶ Alternatively, Kant could modify both the second and third premises as follows: 2**) If perceptions are *not guaranteed to be* associable, then there would be *no guarantee of* transcendental apperception; and, 3**) For empirical cognition to be possible, there must be *a guarantee of* transcendental apperception. Even if this argument were to work, it would still face the second problem I raise below.

priori ground for association insofar as it issues forth *universal and necessary laws* for connecting all appearances. Kant seems to think that he can get this conclusion by treating transcendental apperception as what produces transcendental affinity:

But we can never encounter [affinity] anywhere except in the principle of the unity of apperception with regard to all cognitions that are to belong to me. In accordance with this principle all appearances whatever must come into the mind or be apprehended in such a way that they are in agreement with the unity of apperception, which would be impossible without synthetic unity in their connection, which is thus also objectively necessary. (A122)

But even if all perceptions are subject to transcendental apperception, this does not suffice for producing synthetic unity among them. For all it means for an appearance to be subject to transcendental apperception is that it is *necessary that it be possible* for a cognitive subject to become aware of her numerical identity. But a remote appearance—one which a cognitive subject has never represented herself or come into contact with—could meet this condition: whether or not she has represented it, it is possible for her to become aware of her own numerical identity with respect to it once she has represented it.¹³⁷ But suppose that she does not yet have a representation of it. According to Kant, transcendental apperception is guaranteed by means of an a priori synthesis through the categories, which produces an a priori synthetic unity. But if a cognitive subject has not yet even represented an appearance, it is not clear that she is in any position to synthesize it with other representations. But since such an act of synthesis is what produces the transcendental affinity, and since transcendental affinity is supposed to apply to all appearances both near and remote, a remote representation would fail to be part of the transcendental affinity. And that would seem to undermine Kant's aim of showing that we have synthetic a priori cognition of all appearances, whether near or remote, by means of universal a priori laws of nature.

¹³⁷ For a similar objection, see Van Cleve 1999: 84.

We shall see in the next section how the B-edition provides a better argument in response to this sort of worry. Before doing so, let us see how Kant uses the above argument for transcendental affinity to complete the subjective deduction. First, since transcendental apperception makes possible transcendental affinity, and since transcendental apperception makes necessary a synthesis through a priori laws, these same laws are also ones that the imagination can use for synthesis. Accordingly, Kant concludes that “The imagination is therefore also a faculty of a synthesis a priori” (A123).¹³⁸

7.5 *Satisfaction of (D3)*

Kant’s Promissory Note puts us in a position to see how to interpret some puzzling aspects of his description of the subjective deduction in the A-edition’s Preface. Namely, the Promissory Note is relevant for satisfying the third desideratum for a satisfactory interpretation of the subjective deduction. That desideratum, discussed in Section 4.2 above, is the following:

- (D3) To specify Kant’s assumptions and method for carrying out the subjective deduction, and thereby to explain why the subjective deduction is (i) “like the search for the cause of a given effect”; (ii) “like a hypothesis”; and, (iii) something seeming like an opinion.

In what follows, I shall consider (i)-(iii) in turn.

7.5.1 *“like the search for the cause of a given effect”*

In the A-Edition’s Preface, Kant suggests that the main question to be answered by the subjective deduction is “How is the **faculty of thinking** itself possible?” (Axvii). He

¹³⁸ One oddity here is that Kant’s Promissory Note holds that this thesis is to be demonstrated by showing that there is a transcendental affinity, but Kant’s argument from above already advances this thesis without an argument for transcendental affinity. Perhaps Kant thought that his earlier discussion of transcendental affinity in the Provisional Explanation sufficed for stating this in the argument from above, or perhaps this is just sloppiness on Kant’s part, or perhaps the thesis is advanced only provisionally.

immediately claims that “[this] question is something like the search for the cause of a given effect” (Axvii). Although it is odd for him to describe a question as being a search, we can safely interpret him to mean that the answering of this question is similar to the search for the cause of a given effect. How, then, is the subjective deduction something like this?

On my interpretation, Kant’s inquiry into how the faculty of thinking is possible amounts to an inquiry into how the understanding plays a role in empirical cognition. Recall that the objective deduction begins with the assumption *that* the understanding has some such role but leaves it open how the understanding has a cognitive relation to intuition. On this interpretation, what is like a given effect is the understanding’s cognitive relation to empirical cognition, and so what is being sought is what makes it possible for the understanding to apply concepts within judgments to what is given in sensible intuition. But since the analogy is with the causal relation, whatever is similar to the cause is something whose occurrence necessitates and suffices to bring about the understanding’s cognitive relation to objects. This turns out to be the three a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition, which are responsible for bringing the understanding into a cognitive relation with objects.¹³⁹ But it must be stressed that Kant’s claim is not that they are a cause of the understanding’s cognitive relation to objects. For Kant’s inquiry here is not psychological but rather epistemological. The three taken together are like a cause insofar as they are responsible for—or epistemically necessitate and suffice for—the understanding’s role in empirical cognition.

¹³⁹ This explains why the understanding is not itself one of the three subjective sources: if the explanandum is the understanding’s cognitive relationship to objects of empirical cognition, an explanans that appealed to the understanding’s role in contributing to cognition would likely not be very helpful.

7.5.2 “something like a hypothesis”

But like the search for a cause of a given or specific effect, one confronts a variety of factors that make it difficult to determine with certainty the exact cause. This is presumably one reason why Kant writes, after stating that the subjective deduction is something like the search for the cause of a given effect, it “is therefore something like a hypothesis”. This intuitive sense in which a search for a cause can lead one to hypothesize is exhibited by what we have seen. For although it is clear that there is no question whether the synthesis of reproduction operates on the basis of rules, nothing so far shows whether these rules can be merely empirical or must be a priori. So at this point either type of rule might seem to suffice for the synthesis of reproduction. This means, however, that it is at present undetermined by our evidence so far whether the faculty responsible for the synthesis of reproduction is a merely empirical faculty of imagination, operating on the basis of empirical rules, or an a priori faculty of imagination, operating on the basis of a priori principles. So with respect to the explanation of our given effect, we have no reason at present for opting for one of these explanations over the other.

In addition to an everyday sense of a hypothesis, there is also reason to think that the subjective deduction might seem to be a hypothesis in Kant’s own technical sense:

If the imagination is not simply **to enthuse** but is, under the strict oversight of reason, **to invent**, something must always first be fully certain and not invented, or a mere opinion, and that is the **possibility** of the object itself. In that case it is permissible to take refuge in opinion concerning the actuality of the object, which opinion, however, in order not to be groundless, must be connected as a ground of explanation with that which is actually given and consequently certain, and it is then called an **hypothesis**. (A770/B798)

Notice that Kant’s characterization of a hypothesis appeals to the notion of opinion, which we shall consider in the next subsection. Setting that part of the above passage aside, Kant’s point here is that a hypothesis is not a simple enthusiasm, which would lack anything certain on which it is based. Rather, a hypothesis is grounded on a certainty of a peculiar sort: the possibility, but

not actuality, of the object itself. Furthermore, it must offer a ground of explanation of something actually given and thereby certain.

