The Grounds of Sense: Kant's Image of Theoretical Finitude

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The Grounds of Sense: Kant’s Image of Theoretical Finitude

A dissertation presented

by

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to

the Department of Philosophy

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Philosophy

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

December 2020
The Grounds of Sense: Kant’s Image of Theoretical Finitude

Abstract

I examine the centrality of theoretical finitude—the dependence of our knowledge on what is given—to Kant’s ‘problem of pure reason’ and its solution in the Critique of Pure Reason. I argue that what generates the problem is reflection upon empirical judgment, the paradigmatic act of finite knowledge. And I argue that, though the solution’s method assumes the form of an investigation not, in the first instance, of the empirically given itself but of the capacity by which we know it, nonetheless even here givenness, and thus finitude, persists in our reflective relation to the forms of our sensibility, space and time. These forms are given forms because they do not, according to Kant, belong to finite knowledge just as such: they are peculiarities of human knowledge. And this given character of our sensibility has, I urge, deeper import than is generally appreciated. It determines the shape of critical reflection as expressed by the expository structure of the Transcendental Analytic and thereby plays an essential role in the explanation, not just of the objective validity of the fundamental concepts of the human understanding in their application to the spatiotemporal, but of why these concepts are what they are in the first place. These concepts, such traditional ontological concepts as reality and negation, substance and cause, stand in an essential unity with space and time as per se expressive of the condition, traditionally called ‘nature’, under which alone the spatiotemporal is intelligible.
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Acknowledgments

Sensible of the inadequacy of their expression, I extend thanks to my graduate teachers at Harvard, and especially to Warren Goldfarb, from whom I learned how to read a philosopher’s work, and to Chris Korsgaard, from whom I learned how to read Kant’s.

Thanks to the members of the Kant Reading Group at Harvard; to Lucy Allais, Lanier Anderson, Béatrice Longuenesse, and Rachel Zuckert, who discussed their books with us; and to Charles Parsons, whose encouragement has meant a great deal.

Thanks to the attendees at the Harvard graduate workshops in practical and theoretical philosophy at which I have presented drafts; to the members of Andrea Kern’s 2018-2019 Kolloquium; to audiences at Chicago, Columbia, and Pittsburgh; and to the members of the virtual German Idealism Working Group of the summer of 2020.

Thanks to the Harvard Department of Philosophy for the award of a Philosophy Department Fellowship, to the International Centre for Philosophy North Rhine-Westphalia for the award of a fellowship for study at the International Summer School in German Philosophy in Bonn, and to the Harvard Committee on General Scholarships for the award of a Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship. Thanks to Daniel Warren for conversation, helpful and delightful in equal measure, during my time at Berkeley; and to Andrea Kern, who read drafts of many chapters during my time at Leipzig and who has been continually supportive since.

Thanks, for advice and aid, to Selim Berker, Jeff McDonough, Dick Moran, Mark Richard, Jacob Rosen, Susanna Siegel, and Alison Simmons.

Thanks to Nyasha Bovell and Emily Ware for all their help.

Thanks to the members of my dissertation committee: to Matt Boyle, who from the beginning insisted on the problem; to Sean Kelly, who introduced me to finitude as such; to Béatrice Longuenesse, whose book was the first I read on the Critique of Pure Reason and the one to which I
most often return; and to Samantha Matherne, whose counsel for the last two and a half years has been invaluable. I am exceedingly grateful to them for their instruction and support.

Thanks, for philosophical conversation, to friends and colleagues at Harvard, Berkeley, and Leipzig, and especially to Rachel Achs, Diana Acosta Navas, Olivia Bailey, Sam Berstler, Doug Blue, James Bondarchuk, Sebastian Bürkle, Justin Cavitt, Pirachula Chulanon, Byron Davies, Laura Davis, Sandy Diehl, Lidal Dror, Quentin Fisher, Caitlin Fitchett, Zach Gabor, Jonathan Gombin, Rachael Goodyer, Simon Gurofsky, Chandler Hatch, Zoe Jenkin, Mathis Koschel, Paul Marcucilli, Ian Martel, Jake McNulty, Jen Nguyen, Becca Rothfeld, Ronni Gura Sadowsky, Wendy Salkin, Pia Schneider, Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc, Jana Thesing, David Thorstad, Wim Vanrie, and Kate Vredenburgh. And thanks, for enlightenment and diversion, to Nic Koziol, Jed Lewinsohn, Josh Mendelsohn, Sasha Newton, and Tyke Nunez.

Thanks to Michael Pendlebury and Mary Tjiattas, my interlocutors of longest standing.

And thanks to Jeremy David Fix, whose knowledge of the production of this work is—except, perhaps, by my own—unmatched. He is quite right to insist that it would not be as it is were it not for him. Nor, for me, would anything else.
Introduction

1. Limitation and finitude.

It is a commonplace of the general philosophical consciousness that at the core of Kant’s theoretical philosophy lies a doctrine of limitation. What is limited is human knowledge, and that to which it is limited is the sensible world. In this, it has seemed to many of his readers, Kant’s philosophy is hardly original. Hegel, for example, in *Faith and Knowledge*, writes that the words with which ‘Locke expresses in the Introduction to his *Essay* the goal of his undertaking…are words which one could just as well read in the introduction to Kant’s philosophy: for it similarly confines itself to Locke’s goal, that is, to an investigation of the finite intellect’ (1802-3/1977: 69).

Kant’s investigation assumes the form, as Hegel says, of a ‘critique of the cognitive capacities’ (1802-3/1977: 68). What distinguishes Kant from Locke is not, however, only, or even in the first instance, the ‘ultimate results’ of his investigation, as Hegel also suggests (1802-3/1977: 69). For though Hegel writes that both Locke and Kant investigate ‘the finite intellect’, this means something different in Kant’s case than in does in Locke’s, and with this differs the character of his critical investigation. Locke begins with a conception of knowledge and asks whether and to what extent we, possessed of the capacities we have, may exemplify it. To the extent that we may not exemplify it, we are limited: limited as to knowledge. Though this structure is sometimes imputed to Kant, in my view it should not be. For Kant but not for Locke, there is a moment in which we recognize and acknowledge something we might call a limitation, a moment preceding the investigation of our capacities and, indeed, a moment to which that investigation owes its course. In this moment we locate ourselves within the sphere of knowledge by specifying the concept of knowledge as that of finite knowledge. This is not, or at least not as such, a division within the sphere of the absolutely knowable: it is not in that sense the expression of a limitation. It is, rather, an acknowledgment of a limitation in our relation to the object of knowledge. Finite knowledge is
knowledge of an object that is given, whose actuality is not grounded in that knowledge. Kant's theoretical philosophy is a doctrine of limitation because, and insofar as, it is a doctrine of finitude.

Because finite knowledge is knowledge of what is given, it is articulated into two moments: reception and thought. Thus a finite capacity to know [Erkenntnisvermögen] has two ‘stems’: receptivity and spontaneity [A15/B29]. Kant's so-called ‘two-stems doctrine’ is not a psychological hypothesis but an exhibition of the structure of finitude. It does not precede and inform his doctrine of limitation; that doctrine precedes and informs it.

This essay is a study of the way in which the concept of finite knowledge determines the development of the principal themes of the positive part of the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant's organizing principle in this work is that of a task or problem [Aufgabe] and its fulfillment or solution. The problem is a problem for finite and, in particular, human knowledge as a species, as our species, of finite knowledge. The task is that of self-knowledge: human finitude’s relation to itself. In the prosecution of the task, Kant tells us, we encounter finitude anew: the structure of our relation to the given object of empirical knowledge is echoed even in our relation to our own cognitive nature. This is a study of the problem and the solution, with particular attention to this latter aspect, an aspect which constitutes a peculiarity of Kant’s thought within the tradition of German idealism.

2. Problems of Interpretation.

Though the exposition within each chapter is directed towards the chapter’s contribution to the theme of theoretical finitude, whose development I anticipate in §3 below, the initial orientation is often defined, and much of the development guided, by venerable problems in the interpretation of the Critique. My plea on behalf of theoretical finitude is in large part that, developed as I try to develop it here, it yields an illuminating and systematic approach to a number of different problems.
I wish, then, to describe a few of these here. I reserve for the chapters themselves the development of these problems and discussion of the responses to them by Kant’s readers, including me.

2.1 The problem of the analytic-synthetic distinction.

The problem of the analytic-synthetic distinction is one which challenges the critical project as such. For it threatens the problem of pure reason, the problem from which the critical philosophy ‘arises’ [ergibt sich] [A11/B24]. The problem is, as I have said, best known according to Kant’s formulation ‘how are synthetic judgments possible \textit{a priori}?’ How analytic judgments are possible \textit{a priori} is no mystery, Kant says, since to judge analytically all I need is to reflect on concepts I already possess. And so, it has been thought, if only all judgments possible \textit{a priori}, or, in any case, all such judgments that are of metaphysical interest, were analytic, there would be no problem of pure reason, and the first \textit{Critique} would be otiose. And even if it could not be shown that all such judgments were analytic, the Kantian edifice would stand on an unsure foundation absent a precise criterion of demarcation for analytic judgment, something Kant has been alleged not to provide.

2.2 The problem of Kant’s reaction to Hume.

The problem of Kant’s reception of Hume, less determinate than the problem of the analytic-synthetic distinction, might be formulated in this way: how can Kant have been ‘awoken from his dogmatic slumber’ by the discovery of a problem apparently presupposing a global ‘concept-empiricism’ (as it is called in recent commentary) which Kant does not accept? Hume argues, in particular, that since the idea of \textit{cause} is copied from no primary impression, it expresses nothing belonging to the object itself but merely our disposition in reacting to it. Kant does not, certainly, accept this inference; how, then, can he take Hume to have taught him anything at all?
2.3 The problem of conceptualism and non-conceptualism.

The problem of conceptualism and non-conceptualism has commanded the attention of many commentators of our own day. The question is that of whether concepts, representations of the understanding, are involved in, or in the generation of, intuitions. On the one hand, Kant says that concepts are posterior to intuitions: intuitions are given prior to any thought \([\text{vor \ allem Denken}]\) [B132]. On the other, he suggests that the unity immanent to an intuition is the same as that characteristic of judgment, the act of the understanding [A79/B104-5]. And in general, non-conceptualist and conceptualist interpreters alike have found ample textual material in support of their different readings.

2.4 The problem of the steps of the B-Deduction.

Kant rewrites the Deduction completely in the second edition of the Critique and divides into thirteen sections numbered §§15-27. At the end of §20 he concludes that intuitions stand under the categories and thereby, apparently, secures his quarry. But at the beginning of §21 he says that only a ‘beginning’ of the Deduction has been made and that the Deduction proper is yet to unfold.

2.5 The problem of the B160 footnote.

In an infamous footnote to §26 of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant writes of a unity belonging to sensibility which, though it ‘precedes all concepts’, nonetheless ‘presupposes a synthesis’, apparently an act of the understanding [B161]. And yet the understanding is the ‘faculty of concepts’ [A160/B199]. How could its act constitute an intuitive unity precedent to all concepts?

In what follows I indicate, in sketching the narrative shape of this essay, the way in which theoretical finitude yields an integrated response to these problems of interpretation.
3. Synopsis.

3.1 Part I: Kant’s Problem.

The defining problem of the first Critique, the subject of Part I, is what Kant calls ‘the real problem of pure reason’ [eigentliche Aufgabe der reinen Vernunft], more familiar in its interrogative statement ‘how are synthetic judgments a priori possible?’ [B19]. That this is a problem for finite knowledge as such, and for human knowledge as a species of finite knowledge, I argue in Chapter 1, ‘The Real Problem of Pure Reason’. The problem arises when it is observed that knowledge that is grounded in what is given presupposes knowledge that is not, and cannot be, so grounded: this knowledge, of the given but not from the given, is thus ‘prior to’ the given: knowledge a priori negatively construed. Such knowledge is embodied in such traditional ontological concepts as substance and cause, and their embodiment of this knowledge is their reality, so that the problem of pure reason is that of how such concepts can have reality, otherwise than being—as empirical concepts are—grounded in the presentation to thought of actualities which exemplify them. For since they are not so grounded—and since they, belonging to finite knowledge, do not ground the actuality of the objects to which they apply—it is a mystery how they can have bearing on anything, how they can be applicable to anything, at all. This problem is, I argue, secure in its urgency independently of canonical questions about Kant’s analytic-synthetic distinction and its descendants.

It is obviously not, however, secure in its urgency independently of the non-empirically grounded reality of such concepts as substance and cause, and so in Chapter 2, ‘The Spark and the Flame’, I discuss the reasons Kant supplies, at the outset of his project, to suppose that such concepts belong, and must belong, to human knowledge as a species of finite knowledge: to suppose, that is, that they have reality, and have it in a way in which empirical concepts do not. He presents these reasons against the background of his engagement with the philosophy of Hume, the spark of the critical flame. Hume, Kant thinks, shows us that the reality of such concepts cannot be
grounded in the presentation of the actual because they embody the promise of intelligibility: witnessing the exemplification of *cause*, for example, we should understand why the effect follows the cause; witnessing the exemplification of *substance*, we should understand how the attributes spring from the essence. This promise is, however, one that the objects of experience cannot keep: and since no such object can fully exemplify such a concept, its reality—the reality of the complete concept and all that it promises—is not grounded in the actual, because it cannot be. Hume concludes that we have no right to expect of experience such intelligibility as *substance* and *cause* express (though, he thinks, we expect it nonetheless). Kant, on the other hand, concludes, having argued that empirical knowledge, which is to say finite knowledge, is impossible absent such a right, that he must undertake to explain the reality of these concepts in the face of Hume’s observations, in fulfillment of the task set by the problem of pure reason.

3.2 Part II: Kant’s Solution.

I then turn, in Part II, to Kant’s efforts in this fulfillment. This part is divided into four chapters: one (Chapter 3) on the relation of the two parts of the *Erkenntnisvermögen* and the basic structural solution to the problem of pure reason; and two on the Transcendental Deduction (Chapters 4-5) and one on the Analytic of Principles and, in particular, the Analogies of Experience (Chapter 6), in which, as I read these texts, that basic structural solution is elaborated in its application to human knowledge.

In Chapter 3 I argue that Kant’s positive conception of knowledge *a priori*, and thus his basic structural solution to the problem of pure reason, is that such concepts as *substance* and *cause*, belonging to the form of the human understanding, belong thereby to the form of the object of human knowledge. Though we do not, in possessing or exercising the understanding, bring substances and causes into being (as would the infinite intellect), nonetheless the sensible owes its
form to the human understanding. Thus, in knowing my own understanding, I know its form as that of the sensible object, and thereby know the form of the object from its ground: I know it *a priori* in the traditional sense. From this, I urge, it follows that sensibility and the understanding are not, as many commentators have suggested, independently constituted capacities accidentally combined in cognition. For the understanding's form to be the ground of that of the sensible object as such, it cannot be that what it is to be an object of sensibility is independent of what it is to be an object of the understanding; and as for their objects, so for the capacities themselves.

In his basic structural solution to the problem of pure reason, Kant purports to reveal something about our relationship to the object of knowledge that has heretofore ‘lain hidden’ [A10]: that it is, in respect of metaphysical concepts, the object that conforms to our representations, and not, as a finite knower would expect, the other way about. But the story is, according to Kant, complicated by a further structural aspect of knowledge *a priori*: that belonging to our, human sensibility are the forms, not themselves metaphysical concepts, in which objects are given to us, but which do not belong to finite knowledge as such. Like the object of finite knowledge itself, these forms, space and time, are given to us: they are facticities of our constitution which admit of no explanation. Though in this way they constitute a limit on our self-understanding, they are equally sources of what knowledge we have *a priori*. For it is in terms of them that the question is posed whose answer is the system of human knowledge *a priori*, the question of what concepts are applicable to a spatiotemporal object which may serve as a ground of finite knowledge.

The ideas of the previous paragraph are expressed, as I argue in Chapters 4-6, in the Transcendental Deduction and Analytic of Principles. The Deduction in the second edition of the first *Critique* is so designed as to point up the significance of the facticity of space and time and thereby of the specificity of human knowledge: of its being, that is to say, a species of finite knowledge and not finite knowledge *überhaupt*. The Deduction is customarily divided into two parts,
the first comprehending §§15-20, the second §§21-27, of the Critique. In Part 1, the subject of Chapter 4, ‘The Form of Finitude’, Kant explicates the notion of an a priori concept or category by locating the category within the form of finite knowledge in general, which here receives its fullest elaboration. A category is a concept whose applicability to the sensible object is part of what constitutes that object as an object of the understanding: which is to say, as a possible object of judgment. To give this ultimate transcendental explication of the notion of the category in general is not, however, to explain why substance, cause, and the like are our categories. It is to explain what must be done towards such an explanation: which is, in turn, the business of Part 2 of the Deduction and the Analytic of Principles.

In Part 2, the topic of Chapter 5, ‘The Original Unity’, Kant identifies in the abstract the system of human categories by bringing to bear his discussion of finite knowledge in Part 1 on the human sensible forms. Space and time, as forms belonging to the capacity in whose exercise we are given an object to know, are not discursive unities but an a priori intuitive unity, the unity of the actual, and thereby the unity of that which may serve as the ground of finite knowledge for me whose forms they are. This means, Kant tells us, that the spatiotemporal has the character of nature: a spatiotemporal whose objects are intelligible, intelligible as spatiotemporal, intelligible in their spatiotemporal way, which means in the way in which objects are connected in space and time. The unity of the actual is a natural unity. The categories of the human understanding are thereby the ground of the form of the object of human knowledge by being the ground of its intelligible form. The object of human knowledge is such an object because it supports not merely knowledge but understanding.

In Chapter 6, ‘The Meaning of Objectivity’, I present a reading of the Analogies of Experience according to which they show that what constitutes the spatiotemporal as intelligible—its mode of connectedness, which is to say its unity under the relational categories of substance, cause,
and *community*—is necessary for the objective judgment of those objects. I thus sketch an interpretive approach to Kant’s application in the Analytic of Principles to the spatiotemporal of his ‘principle of the Principles’—the unity of the actual as a unity of intelligibility and thereby of connection—and thereby to his disclosure of the ground of the categories of his famous table.
Chapter 1
The Real Problem of Pure Reason

1. Introductory.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is nothing if not Kant’s attempt to answer the question: ‘How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?’ [B19]. For this question ‘contain[s]’ the ‘real problem [eigentliche Aufgabe] of pure reason’ [ibid]. To understand that problem we must understand the question. To do that we must understand what is meant by ‘synthetic’, by ‘*a priori*’, and by their combination in the idea of a synthetic judgment possible *a priori*.

Kant introduces his notion of synthetic judgment in contradistinction with that of analytic judgment: a judgment whose subject-concept contains its predicate-concept, which can, therefore, be drawn out of the subject by analysis [A6/B10].¹ This suggests that his analytic-synthetic distinction is essential to the problem of synthetic judgment *a priori*. Yet even as this distinction has enjoyed a staying power such as any philosopher might envy, it has from the time of its introduction also been subject to an unenviable series of attacks.² The distinction might be used for different theoretical purposes, and different objections bear on different purposes to different extents. But the most menacing for Kant would be any which threatened the role of the analytic-synthetic distinction in generating the problem of pure reason. For if the distinction is essential to the problem, there is no problem, and thereby no need for a critique of pure reason, a ‘special science’ which ‘arises’ [*ergiebt sich*] from the problem [A11/B24], without it.

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¹ Like Kant, ‘I consider only affirmative judgments’, not, however, because ‘the application to negative ones is easy’ [A9/B10], but because a comprehensive account of Kantian analytic judgment is not necessary here. But see n. 5 for an indication of my own views on this matter.

² Eberhard (1789: 312-32) complains that the notion of containment conflates the different universals of the traditional logic. Maaß, as we shall see, joins Eberhard in objecting that containment is psychologically idiosyncratic. Quine’s criticism (1951: 21) is more familiar to the contemporary reader, though his topic is not Kant’s distinction but that of the logical empiricists. Beck (1955: 174) claims that unless a ‘definite criterion’ for analyticity, absent from Kant’s texts themselves, can be given, ‘an important member of the structure of [Kant’s] philosophy must be given up’.
My focus in this chapter is on an objection alleging that Kant’s distinction leaves it open that all \textit{a priori} judgments might be recoverable as analytic, so that there is no synthetic \textit{a priori} for his problem to be about. I contend that this objection cannot succeed because the prospect of analytic recovery is irrelevant to the real problem of pure reason; the objection therefore misconstrues the problem. The problem is, I argue, about how the concepts figuring in a judgment \textit{a priori} could have the \textit{real representative power}—the power to represent real possibilities, or realities, in the traditional idiom—which such a judgment, successfully made, requires.\textsuperscript{3} This problem about real representative power in the case of \textit{a priori} judgment is recognized when that case is described in contradistinction

\textsuperscript{3} It might be objected that the problem of pure reason is supposed to cover the possibility both of synthetic judgments \textit{a priori} in which figure concepts with real representative power and that of such judgments in which figure concepts without such power. The latter class of judgments might fall within metaphysics as ‘natural predisposition’ [B21-22]. I think that to interpret the problem as indifferent to this distinction is to paper over an essential aspect of its structure: namely, the way in which Kant’s question of the possibility of metaphysics as natural predisposition is included under the heading of the problem of pure reason [B19-B22]. The question how synthetic judgments are possible \textit{a priori} is eventually answered in such a way as to exclude the possibility of such putative judgments as, for example, \textit{that God is omnipotent}, but as to affirm the possibility of such putative judgments as \textit{that every event has a cause}. (For whatever else belongs to his solution to the problem of pure reason, Kant says that synthetic judgments are possible \textit{a priori} because they are expressive of the possibility of objects of experience [A158/B197].) These facts of exclusion and affirmation themselves belong to the explanation of how synthetic judgments are possible \textit{a priori}: such judgments are possible in such a way as excludes the possibility of the former putative judgment but affirms that of the latter. If I am right about the problem of pure reason, the latter are possible because their concepts have real representative power constituted otherwise than empirically, whereas the former do not. Only with these facts of affirmation and exclusion firmly in view can we appreciate the full significance of the question of why we are attracted to putative judgments of, for example, rational theology. They make it possible to pose that question—not itself a metaphysical, but rather an anthropological question, according to Kant, whose answer ‘cannot rightly be demanded of metaphysics proper’ [Prolegomena 4:362-4]—of why we are driven to do what we cannot do.