This is analogous to Kant's procedure in the subjective deduction. What is like a hypothesis in this context is the thesis that the understanding has a cognitive relation to objects in virtue of the three a priori and transcendental subjective sources of cognition. The subjective deduction aims to explain the possibility of the understanding's cognitive relation to objects, and this is what counts as "the possibility of the object itself". Finally, the "ground of explanation" in this case is the functioning of the three subjective sources in their synthetic activities.

More specifically, since his discussion of the synthesis of reproduction includes a Promissory Note for showing the thesis that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition and states that this is to be assumed, we can also understand Kant as offering something like a hypothesis by holding that an a priori synthesis of imagination explains the understanding's cognitive relation to objects. Since Kant has not yet given any reason for preferring this explanation over one that appeals merely to an empirical synthesis of the imagination, Kant's explanation appears to lack certainty, making it seem to be a mere hypothesis.

7.5.3 *appears to be an opinion*

After stating that his inquiry "is something like the search for the cause of a given effect" and "is therefore something like a hypothesis", Kant states that it follows from this that "it appears that I am taking the liberty in this case of expressing an **opinion**, and that the reader might therefore be free to hold another opinion" (Axvii). Again, we should consider what Kant means by "opinion". Much later in the first *Critique*, he writes that "[h]aving an **opinion** is taking something to be true with the consciousness that it is subjectively **as well as** objectively

insufficient” (A822/B850), and the terms used in this definition are in turn explicated as follows: “Subjective sufficiency is called **conviction** (for myself), objective sufficiency, **certainty** (for everyone)” (A822/B85).

On this characterization of opinion, we can see how Kant’s positing of a pure synthesis of reproduction might at this point be understood by his readers as expressing not only a hypothesis but also a mere opinion. Kant’s readers would view it as lacking certainty because Kant has not yet given a demonstration showing that it is necessary for the synthesis of reproduction. But for Kant’s readers to take him to be expressing an opinion, they would also have to take Kant to lack conviction for the claim that there is a transcendental faculty of imagination. And this is just what Kant worries about in the A-edition’s Preface:

even in case my subjective deduction does not produce the complete conviction that I expect, the objective deduction that is my primary concern would come into its full strength (Axvii).

Again, Kant’s point here is made clearer by understanding the specific meaning he gives to the notions of “conviction” and “persuasion”:

If [taking something to be true] is valid for everyone merely as long as he has reason, then its ground is objectively sufficient, and in that case taking something to be true is called **conviction**. If it has its ground only in the particular constitution of the subject, then it is called **persuasion**. (A820/B848)

So, in suspecting that Kant lacks conviction in taking it to be true that the imagination is responsible for a pure synthesis of reproduction, a reader would view Kant as taking this to be true only on the basis of something in the particular constitution of Kant’s personal subject or psychology. And it is clear enough why the reader might suspect this of Kant. For it might seem that cognition requires only that our imagination operates on the basis of empirical rules because Kant has not yet offered—as indicated by his Promissory Note—any reason why the imagination must be a pure faculty rather than merely an empirical one. But the fact that Kant has offered no

such reason for his more extravagant claim raises doubts about whether he has conviction or mere persuasion. For, as Kant elaborates in his later discussion of conviction and persuasion, the only test for distinguishing conviction from persuasion is the communication of the grounds of taking to be true. And since Kant has not yet communicated his grounds, the reader has no evidence that Kant's taking it to be true that there is a pure faculty of imagination is not just grounded in Kant's own personal psychology rather than any reason that could be valid for everyone. Without making good on the Promissory Note, the reader lacks any reason or evidence to think that Kant's view is not merely an opinion, and so the reader might very well just have the impression that it is in fact mere opinion.

7.6 *Satisfaction of (D4)*

With this account of how Kant attempts to satisfy the Promissory Note and show that there is a transcendental affinity, we can see why Kant does not take his claim to be either a hypothesis or an opinion. That is, we can now consider Desideratum 4, given in Section 4.2, for a satisfactory interpretation of the subjective deduction. That desideratum, recall, is:

- (D4) To account for how Kant attempts to remedy the apparent problems resulting from the method described by (D3).

In particular, satisfying (D4) requires explaining two remarks in the A-edition's preface. After asserting that the subjective deduction is something like both the search for the cause of a given effect and a hypothesis, Kant writes parenthetically:

although, as I will elsewhere take the opportunity to show, this is not in fact how matters stand (Axvii).

Likewise, after describing how his readers might take him to express a mere opinion, he writes:

In view of this I must remind the reader in advance that even in case my subjective deduction does not produce the complete conviction that I expect, the objective deduction that is my primary concern would come into its full strength,

on which what is said at pages [A] 92-3 should even be sufficient by itself.
(Axvii)

In this section, I shall elaborate on each of these claims, thereby completing my interpretation of the subjective deduction.

7.6.1 Why the Subjective Deduction Is Not Supposed to be a Hypothesis or Opinion

Recall that the subjective deduction appears to be an opinion, at least in its initial presentation, because Kant has had to assume that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition. But ultimately Kant attempts to make good on his Promissory Note by showing that the imagination operates in accordance with a priori principles and is responsible for the transcendental affinity of appearances. Accordingly, I suggest that the argument for transcendental affinity is the place Kant has in mind when he wrote that he will “elsewhere take the opportunity to show” that the subjective deduction is not a hypothesis. This later argument, which Kant thinks is decisive, amounts to giving an objective ground, which is more than a psychological fact peculiar to him. If this is so, then Kant’s view that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition is not an opinion, at least according to Kant himself. And since something is a hypothesis only insofar as it is also an opinion, this would also entail that the view is also not a hypothesis.

7.6.2 Why A92-3 Is Supposed to Provide Conviction

Now let us consider Kant’s claim that what is said at pages A92-3 should provide sufficient conviction for the purposes of the objective deduction. Those pages contain the first of three paragraphs of the A-edition’s “Transition to the transcendental deduction of the categories”, which I interpreted in Chapter 3. Notably A92-3 does not include the Principle of the Transcendental Deduction, according to which the categories are to be shown to be a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences, specifically the thinking encountered in a possible

experience. Nevertheless, the discussion of A92-3 indicates the way in which the categories might be shown to have objective validity by necessarily and a priori relating to all objects of experience. Although Chapter 3 elaborated on the Principle of a Transcendental Deduction, it did not discuss in detail what came before it in the Transition. Accordingly, I shall go into that here.

Kant's procedure in the Transition is to consider various ways in which there could be a relationship between a priori concepts and objects and to find the suitable one for the categories by rejecting various possible alternatives. He begins with the following claim:

There are only two possible cases in which synthetic representation and its objects can come together, necessarily relate to each other, and, as it were, meet each other: Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible. (A92/B124)

Kant does not defend this claim further, but it is one that he had developed originally in his famous February 21, 1772 letter to Marcus Herz.¹⁴⁰ The first case, Kant claims, would make the relationship merely empirical, and so the relationship described in the first case is not something that can be investigated for providing a transcendental deduction of any a priori concepts, including the categories. The second case, then, is the one to adopt for considering the objective validity of the categories. Kant is careful to point out, however, that the relationship described in the second case “does not produce its object as far as its **existence** is concerned” (A92/B125); rather,

the representation is still determinant of the object a priori if it is possible through it alone to **cognize something as an object**. (A92/B125)

Thus, the second case mentioned above is not committed to holding that objects are fully mind-dependent. Instead of making the object *exist*, Kant holds that the representation makes an object *possible insofar as it is cognizable*.

¹⁴⁰ See particularly 10: 130-1.

After rejecting the first case in which (synthetic) representations and objects can relate and endorsing the second for the categories, Kant then goes on to narrow the options further. He writes:

But there are two conditions under which alone the cognition of an object is possible: first, **intuition**, through which it is given, but only as appearance; second, **concept**, through which an object is thought that corresponds to this intuition. (A92/B125)

We saw above that we are to consider how representations relate to objects insofar as representations make possible cognition of those objects. But if we combine this with the familiar doctrine that cognition requires both intuitions and concepts, it follows that these are the two types of representation that could make the cognition of objects possible. Kant goes on to describe how the former type of representation was shown in the Transcendental Aesthetic to relate a priori to objects in virtue of being “the ground of the form of objects” and because only through the form of our sensible intuition can appearances be “empirically intuited and given” (A93/B125).

We finally come to the question of how the categories, as a priori concepts, have a relationship to objects such that they make possible cognition of objects:

The question now is whether a priori concepts do not also precede, as conditions under which alone something can be, if not intuited, nevertheless thought as object in general, for then all empirical cognition of objects is necessarily in accord with such concepts, since without their presupposition nothing is possible as **object of experience**. Now, however, all experience contains in addition to the intuition of the senses, through which something is given, a **concept** of an object that is given in intuition, or appears; hence concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as a priori conditions; *consequently the objective validity of the categories, as a priori concepts, rests on the fact that through them alone is experience possible (as far as the form of thinking is concerned)*. For they are related necessarily and a priori to objects of experience, since only by means of them can any object of experience be thought at all. (A93/B125-6, my italics)

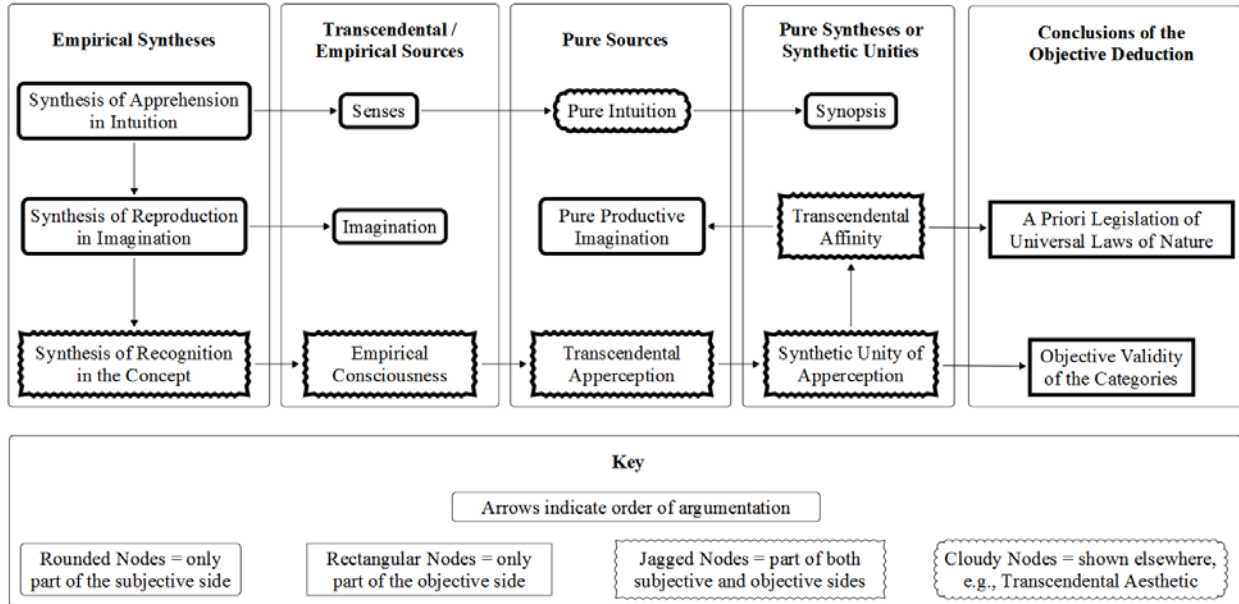
We can now see why Kant claims in the preface that what is said at A92-93 should suffice for any reader of the objective deduction, regardless of whether a reader might take the subjective deduction to be hypothetical or mere opinion. Even if Kant does not succeed in convincing the reader that the faculty of imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition, that thesis does not need to be established for the objective deduction. Such a reader should learn from A92-93 that the objective deduction would be successful if it were to show that the categories are necessary conditions for experience with respect to “the form of thinking”, and this is something that can be shown independently of whether we have transcendental faculty of imagination. This is borne out in the general structure of the objective deduction: it starts from the assumption that empirical cognition from a manifold of intuition requires thought, then shows that this thought requires transcendental apperception, and then shows that this in turn requires that the categories are applied to that manifold of intuition, thereby providing us with empirical cognition of objects and demonstrating the objective validity of the categories. Thus, even if the subjective deduction is unsatisfactory in completing *all of its aims*, its failure does not necessarily give reason for casting doubt on the objective deduction. But, since I have argued that the subjective and objective deductions overlap in significant ways, the failure of the subjective deduction with respect to *some of its aims*—e.g., showing that transcendental apperception is necessary for empirical cognition—would be a problem for the objective deduction.

7.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have completed my exposition of the A-edition’s subjective deduction. Prior to this chapter, there were three things remaining to be addressed: in addition to explaining Kant’s argument that the imagination is supposed to be a pure subjective source of cognition, desiderata three and four needed to be met. By explaining that the later discussion of

transcendental affinity is supposed to fulfill a Promissory Note given earlier, I hope to have clarified Kant's argumentative strategy in the subjective deduction and the A-edition's Transcendental Deduction chapter as a whole. Particularly, we see an additional reason for treating the subjective and objective deductions as *two overlapping sides of one argument*. I earlier noted one reason for this, viz., that they both share one and the same argument for transcendental apperception as a necessary condition for empirical cognition. But now we have two additional ways in which the two are intertwined. First, since Kant's argument for transcendental affinity is required to complete the subjective deduction, and since that argument relies on the objective deduction's conclusions about transcendental affinity, the subjective deduction can be completed only by means of carrying out the objective deduction. Second, the argument for transcendental affinity itself is important for both the subjective and objective deductions: for the former it is supposed to show that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition, and for the latter it is supposed to show that we have synthetic a priori cognition of universal laws of nature based on the categories.