Thus, when Kant asks how synthetic judgments \textit{a priori} are possible, I understand him to ask how we are capable of such judgments: the question is about a capability (whose actualization is an accomplishment) and not a liability (whose actualization is a failure). To ask how synthetic judgments are possible \textit{a priori} is to ask how such judgments are possible as \textit{correct exercises} of our capacity to judge; this eventually rules out the possibility of such judgments as \textit{that God is omnipotent}, because ‘there is no canon for [the] speculative use of reason’ at all [A796/B824]. It might be suggested that it is one thing to be capable of making a judgment, and another thing to be capable of making a true judgment or a judgment expressive of cognition or knowledge, and that it is the first of these capabilities with which Kant is concerned in the problem of pure reason. But even if—as I doubt—we can make sense of a naked capability for issuing in judgments, in itself indifferent to their truth or status as knowledge, Kant’s problem is not about such a capability. For the problem is about the possibility of sciences with \textit{a priori} elements: geometry, pure natural science, and metaphysics. These are all supposed to be positive accomplishments of reason, and it is only because synthetic judgments \textit{a priori} are contained in these sciences that the problem of pure reason is raised in the first place.

Further evidence—and this is just one example—that the problem of pure reason concerns real representative power is that Kant states, as part of the solution to the question ‘how are synthetic propositions possible \textit{a priori}?’, the conclusion ‘that to no concept can its objective reality be secured, save insofar as it can be presented in a corresponding intuition (which for us is always sensory), so that beyond the bounds of sensibility…there can be no cognition whatever, that is, no concepts of which one is sure that they are not empty’ [Entdeckung 8:188-9]. If the problem were itself indifferent as between concepts with and without real representative power, such statements would be irrelevant to it.
to the apparently unproblematic case of judgments *a posteriori*, in which the concepts involved have their real representative power attested to by actualities to which, in those judgments, they are applied. The reason for which judgments *a posteriori* assume this role as unproblematic exemplar is, I suggest, that they are the paradigmatic exercises of *finite cognition*: exercises of thought and, when they are successful, knowledge, which depend constitutively on their object’s being given to the thinker. The problem of pure reason is thus the problem of how a finite thinker and knower could, in her conceptual activity, represent the real otherwise than in that paradigmatically finite way. The problem of pure reason is a structural problem of finitude as such. The notion of an analytic judgment plays a didactic role, forestalling a misunderstanding about what it would take to solve, or dissolve, this problem. In particular, appeal to analytic judgment cannot dissolve the problem, because the possibility of analysis does not explain that of the real representative power of the concepts analyzed.  

I begin (§2) by reviewing the threat of analytic recovery and one apparently attractive defense against it: the *logical* approach developed by Lanier Anderson (2015). Anderson’s interpretation is a useful foil because his principal contention is precisely what I deny: that Kant, to secure the problem of pure reason, must foreclose the analytic recoverability of at least some *a priori* judgments. To emphasize this contrast with his approach, I call mine, echoing Kant’s contrast of logical with real possibility, the *real* approach (§3). I then present a reading of the first *Critique*’s Introduction according to this approach, accounting for the generation of the problem of pure reason (§4) and the didactic role of analytic judgment (§5). Finally, since a significant strength of Anderson’s position is its promise to make sense of Kant’s relation to his rationalist predecessors, I discuss the way in which, in the light of the real approach, this relation appears, and some of the crucial differences between the conception of the problem of pure reason as a structural problem of finitude, on the

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4 The position I defend is closest to one defended by Beck (1951); see §5. Allison (2004) also connects the notions of analytic judgment and real representation; see n. 29.
one hand, and conceptions which, like this one, emphasize real representative power, but according to which the structure of finitude is not the immediate source of the problem. (§6). While Anderson and other commentators understand Kant to address an argument to Leibniz and Wolff with the ambition of immanent conviction, I understand him to cast off one of their fundamental commitments, to the theological ground of the possibility of thought, and thereby to leave himself the task of finding an alternative: one which explains the possibility of real representative power \textit{a priori} on finitude’s own terms, and which emerges in its urgency only in finitude’s everyday self-consciousness. The real problem of pure reason is the problem of how the \textit{a priori} is possible for a finite thinker as such.

2. The logical approach.

Anderson claims that we should understand the problem of pure reason in a ‘dialectical context’ defined by ‘contemporary debates’ in the eighteenth century (2015: 8). In particular, almost all of Kant’s interlocutors assume, according to Anderson, that—in Kant’s idiom—all true judgments are analytic. Thus, in distinguishing between analytic and non-analytic judgments, Kant makes a novel claim. Since everyone party to the debate claims to understand how analytic judgments are possible, the challenge is to understand how non-analytic judgments are possible. Such, according to Anderson, is the setting for the problem of pure reason. Thus, on his view, Henry Allison (2004: 91) is wrong to characterize the distinction so that synthetic judgment has primacy. For the merely negative characterization of synthetic judgment as \textit{not} analytic is part and parcel of its possibility’s being a problem for rationalists like Leibniz and Wolff.

Against this background, Anderson argues for a ‘logical’ interpretation of the analytic-synthetic distinction, according to which judgments divide into two classes based on a difference in the logical relation among their constituents (2015: 22). He contrasts it with what he calls
‘methodological’ and ‘epistemological’ interpretations, according to which the analytic-synthetic distinction records ‘a difference in our cognitive treatment of judgments, or propositions, rather than…a difference between the judgments/propositions’ themselves (2015: 29). He objects that these alternatives ‘[leave] open the possibility of turning synthetic claims into analytic ones’ (ibid). For nothing in the nature of the judgments themselves would require treating them one way (say, synthetically) rather than the other (analytically). Thus only on the logical interpretation is Kant invulnerable to the ‘rationalist strategy’ of ‘recuperation’ of synthetic judgments as analytic (2015: 31).

The idea of such a strategy is, as Anderson notes, not alien to Kant. Consider the following note, dated by Adickes to 1769:

‘The proposition that every body is impenetrable is analytic, not only because body cannot be thought without impenetrability, but because it can be thought solely by means of impenetrability; this mark belongs as a pars to the notion of body. But that every body is inert is a synthetic proposition; for inertia is compars with the concept of what is thought by means of the expression “body,” thus to a whole concept which is combined in a necessary fashion with those partial concepts that belong to the notion of body. If one had the whole concept of which the notions of subject and predicate are compartes, synthetic judgments would be transformed into analytic ones. One wonders to what extent there is something arbitrary here. [R3928 17:350]

Here Kant imagines that the synthetic proposition that every body is inert constitutes the synthesis of a new concept—call it body*—which contains everything contained in body as well as inert. ‘Every body is inert.’ may thus express either the synthetic proposition in which body and inert figure, or the analytic proposition in which body* and inertness figure.

Consider, against this background, the implications for Kant’s claim in the first Critique that the judgment that every alteration has a cause is a synthetic judgment a priori. Suppose that I construct the concept alteration*, which contains everything contained in alteration as well as caused. Now the same words—‘Every alteration has a cause.’—may express an analytic judgment. This procedure is generalizable to every synthetic judgment a priori, thus to every proposition of metaphysics. And so
metaphysics, by this procedure, can be made analytic; since there is no problem about the possibility of analytic judgment \textit{a priori}, there is no problem of pure reason.

Kant does not, as far as I know, apply the idea contained in this note from the 1760s to his work of the 1780s. But his detractors do. J.G. Maaß claims that, given the characterization of the distinction in the first \textit{Critique’s} Introduction, whether a judgment is analytic or synthetic varies with psychological idiosyncrasy (1789: 189). Anderson’s response is to insist, on Kant’s behalf, that whether one concept is contained in another is an objective matter. Anything other than his ‘logical’ interpretation of the distinction, in denying the objectivity of the matter in the relevant sense, leaves open the possibility of recuperation.

There are, broadly speaking, two questions for the logical approach. First, of a metaphysical flavor: what are these containment facts? How are they realized? We cannot say merely what they are \textit{i.e.}, psychological. We must say what they are. Second, of an epistemological or critical flavor: how can we know them? Of course, these kinds of question are intimately related, since how we know about concepts depends upon their nature.

But I wish to set these questions aside.\textsuperscript{5} For we must confront them in the context of the problem of pure reason only if we must take the logical approach, and that, I shall argue, we need

\textsuperscript{5} In my own view, for which I cannot provide a proper defense here, it is a mistake to think of Kantian concepts as fixed logical entities which we access in analytic judgments. Rather, an analytic judgment is (or is the result of) a kind of act called ‘analysis’ to which we can subject the concepts we possess. For us to possess these concepts is, in the case in which they have real representative power—the basic case, in my view, but not, of course, the only case, since there are concepts without such power—is for us to understand the realities they represent. And what a concept is, in my view, is to be understood in terms of what it is for us to possess one. (See Newton (2015: 474-5) for discussion). So, at least in the case of concepts with real representative power, our possession of them is an ‘objective’ matter, since they embody an understanding—factively construed—of the realities they represent, and they may thereby be said to be ‘objective’ themselves. But they are not thereby logical entities over and above the realities our understanding of which constitutes our possession of those concepts. It may be objected that it must be an objective matter what is contained even in concepts without real representative power. That is true, but it does not, in my view, require that we hypostasize these concepts. In brief, even these concepts are essentially related to concepts which do possess real representative power. Our concept of the divine will is, for example, related to that of the human will by analogy \textit{[Prolegomena} 4:356\textit{]. This secures for them a kind of objectivity of content which is not, however, independent of the objectivity constituted by real representative power, even when they themselves lack real representative power. All of this has a natural affinity with what I argue in this chapter, but the argument does not, so far as I can tell, depend on it. My point is not to present a comprehensive interpretation of Kant’s notion of analytic judgment but to argue that the problem of pure reason in
not do. For, as I shall argue, even if every true judgment *a priori* were analytic, still we should need an account of the real representative power of the concepts figuring in it. And for this reason, even if every true judgment *a priori* were analytic, there would still be a problem of pure reason, because it would still be a mystery how concepts could have the real representative power which metaphysical judgments require. The suggestion of global analyticity (restricted to the *a priori* domain or not) does not address this problem, and, as we shall see, Kant and his appointed expositor Schulz say as much. So the recuperation strategy, even if it can succeed, cannot dissolve the problem of pure reason.

3. The real approach.

One way of characterizing the difference between the real and logical approaches is to say that the former emphasizes not the analytic-synthetic distinction but the *a priori*-a *posteriori* distinction. (This, as we shall see, is not to say that the analytic-synthetic distinction is irrelevant.) The expository order of the first *Critique*’s Introduction suggests that Kant expects us to accept that we understand how real representation is possible in the *a posteriori* case. What is important here is, I suggest, that in this case we bear an unproblematic kind of cognitive connection to actualities, a kind of connection characteristic of finite knowledge. Then he argues that in the case of metaphysical judgments, we cannot bear *that* connection to actualities and thus are, with respect to these judgments, at a loss as to how real representation is possible. That is the real problem of pure reason. This is the movement of thought I shall now describe in detail.

First, a note on real representative power and why I use this terminology. Kant distinguishes logical from real possibility, but much of the elaboration of this distinction presupposes the positive development of the *Critique*. Here I want to highlight only what he can assume in the Introduction. In a footnote in the Preface to the *Critique*’s second edition, Kant claims that

> particular does not depend upon any exclusive, exhaustive ‘logical’ distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments considered independently of our cognitive activity.
to cognize [erkennen] an object, it is required that I be able to prove its possibility (whether by the testimony of experience from its actuality or a priori through reason). But I can think [denken] whatever I like, as long as I do not contradict myself, i.e., as long as my concept is a possible thought, even if I cannot give any assurance whether or not there is a corresponding object somewhere within the sum total of possibilities. [Bxxvi n.]

This remark anticipates others, later in the Critique, in which Kant connects the notion of the ‘sum total of possibilities’ to notions like that of the ‘formal conditions of experience’ [A218/B265]. But that is not my topic here. I wish to suggest only that in the Introduction, Kant does not expect us to have in mind his notion of real possibility in terms of the formal conditions of experience. We are, however, supposed to have a grip on the notion of a possibility: of something lying ‘within the sum total of possibilities’. And, if this note in the Preface is any indication, we are supposed to appreciate that mere thinking is not enough to represent—or, in any case, knowingly to represent—such a possibility.

In the terms of Kant’s later distinction between the (logical) possibility of a concept and the (real) possibility of a thing [e.g. A596/B624n.], the countable ‘possibility’ here appears to mean ‘real possibility’, or what has been called, in the tradition, ‘reality’. The real possibilities, or realities, include felinity, rectangularity, and viviparity: things might be feline; things might be rectangular; things might be animals which give birth to live young. Real possibilities need not be actualized; there are ways things might be, but aren’t. Things which are, on the other hand, I call ‘actualities’, again in accordance with the tradition. I use these terms because they disambiguate notions like

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6 Kant’s category of reality [A80/B106 et passim], though related to this notion, is not the same. In this chapter I always mean, by ‘reality’, real possibility, sometimes favoring the former locution for its comparative elegance.

7 It might be suggested that Kant is sloppy here, that (the countable) ‘possibility’ should always, when a reality is meant, be qualified by ‘real’, because there are, alongside the realities, also the merely logical possibilities. But it is not obvious that Kant’s distinction licenses this idiomatic demand, since real possibility pertains to things, logical possibility (not, at least in the first instance, to things but) to thoughts or concepts. But I pursue this no further here.

8 Biangularity is, in contrast, not a reality and ‘must…not be counted among the possibilities’ [A291/B347], though there is, according to Kant, no contradiction in its concept [A292/B348]. Nothing can be biangular.

9 Other traditional terms are the countable ‘essence’ (for ‘reality’) and ‘existence’ (for ‘actuality’). Cognates of these terms appear in rationalist texts, including books from which Kant lectured: see, e.g., Baumgarten (1757/2013 §§55-6) and Wolff (1720/2009 §§389, 544). See also Kant’s ‘substantial’ use of ‘reality’: e.g., Vigilantius 29:1000.
‘object’ and ‘thing’. For example, in talking about cats, I might be talking about cats in general or as such—the cat *überhaupt*—and only about actual cats *per accidens*.

A concept with real representative power expresses a real possibility. According to the passage from the Preface, it is not sufficient, for a concept to have real representative power, that it not be self-contradictory. There is, for Kant, such a thing as a concept without such power. He here departs from a view held by many of his predecessors and which he himself held in the precritical period. But he and they agree that if there is a scientific metaphysics, the concepts involved in it have real representative power. They are not mere symbols in a game with fixed rules. Thus a purely conceptual metaphysics, as imagined by the rationalist, is not ‘merely’ conceptual, if this means a system articulating conceptual contents in abstraction from their power to represent realities. For metaphysics is nothing if not the science of the real. So if Kant can show that there is a problem about how concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments can have the required power, there is a problem of pure reason which does not depend on foreclosing analytic recuperation.

4. Experience as exemplary.

Let us return to the Introduction. Kant’s first examples of analytic and synthetic judgments are ‘All bodies are extended’ and ‘All bodies are heavy’, respectively [A7/B11]. He explains the possibility of the latter thus:

It is thus experience on which the possibility of the synthesis of the predicate of weight with the concept of body is grounded, since both concepts, though the one is

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10 For ‘under thing is understood (1) object in general, (2) the possible, (3) the positive or reality, (4) that which is actual’ [Mrongovius 29:811]. Disambiguation is required.

11 Kant himself clearly understands the rationalist in this way: *i.e.*, not as indifferent to whether the concepts she articulates represent reality, but as simply presupposing that they do. He says, for example, of Leibniz that ‘he, adhering to the Platonic school, assumed innate, pure intellectual intuitions called ideas, which are encountered in the human mind, though now only obscurely; and to whose analysis and illumination by means of attention alone we owe the cognition of objects, as they are in themselves’ [Anthropologie 7:141n.] As I explain in §6 below, Kant elaborates this Platonic doctrine of intellectual intuition in terms of the finite thinker’s dependence on God. Thus, as I explain in that section, it is not that the rationalist denies that metaphysical concepts need represent reality; it is that the rationalist presupposes a theological explanation of that real representative power.
not contained in the other, nevertheless belong together, though only contingently, as parts of a whole, namely experience, which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions. [A8/B12]

Thus this judgment is a ‘judgment of experience’ [Erfahrungsurteil] [A7/B11]. I find, by observing bodies, that ‘weight is also always connected’ with the other ‘marks’ contained in the concept [A8/B12].

Kant seems to expect us to find such empirical judgments unproblematic. And it is in explicit contradistinction to this that he introduces the problematic case of the synthetic a priori:

But in synthetic a priori judgments this means of help is entirely lacking. If I am to go beyond the concept $A$ in order to cognize another $B$ as combined with it, what is it on which I depend and by means of which the synthesis becomes possible, since I here do not have the advantage of looking around for it in the field of experience? [A9/B13; my underlining]

The form of the question here is: if not experience, then what? Kant characterizes synthetic a posteriori judgment positively: judgment in which experience enables the relation of predicate to subject. In light of this, he characterizes synthetic a priori judgment negatively: judgment in which the relation of predicate to subject is enabled by an ‘unknown =X’ which ‘cannot be experience’ [A9/B13].

I suggest that the contrast of empirical with a priori judgment is essential to the problem of pure reason in the following way: the synthetic a posteriori is intelligible as synthetic, because it is the exemplary kind of synthetic judgment, in terms of which we begin to understand the synthetic as such. This kind of judgment is synthetic because it is grounded in a third thing, which, as object, stands over and against the thinker and enables her judgment. What I mean by that—which-stands-over-and-against is what Kant describes Plato as foregoing in abandoning the world of the senses: ‘He did not notice that he made no headway by his efforts, for he had no resistance, no support [Unterlage], as it were, by which he could stiffen himself, and to which he could apply his powers in
order to put his understanding into motion’ [A5/B9]. We first understand such a structural description—‘judgment grounded in a given object’—by considering its empirical exemplification.

This is why Kant immediately specifies his discussion of synthetic judgment to the empirical case.

In my view, this is our initial grip on the notion of cognition [Erkenntnis]: the structure described as ‘judgment grounded in a given object’. This may strike some readers as surprising, because it is often thought that cognition just is a mental state involving the operation of two faculties which Kant attributes to us: sensibility and understanding. If we take this as the first indication of what cognition is, Kant may seem to assume his faculty psychology at the outset of his project. I think that what he assumes is rather that the reader will recognize in her empirical judgments a familiar intellectual activity describable as ‘judgment grounded in a given object’, which will help her get a grip on this structure in general. (This grip secured, he can then elucidate the structure of the activity in terms of the faculties; if such an elucidation is necessitated by the structure itself, he can say that the reader has, in understanding the structure, already implicitly understood herself to possess the faculties in question. But this can only come later.) By ‘cognition’ I will mean this structure.  

12 I think that Kant intends this remark to help the reader grasp a familiar kind of groundedness. It should not be dismissed because it is metaphorical. Metaphor and image at this opening stage serve to indicate something whose significance is independent of the sophisticated theoretical developments of, say, pre-Kantian rationalism and empiricism. They serve, when directed to such pre-Kantian tendencies, ‘to stay that style of thinking little by little in its previous path and, finally, to turn it into the opposite direction by means of gradual impressions’—as Kant writes to Herz [Briefwechsel (after May 11, 1781) 10:269]. In general, I reckon it to Kant’s credit that he begins with our ordinary understanding of empirical judgment rather than, say, a stipulative definition or a theoretical construction. This is not a poor substitute for systematic rigor; that, after all, can come only after we have some idea of what we wish rigorously to systematize. For ‘in philosophy the definition, as distinctness made precise, must conclude rather than begin the work’ [A730-731/B758-759]. For further discussion, see §6.

13 Thus this exemplification of groundedness has causal and epistemic aspects: we are answerable, in empirical judgment, to something which affects us. But Kant does not at this stage analyze empirical groundedness into these aspects; he expects us to appreciate the structure, as it were, on its face.

14 This has been called ‘cognition in the narrow sense’ (Watkins & Willaschek 2017: 86).

15 For an argument along these lines, see Engstrom (2016: 37).

16 This structure does not capture all of Kant’s uses of ‘cognition’ [Erkenntnis]. What I mean here is a paradigmatic exercise of the cognitive capacity [Erkenntnisvermögen], as distinguished from the desiderative capacity [Begehungsvermögen] [EE-KU 20:206, KU 5:178, KpV 5:8]. Practical cognition is, in the paradigm case, an exercise of the desiderative capacity (insofar as it is the will, or practical reason [KpV 5:24-5]). Thus I do not mean ‘cognition’, as used here, to cover practical cognition, which is structurally distinct, since, being an exercise of desire, it is efficacious with respect to its object, which
It is useful to compare Kant’s problem of pure reason to what he calls, in a letter to Marcus Herz, ‘the key to the whole secret of metaphysics, hitherto still hidden from itself’ [Briefwechsel (February 21, 1772) 10:130]. Often the differences between the letter and the Introduction are emphasized in such comparisons. I wish to emphasize their similarities. For the letter underscores the significance of empirical judgment as an exemplar of cognition by placing alongside it another apparently unproblematic case: action.

If a representation comprises only the manner in which the subject is affected by the object, then it is easy to see how it is in conformity with this object…and it is easy to see how this modification of our mind can represent something, that is, have an object. […] Similarly, if that in us which we call “representation” were active with regard to the object, that is, if the object itself were created by the representation…the conformity of these representations to their objects could also be understood. […] However, our understanding, through its representations, is neither the cause of the object…nor is the object the cause of our intellectual representations in the real sense. [ibid] Kant then notes that in the Inaugural Dissertation he characterizes these intellectual representations ‘in a merely negative way’ as ‘not modifications of the soul brought about by the object’. But the positive characterization—the answer to the question what non-desiderative, non-empirical representation could be—he ‘silently passed over’ [ibid].

At the time of this letter, Kant retains the position of the Inaugural Dissertation that these intellectual representations ‘present things as they are’ (in themselves) and not ‘as they appear’ exercises of the Erkenntnisvermögen are not. Of course, not everything called ‘practical judgment’ is efficacious. But the possibility of efficacious practical judgment (by me, here and now) grounds that of my judgments to the effect that an action at some time, by some one is required (prohibited) or good (bad). It also grounds the possibility of what Kant calls ‘practical faith’. How it does all this is beyond the scope of this essay. For discussion, see Engstrom (2006: 62-4).