One would be right to worry that this complicated structure might make Kant's arguments circular. Nevertheless, I do not believe that they are ultimately circular. This is best illustrated by a diagram of how I interpret the argument's structure:



Chapter 8: The B-Edition on Pure Imagination and a Priori Laws of Nature

In the Preface to the B-edition, Kant writes that the new edition of the first *Critique* aims “to remove as far as possible those difficulties and obscurities from which may have sprung several misunderstandings” concerning the A-edition (Bxxxvii), and he thus will make improvements in the “presentation” to “remove [...] the obscurity in the Deduction of the Concepts of the Understanding” (Bxxxviii). He also notes that he has “found nothing to alter either in the propositions themselves or in their grounds of proof, or in the form and completeness of the book’s plan” (Bxxxvii). In sum, the changes to the Transcendental Deduction chapter are supposed to concern merely the presentation but not the basic premises or inferences of the argument. Despite this, I shall argue in this chapter that the B-edition does offer new considerations for an argument that there are a priori laws of nature that are legislated by the understanding through the categories. Thus, although the B-edition neither mentions the subjective deduction nor uses the concept of affinity, it does offer an argument similar to the one we saw in the last chapter from the A-edition. In presenting this argument, I shall also present a new solution to Dieter Henrich’s much-discussed “problem of the two-steps-in-one-proof”.¹⁴¹ Since the secondary literature on that problem is vast, and since my main aim is to show how the B-edition’s argument supplements that of the A-edition, I shall not endeavor to canvass the other proffered solutions in the secondary literature.

8.1 *The Structure of the Transcendental Deduction Chapter in the B-Edition*

In the B-edition, the Transcendental Deduction chapter is divided into numbered headings. From §15 to §20, Kant provides an argument that leads to the following conclusion

¹⁴¹ 1969: 642. For other prominent accounts of how to deal with this puzzle concerning the B-edition’s Transcendental Deduction chapter, see: Allison 2004: 159-201; Evans 1990; Kitcher 1990: 155-74; Longuenesse 1998: 212-27; and, Rauscher 2012.

stated in §20: “the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under the categories” (B143). One might think that this completes Kant’s primary task of showing that the categories have objective validity. But in §21, he restates the result of §20 in terms of consciousness and in terms that allow him to draw an analogy with the Transcendental Aesthetic:

the empirical consciousness of a given manifold of one intuition stands under a pure a priori self-consciousness, just as empirical intuitions stand under a pure sensible one, which likewise holds a priori. (B144)

Kant then states that “[i]n the above proposition, therefore, the beginning of a **deduction** of the pure concepts of the understanding has been made” (B144). He continues by claiming that “the aim of the deduction will first be fully attained” in §26 through “the explanation of its [the category’s] a priori validity in regard to all objects of our senses” (B145). This is a puzzling claim. The argument of §§15-20 demonstrated that the application of the categories to the manifold in a given intuition *in general* is justified because their application is a necessary condition for experience. From this, it seems to follow *a fortiori* that they are also justified in their application to our *sensible* intuition. From this puzzling claim, Dieter Henrich has claimed that a successful interpretation must show how “sections 20 and 26 offer two arguments with significantly different results, and that these together yield a single proof of the transcendental deduction”.¹⁴² That is, a successful interpretation must show how the argument of §§15-20 is insufficient to achieve the aim of the Transcendental Deduction and how §26 provides what is further needed.

In this chapter, I shall focus on explaining the argument of §26, and I show that its primary aim is to show that the understanding legislates a priori laws of nature based on the categories. This goes beyond what was shown in §§15-20, which provides a limited argument

¹⁴² 1969: 642.

that the categories have objective validity for any manifold of a given intuition. In the remainder of this chapter, I aim to do just that.

8.2 *Kant's Description of the Relationship between the Two Steps*

To begin with, it is helpful to see how Kant himself describes the difference between his earlier results and what is now to be accomplished. He describes this in two places. First, in §26, he writes:

Now the possibility of cognizing a priori **through categories** whatever objects **may come before our senses**, not as far as the form of their intuition but rather as far as the laws of their combination are concerned, thus the possibility of as it were prescribing the law to nature and even making the latter possible, is to be explained. (B159-60)

A contrast is drawn here between what Kant plans to explain now in §26 and what was earlier explained. What was earlier explained was the possibility of cognizing a priori through categories whatever objects may come before our senses, i.e., appearances, as far as the form of their intuition is concerned. In a handwritten note written by Kant in his personal copy of the A-edition, Kant calls what is needed “in order to cognize objects as such” the “form of their intuition” (at A126). Since the argument in §§15-20 showed that the categories are required for having the concept of an object, it follows that the above claim in §26 refers to the argument in §§15-20 as demonstrating that the categories necessarily apply to appearances insofar as we cognize them as objects, i.e., insofar as the form of their intuition is concerned. This indicates, then, that Kant recognized that the argument in §§15-20 applies to our sensible intuition. Accordingly, §20’s title states that “All sensible intuitions stand under the categories” (B143). As the passage given above also notes, the argument in §§15-20 did not demonstrate that the objects coming from intuition (sensible or otherwise) necessarily stand under the categories in regard to the laws of their combination, i.e., in regard to a priori laws of nature prescribed by the categories. This is what Kant *now* wants to argue in §26. We already saw in the last chapter a

similar division, with the argument from above accomplishing something like §§15-20 and the argument from below corresponding to that of §26. Unlike the argument in §§15-20, however, the argument in §26 does not apply to all possible forms of intuition, but merely to our sensible intuition (why this is so will be explained shortly).

Second, §21 describes how §26 will rely on the earlier results to complete the transcendental deduction, viz., by showing

from the way in which the empirical intuition is given in sensibility that its unity can be none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general according to the preceding §20 (B144-5).

Since Kant, as we have seen, recognizes that §20 applies to sensible intuition, the relevant contrast here is not between intuition in general and empirical intuition. Rather, the distinction of significance here is between what is true of *a single given* intuition (the concern of §§15-20) and what is true of empirical intuition insofar as *intuitions* are combined with one another and insofar as a possible intuition is *not given* to a subject (the concern of §26). That is, the argument in §§15-20 was insufficient insofar as it did not demonstrate two things: (i) that the categories necessarily apply to the way intuitions relate to one another insofar as they stand under laws of combination; and, (ii) that the categories necessarily apply to intuitions not immediately given to consciousness, i.e., ones that present to us remote appearances. If Kant can show that the laws of combination of (i) apply universally to all possible intuition, then (ii) would follow because remote appearances would be connected to local appearances by laws of combination based on the categories. Accordingly, the title of §26 promises a demonstration of “the universally possible use” of the categories in experience (B159).

So described, the task of §26 is largely the same as that of the A-deduction’s attempted fulfillment of the Promissory Note. Although the Promissory Note is primarily directed at showing that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition, this is carried out by

showing that there are a priori laws based on the categories that guide the imagination's synthesis, and since these laws apply to all appearances—whether near or remote—the categories accordingly apply to all intuition—whether given or not. Hence, the two Transcendental Deduction chapters are roughly the same, even though the B-edition mentions neither a subjective deduction nor affinity. Before presenting Kant's argument of §26, I shall set out in the next two sections how Kant frames that argument.

8.3 *Conclusions Stated in §26*

Now that we have seen how Kant describes the relationship between the earlier results and §26, let us consider the various passages in §26 that express conclusions of some sort. First, most interpreters identify the primary argument of §26 as occurring in its first three paragraphs, which end with the following:

Consequently all synthesis, through which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid a priori of all objects of experience. (B161)

Although this is indeed an important result, it is not Kant's primary conclusion. As we just saw, Kant's main aim in §26 is to show that there are a priori laws of nature based on the categories and that these laws combine appearances both near and remote. Given these aims, we can identify two passages later in the text that express Kant's main conclusion:

Categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances, thus to nature as the sum total of all appearances (*natura materialiter spectata*) (B163)

all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories, on which nature (considered merely as nature in general) depends, as the original ground of its necessary lawfulness (B165).

As I shall show, this conclusion is arrived at from both the argumentation from B159-60 and from B164-5.

8.4 *Motivations for Carrying out §26*

Kant found the need to offer further argumentation for this claim because of the worry that appearances, despite being subject to the categories, might not follow a priori laws prescribed by the categories but instead only a posteriori laws that are derived from contributions of both the categories and experience. This is a worry that remains even after the conclusion of §20 because Kant thinks that all laws of combination of appearances depend on the imagination (B164). The imagination is “the faculty for representing an object even **without its presence** in intuition” (B151). Since the laws of combination of appearances relate all possible intuitions to one another, including those that are not given directly in intuition, the imagination is therefore necessary not only for cognition of such laws but also for cognition involving intuition that is not given immediately to consciousness.

This reliance on the imagination is a source of concern because imagination depends not only on “understanding for the unity of its intellectual synthesis” but also “on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension” (B164). The imagination requires that a manifold be apprehended as a unity through time (what Kant calls the “the manifoldness of apprehension”), and, since it is apprehended through time, this manifold must come from sensibility rather than the understanding. Since the laws of combination of appearances depend on the imagination, and since the imagination depends on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension, it follows that the laws of combination depend on the sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension. This seems, however, to open up the possibility that the laws of combination of appearances are dependent on empirical intuition, and that would make those laws a posteriori rather than a priori. If that were so, then it would not be the case that the categories “can determine a priori the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter” (B163).

Kant's principal argument in §26, then, is meant to discount the possibility that the laws of combination of appearances are derived merely from the manifold of nature, i.e., from experience. Kant argues that although the laws of combination of appearances depend on the manifoldness of apprehension given by sensibility (the unity of a manifold through time), these laws are nevertheless prescribed a priori by the categories.

8.5 *Principal Argument of §26*

Kant leads into his principal argument by stating the following:

the question now arises how it is to be conceived that nature must follow [the categories], i.e., how they can determine a priori the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter. Here is the solution to this riddle. (B163)

Again, it might seem that the argumentation from §15 to §20 has already shown both *that* the categories must apply to appearances and *how* they must do so (namely, via transcendental apperception). But again, the worry here is not so much about whether the categories apply to particular appearances; rather, the worry concerns the application of the categories to the *combination* of appearances, particularly their combination by means of a priori laws that the categories supposedly prescribe to nature.

Kant begins his solution to the aforementioned riddle by reminding the reader of his Transcendental Idealism, his view that we cognize only appearances and not things in themselves:

It is by no means stranger that the laws of appearances in nature must agree with the understanding and its a priori form, i.e., its faculty of **combining** the manifold in general, than that the appearances themselves must agree with the form of sensible intuition a priori. For laws exist just as little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding, as appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being, insofar as it has senses. The lawfulness of things in themselves would necessarily pertain to them even without an understanding that cognizes them. But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves. (B164)

It is noteworthy that Kant made the same sort of appeal in his discussions of transcendental affinity in the A-edition Transcendental Deduction chapter. It is likewise notable that Kant did not explicitly appeal to Transcendental Idealism in his argument from §15 to §20. But as we see in how Kant proceeds, it forms a crucial starting premise of how he continues his argument:

As mere representations, however, [appearances] stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes. (B164)

Kant begins by stating that if appearances are combined or connected in accordance with laws, then they can only be so by means of a faculty of the mind, or what Kant called in the A-edition a subjective source of cognition. Kant's support for this statement seems to be the Transcendental Idealism he just outlined: if appearances are mere representations, then representations do not come prepackaged as connected according to laws. Kant's argument, as we shall see, does not rely on any claim about there actually being laws of connection; rather, all that he needs to assert is that a faculty of the mind is responsible for the connections we experience between appearances.

Kant immediately identifies the faculty responsible for connecting appearances with the imagination:

Now that which connects the manifold of sensible intuition is imagination, which depends on understanding for the unity of its intellectual synthesis and on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension. (B164)

Although Kant somewhat prepares the reader for this identification in the B-edition (B151-2), the A-edition is much more helpful in this regard. For recall from Section 5.3 that insofar as the imagination is the faculty responsible for the synthesis of reproduction and hence responsible for association, it makes possible the representation of any combinations or connections between appearances. Whereas in the A-edition, Kant attributed the synthesis of reproduction to the

imagination, he here attributes the “synthesis of apprehension” to the imagination.¹⁴³ Here, he characterizes this synthesis of apprehension as performing two functions: apprehending manifold representations (making the synthesis dependent upon sensibility) and unifying those representations together (which makes it dependent on the understanding as what provides for unification).

So far, Kant’s point is that appearances are connected by means of the imagination’s synthesis of apprehension. But from this Kant moves quickly to bring in the categories:

Now since all possible perception depends on the synthesis of apprehension, but the latter itself, this empirical synthesis, depends on the transcendental one, thus on the categories, all possible perceptions, hence everything that can ever reach empirical consciousness, i.e., all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories, on which nature (considered merely as nature in general) depends, as the original ground of its necessary lawfulness (*as natura formaliter spectata*). (B164)

Here, Kant relies on the earlier result of §26, which is more commonly interpreted as the main conclusion of §26. Namely, he appeals to the conclusion that all synthesis stands under the categories (we shall consider this claim in the next section). Kant here applies this earlier conclusion to the imagination’s synthesis of apprehension: although it is empirical, it too must stand under or depend on the categories. And Kant understands by this that the synthesis of apprehension operates in accordance with a priori laws: for insofar as categories apply to synthesis, they furnish laws of synthesis, whereas insofar as they apply to objects, they furnish concepts of objects. But Kant also asserts in the above passage that *all possible perception* is made possible by the synthesis of apprehension. Although we shall come back to this striking claim in the next section, it thus follows from Kant’s other claims that all possible perception is connected by a priori laws of combination.

¹⁴³ This point is more strongly brought out in the footnote on B162.