In general, although the various possibilities of rational activity are united in a system of the capacities of the human soul, we should not expect that a single structure to apply to all of them univocally. Kant insists that none of the three capacities—cognitive, desiderative, affective—can be reduced to any of the others [EE-KU 20:206]. Nonetheless, each partakes of reason in the human being, so that there are structurally distinct ways of partaking of reason. For further discussion of this theme, see Engstrom (2006: 97-128) and Gorodeisky (2019).

Kant also uses ‘cognition’ to mean different acts and determinations of the cognitive capacity, including representations belonging both to its higher part (the understanding) and to its lower part (sensibility). I do not claim to have given a characterization that is univocal even within the domain of the Erkenntnisvermögen. But as I have suggested, this initial characterization of cognition, when elaborated, is seen to require both receptive and spontaneous moments in cognition. (See Anthropologie 7:140.) These moments thus inherit the name ‘cognition’ from the structure. This too is beyond my scope here.

While he abandons that position by the time of the first Critique, the structure of the problem is retained. Consider the following passage, which replicates the threefold contrast between the empirical, the practical, and the metaphysical:

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. If it is the first, then this relation is only empirical. But if it is the second, then since representation in itself (for we are not here talking about its causality by means of the will) does not produce its object as far as its existence is concerned, the representation is still determinant of the object a priori if it is possible through it alone to cognize something as an object. [A92/B124-5; see also Bix-x].

Now these passages concern representation rather than judgment. And the passage from the letter to Herz compares not empirical judgment, action, and metaphysical judgment but affection, creation, and intellection. Nonetheless, the structure of the former threefold contrast is similar to that of the latter, and it can generate a problem of pure reason as that of how the concepts figuring in a metaphysical judgment could, in that judgmental use, ‘represent something’, in the sense of representing a reality. The key point is the way in which actualities—things which are—are essentially involved in the two unproblematic cases, the two cases in which it seems to be no problem that I represent realities—ways things might be. For to be affected is to be affected by something actual, and to cause something to become is to make it actual. These causal directions are exhibited in two familiar activities: empirical judgment and action. In an empirical judgment, I am enabled, in the application of a concept, by an actuality, sensibly given. I judge, for example, that this lump of gold is dissolving in aqua regia. In an action, I bring about an actuality by myself actualizing a

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18 The most important difference is that the first Critique's formulations begin to replace the merely negative characterization of the theoretical a priori with something positive. This change marks Kant's recognition of how to solve the problem by distinguishing between kinds of dependence. In the theoretical a priori, the representation is ‘determinant’ of the object, but not practically: i.e., not with respect to its existence. Of course, everything depends on what this means, but that is no my topic here.

19 The analogy between creation and finite action is made explicit in the letter: ‘our understanding, through its representations, is [not] the cause of the object (save in the case of moral ends)’ [Briefwechsel (February 21, 1772) 10:130].
concept. I leave the laboratory and take a stroll in the hills. In both of these acts, in different ways, I apply a concept to an actuality.\(^{20}\)

In a successful empirical judgment or action, I know how things might be by knowing how they are. But consider metaphysical judgment. Such a judgment pretends to universality and necessity [B3-4]. This means that, in making one, I take it to represent not just ways things might be, but ways things must be. Kant says that this means that no actuality—no number of actualities, no matter how great—could enable me to make such a judgment [B4]. This is to say that the actual cannot serve as the ground of the concepts’ application in the judgment. This may serve as a negative characterization of metaphysical judgment as such: such a judgment is one of whose success I cannot be conscious on the basis of actual attestation.\(^{21,22}\)

But how can I do this, in consciousness of the correctness of my doing it, without, as it were, touching the actual—without knowing from it or knowing it by making it? In making a true empirical judgment, in executing a successful action, the actuality in question attests to the real representative power of the concept. This thing is a lump of gold; this act is a stroll in the hills. Thus gold and stroll express ways things might be; they express realities.\(^{23}\) Indeed, in applying the concept, I am conscious of this attestation; I must be in order to know that my application has been successful: true, in the empirical case, or complete, in the practical case. A metaphysical judgment, on the other

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\(^{20}\) By ‘action’ I mean an exercise of the faculty of desire: ‘a being’s faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the actuality [\textit{Wirklichkeit}] of the objects of these representations’ [\textit{KpV} 5:9n.; translation modified].

\(^{21}\) This characterization will eventually require refinement, since it does not distinguish mathematical from philosophical judgments, and since metaphysical judgments are philosophical. But Kant’s characterization of that distinction cannot be formulated except in the terms of the positive development of the \textit{Critique}, precisely those terms which allow this negative characterization to be replaced with a positive one. Thus in the Introduction, it is enough to say that a metaphysical judgment is one of whose success I cannot be conscious on the basis of actualities, and in which figure traditional ontological concepts like \textit{substance} and \textit{cause}. The latter conjunct anticipates a division (of philosophical from mathematical judgments \textit{a priori}) whose fundamental account cannot be given at this stage; the former expresses the explanatory problem which that fundamental account must address.

\(^{22}\) The reasons Kant gives in the Introduction, and which emerge from his engagement with the philosophy of Hume, for supposing that there are metaphysical judgments to begin with, are the topic of Chapter 2.

\(^{23}\) As Wolff writes, ‘if we reach a judgment by means of experience, then we have cognized that this or that does pertain to a thing, and it is accordingly clear once again that it \textit{can} pertain to it’ (1720 §330). As Leibniz writes, ‘[t]he possibility of a thing is known \textit{a posteriori} when we know through experience that a thing actually exists, for what actually exists or existed is at very least possible’ (1684/1989: 26).
hand, can be grounded in no amount of actuality. The attestation by actualities to the real representative power of the concepts figuring in it is not part of what enables me to make the judgment. Nonetheless, if the judgment is successful, then it is true, and the concepts have real representative power. If I make it with consciousness of its success, I make it with consciousness of this power.  

To put it another way: if I say something, and you respond: ‘but are you talking about anything in using those words?’, I can point to something—either something which is already there, or something I thereby do or make—and say, ‘here is an example of what I mean’. I can point to the ‘touchstone of experience’ to dissolve your suspicion that in making the utterance I am ‘frivolously playing with fancies instead of concepts and words instead of things’ [A710-11/B738-9]. And being able to answer such challenges in such a way belongs to having a grip on the real representative power of my concepts. But in making a metaphysical judgment, I can be conscious of the real representative power of the concepts figuring in it, independently of any recognition of the attestation to that power by any actuality whatever.

In the empirical and practical cases, actual attestations help to undergird my sense of the real representative power of the concepts I apply. In a metaphysical judgment, ‘this means of help is entirely lacking’ [B12]. How can I know how things must be, and thus how they might be, without help from the actual? How, in such an act, can I ‘represent something’—represent a reality? This is the problem of pure reason as the problem of the real representative power of concepts figuring in

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24 Karl Schafer (forthcoming: 13-14) distinguishes his position on cognition and real representative power from the ‘semantic’ interpretation of Robert Hanna (2001) in this way: while Hanna’s interpretation is merely semantic, thus requiring that one’s concept achieve genuine reference (to a possibility), Schafer’s requires in addition that one be conscious of this achievement. I have focused here on the consciousness of real representative power; to this extent my discussion harmonizes with Schafer’s. One might nonetheless query his characterization of this consciousness of real representative power as additional to that power itself; it is possible that for Kant, in the basic case, my consciousness of a concept’s real representative power is internal to that power.

25 See Schafer (forthcoming: 38) for a related discussion of the characteristic power of intuitions to ‘provide our concepts with the determinacy that cognition requires in such a way that it is possible to prove the real possibility of the resulting determinate object’.
successful metaphysical judgments. We finite thinkers feel the need of actual attestation to convince ourselves of the reality of our concepts, so that if we can make metaphysical judgments, then there is something about ourselves we do not yet understand.\textsuperscript{26, 27}

\textbf{5. The role of analysis.}

In characterizing the synthetic in terms of the cognitive connection characteristic of empirical judgment, I characterized it positively, and not merely negatively in contradistinction to analytic judgment. This may seem, unacceptably, to leave the analytic-synthetic distinction with no role to play in the Introduction, in spite of Kant’s insistence [e.g., B19] that it has one. Indeed, the Introduction might seem to differ crucially from the letter to Herz on just this point: by the time of the first \textit{Critique}, Kant realizes that his problem is not about \textit{a priori} representation in general but only its non-analytic species. And so it might seem important that not all judgments, or at least not all judgments \textit{a priori}, are analytic.

But a remark in the Introduction confirms that what is at issue is indeed, as I have urged, the real representative power which concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments need:

\textsuperscript{26} I do not mean to suggest that Kant’s ultimate position is that consciousness of the real representative power of a concept requires that we know the reality of the concept from an actuality which exemplifies it. Precisely not: if this were so, there would be, according to Kant, no such thing as a consciousness \textit{a priori} of that power, and thereby nothing for the problem of pure reason to be about. I mean to say only that at this point in the \textit{Critique}, we do not know how else real representative power is possible. See Grüne (2017) for an argument, taking into account Kant’s solution to the problem of pure reason, against the claim that, in my terms, a concept’s real representative power (or our consciousness thereof) must involve the consciousness of an attesting actuality.

\textsuperscript{27} My characterization of this problem as a problem for the reader of the Introduction—the ‘we’ I mean are we, the readers—is not a bit of mere literary analysis which can be ignored in favor of a properly philosophical formulation. It is essential to the character of Kant’s critical project, in my view, that the problem can, to the extent I have indicated, be grounded in the everyday understanding of the common reader. The sense that some mode of empirical relation to the actual is essential to the real representative power, or to our sense or knowledge of the real representative power, of our concepts, may appear to be motivated by theoretical considerations which have their home in empiricist conceptions of mind and knowledge. (This is suggested, in the context of a discussion of the problem grounding the critical turn, by Abaci (2019: 128).) To be sure, Kant’s engagement with empiricist philosophy, especially that of Hume, informs his development, and decisively so. But one need not be a student of empiricism to appreciate the force of the contrast of apparently unproblematic empirical judgment and action with apparently problematic metaphysical judgment. This is an important aspect of the point I wish to make: that the problem of pure reason does not, for its proper philosophical appreciation, require the kind of theoretical construction that has often been supposed essential to its sense and significance. See also n. 12 above and my discussion in §6 below.
...one can and must regard as undone all attempts made until now to bring about a metaphysics dogmatically; for what is analytic in one or the other of them, namely the mere analysis of the concepts that inhabit our reason a priori, is not the end at all, but only a preparation for metaphysics proper, namely extending its a priori cognition synthetically, and it is useless for this end, because it merely shows what is contained in these concepts, but not how we attain such concepts a priori in order thereafter to be able to determine their valid use in regard to the objects of all cognition in general. [B23-24]

Here Kant says not merely that the analytic metaphysician inevitably makes synthetic judgments because there are some to make. He explains why she must make such judgments: analysis ‘merely shows what is contained in these concepts’, whereas ‘metaphysics proper’ requires an explanation of their ‘valid use’ ‘in regard to the objects of all cognition in general’. What we need to show is how metaphysical judgments can have representative power ‘in advance of’ any actual attestation to that power, as such universal valid use requires. Here, then, is the explanation of Kant’s formula: how are synthetic judgments possible a priori? The possibility of analytic judgment, however much might admit of being judged analytically, does not account for the real representative power that concepts need in figuring in metaphysical judgments. Thus, to answer the question of how analytic judgments are possible a priori would take us no distance at all towards an explanation of the possibility of metaphysics. Whereas to account for that just is to answer the question how synthetic judgments are possible a priori.\(^\text{28}\)

This conception of the problem of pure reason is also discernible in a discussion of the analytic-synthetic distinction by Johann Schulz, one of Kant’s expositors. Recall Maaß’s claim that, given the Introduction’s characterization of the distinction, whether a judgment is analytic or

\(^{28}\text{What, then, of Kant’s putative examples in the Introduction of judgments which cannot be made analytically? Do these play no argumentative role, according to the real approach? They may constitute a sound dialogical path to the need for posing the problem of pure reason. But there are, in principle, any number of such paths; what I claim for the real approach is that it discloses the ground of the problem. That the examples do not is shown by such passages as [B23-24], quoted above.}\)
synthetic might vary with psychological idiosyncrasy (1789: 189). Among the things Schulz says in response is this:

Let him place just so many marks (Merkmale) in the concept of the subject that the predicate, which he wishes to prove of the subject, can be derived from its concept through the mere principle of contradiction. This trick (Kunststück) does not help him at all. For the Critique grants to him without dispute this kind of analytic judgment. Then, however, it takes the concept of the subject itself into consideration, and it asks: how did it come about that you have placed so many different marks in this concept that it already contains [TP: what Schulz has characterized as] synthetic propositions? First prove the objective reality of your concept, i.e., first prove that any one of its marks really belongs to a possible object, and then, when you have done that, prove that the other marks belong to the same thing that the first one belongs to without themselves belonging to the first mark. [1790; Akademieausgabe 20:408-9; translation adapted from that of Allison (1973: 175)]

Let alteration*, and not alteration, figure in metaphysics; then belonging to metaphysics is an analytic judgment expressed by the sentence ‘Every alteration has a cause.’ Now, Schulz tells us, we should turn to the subject concept: alteration*. What is the proof of its objective reality—of its applicability to a possible object? Since I can make a metaphysical judgment with this concept, I must be able to answer this question without pointing to any actuality as attestation of the concept’s real representative power. How I could do that is the problem of pure reason. This is why Schulz says, in the sentence immediately following the quoted passage, that the ‘dispute as to how much or how little should be contained in the concept of the subject has not the least effect on the merely metaphysical question: how are synthetic judgments possible a priori?’ [ibid] We may define any word in any way we please, and thereby extract an analytic judgment. But then, as Beck (1951: 177) notes, we will face the question: ‘how can this judgment, based on definition, be valid objectively?’

There is a way in which the proponent of the logical approach is not without response to this argument. Indeed, Anderson says that this kind of argument is not convincing ‘from a

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29Allison (2004:94) notes that in an analytic judgment ‘the “reality” of the predicate does not come into consideration’, and this is an important element of my position. He does not note that the reality of the subject does not come into consideration either—which is Schulz’s point—not that this forecloses an analytic dissolution of the problem of pure reason. But the threat of such dissolution is not his topic.
Leibnizian point of view’ because for Leibniz, concepts do not need ‘justification for their applicability to the objects. They are prior to the objects, which are as they are exactly because God has created the possible world represented by these concepts’ (2015: 143 n. 8). In the next section, I suggest that there is a problem of pure reason precisely because Kant rejects theological accounts of the real representative power of concepts. That the argument would not convince Leibniz is thus neither here nor there.

6. Sources of real representation.

I said in §3 that no rationalist would deny that concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments have real representative power, since metaphysics is nothing if not the science of the real. I then argued that Kant expects us to feel that against the unproblematic exemplars of empirical judgment and action, we do not understand how concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments could have such power. Do his rationalist predecessors feel the force of this problem? Yes and no. Yes, in that they do not deny there is a problem about understanding how the human thinker, considered merely as possessed of the human power of thought, could, in thinking, represent the real. No, in that they claim already to have solved the problem.

According to a traditional rationalist thought, realities inhabit what Kant calls the ens realissimum, and we apprehend them by getting in touch with, or imitating, God. In the precritical essay on The only possible argument in support of a demonstration of the existence of God, Kant argues that, since it is possible to think about things of a kind—cats, say—without there being, or having been, any actualities of that kind—any historical cats—we must in thinking depend upon such divinely grounded realities. For our representations, though not related to anything actual, must, if they have

30 The variations on this theme—see, e.g., Jolley (1990) for a study of those of Descartes, Malebranche and Leibniz—are diverse, but the details do not bear on my point here.
content, be about something: a universal which could be instantiated.\textsuperscript{31} When ‘possibility…vanishes, …nothing any longer remains to be thought’ [\textit{Beweisgrund} 2:82]. Since we could think about cats without there being any, their possibility must be grounded otherwise: ‘[t]herefore, something exists absolutely necessarily’ [\textit{Beweisgrund} 2:83].\textsuperscript{32} God, as repository of universals, as ‘storehouse of material [\textit{Vorrat des Stoffes}] from which all possible predicates of things can be taken’ [A575/B603], must exist. So goes the only argument which has, according to Kant, any chance at establishing God’s existence.

The idea of God as ‘storehouse of material’ for being is an ancient one. With it, we may hope to ground the real representative power of metaphysical concepts. For this image allows us to hope that, in sheer thinking, we entertain, apprehend or know such divinely supported realities.\textsuperscript{33} We need not depend on our own apprehension of actualities which express them in order to represent them; we can directly represent the realities themselves. There can be no special problem about how this or that kind of concept has such power, because they all have it in the same way. Thus, Kant notes, ‘[i]ntuiting everything in God…makes all research into synthetic a priori cognition unnecessary’ [R6051 (1780s? 1776-79?) 18:438].

So why does Kant not dissolve his problem by falling back upon this image? In the fourth letter to Herz, he mentions three variations on this theological theme, and remarks that ‘the \textit{deus ex machina} is the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions’ [\textit{Briefwechsel} (February 21, 1772) 10:131].\textsuperscript{34} In this remark he does not reject every use

\textsuperscript{31} Or, as Stang (2016: 120) argues, our representations must at least be composed of representations which could be instantiated.

\textsuperscript{32} See also ND 1:395-6.

\textsuperscript{33} Kant describes Plato as concluding that ‘we could not participate in [cognitions of things in themselves] on our own, consequently only through the communication of divine ideas’ by way of ‘immediate intuitions that we have of the archetypes in the divine understanding’ [R6050 (1780s? 1776-79?) 18:434-5].

\textsuperscript{34} This dismissal is not equivalent to the argument against ‘preformation-systems’ in §27 of the Transcendental Deduction [B167-8]. In the letter to Herz this ‘implantation’ image is associated with Crusius in particular [\textit{Briefwechsel} (February 21, 1772) 10:131], and this view, according to which there is a pre-established harmony between mind and world, is thus not one according to which we apprehend the realities creatively instantiated in the world. Plato and Malebranche, Kant’s other examples [\textit{ibid}], presumably do better (from his point of view) on this score. But they still, according to Kant, fall under the title of a ‘\textit{deus ex machina},’ which, whatever its details, ‘encourages all sorts of wild notions and every pious and speculative brainstorm’ [\textit{ibid}].
of the image of the *omnitude realitatis.* But he does dismiss any theological explanation of the real representative power of thought. He dismisses it as a *deus ex machina:* a contrived plot device which advances a narrative in an unnatural way, in a way that cannot be accounted to the natures or characters of any of the subjects of the narrative. The subject in question here is the finite thinker: Kant wants to know how such a being is *itself,* by its nature, capable of metaphysical representation. The possibility of such representation is not to be accounted to something external to the thinker, like God. Thus Kant writes in a note dated to 1772 that ‘[t]o say that a higher being has already wisely put such concepts and principles in us is to run all philosophy into the ground’, and that the solution to the problem of pure reason ‘must be sought in the nature of cognition in general’ [R4473 (1772) 17:564].

Anderson recognizes that the *deus ex machina* ‘did not impress Kant as an adequate solution to his question about how our intellectual representations can relate to objects’ (2015: 197). But his account of Kant’s attitude introduces unwarranted complication. He claims that

Kant’s focus on representations’ “relation to an object” (at their expense of their relations to one another, which assumes pride of place in the predicate-in-subject theory) suggests that his new metaphysical program was motivated in significant part by a growing recognition that some truths are irreducibly synthetic. “Relation to the object” is the obvious place to turn for an explanation of such truths, which (per hypothesis) cannot rest on any logical relation among the constituent terms… *(ibid)*

I agree that Kant’s concern is ‘relation to an object’, or real representative power. But I do not see how the letter to Herz, in which Kant rejects the *deus ex machina,* suggests a concern with ‘relation to an object’ *because* it solves a problem about ‘irreducibly synthetic’ truths. Most straightforwardly read, the letter simply rejects the theological account of real representative power, which leaves Kant with the problem of finding an alternative.

Anderson argues that his reading is supported by a contemporaneous reflection in which Kant wonders how ‘we can, from within ourselves, validly connect properties and predicates with

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the represented objects, although no experience has shown them to us [as] so connected’, and in which he again rejects a theological account as ‘[running] all philosophy into the ground’ [R4473 (1772) 17:564]. Anderson remarks that if the predicates ‘in question were related to one another by analytic containment, then there would be no mystery at all about how the one representation in me could be connected to the other […] Thus, Kant’s puzzle can only get off the ground if he is assuming that the predicates in question stand in an irreducibly synthetic relation to one another’ (2015: 200). But I do not see how the passage quoted from the letter to Herz suggests that the irreducible syntheticity of the relation between predicates grounds the need for an account of the their real representative power. First, Kant is talking about the valid connection of predicates ‘with the represented objects’ [emphasis mine]. Second, to all appearances, he is concerned with the real representative power of our concepts, and is concerned with that as a problem: not as a solution to another problem about how non-analytic judgments are possible. I do not see why anything is required for this problem to ‘get off the ground’; it is a pressing problem in itself.

For as we have seen, and as Anderson notes, the rationalists are not wanting for an account of real representative power; they explain it theologically. In this sense, they can recognize the problem and, to their own satisfaction, solve it. Indeed, it is hard to see how their predicate-in-the-subject theory of truth would be comprehensible as a theory of truth absent this explanation. Take God away, and all they have are collections of marks: symbols in a game. Rules may be written for the game and called by such esteemed appellations as ‘principle of contradiction’, but unless it is explained how the symbols have something to do with anything, they have nothing to do with cognition either. The rationalists do not dispute this; they account for real representative power theologically. Thus, if the theological account is rejected, the recuperation strategy is neither here nor there: something else must explain how these marks can be more than symbols in a game. This
explanatory task, in connection with the concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments, is the real problem of pure reason.

It might be alleged, finally, that even if this is so, Kant must have an argument against the theological account of real representative power, which might appeal to the irreducible syntheticity of a certain class of truths. But, however such an argument might be developed, what Kant says is that the theological account is ‘the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions’ and that it ‘runs all philosophy into the ground’. To all appearances, these are his arguments against the theological account. He rejects it because it is a deus ex machina in the sense I have described. It might be noted in this connection that the first philosopher mentioned in his dismissal of the deus ex machina is not any early modern rationalist with dreams of ‘recuperation’, but Plato.36 This suggests that these remarks are not meant principally to allude to an argument against one or another variation on the theme espoused by one or another rationalist, but as a wholesale dismissal of a broadly Platonic-Augustinian theological account of the possibility of thought. Kant is, in short, painting with a broader brush than Anderson suggests.