Put schematically, Kant's argument runs as follows:

- (1) All possible perception depends, and hence all possible appearances, on the synthesis of apprehension. [supported earlier in §26 and in the A-edition's discussion of the imagination, to be considered in Section 8.6]
- (2) The imagination's synthesis of apprehension stands under the categories. [supported earlier in §26, to be considered in section 8.7]
- (3) The synthesis of apprehension operates according to a priori laws of combination. [from 2]
- (4) All possible appearances are connected by a priori laws of combination. [from 1, 3]

This argument, if sound, achieves what I have stated is Kant's aim in §26. It also would fulfill the Promissory Note of the subjective deduction: for it shows that the imagination is a pure subjective source of cognition insofar as it operates in accordance with a priori laws of combination. But it is not so clear whether this argument is sound or whether it is more successful than the A-edition's attempt at fulfilling the Promissory Note. For premises (1) and (2) still need to be examined, and we shall turn to that task in the next two sections.

8.6 *Premise 1*

To understand Kant's support for both premises (1) and (2), we must return to the earlier argumentation from B160-1. There, he begins with the following explanation of the synthesis of apprehension, thereby addressing premise (1):

First of all I remark that by the **synthesis of apprehension** I understand the composition [*Zusammensetzung*] of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance), becomes possible. (B160)

This synthesis of apprehension makes possible perception or empirical consciousness. But two points are worth noting here. First, as we have already seen, it seems likely that Kant uses “synthesis of apprehension” in a different way than in the A-edition.¹⁴⁴ Here, it seems that “synthesis of apprehension” includes the A-edition’s synthesis of apprehension and synthesis of reproduction. For recall that both of those syntheses were prerequisites for empirical consciousness, prior to considering any contribution of the understanding.¹⁴⁵ Second, the synthesis of apprehension need not suffice on its own for empirical consciousness; for as we have already seen, transcendental apperception is also required for any empirical consciousness.

This is all that Kant directly states that could support premise (1), which states:

- (1) All possible perception depends, and hence all possible appearances, on the synthesis of apprehension.

Since we have seen from the A-edition’s discussion of the empirical threefold synthesis how empirical cognition and consciousness require synthetic activities of the mind, it is fairly clear why Kant claims that *all possible perception*, i.e., all empirical consciousness, relies on something like the synthesis of apprehension. But it is less clear why it is supposed to follow from this that *all possible appearances* depend on the synthesis of apprehension. This is not so surprising if we note that Kant does not use “consciousness” [*Bewusstsein*] to refer to only what a subject is phenomenally aware of. For Kant holds that obscure representations are conscious,¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ But even the A-edition is not clearly consistent with its use of the term “apprehension”; for at A120 Kant blurs the distinction between apprehension and reproduction by attributing apprehension to imagination.

¹⁴⁵ But see the footnote at B162, where Kant suggests that there is no real distinction between the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of apperception. Again, this recalls the A-edition, which holds that although we can consider apprehension, reproduction, and recognition as distinct syntheses, they really occur through one and the same action, thereby warranting the description of them as a “threefold synthesis”.

¹⁴⁶ “[A] certain degree of consciousness, which, however, is not sufficient for memory, must be met with even in some obscure representations” (B414-5n.)

and this consciousness seems to be what permits us to become indirectly aware of them.¹⁴⁷ A cognitive subject is indirectly conscious of a representation when she infers that she has that representation.¹⁴⁸ This suggests how Kant can claim that the synthesis of apprehension applies to all appearances, not just those that are directly given to us but also those that are remote or not directly given to us. We can cognize such remote appearances because we can infer them based on their connection(s) to appearances that we are directly given. Such inferences require that a manifold of a given intuition be apprehended together with the representation(s) of the remote appearance (such representations will be imaginary insofar as they present an object without its presence in intuition). Hence, insofar as remote appearances are cognizable, they must be subject to the synthesis of apprehension.

This still is not quite enough. For this argument only shows that all appearances are subject to the synthesis of apprehension *only conditionally*, viz., only on the condition that they are cognized. This recalls the objection I raised against Kant's argument for transcendental affinity: that argument shows that all appearances stand in a transcendental affinity only on the condition that they are apperceived. Nevertheless, Kant's support for premise (2) provides a means for handling both objections.

¹⁴⁷ “[W]e can still be indirectly conscious of having a representation, even if we are not directly conscious of it. - Such representations are then called obscure; the others are clear, and when their clarity also extends to the partial representations that make up a whole together with their connection, they are then called distinct representations, whether of thought or intuition.” (A 7: 135; cf. LB 24: 119, MM 29: 879)

¹⁴⁸ “Our representations are either obscure or clear, etc. Obscure representations are those of which I am not immediately conscious, but nevertheless can become conscious through inferences.” (MM 29: 878-9) “A *representation* is obscure [...] of which one is not conscious *immediately*. Namely, one can become mediately conscious of this cognition by means of reason, and thus a way remains to make an otherwise obscure cognition clear, distinct, and thus to make insight into it easier. E.g., if I see the Milky Way with the naked eye, I see nothing but a white band, but if I make use of a tubus, then I at once become aware of the individual parts as individual stars, and then judge at once by means of reason that these must be the stars that I saw with the naked eye merely as a white band. I am conscious of this representation mediately, then, but not immediately; hence in the beginning it is only obscure, but afterwards it is distinct, mediate, or clear.” (LB 24: 119)

8.7 *Premise 2*

Kant's argument for premise (2), the thesis that all synthesis stands under the categories, might seem unnecessary. For since any synthesis requires the use of the understanding (B129-30), it would seem that even the synthesis of apprehension has some relationship to the categories. Kant's worry is not, however, that the synthesis of apprehension does not require the understanding; rather, the worry is that this particular synthesis is not exercised a priori through the categories. Without showing that it is exercised a priori, Kant would not be able to show that the understanding legislates a priori laws of nature. This premise is of particular interest because it is also what brings in new considerations beyond the A-edition's argument for transcendental affinity.

Kant's argument for premise (2) begins as follows:

We have **forms** of outer as well as inner sensible intuition a priori in the representations of space and time, and the synthesis of the apprehension of the manifold of appearance must always be in agreement with the latter, since it can only occur in accordance with this form. But space and time are represented a priori not merely as **forms** of sensible intuition, but also as **intuitions** themselves (which contain a manifold), and thus with the determination of the **unity** of this manifold in them (see the Transcendental Aesthetic).* (B160)

The most notable feature of this passage is Kant's appeal to the distinction between forms of intuition and "formal intuitions", and this distinction is newly made explicit in the B-edition. He explains it further in the footnote within the above passage, indicated by the asterisk:

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** [*Zusammenfassung*] of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. (B160)¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Kant's footnote does not end here, and the rest of it has generated much scholarly debate, which I avoid here.

As forms of intuition, space and time provide an order in which an object's manifold representations appear to a cognitive subject. As formal intuitions, space and time are themselves objects containing a unified manifold of intuition, viz., manifold representations of points or of instants, respectively. That we have such formal intuitions was earlier illustrated in the Transcendental Aesthetic: our possession of a priori cognition of geometry and arithmetic, which require unified manifolds of points or instants rather than manifolds of sensible objects, exhibits that we have such a priori formal intuitions.