What Kant is saying, then, is that if we could get in touch with God, we could comprehend possibility ‘before’ we knew actuality. But we can’t. We comprehend possibility only in and through knowing actuality. We do not depend, for the real representative power of our concepts, on God. That is not the character of our finitude. What we depend on, in the case we think we understand, the empirical case, is the sensibly given. It is this deicide in the theory of thought which leaves Kant with a problem of pure reason: with the problem of the real representative power which a

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36 Kant writes that we might consider Plato’s proposed explanation of knowledge a priori—according to which ‘we men possess intuitions a priori, which would, however, have their first origin, not in our understanding…but rather in one that was simultaneously the ultimate ground of all things, i.e., the divine understanding’—as an answer to the question ‘how are synthetic propositions possible a priori?’, which ‘undoubtedly hovered, albeit obscurely’ before Plato’s mind [Ton 8:391].
metaphysical judgment requires of its concepts. In extinguishing the divine light, he gives finite reason the task, terrifying and thrilling in equal measure, of finding illumination in itself.

It is worthwhile, finally, to distinguish the proposal I have made from another prominent in recent commentary, with which it shares an emphasis on real representative power. For in spite of this commonality, there is a significant difference. According to this other line of thinking, there is some special reason, over and above our finitude, to suppose that there is a problem about securing or establishing the real possibility of things to which our concepts would apply. One candidate for such a reason is that we cannot, by means of mere thought, rule out that there is real repugnance between two predicates (Abaci 2019: 197; see also, for background, Chignell 2009:174), so that the rules for conceptual combination grounded in general logic and conceptual content alone might leave us vulnerable to ontologically illicit combinations. Thus we must, for example (on the critical Kant’s view) resort to experience, something additional to thought, to prove real possibility.

On this conception, it is as though mere thought might have ‘tracked’ real possibility, though, unhappily, it does not. Kant’s problem of pure reason—insofar as the problem of ‘proving real possibility’ is connected to it—is identified as arising ultimately from an obstacle we encounter when we try to understand mere thought as sufficient to track real possibility. Thus, as much as this conception emphasizes real representative power, it is structurally akin to Anderson’s logical approach, according to which the problem of pure reason ultimately arises from an obstacle we encounter when we try to understand analytic judgment as sufficient to capture the a priori. It assumes that there is nothing in what Kant means by ‘mere thought’ that excludes that mere thought might track real possibility, just as Anderson assumes that there is nothing in what Kant means by ‘analytic judgment’ that excludes that analytic judgment might be sufficient to capture the a priori.

On my view, on the contrary, we need encounter no particular obstacle of this kind to appreciate the real problem of pure reason. The problem is simply that, when we consider
metaphysical concepts, we are left, temporarily, without an idea of anything recognizable as thought: we are left with the feeling of non-empirical thought as a mere play ‘with fancies instead of concepts’ [A710-11/B738-9]. We finite beings appear to ourselves to need a cognitively significant connection to the actual, not to make up for a particular deficiency which we discover mere thought to possess, but precisely because mere thought is mere thought, which means, in this context, the same as this: that we are finite.37

From a certain interpretive point of view, this suggestion is no doubt objectionable. Consider Chignell’s criticism of the ‘hylomorphic images’ implicated in Kant’s allegation that, in Chignell’s words, ‘the “form” of our concepts has to be connected to the “matter” of experience in order for us to go beyond mere groping among “thought-entities”’ (2014: 579). My characterization of the problem of pure reason is reminiscent of this. The notion of form in need of matter is, in this context, analogous to that of the finite thinker’s capacity in need of affection by an actuality. Chignell objects that ‘the talk of emptiness, matter, and groping is metaphorical’ and accuses Kant of begging the question against the rationalist by adopting a variation on the scholastic slogan nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu: ‘no substantial knowledge in the understanding that isn’t first in sensibility’ (2014: 580).

About this I wish to make two points. First, a negative point: we should note that, however objectionable a reader might find Kant’s hylomorphic idiom or its application in this sort of context, the idiom is all over Kant’s texts, as are such images—the ones I want to emphasize here—as that of the finite thinker shrouded in darkness without the light of sensibility, or that of Plato’s dove [A5/B9], or that of the understanding fancying instead of thinking ‘[der Verstand, der denken soll, an

37 In this light, the point of the theological image is not so much that it, for example, allows us to think of our thought as bearing immediately on the actual, in the sense of actual divine ideas or attributes or whatever, as according to discussion emphasizing the ‘actualist principle’ endorsed by early modern rationalists; see, e.g., Newlands (2013) and Abaci (2019: 135 et passim), but that it allows us to think of our thought as grounded in, and thus expressive of, the real, in some other way than in being grounded in the actual. This is why Kant can attribute this image, in the letter to Herz, not just to early modern figures who endorse metaphysical ‘actualist’ principles, but to Plato.
when it takes leave of sensibility. If we wish to make sense of Kant’s project as he presented and executed it, as I do, we cannot dismiss this as so much rhetoric. Second, and more importantly, in the present context, a positive point: I am in this chapter pleading for precisely what Kant means to capture in these images and in his hylomorphic idiom (which I do not read as metaphorical). What Chignell rightly identifies as a scholastic tendency in Kant, especially as it figures in the problem of pure reason, is not a question-begging stipulation. I have tried to argue that it captures the way in which the common understanding thinks about itself: for that understanding, I have suggested, is the audience of the Critique’s Introduction.\(^{38}\) I do not think that Kant takes his principal interlocutor in this work to be the rationalist (though he has much to say about rationalism and owes a great debt to the rationalist tradition); thus, his principal discursive obligation is not to the rationalist but to the common understanding, to which rationalist principles ‘do violence’ [Fortschritte 20:282]. Kant does not ‘need an argument’ (2014: 580) for thinking that ‘the “form” of our concepts has to be connected to the “matter” of experience in order for us to go beyond mere groping among “thought-entities”’. For, in his opinion, this is what the common, healthy understanding already feels, recognizing itself to be finite. That is all that is required for the problem of pure reason: the distinction, as Kant later elaborates it, between the finite knower, for whom the matter of thought is given from without, and an infinite knower, whose thought itself gives the matter [B135]. And it is precisely for this reason that this understanding feels, with urgency, the force of the problem of pure reason. It feels both that it needs a sensible relation to the actual for the real representative power of its concepts, because this is the kind of thinking and knowing that belongs to it as such, and yet it knows that it possesses some concepts which have such power prior to any such relation. It faces, in the problem of pure reason, a kind of

\(^{38}\) This is not to say, precisely not, that the common understanding is to remain common in the course of the Critique. In coming to thematize the a priori form of its own activity and the meaning of the theoretical a priori as such, it becomes thoroughly uncommon, knowing itself as never before. For within the common understanding ‘a certain secret lies hidden’ [es liegt auch hier ein gewisses Geheimnis verborgen] [A10], and transcendental philosophy is its revelation.
transcendental identity crisis: it recognizes that it just must possess a kind of knowledge which is not, it seems, the kind of knowledge that it can possess, given the kind of knower it is. (This is why ‘every perceptive reader, if he carefully ponders what this problem demands, is bound to consider it insoluble and, if such pure synthetic cognitions a priori were not actual, altogether impossible’ [Prolegomena 4:277].)

Kant is asking the reader to feel the urgency of a question, not in a position in which a variety of sophisticated philosophical developments are available as candidate answers—‘I have not argued against systems, etc.’ [R5019 (1776-78) 18:62]—but in the position of everyday finite self-consciousness. Thus Kant says in the Preface to the Prolegomena that to consider his problem properly requires that the metaphysicians ‘consider all that has happened until now as if it had not happened, and before all else to pose the question: “whether such a thing as metaphysics is even possible at all”’ [Prolegomena 4:255; emphasis mine]. He insists also that the reader abandon ‘the prejudice’ that his ‘new science…can be judged by means of one’s putative cognitions already otherwise obtained’ [Prolegomena 4:262], and this applies equally to the question which leads him to develop that science in the first place. This is, in my view, no embarrassment, from which we might rescue Kant by the invention of arguments he does not himself elect to make. It is not a liability but a great attraction of his critical philosophy: that in it we start with our everyday finite self-consciousness, and not with a checklist of philosophical opinions to argue against. The problem of pure reason is not constituted in a scenario of disputation, one in which Kant is faced with a set of interlocutors, one in which a charge of petitio principii is apt. It is constituted in a scenario of self-reflection.\(^{39,40}\)

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39 This attraction is not, of course, peculiar to Kant. Even philosophers who come to condemn, or to reinterpret in a radical way, the standpoint of the everyday, nonetheless begin with it. We may take as an example Descartes, who recognizes that, to become a rationalist, the common understanding must undergo a kind of conversion in which it turns from experience towards, as he would have it, the true source of knowledge (1641/1996). Kant, in contrast, wishes the understanding to remain with experience, and to ask, in that position, how there could be anything else.

40 Thus, I disagree with Stang when he says that the ‘non-question-begging’ arguments he prefers are Kant’s ‘best’ arguments (2016: 184). The arguments Kant ‘typically’ (as Stang notes) gives are, in my view, better, because they begin
7. Conclusion.

It is a familiar thought, in the interpretation of Kant and in contemporary philosophy alike, that if there is an analytic-synthetic distinction, it divides judgments into two classes. And so if judgments are not, after all, subject to any such division—the thought continues—Kant’s problem of pure reason can never arise. While I have not argued that Kant rejects such a division, I have argued that it does not play the role one might expect in generating the problem of pure reason. This is not to deny that the problem is about the possibility of synthetic judgments \( a \text{ priori} \). But as I have interpreted it, that problem is about how concepts can have the real representative power needed in figuring in metaphysical judgments. That is: it is the problem of how we can know a concept to represent reality in independence of any attestation to its real representative power by the actual, of any such attestation as is constitutively contained in the apparently unproblematic cases of self-consciously successful conceptual application, in the apparently unproblematic exercises of finite cognition and desire, empirical judgment and action. The possibility of analytic judgment, an act in which I draw out the content of a concept, cannot be cited to answer this question, to explain the possibility of a concept’s real representative power, be the concept empirical or \( a \text{ priori} \). And that, I have said, is why the formula of synthetic judgment’s possibility \( a \text{ priori} \) expresses the real problem of pure reason.

where philosophy must begin: not in the situation of a rationalist, empiricist, or post-Kantian idealist, but in that of everyday reflection on our rational activity.
Chapter 2
The Spark and the Flame

1. Introductory.

In Chapter 1 I argued that the real problem of pure reason is that of how concepts figuring in metaphysical judgments can represent reality. I said that this problem is, at bottom, that of how concepts could have real representative power independently of any actual attestation to that power, such attestation as characteristically grounds the self-conscious reality of a concept: that is, a finite knower’s consciousness of its reality. There was, however, something I left unexplained in that chapter: why, according to Kant, we have reason to suppose that there are and must be metaphysical concepts to begin with, concepts with real representative power ungrounded in the actual. But it is only if we have such reason that we can recognize the real problem of pure reason as the task it is: if there need not be metaphysical concepts, Kant cannot task himself with accounting for their real representative power. Now, we shall not, to be sure, claim a full understanding the necessity of metaphysical concepts until the task is fulfilled, because it is not until then that we shall arrive at a full understanding of what they are. But we need at this stage only convince ourselves that they are necessary. My aim in this chapter is twofold. First, I describe the kind of reasoning which is supposed to allow us to ‘see, as though far off in the twilight’ [Mongovius 29:795] the necessity of such concepts. And second, I suggest that this kind of reasoning is profitably considered in light of Kant’s engagement with the thought of David Hume, which here, at the outset of Kant’s project, reaches its highest pitch. To elaborate and defend this suggestion requires a characterization of Hume’s role in the constitution of the critical philosophy: of his role as, in Kant’s words, ‘[striking] a
The Spark and the Flame

spark from which a light’ may be ‘kindled, if it’ hits ‘some welcoming tinder whose glow’ is ‘carefully kept going and made to grow’ [Prolegomena 4:257].

I begin (§§2-3) by sketching, with attention to Kant’s characterization of this doctrine as skeptical, a Kantian reading of Hume’s doctrine of the concept cause, identifiable, Kant thinks, as a metaphysical concept prior to the Critique’s positive development. I then describe, in contradistinction to Hume’s doctrines, and with a focus on the concepts cause and substance, the kind of preliminary movement toward the necessity of the a priori that Kant thinks is available even in the Critique’s Introduction (§4-5).

2. A compulsion to connect.

Let us begin with Kant’s metaphorical statement of Hume’s doctrine of cause in the Prolegomena.

He concluded that reason [Vernunft] completely and fully deceives herself with this concept [of cause and effect], falsely taking it for her own child, when it is really nothing but a bastard of the imagination [Einbildungskraft], which, impregnated by experience, and having brought certain representations under the law of association, passes off the resulting subjective necessity (i.e., habit) for an objective necessity (from insight). [Prolegomena 4:257-8]

Kant characterizes the position here attributed to Hume as a ‘skepticism’: ‘[Hume] deposited his ship on the beach (of skepticism) for safekeeping, where it could then lie and rot’ [Prolegomena 4:262; see also 4:360]. And in the ‘History of Pure Reason’ with which the first Critique concludes, Hume is Kant’s exemplar of a philosopher who ‘proceed[s]…skeptically’ [A855/B883]. If we wish to understand how Kant reacts to Hume, we must understand what he means in the passage from the Prolegomena and why he calls this ‘skepticism’.

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1 Kant’s version of the metaphor is presented subjunctively in a complaint against those—he names Thomas Reid, James Oswald, James Beattie, and Joseph Priestly [Prolegomena 4:258]—who have failed to treat Hume’s problem with the seriousness it deserves. But we may, as I have done, apply it indicatively to his own reception of the problem.

2 Though for Hume there are no concepts—that is, universal representations [Treatise I.i.vii SB 17-25]—this is not germane to Kant’s reception of Hume, at least as I tell its story here. There will be several further aspects of Hume’s own position from which I shall abstract in the course of this chapter in order to draw attention to the lessons Kant claims to find in his predecessor’s thought.
There are immediate complications, of which I mention two. First, though both Hume and Kant use the words ‘reason’ and ‘imagination’ (or their German equivalents, ‘Vernunft and ‘Einbildungskraft’), and though this idiomatic continuity is no accident, Kant’s use of these terms is very much at variance with Hume’s. The most important difference is that while Kant uses ‘Vernunft’ to name an active, spontaneous, self-conscious, ‘higher’ aspect of our cognitive nature, one in whose exercise we determine ourselves, he uses ‘Einbildungskraft’ to name either a passive, receptive, ‘lower’ aspect of that nature, one in whose exercise we are determined (but not by ourselves), or else a power or faculty which mediates the relationship of the ‘higher’ to the ‘lower’. The ‘lower’ is a nod to our embodiment, our commonality with non-rational animals, our belonging to the material, natural world, and the like. For Hume, on the other hand, the distinction between ‘reason’ and ‘imagination’ does not have this significance, not because he has decided out of petulance to use words in a novel way, but because he believes that what the philosophical tradition has understood to be a distinction between the ‘higher’ and the ‘lower’ in something like Kant’s sense should be understood differently. In particular, reason, for Hume, is not a faculty by exercising which we determine ourselves; it is, like the imagination, something which determines us: ‘[t]o consider the matter aright’, he writes, ‘reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations’ [Treatise I.iii.xvi SB 179].

Kant’s use of ‘Vernunft’ and ‘Einbildungskraft’ in the passage from the Prolegomena is Kantian rather than Humean. This is entailed by his remark at the end of the passage, in the moment at which he associates objective necessity with reason, subjective necessity the imagination. As we are about to see, if our application of cause is merely subjectively necessary, it is explained not by our

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3 It is infamously difficult to characterize the position of the imagination in Kant’s image of cognition. Some of the principal roles it is called upon to play are discussed at A94, A100-130, B141-2 (which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5), A140-5/B179-185; Anthropologie 7:141-2, 134, 153; Mungovius 29:883; and Dohna 28:672-3.

4 See for discussion of this point Annette Baier (1991), especially p. 80.
recognition of its applicability—as it would if cause partook of objective necessity—but by an arbitrary tendency of thought which happened to belong to our constitution. For reason to be spontaneous is, on the other hand, for its exercises to be self-determining; for its exercises to be self-determining is for them to be explained by the subject’s sense of their correctness. For cause to belong to reason is for my applications of cause to be explained by my recognition of its applicability: it is, therefore, for cause to be objective. For it to belong to the imagination is for my application to depend not on any recognition of its applicability but on an applicative tendency I happen to have. ‘Reason’ and ‘imagination’ are here, it is clear, used in Kant’s sense.

This complication need not, however, detain us for much longer. Kant’s description distorts the systematic significance of Hume’s assignment of cause to the (Humean) imagination rather than to (Humean) reason. But it nonetheless captures this: that for Hume, whatever reason may be, our application of cause is explained not by any recognition of its applicability but by an arbitrary tendency of thought. And this contrast, as we shall come to see, is the heart of the matter.

The second complication attending the Prolegomena passage is that Hume and his readers do not always use ‘skeptical’ in Kant’s sense. We can clarify Kant’s application of this term to Hume’s philosophy by briefly considering his criticism of Christian August Crusius’s image of the mind as ‘pre-formed’. This criticism is advanced in different contexts, one of which is §27 of the Transcendental Deduction, to which we shall have occasion to return in future chapters. In this section Kant considers a position according to which we enjoy ‘subjective predispositions for thinking, implanted [eingepflanzt] in us along with our existence by our author in such a way that their use would agree exactly with the laws of nature along which experience runs’ [B167]. Citing as an example of such a predisposition the concept cause, he says that according to this ‘preformation-system’, cause would ‘[rest] only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining

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5 Another locus is in the Prolegomena [4:319n], at which Crusius is mentioned by name.
certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation’ [B168]. Though Hume is not his principal target here, this description agrees with his characterization of Hume’s position in the Prolegomena. This agreement persists as he continues:

I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object…, but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than so connected; which is precisely what the skeptic wishes most, for then all of our insight through the supposed objective validity of our judgments is nothing but sheer illusion, and there would be no shortage of people who would not concede this subjective necessity (which must be felt) on their own; at least one would not be able to quarrel with anyone about that which merely depends on the way in which his subject is organized. [B168]

According to the position so described, the concept cause belongs to an ‘implanted’ predisposition. That is, our application of this concept is not explained by a recognition on our part of its applicability. This would be so even if nature were, in fact, causally arranged, even if our use of this concept ‘[agreed] exactly with the laws of nature along which experience [ran]’. It would be so even if our possession of this predisposition were not in every way unrelated to these laws of nature: it would be so, for example, even if our author had ensured that the structure of the mind had a match in that of the world. For such relations between tendencies of mind and tendencies of nature, even if they prevailed, would be external to the predisposition itself. The predisposition is, according to the preformationist image, what it is, whoever or whatever is responsible for its being implanted in us, and irrespective of whether it has any kind of structural match in the world.6 And it explains why we apply the concept cause.7, 8

6 This is a theme to which I return in Chapter 3’s discussion of Kant’s positive conception of the a priori.
7 Thus, Kant’s reading of Hume is, as I understand it, indifferent as to whether the latter is a ‘reductionist’ or rather a ‘realist skeptic’ about causality itself: that is, as to whether he believes that ‘causation is nothing more than constant uniformity’, or rather that ‘there are “secret powers” or “ultimate principles” in nature beyond constant conjunction, but that their nature is unknown and unknowable by us’, as it is put by Don Garrett (2015: 173). The ‘preformation-system’ is reminiscent of the latter, especially as apparently expressed in such passages as this: ‘[h]ere, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and concepts have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature’ [Enquiry V.ii SB 54-5].
8 There is an additional dimension in the Prolegomena passage: namely, that if our application of cause is not explained by its applicability, then in applying it we achieve no ‘insight’ into the object. Hume and Kant follow the tradition in treating
In both Kant’s characterization of Hume’s position in the Prolegomena and in his criticism of Crusius, Kant uses the vocabulary of skepticism. And in both cases, what he says is skeptical is the position, not just that cause is founded on an arbitrarily implanted predisposition, but that it is nonetheless ‘passed off’ as an objective representation, so that ‘all of our insight’—that is, supposed insight—‘is nothing but sheer illusion’. There is a moment of disappointment essential to skepticism, so described. We thought that we apply the concept cause because it is applicable, that its applicability is the internal ground of our applying it, that we call things causes because they are. But we’ve been had. We apply that concept because we are arbitrarily predisposed to do so.⁹

Now we come to the complication. It is controversial among Hume’s readers whether his own—in Kant’s idiom—implantationist doctrine is, as such, a skepticism, in spite of Hume’s himself calling it, in a section title in the Enquiry, no less, a ‘sceptical solution’ to the problem of why we apply such concepts as cause [Enquiry V.i SB 40].¹⁰ Many of his readers, including, for example, Norman Kemp Smith and, more recently, Annette Baier and Don Garrett, argue that, in Hume’s hands (and especially in the Treatise), it is not a skepticism but a naturalism. An important aspect of their positions is the thought that our implanted constitution can, in Kemp Smith’s words, confer ‘de facto prescriptive rights’ on beliefs produced by associative predispositions (1941: 195); or have, in Garrett’s words, a ‘title’ over us (1996: 208); or admit, as Baier has it, of elevation ‘from habit to norm’ by passage of ‘the test of reflexive employment’ (1991: 97). The thought is that Hume’s

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⁹ This dimension of disappointment, or at least of concealment and exposure, is clearly presented in Hume’s text: ‘[s]uch is the influence of custom that, where it is strongest, it not only covers our natural ignorance, but even conceals itself, and seems not to take place, merely because it is found in the highest degree’ [Enquiry IV.i SB 28-9]. Sometimes this concealment is depicted as self-delusion: ‘the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it’ [Enquiry IV.i SB 31].

¹⁰ To call Hume’s doctrine ‘implantationist’ is not to suggest, contrary to fact, that he thinks the relevant predisposition implanted by a deity. Nor does it matter, for Kant’s purposes, whether Hume believes there is causality in rerum natura; see n. 7. The point of calling the predisposition implanted is to express this, that according to this position neither our actual application of the concept in question, nor our tendency to apply it, is explained by its applicability. Kant himself says that that positions, like the Crusian implantationist one, which purport to supply an external explanation of the ‘agreement of appearances with laws of the understanding, despite their having entirely different sources from the former’, are akin to Hume’s conception of judgments of causality as ‘mere illusion from custom’ [Anfanggründe 4:476].
position is not skeptical if it says—or places us in a position to say—that we ought to believe as we are predisposed to do. Other readers find a less happy conclusion in Hume: an ‘unmitigated skepticism’, as Robert Fogelin proposes, concerning the ‘warrant’ for almost all of our beliefs, including those belonging to the domain defined by cause (1985: 5-6), or, as Donald Ainslie suggests, a ‘moderate skepticism’ amounting to an exhortation to ‘learn to live with a kind of “blind”…embrace of our natural epistemic propensities’ in a ‘rapprochement with our irremediable vulgarity’ (2015: 2, 241).

Perhaps Kant’s reading of Hume is closest to (of those I have just summarized) Ainslie’s: Hume confronts us with—as he would have it—the fact of our ‘irremediable vulgarity’, about which we have heretofore deceived ourselves. This is certainly a position which admits of formulation in Kantian terms, and indeed in terms much the same as those I have already used: we thought our rational life extended to the application of cause, but it does not; insofar as we apply that concept, our activity is not rational but compulsive. The ‘naturalist’ alternatives, on the other hand, however much sense they may make of Hume’s philosophy in its own right, do not show up as alternatives within a philosophical space shaped by notions of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’, ‘spontaneous’ and ‘receptive’, and the like. To see this, consider Garrett’s observation that, in the Treatise, Hume ‘collect[s] the results of his investigations of reason…before bringing those results together for a final evaluation of reason’—here Garrett means reason in a broad sense, including such operations of the imagination as contribute to Humean ‘inference’—‘to determine which if any of its operations should receive his ultimate endorsement’ (2015: 181). What Kant chooses to find in Hume’s reflections on cause is not a normatively neutral argument about the source of a concept, so that it makes sense to defer normative discussion until after the investigation of our faculties is complete. If cause does not belong to a rationally grounded activity—to, that is, a spontaneous activity, in which it is applied in and through our consciousness of its applicability—but rather to an implanted
predisposition, then it does not make sense, from Kant’s point of view, to await an ‘epistemic verdict’ on its application. If it makes no sense to ‘quarrel’ [haden] about the issuances of a subjective predisposition, as Kant says in §27, then those issuances are not subject to epistemic evaluation either.\footnote{11}

For in general, confronted with Hume’s conceptions of our cognitive life, Kant would understand them as denials of cognitive life. Knowledge, for Kant, is essentially the activity of a self-conscious, which is to say rational, capacity, something which has no correlate in Hume’s philosophy. When Hume speaks of our ‘knowledge’ of the causal relation [Enquiry IV.i SB 27], what he really means—or so Kant would say—is what we call knowledge, but which, upon further investigation, is revealed to be nothing of the sort.\footnote{12} Mutatis mutandis for ‘belief’ [Enquiry V.i SB 46], ‘inference’, ‘just inference’ [Enquiry IV.ii SB 34], and the ‘ignorance’ from which, Hume claims, custom saves us [Enquiry V.i SB 45].\footnote{13}

Thus even if Kant were to accept Hume’s doctrine of cause, he could not embrace the happy naturalism of Kemp Smith, Baier, and Garrett, not because the imagination would then appear to him fanciful or unreliable or otherwise unworthy of epistemic approbation, but because if Hume’s

\footnote{11} Compare Thomas Ricketts’s discussion of objectivity and the possibility of disagreement in the philosophy of Frege (1986: 317-18 et passim). This is not to say that Hume is not alive to the need to ‘mirror’ (see n. 12 below) agreement and disagreement in his system, and this is indeed foremost among the aims of contemporary neo-Humean expressivists: see, for example, Allan Gibbard (2003: 60-87). But Kant (and Frege) would regard these as accounting for the mere appearance of (dis)agreement, not (dis)agreement itself.

\footnote{12} Some may prefer to say that these two philosophers have different ‘accounts’ of knowledge, though their topic is identical. It would, from a Kantian point of view, be less misleading to use Fogelin’s idiom of mirroring: as he says that ‘the notion of an \textit{a priori} probability calculus is mirrored in Hume’s naturalistic system’ (1985: 60), so too Kant can say that cognitive life in general is ‘mirrored’, rather than ‘accounted for’, in Hume’s system.

\footnote{13} For Hume, belief is not the spontaneous exercise of a rational capacity, since ‘the mind is carried by custom…to believe’:

\begin{quote}
It is an operation of the soul, when we are so situated, as unavoidable as to feel the passion of love, when we receive benefits; or hatred, when we meet with injuries. All these operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able either to produce or to prevent. [Enquiry V.i SB 46-7]
\end{quote}

It is no surprise, then, that for Hume ‘the whole nature of belief’ consists in this, that ‘[w]henever any object is presented to the memory or senses, it immediately, by the force of custom, carries the imagination to conceive that object, which is usually conjoined to it; and this conception is attended with a feeling or sentiment’ [Enquiry V.ii SB 48]. This sentiment makes the conception comparatively ‘vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady’, and belief is ‘nothing but’ that [Enquiry VI.ii SB 49]. See also his rejection of the distinction between ‘conception, judgment, and reasoning’ [Treatise Liii.vii SB 96-7n.]
doctrine were true, we should not be what we thought we were: subjects of empirical knowledge. Instead, we should be ‘irremediably vulgar’, and whereas Hume insists we have no option but to acquiesce in our vulgarity, Kant thinks there is a way out. To think that, however, he must first find his way in: he must appreciate that Hume has discovered a problem worth our philosophical attention, a problem about how cause can be objective, which leads Hume to assign it to an implanted predisposition. To this discovery I now turn.

3. **Hume’s problem: a Kantian variation.**

3.1 Necessity & understanding.

Causality involves necessitation. It is controversial whether Hume understands causality in terms of an independently intelligible notion of necessitation, or whether our notion of necessitation instead rests upon our notion of causality.\(^\text{14}\) But since in this chapter we follow Kant in aiming for a preliminary grasp of the necessity of metaphysical concepts, we can set these controversies aside and keep to the everyday: for something to be caused is, let us say, for it to be made to happen. Hume claims that, however hard he looks into the objects of experience, he finds no necessitation there [\textit{Treatise} I.iii.ii SB 77]. This may seem obviously disingenuous. Do I not find necessitation everywhere, at almost each and every moment of experience? I depress the button on my kettle and thereby necessitate the boiling of my water. A squirrel runs up a branch and thereby necessitates its slight droop. One billiard ball strikes another and thereby necessitates its arrival in a pocket. I see things be made happen, I make things happen, all the time.

To see what he means by his denial that he finds necessity in the objects of experience, we must consider his claim that ‘[t]here is no object, which implies the existence of any other if we consider these objects in themselves, and never look beyond the ideas which we form of them’

\(^{14}\text{See for discussion, for example, Fogelin (1985 39f.).}\)
The ideas that we form of them contain nothing more than we are given in experience, since they are nothing more than (combinations of) copies of our impressions [Treatise I.iii.vi SB 86-7]. It is tempting at this point to examine Hume’s theory of ideas and impressions, and to ask whether the absence of necessity in the objects of experience is to be accounted to some arbitrary limitation on the content of impressions according to that theory. But whatever problems that theory might have, what Kant learns from Hume does not, in my view, depend on it. As Fogelin says, that many of Hume’s arguments ‘tolerate…displacement’ from their setting in his text ‘shows that they possess merit beyond the particular philosophical framework in which they were developed’ (1985: 38). Let us keep, again, to commonsensical examples. A squirrel runs up a branch, I said, and thereby necessitates its slight droop. Hume says that if I consider the branch-running squirrel and the drooping branch in themselves, I cannot declare that the one implies the other. What does it mean to consider them ‘in themselves’? Hume’s positive conception of considering things ‘in themselves’ involves a notion of conceivability [e.g., Enquiry IV.i SB 25]. Thus, he would ask us whether it is conceivable that, though the squirrel runs up the branch, the branch does not droop. And he would insist that this is conceivable, so that we may conclude that there is nothing in the squirrel’s run up the branch which excludes the branch’s staying put.

What does ‘conceivable’ mean? ‘Conceivable’ is related to ‘concept’ and ‘conception’, and so it is natural, at this point, to reach for familiar locutions, like ‘logical’ and ‘analytic’ and ‘conceptual’, and to say, that Hume is telling us that there is no logical implication of the droop by the squirrel’s run, or that it is not analytic that when the squirrel runs, the branch droops. To say that it is not analytic that when the squirrel runs, the branch droops, is to say—since this is, recall, a Kantian

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15 Though Hume’s notion of an impression is not identical to any notion in Kant’s philosophy, we may, for purposes of comparison, adopt this principle: that just as in intuitions, for Kant, the object is given to us, so too for Hume the object is given to us in and through impressions.

16 For an interesting critical discussion of Hume’s theory of ideas, see Stroud (1977: 17-41).
reconstruction of Hume’s problem—that it is not contained in our concept of a branch (of-such-and-such-a-character)-running squirrel (of-such-and-such-a-weight) that the branch droops. But what does that mean: it is not contained in our concept?

We can clarify the matter further, to just the extent required for present purposes, by understanding conceptual containment in terms of partial identity.\(^\text{17}\) This will allow us to see why, as we shall see, Hume emphasizes the distinctness of what is (supposedly) necessarily connected. Let us say that \(B\) (the concept) is contained in \(A\) (the concept) when for something to be \(A\) (the thing) \(is\) for it to be \(B\) (the thing). For Rufus to be a squirrel \(is\) for Rufus to be a mammal. Something true of identity proper is true of partial identity: there is a kind of demand for explanation that is inapposite when the identity is known. ‘Rufus is a squirrel, and Rufus is a mammal. But explain to me, in light of his being a squirrel, why (how) he is a mammal.’ This is an absurd demand because there is nothing to explain, and there is nothing to explain because it is a case of partial identity. An explanation serves to unify: but in a case of partial identity, there is no unifying to do, because we already understand the thing in question to be one. Consider, on the other hand: ‘Rufus runs up the branch, and the branch droops. But explain to me, in light of his running up the branch, the branch’s droop.’ This is not at all absurd. For here we have the sense that these are two things, two things with space enough between for an apt demand for explanation.

We may now return to Hume’s claim that we find no necessitation in experience. He does not mean, of course, that we do not find identity—proper or partial—in experience. That might be construed as a kind of ‘internal’ or ‘constitutive’ or ‘conceptual’ or ‘logical’ or ‘analytic’ necessity.\(^\text{18}\) He claims that we find no necessitation between distinct things [Enquiry IV.i SB 29], things I have

\(^{17}\) A judgment whose predicate is contained in its subject is thereby analytic; an analytic judgment, we are told in the Jäsche Logic, is one ‘whose certainty rests on identity of concepts (of the predicate with the notion of the subject)’ [111; emphasis in the original].

\(^{18}\) Indeed, Hume writes of a ‘necessity, which makes two times two equal to four, or three angles of a triangle equal to two right ones’ [Treatise L.iii.xiv SB 166].
characterized as leaving space enough between for an apt demand for explanation. This suggests that to ‘find necessitation’ (between two things) ‘in experience’ would be for experience to put me in a position in which no such demand would be apt. To find necessity in experience is, Hume suggests, for experience to give us everything requisite to understanding, to such complete understanding as to leave no room for any further ‘why’. If we understood, upon experiencing the squirrel’s run and then the droop, by a ‘penetration into [the] essences’ of the things involved [Treatise I.iii.vi SB 86], then we should find necessity in experience. Sometimes Hume gives expression to this thought by inviting us to imagine what it would be to know the ‘powers and forces’ underlying natural events [Enquiry IV.ii SB 37]: those would be principles of intelligibility, knowing which we should understand, and understand completely. Understanding the ‘powers and forces’, we should ‘find the effect in the supposed cause’ [Enquiry IV.i SB 29]. Thus finding necessity in experience would not be like finding an unfamiliar shade of blue. Finding necessity would not be finding another thing: it would be finding the way in which things are connected, knowing which no further ‘why’ would be apt. I suggested above that I see things make things happen all the time. Hume says that I see things make things happen only if I see the making-happen itself: only if experience places me in a position to understand why the water boils when the button is depressed, why the branch droops when the squirrel runs. It is essential to Hume’s conclusion that a concept like cause bears the promise of understanding. For his argument is that cause is not applicable to anything we find in experience because experience’s provisions never allow that the promise might be kept [Enquiry VI.1.i SB 29].

Nevertheless, Hume says, we apply cause to things. But this cannot be accounted to our recognition of its applicability to them, on the strength of their presentation to us in experience. Because it is inapplicable to objects of experience, it is not derived from any object of experience: it is copied, in his idiom, from no primary impression. To summarize what Fogelin rightly calls the ‘complex dialectical development’ (1985: 39) of Part III of the Treatise: he finds that it is instead
copied from a secondary impression, from a feeling we have in engaging in a certain mental operation [Treatise Liii.xiv SB 165]. That mental operation is inductive association, the tendency of which is, as Kant would say, implanted in our imagination.\textsuperscript{19} Thus our reconstruction of the argument that leads Hume to what Kant calls his ‘skepticism’: the doctrine of \textit{cause} as belonging to an implanted predisposition. It must belong to such a predisposition, because though we apply it, this application is not explained by any recognition of its applicability. For there is, and can be, no such recognition, since what \textit{cause} promises us is nothing that experience ever delivers.

3.2 Knowing that and knowing why.

There are two questions to be asked, on Kant’s behalf, at this point. First, is Hume right that experience’s provisions never allow that the promise might be kept? And second, is he right that if they do, \textit{cause} is not applicable to anything we find in experience? As we are about to see, Kant agrees with Hume on the first point and disagrees on the second.\textsuperscript{20} I have said nothing about why Hume holds the first point, and I shall not say very much more about why Kant does, because in my view that point is not \textit{the} point. \textit{The} point is that, as Hume and Kant agree, we do in fact apply \textit{cause} when many further ‘why’s are apt: we apply it even when we do not find, \textit{sensu} Hume, necessity in experience. This is true irrespective of whether ‘in principle’ we could not eliminate the call for further or deeper understanding. Hume thinks that if what we are given leaves any ‘why’ open, \textit{cause} is inapplicable to it. Kant, as we shall see, disagrees.

Thus, before we know anything else about Kant’s position on the matter, we know that according to him, to see that one thing is necessitated by another, that something is made to happen,

\textsuperscript{19} I shall not discuss Hume’s argument for that position in detail. In brief, this tendency belongs to the imagination because, if it belonged to reason, it would have to rest upon a principle, the principle of the uniformity of nature, which we should endorse in recognition of our warrant for doing so. But there can be no warrant for doing so.

\textsuperscript{20} It is easier to understand how Kant could endorse such a claim as the first point ‘in principle’: it would seem that all Hume can really say for his own part is that, so far as he knows on the basis of his investigations, experience never puts us in a position in which no further ‘why’ is apt.
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does not require knowledge of the ultimate ‘powers and forces’: that is, knowledge of what these powers and forces are. For Kant, we can know that one thing makes another happen without yet knowing why or how. Hume’s claim amounts to this: that there is no knowing that a necessary connection is without knowing what the necessary connection is. Knowledge of a necessary connection must already amount to a perfect understanding.

Nonetheless, as I have said, Kant agrees with Hume on the first point: that experience never delivers what cause promises. Indeed, he generalizes this point from cause to other modes of intelligibility [Prolegomena 4:260], which he eventually systematizes in his table of the categories:

[The pure concepts of the understanding] contain in themselves a necessity of determination which experience never equals. The concept of cause contains a rule, according to which from one state of affairs another follows with necessity; but experience can only show us that from one state of things another state often, or, at best, commonly, follows, so it can therefore furnish neither strict universality nor necessity (and so forth). [Prolegomena 4:315]

Necessity is only incompletely available in experience, precisely because we never, according to Kant as according to Hume, reach the ultimate ‘springs and principles’ of things, no matter how far we go. But this means that Hume is right about something else too: the concept cause—for Kant, its self-conscious real representative power—is not, and cannot be, derived from experience. For although, for Kant, cause is indeed applicable to experiential objects, nonetheless we comprehend more in the concept than experience ever gives us; no amount of actuality can vouch for the reality of the concept, because causality is necessitation and thereby complete necessitation, and yet no necessitation shows up to us complete. So although experience offers us examples of causality, because we recognize those examples as ‘never equaling’ causality, our consciousness of its real representative power cannot be grounded in those examples. Hume is wrong that we find no

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21 And so Hume is right, according to Kant, to ask ‘[w]ho will assert that he can give the ultimate reason, why milke or bread is proper nourishment for a man, not for a lion or a tiger?’ [Enquiry IV.i SB 28; emphasis mine].

22 Though the matter is more complicated than this would suggest, it is not misleading to say that here Kant and Hume are allied against Locke, who seeks an empirical derivation even of what Kant insists are metaphysical concepts: see, for example, his discussion of the origin of the idea of substance [Essay II.xvii.1 N 295].
necessity in experience. But he is right—to put the point, once again, in Kantian terms—that experience is not the ground of the reality of cause.

The same is true even if we dispense with the assumption that experience can never place us in a position to achieve perfect understanding, as long as cause has self-conscious reality and thus applicability independently of, and prior to, our achieving such understanding: or so I am about to argue. And that brings us, finally, to the reasons Kant thinks we have, at the outset of his project, for supposing that cause and like concepts have, and must have, real representative power, though this power is ungrounded in actual attestation. For it is not enough, for there to be a problem of pure reason, that cause not have reality in the way in which an empirical concept does. We must be given reason to think that it is no mere fancy either.

4. Far off in the twilight.

Kant tells us in the Introduction to the first Critique that we know metaphysical concepts to be applicable in experience because experience would be otherwise impossible: ‘even without requiring...examples for the proof of the reality of pure a priori principles in our cognition, one could establish their indispensability for the possibility of experience itself, thus establish it a priori’ [B5]. Nor is the proof of this indispensability postponed until the positive thematic sections of the Critique. For he continues: ‘for where would experience itself get its certainty if all rules in accordance with which it proceeds were themselves in turn always empirical, thus contingent?; hence one can hardly allow these to count as first principles’ [B5]. There is something called ‘certainty’ [Gewißheit] which belongs to experience and which depends upon metaphysical concepts.

The word ‘certainty’ is apt in this context to bear misleading connotations. It might be thought, for example, that Kant wishes to secure for judgments of experience the highest degree of confidence; absent the applicability of metaphysical concepts, the suggestion would go, the degree
must be lower than that. But if we expect the first *Critique* to be a treatise on degrees of confidence, we shall be disappointed. What, then, is Kant’s thought? We may approach it by way of another expression of the same thought in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*:

[A *priori* concepts] underlie experience as substance, and if we did not have *a priori* concepts then we also would not obtain any [concepts]. [...] and when we have gone through this synthetic *a priori* cognition according to its entire extent, then we can say that we have *a priori* principles on which [rests] the possibility of experience, which concerns all objects; we will show that they are certain because experience is certain and it rests on them. [29:798-9]

Here the certainty of experience is not a quality of experience but the certainty of experience’s being something of which we partake. Experience [*Erfahrung*] is, Kant tells us, empirical cognition [*empirische Erkenntnis*] [A124, B147]. It is, as cognition, a rationally grounded activity. And that, its rational groundedness and therefore its objectivity, is, I shall now suggest, what depends upon the applicability of metaphysical concepts.

Consider the case of inductive inference, especially apt in light of our discussion of Hume, and indeed a paradigmatic mode of empirical cognition by which we proceed from ignorance to knowledge. Kant says in the Preface to the *Critique of practical reason* that ‘[t]o substitute subjective necessity, that is, custom, for objective necessity, which is to be found only in a priori judgments, is to deny to reason the ability to judge an object…; it is to deny, for example, that when something often or always follows upon a certain prior state one could infer [schließen] it from that (for this would mean objective necessity and the concept of an *a priori* connection)’ [*KpV* 5:12; emphasis in the original]. He has in mind Hume’s conception of induction as the operation of an associative predisposition, that which, we have already seen, is supposed, for Hume, to explain our application of the concept *cause*. He says that according to such a conception of induction, it is not inference.24

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23 He would thus endorse Frege’s description of ‘those empiricists who recognize induction as the sole original process of inference (and even that as a process not actually of inference but of habituation)’ (1884/1953: xi).

24 --notwithstanding that Hume, ‘mirroring’ cognitive life in his naturalistic image of the human being, calls this kind of association ‘inference’ [e.g., *Treatise* Liii:vi SB86-7f]. For discussion, see Baier (1991: 69, 76-7 et passim).
And he says that absent the ‘objective necessity’ supplied by ‘a priori judgments’, induction cannot be understood as inference. Why should this be?

Consider an example involving *substance*, another traditional ontological concept, due to Locke. Locke writes not of inductive reasoning but of the curation of a substance’s ‘nominal essence’. Thus I construct the nominal essence for a kind—say, gold—by observing particulars of that kind and selecting some of their sensible qualities for membership in my complex idea of the kind. I then expect unobserved lumps of gold to be so qualified. My complex idea of gold may contain ideas of its color (yellow), its malleability, and its solubility in *aqua regia*, such as I have observed in particular lumps. But in making the selection—which is the same as inferring from observed to unobserved—I require a principle, lest my selection be arbitrary and thus no inference at all. Thus Locke writes:

> Whosoever first light on a parcel of that sort of Substance, we denote by the word *Gold*, could not rationally take the Bulk and Figure he observed in that lump, to depend on its real Essence, or internal Constitution. Therefore those never went into his *Idea* of that Species of Body… [Essay II.xxxi.9 N 381]²⁵

The suggestion is that the sensible qualities we associate with a kind in its ‘nominal essence’ are those properties we can (reasonably) take to spring from an internal constitution shared by that kind’s particulars.