In the first sentence of the passage above, Kant indicates the significance of our possession of these formal intuitions, beyond mere forms of intuition, and he fleshes it out in how he continues:

Thus even **unity of the synthesis** of the manifold, outside or within us, hence also a **combination** with which everything that is to be represented as determined in space or time must agree, is already given a priori, along with (not in) these intuitions, as condition of the synthesis of all **apprehension**. (B160-1)

Since the synthesis of apprehension operates upon representations presented in space and time, they are subject to the conditions that make possible our representations of space and time themselves, including the conditions that make them possible as formal intuitions. Since each of our formal intuitions is a *unity*, one of these conditions is that their unity "presupposes a synthesis" (B161 fn.). And since they are a priori unities, they likewise presuppose an a priori synthesis. Hence, to paraphrase the above passage, the a priori unity of the synthesis of our formal intuitions is a condition for the synthesis of apprehension. If space and time were merely represented a priori as forms of intuition but not as a priori formal intuitions themselves, then this result would not have been obtained because they then would not have contained a manifold requiring such an a priori synthesis.

Kant's next step is to bring in the categories:

But this synthetic unity can be none other than that of the combination of the manifold of a given **intuition in general** in an original consciousness, in agreement with the categories, only applied to our **sensible intuition**. (B161)

Essentially, Kant here relies on the argument from §§15-20, where he argued that the manifold of a given intuition stands under the categories because its unity comes from an a priori synthesis of apperception. Since the formal intuitions of space and time are each a manifold of a given intuition, they too derive their unity from the a priori synthesis of apperception through the categories.

But since Kant had already shown that the synthesis of apprehension stands under whatever conditions make possible the formal intuitions of space and time, it follows that the synthesis of apprehension stands under the categories:

Consequently all synthesis through which even perception itself becomes possible stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid a priori of all objects of experience. (B161, translation slightly modified)

Since the synthesis of apprehension was earlier defined as the synthesis through which perception becomes possible, the first part of this sentence amounts to a statement of premise (2). Kant then draws the further conclusion that the categories are “valid a priori of all objects of experience”. I interpret this to mean that the categories apply to all appearances, whether near or remote. Hence, Kant is prematurely asserting something that follows only from the later argument concerning laws of combination: if all possible appearances are connected by a priori laws of combination based on the categories, then the categories apply to all appearances, whether near or remote. This further claim also goes beyond the conclusion given in §20 that the manifold in a given intuition necessarily stands under the categories; for that earlier conclusion does not show that remote appearances are subject to the categories.

I shall now summarize the argument, in order to show how it offers resources beyond the A-edition's attempt to establish transcendental affinity. Kant's strategy for establishing premise (2) is to show that, since we have a priori formal intuitions of space and time which are themselves dependent on the categories, and since the synthesis of apprehension is dependent on the representations of space and time, it too is dependent on the categories. Schematically, the argument runs as follows:

- (i) The conditions for our representations of space and time are likewise conditions for the synthesis of apprehension.
- (ii) We have formal intuitions of space and time, which are manifolds of intuition that are given a priori.
- (iii) An a priori synthesis of apperception through the categories is a condition for our formal intuitions of space and time. [from (ii) and the result of §20].
- (iv) The synthesis of apprehension stands under the categories. [from (i) and (iii)]

Since this argument crucially relies on an appeal to the a priori formal intuitions of space and time, we can see why Kant claims in §21 and at the beginning of §26 that the argument of §26 must take into account the particular nature of our senses. Kant's argument up through §20 had a broader scope, applying to intuition in general. But since intuition in general need not provide formal intuitions in addition to forms of intuition, the argument of §26 needs to appeal to the particular nature of our intuition.

More importantly, Kant's new appeal to formal intuitions in the B-edition helps address the main problem I raised against the A-edition's argument for transcendental affinity. That argument was flawed insofar as it only conditionally applied to all appearances, namely appearances that are in fact apperceived or empirically cognized. Other appearances, however,

are not guaranteed to stand under the categories. Kant's appeal to formal intuitions helps to show that a priori laws of combination, prescribed by the categories, apply to all appearances (near or remote) and not just conditionally. For it is not conditional that all objects of experience appear within space and time. So even if a particular appearance is not given, and so neither apperceived nor empirically cognized, it nevertheless must be within space and time, which must be apperceived according to Kant. Thus, a priori laws of combination are guaranteed to apply to all appearances because those a priori laws apply to whatever might appear in space and time.

8.8 *Summary*

In this chapter, I have shown that the B-edition parallels the A-edition in offering an argument for a priori laws of nature that are based on the legislation of the understanding by means of the categories. This argument, however, brought in the notion of formal intuition to shore up one of the problems with the A-edition's argument. Whether this new argument is satisfactory is outside the scope of this dissertation. For a full evaluation of the argument's success would also require an interpretation of the first part of the objective deduction—the argument from above in the A-edition and the argument in §§15-20 in the B-edition—which attempts to show that the categories have objective validity insofar as they are necessary conditions for the thinking encountered in any empirical cognition of a given manifold of intuition. In Section 6.5, I gestured toward how that argument is supposed to work. Nevertheless, I hope the present chapter helps us understand that earlier argument insofar as that argument is intimately connected with what I have been able to explain.

Note on Translations and Abbreviations

Kant's works are generally cited according to the *Akademie* edition's page numbers, and most quotations are given from the translations in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. Four exceptions are the following: (i) citations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are given according to the standard pagination of the A- and B-editions; (ii) Kant's *Reflexionen* are cited using Adickes's numberings rather than the *Akademie* edition's page numbers; (iii) I have translated any quotations of works that have not yet appeared in the *Cambridge Edition*; and, (iv) I have modified some translations from the *Cambridge Edition* and have indicated when I have done so.

I have used the following abbreviations for citing Kant's works, along with four other primary texts:

- A *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (Ak. 7: 119-333) = *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Translated by Robert B. Louden in *Anthropology, History and Education*, edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2007): 231-429.
- AV Meier, Georg Friedrich. *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*. Halle: Johann Justinus Gebauer, 1752.
- Br *Kant's Briefwechsel* (Ak. 10-12) = *Correspondence*. Translated and edited by Arnulf Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1999).
- FS *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren* (Ak. 2: 44-61) = *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures*. Translated and edited by David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 86-105.

- GL Wolff, Christian. *Vernünfftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes und ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in Erkenntnis der Wahrheit*. 4th ed. Herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Hans Werner Arndt. *Christian Wolff Gesammelte Werke* 1. Edited by J. Ecole, H. W. Arndt, R. Theis, W. Schneiders, and S. Carboncini-Gavanelli. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2006 [1713].
- GM Wolff, Christian. *Vernünfftige Gedancken: von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*. Mit einer Einleitung und einem kritischen Apparat von Charles A. Corr. 2 vols. *Christian Wolff Gesammelte Werke* 2. Edited by J. Ecole, H. W. Arndt, R. Theis, W. Schneiders, and S. Carboncini-Gavanelli. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003 [1751].
- ID *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* (Ak. 2: 385-419) = *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World* (Inaugural Dissertation). Translated and edited by David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 377-416.
- KU *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Ak. 5: 165-485) = *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2000).
- LB1 *Logik Blomberg* (Ak. 24: 16-301) = *The Blomberg Logic*. Translated by J. Michael Young, in *Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 5-246.
- LBu *Logik Busolt* (Ak. 24: 608-86)
- LJ *Logik*, as compiled by Benjamin Jäsche (Ak. 9) = *The Jäsche Logic*. Translated by J. Michael Young, in *Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 527-640.