Locke suggests here that this kind of empirical reasoning depends upon a conception of gold as having a ‘real Essence, or internal Constitution’. Locke has further views about what such a real essence would be—*i.e.*, probably a corpuscularian structure visible only to microscopical eyes which we do not have [Essay II.xxiii.12 N 303]—but his basic suggestion expresses a more generic thought familiar to the tradition about the significance of a substantial essence. Consider, for illustration, a canonical example of inductive reasoning as given in the tradition of the twentieth-century

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²⁵ In citing the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* I indicate book, chapter, section, and pagination in the edition by P.H. Nidditch (’N’) listed in the Bibliography.
philosophy of science: I conclude, on the basis of having observed among emeralds only green ones that all emeralds are green. Now, this makes a good deal of sense if I think that all those emeralds were green because green in some way belongs to the essence of the emerald: that is, if I think that what an emerald is would explain its being green under the relevant circumstances; if I think that, given that something is an emerald, it is no accident that it would be green under such circumstances. For then I have some reason to suppose that other emeralds will also be green in such circumstances.

If, however, I did not think anything like this, why should I have any reason to expect that emeralds I am yet to encounter will also be green? However great the number of green emeralds I have encountered, absent the supposition that their being green was other than sheer accident, I have no reason to expect green of the next emerald I see, let alone of all the rest of them. Of course, even if I do have thoughts about the essence of the emerald and the essential groundedness of green, the qualities of the ones I happen to have observed might yet turn out to have been accidents of circumstance. But the point here is not that my expectation is guaranteed satisfaction. It is that unless I have a thought about the essence of the emerald, I do not even think of a distinction between those qualities that are such accidents, and those that are not: whereas without this distinction, it makes no sense to have any expectation at all. Thus, I cannot be said to infer [schließen] from observed to unobserved unless I have in mind something like the explanatory relation of substantial essence to attribute. For it is precisely the thought that some quality of heretofore observed particulars of a kind is no accident that the idea of essence and attribute is meant to distill.

26 See, for example, Goodman (1955: 73).
27 Compare this with an observation made by Houston Smit:
   Our a posteriori cognitions…have what clarity and certainty they enjoy only on the assumption that the regularities among appearances they represent are consequences of rationes essendi that they do not register in their distinctive character, and in such a way that these appearances constitute experience. (2009: 221)
28 Indeed, without that in mind, I cannot even speak of this and that emerald. I can speak only of this thing, of such-and-such an appearance, and that thing, of such-and-such an appearance; and as Hume teaches us, that two things are superficially resembling gives us, on its own, no reason whatever to expect of the second what we have found in the first [Enquiry IV.ii SB 34]. I am, as always, reading Hume as Kant does. What Hume himself says is that no such expectation can reached ‘by a chain of reasoning’ [Enquiry IV.ii SB 34]. His naturalist readers would say that it is not reasoning alone.
Chapter 2

The concept *substance* is, however, like the concept *cause*, not a concept whose self-conscious real representative power can—so Kant has it, following Hume—be grounded in any amount of actuality.\(^{29}\) For *substance* embodies a mode of intelligibility just as *cause* does. In the case of *cause*, what is unified is cause with effect, or agent with patient. In the case of *substance*, what is unified are the various attributes of the substance, and what unifies them is the substantial essence. It is an idea familiar in the tradition that if we know the essence of a substance, we are in a position to appreciate the way in which its attributes spring from its essence. Hume says about *substance* what he says about *cause*: because experience never places us in a position in which no ‘why’ may stand between a substantial essence and its attributes, we never have occasion to apply the concept. So too does Kant say about *substance* what he says about *cause*: though Hume is right that no experience never places us in a position in which no ‘why’ may stand between a substantial essence and its attributes, nonetheless the concept *substance* is applicable in experience, for otherwise experience would be impossible. For experience is empirical cognition, and inductive inference, paradigmatic of empirical cognition, presupposes, in our example, the applicability of *substance*; and, thus, in general, the applicability and therefore the reality of metaphysical concepts.\(^{30}\)

Now, in the last section I said that, for Kant, the reality of such concepts as *substance* and *cause* could not be grounded in actual attestation because experience ‘never equals’ them. For us to

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\(^{29}\) Kant appears not to be aware that Hume’s skepticism extends beyond *cause* to *substance* [*Proleg 4:260; Treatise I.i.iii SB 15-16, Liv.iii SB 219-225*].

\(^{30}\) It is easy to sketch the analogous line of thought for *cause*. No matter how many times I witness the dissolution of gold in *aqua regia*, unless I think that the *aqua regia* acts on the gold to make it dissolve by virtue of the active and passive powers possessed by it and gold, respectively, I can have no reason to expect it to happen again (and indeed, no reason to call it ‘it’: the same thing happening in different places and times to different lumps of gold).
recognize their applicability to experiential objects is for us to recognize those objects as exemplifying these concepts only incompletely. I also promised to show that this assumption is not required for an understanding of what he learns from Hume. Now is the time to discharge the promise. Even if we could achieve perfect understanding on the strength of what experience provides, we should have to begin with, as Aristotle puts it, what is ‘prior in relation to us’, and in proceeding avail ourselves of inductive inference \([\textit{Posterior Analytics} \text{ I.2 72a}]\).\(^{31}\) Indeed, inductive inference is on the scene at all only because we do not begin with what is ‘prior by nature’ \([\textit{ibid}]\). If we began there, we, like God, should know everything always already from its ground, and should not need to discover the ground by examining exemplars inductively. Inductive inference has a place in knowledge only insofar as such concepts as \textit{substance} and \textit{cause} are not yet completely exemplified, to our view, in experience. Thus, if inductive inference is undergirded by the reality of such concepts, that reality cannot in turn be undergirded by their complete exemplification. Their reality cannot be undergirded by the actual, and yet they are real. There is, therefore, a problem to be posed about the possibility of this reality, and it is the problem of pure reason.

This is, I submit, the point Kant wishes to make in his rather compressed argument at B5 to the effect that the rules of experience could not all be ‘empirical’. In this kind of argument, Kant would profess to establish the necessity of \textit{a priori} knowledge for activities characteristic of empirical knowledge, according to our ordinary conception of the latter, independently of and prior to the development of the thematic part of the first \textit{Critique}. What is left to that development is, first, the explanation of how \textit{a priori} knowledge is possible for a finite being; and, second, the elucidation of the system of \textit{a priori} knowledge pertaining to the human cognitive capacity.

\section*{5. The Kantian Difference.}

\(^{31}\) In citing Aristotle’s texts I indicate the work, book, chapter, and approximate Bekker pagination.
Hume might agree that if induction is what Kant claims it is, it presupposes the applicability of that which nothing in experience ‘equals’ (or, at least, as I have suggested, ‘has yet equaled’ at the point of application). But Hume does not think induction is what Kant claims it is, in part because he does not regard us as entitled to apply concepts like *substance* and *cause*. To simplify: Hume says that since we are unentitled to apply concepts like *substance* and *cause*, induction is not a rational activity; Kant says that since induction is a rational activity, we are entitled to apply concepts like *substance* and *cause*. Though the one’s *modus ponens* is the other’s *modus tollens*, Hume may appear to stand on higher philosophical ground, because though Kant argues for the necessary applicability of metaphysical concepts from the status of induction as a rational activity, he nonetheless considers the explanatory relationship to run in the other direction: metaphysical concepts make inductive inference possible, and not the other way round. Hume appears to have undermined the foundation of inductive inference, and so given us reason to suppose that induction is not inference. It does not do for Kant to respond simply that since induction is inference, Hume cannot really have undermined its foundation.

But recall that Hume has undermined this foundation only if he has persuaded us that such concepts as *substance* and *cause* are inapplicable to the objects of experience. And Kant does not think that he has. He has, to be sure, achieved a keen insight: that the self-conscious reality of these concepts cannot be grounded in any experience, because their applicability and thus their reality is prior to their (complete) exemplification. That they are inapplicable to the objects of experience follows from this, however, only given the premise that a concept is applicable in experience only if its self-conscious reality is grounded in experience. Hume believes this: it is what is now known as his ‘concept-empiricism’, a cornerstone of his philosophy. But we need not, and Kant does not wish us to, accept this premise.
Nonetheless, with this premise in mind, we can take Hume to have set Kant a task: that of explaining how otherwise a concept’s self-conscious reality might be grounded than in experience. And with this we make our return to the contradistinctive formulation of the real problem of pure reason according to the reading presented in Chapter 1. Thus, Hume’s ‘concept-empiricism’, though it is not a premise Kant wishes us to accept, is not one he wishes us to reject without further ado. This premise is, as it were, an overpowered distortion of our own consciousness of our finitude, our reliance in thinking and knowing on what is given to us. Hume falls victim to the self-misunderstanding of this distortion, a self-misunderstanding which it is the task of the Critique to address.

5. Conclusion.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that for the real problem of pure reason to be properly a task, we must be convinced that there are metaphysical concepts possessed of real representative power, since the task is to explain how concepts may be real in the way in which metaphysical concepts must be: independently of any actual attestation to that power. In examining Kant’s reaction to Hume’s doctrine of the concept cause, I have suggested, we come to see why such concepts as cause and substance are metaphysical. They are metaphysical because their applicability in experience, and thus their reality, is independent of, or at least prior to, their complete exemplification in experience. Hume is right, Kant thinks, that such concepts are never completely exemplified in experience. For these concepts are modes of intelligibility: their complete exemplification would give us everything we needed for perfect understanding. But even those more optimistic than Kant about the prospects

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32 This is part of the answer I should give to a problem identified by Hannah Ginsborg: that of how to make sense of Kantian Erfahrung as ‘capturing a notion that is at least to some extent continuous with the empiricist conception of experience’ but nonetheless as something thoroughly cognitive (2006: 64). The empiricist conception of experience, at least as it figures in Hume’s philosophy, is a distortion of our basic self-understanding as finite knowers—namely, that we are dependent in our knowledge and even in our thought on the sensibly given—which Kant wishes to elaborate in its true signification.
for perfect understanding must admit that we finite beings do not begin with such perfect understanding, and for precisely that reason avail ourselves of such paradigm exercises of empirical cognition as inductive inference, which are indeed exercises of empirical cognition only under the supposition that such concepts as *substance* and *cause* are applicable in experience. Thus, the reality of *substance* and *cause* does not rest upon experience. Experience rests upon their reality. The task is secured in its urgency. In the remaining chapters, I examine Kant’s effort in behalf of its fulfillment.
1. Introductory.

Recent years have witnessed spirited philosophical discussion of the involvement of concepts—whether there is any, and if so, what form it takes—in perception or sensory representation. This discussion has had both contemporary systematic and historical dimensions, and among the historical topics treated has been Kant’s account of cognition. The central question, posed in Kantian terms, is that of whether Kant believe that concepts, universal representations of the understanding, are involved in, or prerequisite to, intuitions, singular, immediate representations of objects.

The discussion of this question has tended to complexity, if not to complication. It has been asked, for example, whether particular intuitions demand the application or merely the background possession of concepts. It has been asked whether concepts, if they are required at all, must be empirical, or whether the *a priori* concepts called ‘categories’ might suffice. To see a cat, for example, must I apply or possess the concept *cat*? Or is the concept *substance* enough? It has also been asked why such conceptual involvement might be required: to constitute intuitions as having correctness conditions, perhaps, or to make their objects determinate, or for some other reason. And it has been asked which intuitions might require particular concepts or acts of the understanding: empirical intuitions, like my intuition of a cat, or perhaps just the pure intuitions of space and time.\(^1\)

And yet all this variety in the content of the questions posed and in the possible answers to them masks something that all these questions and answers have in common. In every case the question is not about just any way in which concepts might be involved in intuitions. It is about whether particular concepts are, as we might put it, immanently involved, involved-as-present-in, or

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\(^1\) For a survey of these different kinds of question, see McLear (2014).
as needed in the generation of, particular intuitions. Vary the kind of concept, the kind of intuition, the reason for the involvement: what remains constant is the theme of the immanent involvement of one particular in another.

But this is not the only way in which concepts might be involved in intuitions. I hope to show in this chapter that more, and more promising interpretive possibilities emerge when we turn our attention from particular representations of sensibility and the understanding to the capacities themselves, and ask directly about them. For when we do so, I submit, modes of involvement other than the immanent emerge.

One of these modes, which will become one of the principal themes of this chapter, may be approached by way of the distinction between essential and accidental unity. An essential unity is one whose parts belong to the whole per se. That is, it is not just that the nature of the whole demands those parts; each of the parts belongs to the whole by its, the part’s, nature. The traditional example of this kind of unity is that of the organized body. The heart, for example, is not what it is but for its relation to the lungs, and to every other organ, and indeed to the whole organism, of which, we say, they are members. On the other hand, an accidental unity is, in one sense of ‘unity’, not a real unity at all, since its elements are together per accidens. Here again, the Latin expression qualifies not the accidental unity, which we might also call an aggregate, but the elements: a heap of sand by nature demands grains of sand as parts, but it does not belong to the nature of any

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2 I do not mean to suggest that nothing has been written on these issues with particular reference to the nature of the capacities. (See, for discussions framed in terms of the capacities, for example, Conant (2016), Deleuze (1971), Engstrom (2006), Heidegger (1973/1997), Kern (2018), Longuenesse (1998), and McDowell (2017). For a treatment of a closely related issue in the contemporary philosophy of mind, see Boyle (2016). For a general discussion of ‘capacities-first’ approaches to the interpretation of Kant, see Schafer (2019).) I mean to suggest only that lines of argument and textual interpretation advanced, especially by ‘non-conceptualists’, have tended to hinge on questions about concepts and intuitions.

In some cases, authors treat concepts and intuitions as products of the understanding and sensibility, respectively, in a very literal sense; it is natural for such authors to focus on the properties of these products rather than on those of the producers. (See, for example, Allais (2015: 145-175) and Hanna (2005).) But if, as I suggest below, we understand concepts as material determinations of the capacity to judge, and intuitions as exercises of sensibility, then we have squarely in view the capacities themselves, and this opens up different philosophical possibilities.
of those grains that it belong to such a heap. It isn’t that the grains of sand have nothing to do with each other: of course they act on, and react to, each other. But there is nonetheless a way in which each grain is indifferent to every other, a way in which the heart and the lungs are not indifferent to one another.3

Thus the question I want to ask about the capacities, sensibility and the understanding, is this: do they, in their combination, constitute an essential or an accidental unity? Call essentialism the thesis that the unity is essential: what Kant calls the cognitive capacity [Erkenntnisvermögen] is an essential unity whose parts are sensibility and the understanding.4 Call accidentalism the view that the unity is accidental: sensibility and understanding are independently constituted, thus independently intelligible, capacities. Now, if we favor accidentalism, we have to find something to say about the cognitive capacity: how do they relate to it, in an accidental way? And here there appear to be several options, but here is an especially natural one: cognition might be construed as an activity which the subject performs, exploiting both sensibility and understanding as instruments, thus as perfectly serviceable in cognition but as in themselves indifferent to the use made of them. Then the possibility of that activity could be called ‘cognitive capacity’ [Erkenntnisvermögen].

3 Both of these examples are from the Metaphysik Mrongovius [29:747]. In an aggregate like a ‘sand hill’, the parts are ‘arbitrarily put together’. In what is called a series, on the other hand, the parts are ‘called members, because we can cognize one part only through the others, e.g., in a human body each part is there through the others’. This is because it is, as Kant says in the Preface to the first Critique, a ‘truly articulated structure of members in which each thing is an organ, that is, in which everything is for the sake of each member, and each individual member is for the sake of all’ [Bxxxvii-xxxviii].

4 The cognitive capacity is, properly speaking, only one of three division of the mind [Gemüth], which also comprehends the desiderative capacity [Begehrungsvermögen] and feeling of pleasure and displeasure [Gefühl der Lust und Unlust] [20: 205-6]. ‘Taken together, these three major powers of the soul constitute its life’ [Mrongovius 29:878]. Within each division there is a distinction between higher (active) and lower (passive), but my focus here is on that distinction within the Erkenntnisvermögen alone.

5 This is suggested by Robert Hanna’s interpretation of Kant’s adage ‘thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind’ [A51/B75]. While some authors, including me, take this to express an internal connection between the capacities, he takes this to express the view that thoughts and intuitions must be associated ‘only for the specific purpose of constituting objectively valid judgments’ (2005: 257). Thus, according to Hanna, cognition, in the sense of objectively valid judgment, is merely one purpose among others, which I may take up at my option; should I choose to do so, I shall have to combine two independently constituted items.
I expect that this question, whether the capacities constitute an essential or accidental unity, may seem much less tractable than those various questions about immanent involvement I rehearsed above. And yet I think it is deeply important, and, indeed, that it approaches to the very heart of the positive project of the first Critique. I make a case for its importance here by defending, in some detail, an essentialist image of the shape of the Kantian mind. In §2 I gather evidence from the first Critique and student notes on Kant’s lectures on metaphysics which supports an essentialist reading. This evidence will also supply a clue as to the particular form Kant’s essentialism might assume: that is, as to how, in particular, we should characterize the way in which the capacities are dependent on one another. I then turn to the details of these modes of dependence. In §3 I discuss the understanding’s dependence on sensibility, in §4 sensibility’s dependence on the understanding.

To anticipate, and to introduce the second of this chapter’s principal themes, the argument running through these sections will be that an essentialist image of the mind is necessary for Kant’s conception of the understanding’s a priori knowledge, his basic structural solution to the problem of pure reason as I have interpreted it in Chapters 1 and 2. Part of the interest of this argument will, I think, consist in this: that the essentialism I defend will embody a rejection of the view that particular intuitions need be immanently involved in particular concepts; in this sense, it will embody a rejection of conceptualism. Equally, however, it will embody a rejection of every position I know of defended under the title of ‘non-conceptualism’, since these positions embrace or presuppose

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6 Here I follow many ‘conceptualist’ readers in thinking that Kant’s account of a priori knowledge is the heart of the matter: if this account requires a particular shape for the mind, that demand has primacy relative to other textual considerations. (Those emphasizing the importance of this demand include, for example, Ginsborg (2008), Gomes (2017), McDowell (2017), and Newton (2016).)

7 I say ‘knowledge’ advisedly, not to suggest that it is always the right translation of ‘Erkenntnis’ (though it is, in my view, the right translation of the primary use of this term), but to suggest that, for Kant, the fundamental concepts of the understanding (the categories) and their principles, which are a priori, constitute knowledge of the form of nature, and that it is this knowledge that is his principal concern in the positive part of the first Critique, as discussed below (§4).
accidentalism. And so I indicate, along the way, the points at which it makes its departure from these other readings.


2.1 The Specific Distinction.

One way of putting essentialism is to say that sensibility and the understanding are, by nature, one. And yet it may seem difficult to say this, because Kant insists that they are two:

If we will call the receptivity of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way sensibility, then on the contrary the capacity to bring forth representations itself, or the spontaneity of cognition, is the understanding. It comes along with our nature that intuition can never be other than sensible, i.e., that it contains only the way in which we are affected by objects. The capacity to think of objects of sensible intuition, on the contrary, is the understanding. Neither of these properties is to be preferred to the other. [...] Further, these two capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. [A51-2/B75-6]

The senses intuit objects, and the understanding thinks the objects intuited. This is essential to the nature of each capacity. They do utterly different things; they have utterly different functions; they are not one; they are two.

Part of the reason Kant insists on this is that other philosophers have been denied it. Indeed, such denials are characteristic of theories of the mind and representation in the early modern period:

Leibniz intellectualized the appearances, just as Locke sensitivized the concepts of the understanding....Instead of seeking two entirely different sources of representation in the understanding and the sensibility, which could judge about things with objective validity only in conjunction, each of these great men holds on only to one of them... [A271/B327]

Each of Leibniz and Locke ‘preferred’ one kind of representation to the other, and tried to assimilate the other to it. Lucy Allais has urged us to remember this, in her defense of a non-

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8 Thus my position might be construed as a kind of middle way, though I hope not one which determines itself ‘as it were mechanically (something from one side, and something from the other), and by which no one is set right, but rather a middle way that can be determined precisely, according to principles’ [Prolegomena 4:360].
conceptualist reading, in a way which usefully summarizes some of the crucial differences between concepts and intuitions: ‘[t]hat intuitions are singular and concepts are general, that intuitions give us objects and concepts cannot do this, and that these two ingredients make essential and distinct contributions to cognition are not features of Kant’s account that are provisional or open to revision. These claims are fundamental to Kant’s position, and asserted many times throughout the critical works’ (2015: 162).

2.2 Unity in Diversity.

But for sensibility to be assimilated to the understanding, or the understanding to sensibility, is not the only way for these two things to be one. Here we might reach further back than Leibniz and Locke and consider the image of the mind defended by St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas, like Kant, and unlike the early modern figures I have mentioned, embraces a specific distinction of sense and intellect. But he does not think of these capacities as constitutively independent. I wish to introduce an essentialist reading of Kant by comparing some of the remarks recorded by his students to some passages from Aquinas. So, first, consider Aquinas’s description of how the capacities relate to each other. He says that each is dependent on the other, but in different ways:

Since the soul is one, its capacities several, and many things come from one in an ordered sequence, there is necessarily an order between the soul’s capacities. […] The dependence of one capacity on another can be understood in two ways. First, in terms of the order of nature, inasmuch as the perfect are prior by nature to the imperfect. Second, in terms of the order of generation and time, inasmuch as things go from being imperfect to being perfect. With respect to the first ordering of capacities, then, the intellective capacities are prior to the sensory; as a result, they direct and command them. […] As regards the second ordering, however, the situation is reversed. For the capacities of the nutritive soul are prior, in the process of generation, to the capacities of the sensory soul; as a result they prepare the body for sensory activities. The same is true for the sensory capacities, with respect to the intellective ones. [Summa Theologica 1a 77.4]9

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9 In citing the Summa Theologica I indicate the volume, question, and article.
In the order of nature, he says, the intellectual powers are prior to the sensitive. Whereas in the second order, that of generation, the sensitive are prior to the intellectual. This means, in particular, order in the acts of the soul: ‘This order among the soul’s capacities holds both as regards the soul…and as regards objects. It also holds as regards acts’ [Summa Theologica 1a 77.4]. Elsewhere he puts the priority of the intellect to the senses in another way: he says that ‘the senses exist for the sake of intellect, not vice versa’ [Summa Theologica 1a 77.7]. So, abstractly put, the intellect, to do what it does, needs the senses. And the senses are directed towards the intellect’s needs. The intellect and senses are united teleologically. The intellect supplies the principle for the unity that they constitute, but it cannot realize this principle alone. It needs the senses, and their contribution to the intellect, their fulfillment of this need, is their *raison d’être*.

Aquinas regards sense and intellect as essentially unified even as he regards them as distinct. His is not an assimilative conception of their unity, as are, according to Kant, the doctrines of Locke and Leibniz. Might Kant’s philosophy of mind resemble, in this respect, that of Aquinas? An indication to this effect is to be found in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, in which we are told that ‘the use of the lower cognitive powers depends on the higher, and indeed the higher govern over the lower by means of the imagination’ [29:887]. This is not the only place at which Kant uses metaphors of governance and service, familiar from the tradition. He says in the *Anthropology*, for example, that ‘[t]he senses do not have command over understanding. Rather, they offer themselves to understanding merely in order to be at its disposal’ [*Anthropologie* 7:145].

Consider another rather telling way in which a parallel can be found between Aquinas and Kant:

[A]n animal would not be absolutely one, in which there were several souls. For nothing is absolutely one except by form, by which a thing has existence….If,

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10 Another, related metaphor is that of obedience: ‘The nonrational [part], then, as well [as the whole soul] apparently has two parts. For while the plantlike [part] shares in reason not at all, the [part] with appetites and in general desires shares in reason in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it’ [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 1102b29-32].
therefore, man were ‘living’ by one form, the vegetative soul, and ‘animal’ by another form, the sensitive soul, and ‘man’ by another form, the intellectual soul, it would follow that man is not absolutely one... [Summa Theologica 1a 76.3]

The singularity (singularity not simplicity) against which some assume three souls (vegetative soul—e.g., growth of hair—sensitive soul—cause of actions according to the brute power of choice, and rational soul, use of reason); but three faculties do not give three souls, and moreover the I brings everything to unity. The question cannot be settled otherwise. A human being constitutes a unity, and we cannot call the principles of life in various parts souls. [Metaphysik Dohna 28:683]

Aquinas advances in the first of these the Aristotelian thesis that the human being has only one soul, not several, because otherwise it would not be one thing. And Kant is recorded, in the second, as recapitulating that very argument.¹¹,¹² This is an indication—again, like the passage from the Mrongovius above, not decisive, but an indication nonetheless—that Kant, like the Aristotelians, is concerned to explain how the human being, including in its cognitive constitution, is a unity, and not an aggregate of independent elements, though the unity is, to be sure, complex: an Einheit, a unity, but not an Einfachheit, a simplicity.

We might note also that the principle of that Einheit is the ‘I’: Kant says that the ‘I’ brings everything to unity. In the same series of lectures he is recorded as saying that

[the I] is the first act of the mind: the capacity to cognize oneself as representing subject, and also as object of our representation. [...] This capacity contains the ground of the difference of sensibility and understanding (capacity of rules—higher cognitive capacity). [Dohna 28:670-1]

In combination, the passages tell us that the ‘I’ brings sensibility and intellect—let’s forget about growth of hair—to unity, and that it is the principle of their difference. This makes sense if we take the I to be a principle of what Rachel Zuckert has called a unity of the diverse as such (2007: 24 et passim). This is, at a certain level of generality, the kind of unity an organism is: its principle—roughly,

¹¹ See also K, 28:753.
¹² Kant is not, of course, committing himself to the existence of a non-sensible substance such as many members of the tradition have meant by ‘soul’ (‘Seele’, ‘anima’, ‘psyche’ and so on). He means ‘the vital principle of man in the free use of his powers’ [MS 6:384].
homeostasis—is what unites all its parts, and determines why the whole is articulated into those parts. In fact, its explaining the unity of the parts, and its explaining the diversity of the parts, are not two different things. One thing is explained in one explanation: the unity of the diverse as such.

It should, however, be noted that this essential unity, of intellect and sense, is different in an important respect from the unity of, say, the heart with the lungs under the principle of homeostasis. Neither the heart nor the lungs can be taken to be the other’s governor. Whereas in the unity of cognition as we find it in Aquinas and Kant, one member of the unity has a kind of explanatory priority relative to the other; one part is a privileged member of the whole. That is, it is the intellect which explains why the senses are there, and not vice versa. Kant, as we shall see, sometimes identifies the activity of the understanding with cognition, as though the part were the whole. This may be more than mere sloppiness: it may be an expression of the explanatory priority we have identified.13 Indeed, to stress the parallel of Kant with the Aristotelian tradition even further, we might note here the ancient view that a composite system is, in some way, identical to its ruling part, thought not at the expense of the distinctness of the other parts.14, 15

But upon what grounds could this essentialism be attributed to the critical, published Kant? Here all we can do is to examine the published works and what they say about the relationship between sensibility and the understanding. I begin by considering whether the understanding needs sensibility (§3). I then turn to the question whether sensibility is, by nature, that which allows the understanding the fulfillment of this need (§4).

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13 See Engstrom (2006) for further discussion of cognition as the activity of the understanding.
14 ‘[A] city and every other composite system seems to be above all its most controlling part’ [Nicomachean Ethics IX.8 1168b30-5].
15 In the first Critique’s A-Deduction, Kant calls transcendental apperception the ‘radical faculty [Radikalvermögen] of all our cognition’ [A114]. Dieter Henrich suggests in accordance with this that ‘[i]n its content the structure formed by the faculties of the mind [sensibility, imagination, and understanding] is determined through the structure of finite self-consciousness’ (1955/1994: 31). And apperception is, Kant claims, identical to the understanding [B134n.]. Here, then, the higher, the understanding, is identical with what, in the Metaphysik Dohna, is called the principle of the higher’s unity with the lower, sensibility. Cognition is a composite system which is most of all its ruling part.
3. The Intellect’s Vocation.

3.1 The *Erfahrungsgebrauch.*

In an initial characterization of the understanding in the opening pages of his analysis of that faculty, the Transcendental Analytic, Kant calls sensibility a ‘capacity to receive representations’, the understanding a capacity ‘to cognize an object by means of those’—those sensory—‘representations’ [A50/B74]. Note that in this characterization, Kant says that the understanding *is* a capacity to *cognize* an object *by means of* such sensory representations; that such sensory representations are the means of its activity is specified in the characterization of the capacity.

Of course, this cannot mean that the understanding depends on sensibility, and depends upon it in the same way, in each and every one of its representations. For Kant’s foremost ambition is to explain the possibility of knowledge *a priori*, which we have characterized negatively as knowledge ungrounded in the sensible presentation of objects. If the understanding depends on sensibility *per se*, as suggested by this initial characterization, this cannot be taken as a universal generalization over exercises of the understanding, as though, in speaking of the dependence of one capacity on another, we were merely summarizing facts about these exercises. What I seek to show here is that, according to Kant, all the acts and determinations of the understanding are unified, not by some feature which each has, but by a kind of exercise which is explanatorily privileged relative to the others: a kind of exercise of which it makes sense to say that, though it is not the only act of the understanding, it is the act of the understanding.

But I want to work up to this thought, and its textual ground, more carefully. So let us begin by considering the ways in which the understanding depends upon sensibility according to Kant’s discussion in the First Chapter of the Analytic of Concepts.
First of all, the understanding depends on sensibility in its acts: that is, in judgments.\textsuperscript{16} Thus:

Now the understanding can make no other use of these concepts than of judging by means of them. Since no representation pertains to the object immediately except intuition alone, a concept is thus never immediately related to an object, but is always related to some other representation of it (whether that be an intuition or itself already a concept). Judgment is therefore the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it. [A68/B93]

Because ‘we can trace all actions of the understanding back to judgments’, the understanding ‘can be represented as a capacity to judge’ [A69/B94]. In a judgment, concepts are applied to an object given by sensibility. The object has to be given by sensibility, because concepts do not ‘pertain to the object immediately’. An intuition must mediate the relation of concept to object. So in a judgment, an act of the understanding here and now, the higher capacity depends upon the lower. It depends upon it for the object of the judgment, the presentation of which enables this activation of the intellect.\textsuperscript{17}

But this is not the only way in which the understanding depends upon sensibility. For Kant speaks not just of the act of judgment as so depending but even of the concept applied in such an act as so depending. Thus:

The concept of body thus signifies something, e.g. metal, which can be cognized through that concept. It is therefore a concept only because other representations are contained under it by means of which it can be related to objects. It is therefore the predicate for a possible judgment, e.g., “Every metal is a body”. [A69/B94]

\textsuperscript{16} Here I follow Béatrice Longuenesse’s reading of the understanding as capacity to judge \textit{[Vermögen zu urteilen]} and the power of judgment, or judgmental force \textit{[Urteilskraft]} as that capacity’s actualization (1998: 7). Thus judgment, insofar as I consider it here, is not judgeable content but an act. As Kant puts it in a letter to Jacob Sigismund Beck, ‘[t]he difference between the connection of representations in a concept and the connection of representations in a judgment…lies, I think, in this: in the first, one thinks of a concept as determinate \textit{[bestimmt]}; in the second, one thinks of the activity of my determining \textit{[meines Bestimmens]} this concept’ \textit{[Briefwechsel (July 3, 1792) 11:347]}. It is, in particular, the assertoric judgment, in the making of which ‘[the assertion] is considered actual (true)’ [A74-5/B100; emphasis mine].

\textsuperscript{17} Kant’s remarks here may seem, in spite of his refusal to include any explicit qualification to this effect, to apply only to some judgments: synthetic, and, in particular, empirical judgments. In a way, this is right. But, as I am in the course of arguing, this is not a case of mere sloppiness, nor of ambiguity or polysemy in the word ‘judgment’. The kind of judgment Kant describes here has, as an act of the understanding, a kind of explanatory priority relative to the others.
How are concepts related to the understanding, if judgment is related to the understanding as act to capacity? We can understand concepts as determinations of the capacity, which constitute it as a readiness to judge concerning particular subject matters.\(^{18}\) Thus, to possess an understanding is to be capable of judging \textit{sans phrase}. To possess the concept \textit{cat} is, roughly speaking, to be able to make judgments about cats. To judge that something is a cat is to exercise one’s capacity to judge in that determination. Now Kant says that the concept \textit{body} ‘is a concept’ only because it can be related to objects by intuitions. He does not say that it is a concept because it \textit{is} related to objects by intuitions; for then it would be a concept only in an act of the understanding, only in judgment. But as concept, it is the possibility of such acts, insofar as they would concern bodies. For a concept is not an act but a determination of potentiality. If an act of the understanding requires the actual presentation of an object, then the corresponding potentiality of the understanding—the concept—requires the possibility of such presentation. In this way, the possibilities for the understanding depend upon the possibilities for sensibility. Call this the \textit{sensible-significance condition} on conceptuality.\(^{19,20}\)

So far, it sounds very much as though the understanding depends by nature on sensibility. But it might be thought that this is an artifact of Kant’s example: \textit{body}. For \textit{body} is, according to Kant, an empirical concept. It might be thought fair enough to describe an empirical concept as the

\(^{18}\) These are determinations [\textit{Bestimmungen}] because they yield a capacity more specific than that of the capacity to judge in general: a capacity to judge about this or that subject matter.

\(^{19}\) With the word ‘significance’ I mean to echo the most common translation of ‘\textit{Bedeutung}’ in Kant’s use of that word. It might be alleged that significance in this sense goes beyond mere conceptuality, because there are concepts without significance [A292/B348-9; A596/B624n.]. But I think we should take Kant seriously when he says that \textit{body} ‘is a concept’ only because it can be related to objects by intuitions. Two brief notes on this. First, we need not assume that it is true of every concept that its being a concept depends on such a possibility; we need only, as I am in the course of arguing, recognize that for some concepts, and indeed for the explanatorily central concepts, \textit{their} conceptuality cannot be sundered from their significance. Second, we may acknowledge a distinction between genuine concepts, which have positive content, and merely negative or analogical characterizations which do not strictly deserve the title concept (e.g., ‘we can think these properties of the highest being only by means of analogy’ [\textit{KU} 5:456]; therefore, ‘the human understanding cannot even form for itself the least concept of another possible understanding, …one that would itself intuit’ [B139]). Kant thinks that these characterizations admit of formulation only by virtue of their (e.g., analogical) relation to (genuine, positive) concepts.

\(^{20}\) This is related to, and deliberately reminiscent of, P.F. Strawson’s ‘principle of significance’: ‘there can be no legitimate, or even meaningful, employment of ideas or concepts which does not relate them to empirical or experiential conditions of their application’ (1966: 16).
possibility of judging, or, as we might put it, the readiness to judge upon sensory presentation of an appropriate particular. But what of non-empirical concepts? Broadly speaking, Kant admits two kinds of non-empirical concept. The first kind I shall call, more or less in agreement with his own usage, the pure concepts [A70/B95ff.]. These concepts all derive from the fundamental system of the concepts of the intellect, or the categories: examples include reality, substance, cause and effect, and the like. The second kind of non-empirical concept he calls ideas [A311/B368ff.]. These are not applicable to sensible things, or at least not straightforwardly so: these are concepts like God, immortal soul, and world-totality. I consider the first kind, the pure concepts, here, and discuss the ideas very briefly in §3.2 below.

The pure concepts, unlike the ideas, are applicable to sensible things. Unlike empirical concepts, they do not depend for their sensible applicability on an object’s falling into one species of sensible being rather than another. The concept cat applies to cats, but not to rats or bats; the pure concepts apply, as a system, to every region of sensible being. For they are applicable to things just insofar as those things are sensible. They are not readinesses to judge this or that kind of sensible being: rather, as a system, they articulate the form of any such readiness. This is why Kant says of empirical concepts that they are ‘concepts of the understanding in concreto’ [A567/B595].

Because the pure concepts fulfill the sensible-significance condition, as they must if empirical concepts are the pure concepts in concreto, Kant’s admitting these concepts does not force him to qualify the condition. To the extent that the condition expresses a dependence of the understanding on sensibility, his admitting pure concepts does not require that we deny or qualify such a

21 ‘All the pure cognitions of the understanding are such that their concepts can be given in experience and their principles confirmed through experience; by contrast, the transcendent cognitions of reason neither allow what relates to their ideas to be given in experience, nor their theses ever to be confirmed or refuted through experience’ [Prolegomena 4:329]. As we saw in Chapter 2, not even the pure concepts are, according to Kant, completely exemplified in experience. But they are incompletely exemplified, whereas an idea cannot be incompletely exemplified, because an idea is per se expressive of a perfection, thus of a completion: see n. 29 below.

22 Thus ‘I have complete insight into not only the possibility but also the necessity of subsuming all appearances under these concepts’ [Prolegomena 4:311].
dependence. Nonetheless, there is an important difference between the way in which the pure concepts fulfill the condition and the way in which empirical concepts do, and this difference might be thought to undermine the claim of dependence. Consider a representative passage from the Analytic of Principles:

A concept that includes a synthesis in it is to be held as empty, and does not relate to any object, if this synthesis does not belong to experience, either as borrowed from it, in which case it is an empirical concept, or as one on which, as a priori condition, experience in general (its form) rests, and then it is a pure concept, which nevertheless belongs to experience, since its object can be encountered in the latter. For whence will one derive the character of the possibility of an object that is thought by means of a synthetic a priori concept, if not from the synthesis that constitutes the form of the empirical cognition of objects? That in such a concept no contradiction must be contained is, to be sure, a necessary logical condition; but it is far from sufficient for the objective reality of the concept, i.e., for the possibility of such an object as is thought through the concept. [A220/B267-8]

Here we are told that an empirical concept’s synthesis is ‘borrowed from experience’, whereas that of a pure concept is ‘an a priori condition of experience in general’. If a concept is empirical, its marks are supplied by observation of the particulars which fall under it. This is confirmed in the Doctrine of Method:

Thus in the concept of gold one person might think, besides its weight, color, and ductility, its property of not rusting, while another might know nothing about this. One makes use of certain marks only as long as they are sufficient for making distinctions; new observations, however, take some away and add some, and therefore the concept never remains within secure boundaries. [A728/B756]

Pure concepts are not like that. There are, to be sure, objects in experience to which they are applicable; they ‘belong to experience’ [A220/B267-8]. But that is not because they, like empirical concepts, depend on the actual experience of these objects. It is rather because the experience of these objects depends on them. The concept cat is, as it were, at the mercy of our experience of nature: in such experience we may be given cats or not. Now, as a matter of fact, we have been, so

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23 The possibility of the pure concepts ‘is founded solely in the relation of the understanding to experience: not, however, such that these concepts and laws are derived from experience, but such that experience is derived from them’ [Prolegomena 4:313].
that we can have a concept *cat*. But we need not have been so lucky: as Kant is recorded as saying in one of his lectures on logic, ‘concepts of experience simply do not exist without experience...If there were no horse, then no one would be in a position to fabricate a horse, either’ [Blomberg 24:253]. The pure concepts, on the other hand, are not at the mercy of experience; experience is at their mercy. So though they fulfill the sensible-significance condition, the direction of the fulfillment’s explanation is not the same in the pure case as in the empirical case. As Kant says in the Transcendental Dialectic, it is ‘because [the pure concepts] constitute the intellectual form of all experience’ that ‘it must always be possible to show their application in experience’ [A310/B367]. And so, it may seem, they do not depend upon sensibility, though experience, to which sensibility contributes, does depend on them.

It may seem, then, that we must qualify our initial impression. The understanding does indeed depend upon sensibility for its empirical activity. But it does not seem to depend upon sensibility for its *a priori* form, that by which it makes experience possible. The understanding appears to have a potentiality which is not dependent upon sensibility after all.

But actually, this dependence, of experience on the pure concepts, could turn out equally to be a dependence of the pure concepts on experience. It all depends on whether the pure concepts are *per se*—that is, according to what they are—anything other than constitutive of the possibility of experience. That is, it depends on whether they would be anything apart from their making experience possible, anything apart from their role as the form of empirical concepts. If so, then they themselves would not depend on experience, and the understanding would have a potentiality which, in its nature, need have nothing to do with experience. Making experience possible would

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24 Note that I do not say: it depends on whether they are anything apart from their making experience possible. For they are, in some sense, something apart from their making experience possible: they can serve as mere *Gedankenformen* for the inexperientiable [A248/B305]. What I am suggesting is that they can do that only because they make experience possible. For an explicit suggestion by Kant to this effect, see his discussion of Hume on cause and effect in the second *Critique* [KpV 5:54].
just be, for them, an especially engaging transcendental hobby, and they would find something else
to do if it were not available to them. But if they are nothing if not what makes experience possible,
then they depend on experience for their constitutive purpose, and thus for their very being.

And that is exactly what Kant thinks. Indeed, he announces, as the central result of his Transcendental Analytic, the positive part of his consideration of our intellectual powers, ‘that
everything that the understanding draws out of itself, without borrowing it from experience, it
nevertheless has solely for the sake of its empirical exercise [Erfahrungsgebrauch]’ [A236/B295-6].
This is the principle I anticipated at the beginning of this section, which unifies every act and
determination of the understanding, empirical and non-empirical alike. The capacity to judge is the
capacity to judge empirically, and everything non-empirical belonging to it belongs to the form of
that capability, a capability whose exercise essentially involves sense. The understanding is, in a sense
deeper than that expressed by the sensible-significance condition, by its own nature dependent upon
sensibility.

This kind of observation is available to us only if we train our attention on capacities. For
capacities are capacities to do something; they are teleologically constituted. This means that what
they are for—their Behuf—is not additional to, but indeed constitutes, what they are. It is only in
appreciating this that we can see how the understanding can be essentially dependent on sensibility
even as much belongs to it which is not empirical.

3.2 Indirect dependence.

25 He similarly describes the ‘concepts and principles of the pure understanding’ as ‘destined for a merely empirical
exercise [zum bloßen Erfahrungsgebrauch bestimmen]’ [Prolegomena 4:313], and claims to have achieved, as no one did before,
an ‘insight into the nature of the categories’, [emphasis mine] ‘that these concepts serve only to determine empirical
judgments with respect to all the functions of judging...so as to procure universal validity for these judgments, and, by
means of it, to make judgments of experience in general possible’ [Prolegomena 4:324].
26 It may seem strange that Kant should secure the possibility of a priori cognition by discovering its purpose to be the
understanding’s empirical exercise. Indeed, he himself acknowledges the apparent strangeness of his ‘result’ [Bsix]. But it
isn’t really very strange at all, given that, as we saw in Chapter 2, our first indication of the actuality of a priori knowledge
is its necessity in experience.
Before I move on to consider sensibility’s dependence on the understanding, I want to return very briefly to the concepts of God, the immortal soul, and the world-whole. I cannot give a comprehensive reading of the transcendental ideas in this chapter, but it is important to see that what I have said does not make for their impossibility. Indeed, I think that Kant’s discussion of the ideas, and the positive use to which he puts them, corroborates what I have said about the understanding. But here I can only gesture to the reason why.

Some would object to the kind of reading I am proposing on the ground that these concepts, though not satisfying the sensible-significance condition, because no sensible object can be congruent to them, are concepts just as much as any concepts satisfying that condition, and that given the crucial roles they play in Kant’s theoretical philosophy, must have a kind of content. Of course, they do have a kind of content; they have marks. That is, we associate different predicates with each of them. (For example, omnipotent belongs to God but not to immortal soul.) Some might suppose that, once this is admitted, we are forced to think that having consistent marks is just what it is to be a concept, so that, just insofar as they are concepts, God, immortal soul, and perhaps even unicorn are on all fours with body, gold, and little leaf linden. The latter three satisfy the sensible-significance condition, to be sure; but you can think with all six of them alike, because none is self-

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27 Some readers may prefer to put the ideas entirely aside, as representations of reason, as opposed to the understanding, narrowly construed; this would limit my scope here to the relation between sensibility and the understanding, narrowly construed. I do not share this preference. The capacities under discussion here are sensibility, the power to represent an object in and through being affected by it, and the understanding, the power to judge on the basis of representations of sensibility. Both the understanding in the narrow sense and reason belong to this power. Reason is the power of syllogism, and ‘the syllogism is nothing but a judgment mediated by the subsumption of its condition under a universal rule’ [A307/B364]. Thus, it is a judgment mediated by the consciousness of its ground. If the understanding, as the power to judge, is essentially self-conscious, as Kant says it is in the Transcendental Deduction, then it includes the possibility of judgment mediated by the consciousness of its ground. Since that, however, is nothing other than the possibility of syllogism, that power includes reason.