- LPh *Logik Philippi* (Ak. 24: 311-496)
- LW *Wiener Logik* (Ak. 24: 790-937) = *The Vienna Logic*. Translated by J. Michael Young, in *Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 249-377.
- MD *Metaphysik Dohna-Wundlacken* = *The Dohna-Wunclacken Logic*. Translated by J. Michael Young, in *Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): 431-516.
- MAN *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (Ak. 4) = *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Translated by Michael Freedman, in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry E. Allison and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002): 183-270.
- ML₁ *Metaphysik L₁* (Ak. 28: 195-301). Translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997): 19-106.
- ML₂ *Metaphysik L₂* (Ak. 28: 531-594). Translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997): 299-356.
- MM *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (Ak. 29: 747-940). Translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997): 109-288.
- MV *Metaphysik Volckmann* (Ak. 28: 440-50). Translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997): 289-298.
- N *Nachträge zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1. Auflage)* (Ak. 23: 15-50)

- PE *Vorlesungen über Philosophische Enzyklopädie* (Ak. 29: 5-45)
- PRO *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird aufterten können* (Ak. 4) = *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*. Translated by Gary Hatfield, in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry E. Allison and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002): 53-169.
- R *Reflexionen aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlaß* (Ak. 17-19) = *Notes and Fragments*. Edited by Paul Guyer. Translated by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, and Frederick Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005).
- UE *Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere antbehrlich gemacht warden soll.* (Ak. 8) = *On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason Is to Be Made Superfluous by an Older One*. Translated by Henry Allison in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry E. Allison and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002): 283-336.
- V Meier, Georg Friedrich. *Vernunftlehre*. Halle: Johann Justinus Gebauer, 1752.
- WF *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnitzens und Wolf's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?* (Ak. 20: 255-351) = *What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?* Translated by Peter Heath, in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002): 353-424.

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Areas of Specialization	Kant & Early Modern Philosophy, Phenomenology & Existentialism (especially Sartre)
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EDUCATION

Indiana University, Bloomington
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2011-12 Direct Exchange Fellowship with IUB

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Summer 2011 interDaF Intensive-Language Study

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
2008, M.A. in Philosophy

Southwestern University
2006, B.A. in Economics (Minor in Philosophy), *summa cum laude*

DISSERTATION

Title: The Central Role of Cognition in Kant's Transcendental Deduction

Committee: Allen W. Wood (chair), Gary Ebbs, Adam Leite, Paul Vincent Spade, Rebecca Spang (Department of History)

Summary: I argue that Kant's primary epistemological concern in the *Critique of Pure Reason's* transcendental deduction is empirical cognition. I show how empirical cognition is best understood as "rational sensory discrimination": the capacity to discriminate sensory objects through the use of concepts and with a sensitivity to the normativity of reasons. My dissertation focuses on Kant's starting assumption of the transcendental deduction, which I argue to be the thesis that we have empirical cognition. I then show how Kant's own subjective deduction fleshes out his conception of empirical cognition and is intertwined with key steps in the transcendental deduction's arguments that the categories have objective validity and that we have synthetic a priori cognition.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- "Sartre's Case for Nonthetic Consciousness: The Ground of the Cartesian Cogito's Certainty and the Methodological Basis for Phenomenological Ontology", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, forthcoming 2017. (*submitted*: February 2015; *accepted without revisions*: September 2015)
- "Empirical Cognition in the Transcendental Deduction: Kant's Starting Point and his Humean Problem", *Kantian Review*, forthcoming November 2016. (*submitted*: October 2014; *accepted*: May 2015)
- "Erkenntnis in Kant's Logical Works". In *Akten des 12. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*. Eds. Violetta L. Waibel and Margit Ruffing. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming 2018.

REFEREED PRESENTATIONS

“Sartre’s Introduction to Husserl via Levinas”

2015, Nov. 14 21st Conference of the North American Sartre Society, Bethlehem, PA

“*Erkenntnis* in Kant’s Logical Works”

2015, Sep. 22 12th International Kant Congress, University of Vienna

“Kant’s Denial that Animals have Consciousness”

2015, May 29 Leuven Kant Conference, Institute of Philosophy of KU Leuven

2014, Nov. 8 History of Science Society’s 2014 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

“Sartre’s Case for Nonthetic Consciousness”

2015, Jan. 31 Thinking with Sartre Today, Maison Française d’Oxford

“Kant’s Subjective Deduction and the Copernican Revolution”

2014, Oct. 25 Midwest Group of the North American Kant Society, Washington Univ.

“Kant’s Notion of Cognition and the Leibnizian-Wolffian Background of Clarity & Distinctness”

2014, Mar. 1 Southern Group of the North American Kant Society, Rhodes College

PROFESSIONAL COMMENTARIES

On Samuel Kahn, “A Kantian Take on Fallible Principles and Fallible Judgments”

2014, Oct. 18 Indiana Phil. Assoc. Fall Meeting, Indiana Uni.-Purdue Univ., Fort Wayne

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2009, Dec. 5 Indiana Phil. Assoc. Fall Meeting, Indiana University, Bloomington

On Matt Kopec, “Reference and the Cause of Non-Existent Objects”

2007, Nov. 3 Graduate Philosophy Conference, Virginia Tech

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

“Kant’s Conception of Cognition and Why Cognition Isn’t Justified True Belief”

2014, Apr. 4 IUB Philosophy Dept. 2014 Nelson Fellowship Lecture

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HONORS AND AWARDS

2015-16 College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Year Research Fellowship

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2010 Bo & Lynn Clark Essay Prize for 1st & 2nd Year Grad. Students, IUB Dept. of Phil.

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Topics in Moral and Political Philosophy (co-teaching w/ Mariam Kenney): Spring 2016
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Introduction to Existentialism: Fall 2009 (Paul Vincent Spade)
Thinking and Reasoning: Fall 2008 (Chris Tillman)

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Classics in Social and Political Philosophy: Fall 2012 (Allen W. Wood)

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Knowledge and Reality: Spring 2008 (James C. Klagge), Fall 2006 (Joseph Pitt)
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2015 Chair, Kant on Knowledge and Cognition, Univ. of Wisc.-Madison, Oct. 23
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2013 Chair, Midwest Group of NAKS, IU—Southeast, New Albany, IN, March 9
2012-13 Representative to the Graduate Curriculum Committee, IU Dept. of Philosophy

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North American Sartre Society
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German (Reading and Speaking)
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OUTREACH

2016 With Margaret E. Gray, Interview for WFHB Radio Program *Interchange*,
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Teaching Philosophy Courses (accredited by Holy Cross College) to inmates