28 The practical philosophy, in which God, freedom and immortality play essential roles, is yet another matter. In this study I am concerned only with concepts only as representations of the intellect, thus not with concepts as representations of the will. The latter require, in my view, a different treatment, and there is no reason to expect that representations essential to our practical consciousness work in the same way as those essential to our theoretical consciousness. There are, however, analogies: in both cases, these ideas serve as schemata for structural features of the exercises of the capacities in question (cognition in the theoretical case, desire in the practical). Still, the two cases are different, because theory and practice are different.
contradictory, and the only principle governing thinking as such is the principle of non-contradiction: ‘I can think whatever I like, as long as I do not contradict myself’ [Bxxvi n.].

But this line of argument presupposes that we must have a full and complete generic account of conceptuality (or, equivalently, of what it is to think), comprehensible independently of our understanding of any of the species of concepts (or thinking), and thus, in particular, independently of our understanding of empirical concepts (or empirical judgment). The result is an image of the understanding as ‘flat’, so that its nature can be fully characterized without reference to this or any other species of concept. But that image is distorting if, as Kant says, the empirical use of the understanding is that capacity’s sole Behuf. Thus even if concepts like God, soul and world-whole have their marks independently of the possibility of experience, they are determinations of the capacity to think, and that capacity is per se directed to its Erfahrungsgebrauch as its principal exercise. So these concepts must, if they are determinations of that capacity, be shown to contribute to its Erfahrungsgebrauch. This is why Kant, in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, insists that because the ideas ‘are given as problems for us by the nature of our reason’, which ‘cannot possibly contain original deceptions and semblances’, ‘they have their good and purposive vocation in regard to the natural predisposition of our reason’ [A669/B697]. The vocation he claims for them is to serve as the necessary schemata for a principle expressing the systematic perfection of the understanding’s empirical exercise [A671/B699ff.]. This is ‘the true but hidden end of the natural determination of our reason’, that ‘they may be aimed, not at concepts that are overreaching, but merely at the unbounded expansion of the use of concepts in experience’ [Prolegomena 4:333]. He never suggests that it might make sense for the ideas to sit about with nothing to do, as though, even if he had not found them some empirical work, they would still be there, all right, but with no function, rather like a transcendental appendix—the title of the relevant part of the Critique notwithstanding—or, worse still, that it might be that they have (irresolubly and irremediably)
deleterious effects on the understanding’s operation. Indeed, he writes that ‘there must nonetheless be agreement between what belongs to the nature of reason and what belongs to the nature of the understanding, and the former must contribute to the perfection of the latter and cannot possibly confuse it’ [Prolegomena 4:331; emphasis mine]. Thus, though they do not satisfy the sensible-significance condition, they, like the pure concepts, play a role in experience which is essential to them.  

4. Essentialism & knowledge a priori.

4.1 The task of the Deduction.

So much, then, for the understanding’s dependence on sensibility. What of sensibility’s dependence on the understanding? I think that unless sensibility plays its role in cognition by nature, Kant’s explanation of the categories as embodying a priori knowledge of sensible objects fails by his own lights. This means, in textual terms, that it is required for the success of the Transcendental Deduction that sensibility not just contribute to cognition, but be by its own nature directed to doing so.

The Deduction’s structure and argument are the topics of Chapter 4 and 5. Here I discuss Kant’s indication of its aims in introduction of the Deduction and §27, with which the Deduction concludes in the second edition, since it is in these passages that he announces and confirms his positive conception of knowledge a priori, that which, I am in the course of arguing, requires that sensibility not be indifferent in its nature to the understanding, and that which constitutes his basic  

[29] It is not clear, in any case, that the marks of the ideas are constituted independently of experience. Now, of course, what the ideas express is no possible object of experience. But that does not mean that the ideas are indifferent to experience. Rather, it might be more appropriate to say that they are too good for experience—or for its objects. This is suggested when Kant tells us that it is the mark of an idea that it expresses a perfection to which no particular object can manage to be congruent [A318-18/B374]. In accordance with this thought, when he says, in the so-called Stufenleiter passage, that an idea is a ‘concept…which goes beyond [übersteigt] the possibility of experience’ [A319-20/B376-77], we might say he means one which exceeds, which surpasses, ‘übersteigt’, any perfection possible in experience. That is, perhaps, why he doesn’t just say: ‘isn’t possibly exemplified; he says it ‘goes beyond’; it represents what is more than, in the sense of ‘more complete than’, ‘more perfected than’.  

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structural solution to the problem of pure reason. The aim of the Transcendental Deduction is to explain how the categories of the understanding can constitute knowledge \textit{a priori} of sensible objects. They constitute such knowledge just in case they are known to be, of necessity, applicable to objects just insofar as they, those objects, are sensible. Sensible objects are, for human beings, at least, by necessity spatiotemporal. So Kant’s strategy in the Deduction is to explain why the categories are, by necessity, applicable to objects of a spatiotemporal sensibility. He thinks that the explanation is not easy. Not as easy, that is, as the explanation of the necessary applicability of the concepts \textit{space} and \textit{time}.

\begin{quote}
In the case of the concepts of space and time, we were able above to make comprehensible with little effort how these, as \textit{a priori} cognitions, must nevertheless necessarily relate to objects, and made possible a synthetic cognition of them independent of all experience. For since an object can appear to us only by means of such a pure form of sensibility, i.e., be an object of empirical intuition, space and time are thus pure intuitions that contain \textit{a priori} the conditions of the possibility of objects as appearances, and the synthesis in them has objective validity. [A89-90/B121-2]
\end{quote}

Sensible things are all, by necessity, spatiotemporal; therefore, the concepts \textit{space} and \textit{time}, by necessity, apply to them. The categories, on the other hand, unlike the concepts \textit{space} and \textit{time}, ‘do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all’ [A89-90/B121-2]. So we cannot explain their necessary applicability to objects in the same way. Thus, Kant says, ‘a difficulty is revealed here that we did not encounter in the field of sensibility’ [A89-90/B121-2].

This is the point at which I can begin to make more explicit the interpretive attractions of essentialism in connection with the discussion of conceptualism and non-conceptualism. Some conceptualists take this claim—that ‘the categories…do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all’—to be merely didactic.\textsuperscript{30} That is to say, they think that this is given to us as a problem of the following form. Suppose objects are not given in intuition under the categories as conditions. Then the categories would not apply to objects as given in sensibility as

\textsuperscript{30} I owe the application of the term ‘didactic’ in this context to Grüne (2011: 475).
such, and thus could not embody knowledge \textit{a priori} of sensible objects. Thus, we must show that the supposition is false.\textsuperscript{31} They must say the same thing about Kant’s claim, in the next sentence, that ‘appearances can be given in intuition without functions of the understanding’ [A89-90/B121-2]. They say all this because they think that functions of the understanding are involved in particular acts of sensibility, and that this is required to account for the necessity of categorical applicability to objects given in those exercises. I think that this is wrong. I think that these claims are made in Kant’s own voice, and that they express his considered view.\textsuperscript{32} But it is important to be clear about what they mean.

When he says that ‘objects are given in intuition without having to be related to functions of the understanding’, he cannot mean that objects are given in intuition to which the categories of the understanding need not be applicable. That cannot be what he means because it would immediately foreclose the possibility of the Deduction’s success; the Deduction is supposed to explain why the categories are necessarily applicable to the deliverances of sensibility.\textsuperscript{33} I propose that what he means is just this: that objects are given in intuition without \textit{already being thought under} categories, or indeed any other concepts—any functions of the understanding. That is, an object’s being given in an act of sensibility does not depend on any particular act of categorical predication by the thinker.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} For example, Ginsborg (2008 p. 70) argues that the supposition seems true because Kant has not yet introduced the possibility of an imaginative synthesis in perception; that possibility exhibited, we shall be in a position to dismiss the supposition.

\textsuperscript{32} Thus on this point I agree with some non-conceptualists, like Allais (2015: 162-3), who notes that ‘can’ [können] in this passage appears in the indicative mood. In the context of corroborating evidence, this can be treated as a defeasible indication that this passage is not didactic.

\textsuperscript{33} Allais claims that ‘to show that everything given in intuition must fall under the categories…is not the same’ as to show ‘that everything given in intuition must fall under the categories in order to be presented to us in intuition’ (2015: 174). It is important that I am drawing a different distinction. I am saying that to show that everything given by sensibility must fall under the categories is not the same as to show that acts of categorical application are involved in sensibility’s exercises. For it is compatible with my denial that such acts are so involved that, nonetheless, ‘everything given in intuition must fall under the categories in order to be presented to us in intuition’. Indeed, I believe that, according to Kant, that is true.

\textsuperscript{34} It might be noted in this connection that when he introduces the term ‘function’ [\textit{Funktion}], he says that ‘by a function…I understand the unity of the action [der Handlung] of ordering different representations under a common one’ [A68/B92-3]. In agreement with one possible reading of this characterization, I am saying here that relation to functions
Therefore, Kant says, we cannot explain the necessary applicability of the categories by pointing to their already having been actually applied. We must find some other way to explain it. The explanation is ‘not so easily seen’ [A90/B122-3]. But that does not mean, as might be thought, that his point is skeptical. He is not entertaining the possibility that, after all, the categories are not necessarily applicable to sensible objects. For, again, that would foreclose the possibility of the Deduction’s success. Thus, though nothing I have discussed thus far is didactic, it is clear that the chaotic scenario imagined shortly thereafter is indeed put forth merely didactically:

For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity, and everything would then lie in such confusion that, e.g., in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish a rule of synthesis and thus correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would therefore be entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance. [A90/B122-3]

In this scenario, in which nothing sensibility presents us exhibits the order of cause and effect, the concept of cause is ‘entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance’—and that is precisely what the concept of cause is not, according to the conclusion of the Deduction. It is easy to read this passage as saying the same thing as the previous one. But that they are not, that this passage is didactic, where the previous one is not, is corroborated by the difference in verbal mood between these passages. In the previous one he says that ‘appearances can [können] be given in intuition without functions of understanding’. Whereas in the description of the chaotic scenario in this one, he says that ‘appearances could [können] after all be so constituted…that the concept cause would be [wäre] empty, nugatory, and without significance’.

4.2 The a priori as explanatory.

of the understanding should be understood as relation to acts of the understanding. But I should not wish to lean on this, given Kant’s habits of terminological fluidity.

35 This is suggested, for example, by Grüne (2011: 475-6). I agree with her that the passages have the same import, but they communicate that import in very different ways. See for further discussion Chapter 4, §2.2.2 below.
So, although concepts are not applied in any act of sensibility, nonetheless sensibility must, in its acts, present us with objects to which the categories are applicable. Now this can be heard in either an accidentalist or an essentialist register. According to the essentialist construal, our sensibility gives us, by necessity, objects to which the categories are applicable, and does so in order that the categories be applicable to them. This is just a specification of the idea of sensibility as being for the sake of the understanding; it is a Kantian specification because it incorporates Kant’s theory of the categories. On the other hand, according to the accidentalist construal, our sensibility gives us, by necessity, objects to which the categories are applicable, but in indifference to this applicability. Note that, while the essentialist interpretation explains why sensibility gives, by necessity, objects to which the categories are applicable, the accidentalist interpretation does not. An accidentalist might think there is no explanation, that it is just a matter of luck. Or an accidentalist might think that our

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36 Compare, from the Duisburg Nachlass:

Only because the relation that is posited in accordance with the conditions of intuition is assumed to be determinable in accordance with a rule is the appearance related to an object; otherwise it is merely an inner affection of the mind. [R4677 (1773-75); 17:567]

Kant does not say here that an act of determination in accordance with a rule is required for the relation of the appearance—here this appears to mean an empirical intuition (‘Empirical intuition is appearance’ [R4679 (1773-75); 17:663])—to an object. He says that unless the relation posited in accordance with the conditions of intuition is thus determinable, the appearance is not related to an object. This suggests that exercises of sensibility can indeed themselves have relation to an object, but need not, to have this, contain an act of determination. Consider also:

The synthesis contains the relation of appearances not in the perception but in the concept. That all relation in perception nevertheless presupposes a relation in the concept indicates that the mind contains in itself the universal and sufficient source of synthesis and that all appearances are exponible in it. [R4681 (1773-75); 17:667]

Once again, the word is ‘exponible’, not ‘exposed’.

37 To embrace this alternative is to think that, in Allais’s terms, though ‘everything given in intuition must fall under the categories’, it is not true that ‘everything given in intuition must fall under the categories in order to be presented to us in intuition’. According to this conception, sensibility, though it serves the understanding’s needs perfectly, is in its nature indifferent to the service it performs.

38 But is not this—that there is no explanation—Kant’s stated position? Consider, for example, this remark from a letter to Marcus Herz:

[W]e are absolutely unable to explain further how it is that a sensible intuition (such as space and time), the form of our sensibility, or such functions of the understanding as those out of which logic develops are possible; nor can we explain why it is that one form agrees with another in forming a possible cognition. [Briefwechsel (May 26, 1789) 11:51]

No. What Kant means by ‘explain’ in this passage is not what I mean. It is clear from the rest of the letter that what he regards as impossible are ‘judgments about [the] origin’ of the faculties, in which, he says, ‘we could name nothing beyond our divine creator; once they are given, however, we are fully able to explain their power of making a priori judgments’ [11:52]. What I am urging is precisely that the categorical determinability of all objects given by our sensibility
author has rigged us up just right. It is important to see, then, that the essentialist interpretation requires more than just that there be some explanation for sensibility’s delivering, by necessity, objects to which the categories are applicable. The explanation must be internal to the nature of sensibility; that is, to its essence. That is why the position is called ‘essentialism’.

I am going to argue is that the essentialist interpretation of the necessity of categorical applicability to sensible objects is true to Kant. (It will follow that the accidentalist reading is false; here, then, is the point at which I depart from those positions usually called ‘non-conceptualist’.)

Recall that this necessary applicability is the way in which the categories embody knowledge *a priori* of sensible objects. So towards our conclusion, we must now consider Kant’s doctrine of knowledge *a priori*. We already have in hand the negative characterization: knowledge ungrounded in the actual, which is to say knowledge ungrounded in any particular act, or any number of particular acts, of sensibility. And though we do not yet have in hand his positive conception, it is reasonable to suppose—and every reader of the *Critique* will admit—that though this conception is of a kind of knowledge ungrounded in acts of sensibility, nonetheless it will refer to knowledge that is grounded in such acts. For we know the applicability of metaphysical concepts in recognizing it as a condition on the possibility of empirical knowledge. This reflection yields the following conception of knowledge *a priori*: knowledge that objects are thus-and-so, grounded in knowledge that their being thus-and-so is a necessary condition of my having empirical knowledge of them.39

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39 By ‘knowledge *a priori*’ I do not, then, mean just any representation *a priori*. My attention, here as elsewhere in this essay, is restricted to the theoretical *a priori*, and only insofar as it amounts to knowledge.
But this, in turn, has at least two possible determinations. The first is the internal construal: knowledge *a priori* is knowledge that objects are thus-and-so in and through knowledge of my own cognitive requirements as the ground of their being thus-and-so, as their *ratio essendi*.\(^{40}\) This interpretation is the only one I discuss in this chapter which inherits the original sense of the term ‘*a priori*’—the sense it had before it meant ‘independent of experience’. In brief, the traditional notion of *a priori* knowledge is that of knowledge from grounds, from explanatory grounds.\(^{41}\) So, for example, if you could know the essence of gold, and the connection between this essence and gold’s surface-level properties, you could know that gold is malleable *a priori* by deducing that surface-level property from the essence. Just so, according to the internal construal of knowledge *a priori*, I know that things are thus-and-so in and through knowing that their being thus-and-so is a necessary condition of my knowing them by knowing my cognitive need to be the explanatory ground of their being thus and so.\(^{42}\)

The alternative is the external construal of knowledge *a priori*, which is simply the rejection of the internal construal. What exactly does this mean? Consider the following line of argument: ‘in order for anything to be knowable by me, by virtue of my cognitive constitution, it must be thus-and-so. Since my author is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, He will have ensured that things are thus-and-so. Therefore, things are thus and so’. That is an argument which begins with my cognitive need and arrives at a conclusion about the nature of things. But the direction of thought in the argument does not at the same time express the status of the first premise as ground (*ratio essendi*) of

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\(^{40}\) Thus, not just as their *ratio cognoscendi*, and not at all—‘for we are not here talking about…causality by means of the will’ [A92/B125]—their *ratio fiendi*. ‘The principle of becoming <*ratio fiendi*>, is cause (principle of becoming <*principium fiendi*>) is that which contains the ground of causality, [principle] of cognizing <*cognoscendi*> [contains the ground of] judgment, [principle] of being <*essendi*> the ground of possibility, and concerns the essence of things’ [Mrongovius 29:844].

\(^{41}\) See, for a classical source, the passages from Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* cited in Chapter 2, or, for an early modern rationalist example, Leibniz’s variation on this theme in *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas* (1684/1989: 26).

\(^{42}\) For a discussion of the interaction of the traditional and contemporary senses of ‘*a priori*’ in Kant’s philosophy, see Smit (2009).
the conclusion. Something else, a ‘third-thing’, as we might put it, is cited as the explanatory connection my knowledge of which justifies the inference.

4.3 The epigenesis of pure reason.

Which of these—the external, or the internal—expresses Kant’s position? His remarks in introducing the Deduction suggest the internal construal, which is then confirmed to be his position in §27. In introducing the Deduction he writes that

> [t]here 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. If it is the first, then this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible a priori. And this is the case with appearance in respect of that in it which belongs to sensation. But if it is the second, then since representation in itself (for we are not here talking about its causality by means of the will) does not produce its object as far as its existence is concerned, the representation is still determinant of the object a priori if it possible through it alone to cognize something as an object. [A92/B124-5]

The representations belonging to the understanding make their objects possible. They are the ground of the possibility of those objects and thereby ‘concern the essence of things’; they relate to those objects as rationes essendi. Like representations of the will, these representations are not posterior but prior to their objects. Unlike representations of the will, these are not their objects’ rationes fiendi: they are not the ground of their coming into being. They are the ground not of their existence but only of their essence.

In §27 of the B-Deduction, Kant says that ‘the categories contain the grounds of the possibility of all experience in general from the side of the understanding’ [B166]. In the A-Deduction he says that ‘the a priori conditions of possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience’ [A111]. Putting these together, we obtain this: the categories contain the grounds of the possibility of objects of experience. This is codified in the ‘supreme principle of all synthetic judgments’, according to which ‘[t]he conditions of the
possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgment a priori? [A158/B197].

But why does Kant embrace the internal conception? This is explained in the passage I discussed in Chapter 2 from §27 of the Deduction, and which I quote more fully here:

Now there are only two ways in which a necessary agreement of experience with the concepts of its objects can be thought: either the experience makes these concepts possible or these concepts make the experience possible. The first is not the case with the categories (nor with pure sensible intuition); for they are a priori concepts, hence independent of experience….Consequently only the second way remains (as it were a system of the epigenesis of pure reason): namely that the categories contain the grounds of the possibility of all experience in general from the side of the understanding. […]

If someone still wanted to propose a middle way between the only two, already named ways, namely, that the categories were neither self-thought a priori first principles of our cognition nor drawn from experience, but were rather subjective predispositions for thinking, implanted in us along with our existence by our author in such a way that their use would agree exactly with the laws of nature along which experience runs (a kind of preformation-system of pure reason), then… this would be decisive against the proposed middle way: that in such a case the categories would lack the necessity that is essential to their concept. For, e.g., the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining certain representations according to such a rule of relation. I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object (i.e., necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected; which is precisely what the skeptic wishes most… [B166-8]

This is Kant’s definitive embrace of the internal conception of knowledge a priori as expressed by the categories. Here, as we know in light of our reflections in Chapter 2, he explicitly entertains a version of the external option I introduced above, the version due to Crusius, according to whom ‘the categories are subjective predispositions for thinking, implanted in us along with our existence by our author in such a way that their use would agree exactly with the laws of nature along which experience runs’. Kant says that all this would mean is that I am so constituted that I cannot think
otherwise. This predisposition would not count as knowledge. In Chapter 2 I said that it would not count as knowledge because it is a predisposition to apply a concept which is explanatorily detached from that concept’s applicability. That is, neither my applications of the concept *hic et nunc*, nor my disposition to apply it, is owed to their applicability. Now, in reading more of the passage, we see, in this passage as in the passage from A92/B124-5, that for Kant there are ‘two ways’ in which our application of a concept might be explanatorily connected to its applicability.

The first way is the familiar empirical way, characteristic of finite knowledge. According to this way, as we saw earlier in this chapter, it is not just judgment—the act of the understanding—which is enabled by the presentation of actualities. I only determine my understanding as a capacity to judge a particular subject matter—I only, for example, come to be able to make judgments about cats—in response to the presentation of actualities. Both my judgments *hic et nunc* and my readiness to judge are explained, in the empirical case, by my recognition of the applicability of the concept which constitutes that readiness.

The second way concerns my capacity rather than my act. For the acts *hic et nunc* in which I apply such concepts as *substance* and *cause* are the same as those in which I apply *cat*. I apply *substance in concreto* as the concept *cat*, in recognition of its applicability to the actuality which enables my judgment. But unlike empirical concepts, which are determinations of my capacity, concepts like *substance* and *cause* belong to that capacity’s very form. They are not grounded in any object; rather, the form of every object is grounded in them. They presuppose no act *hic et nunc*, but make every such act possible by making possible its enabling condition: the experienciable object. And nothing short of this, Kant says, can count as knowledge *a priori*. No third thing—in particular, no divine author—but, in general, nothing external to the nature of the intellect can explain the necessary
applicability of its concepts to sensible objects. Rather, that necessary applicability, which, recall, is constitutive of knowledge *a priori*, must be internal to the nature of the intellect itself.\(^{43}\)

### 4.4 The capacity to know.

What is Kant’s reason for this insistence? Is his criterion of adequacy for an account of *a priori* knowledge, that it involve no ‘third-thing’ explanations, arbitrarily adopted?\(^{44}\) No. It is worth reflecting for a moment on the significance of the criterion, so that its philosophical attractions come more clearly into focus. According to a ‘third-thing’ explanation, there are two conditions whose satisfaction constitutes the possibility of knowledge *a priori*. The first, subjective condition is that the forms of our capacity be \(x, y,\) and \(z\). The second, objective condition is that the forms of objects be \(x, y,\) and \(z\). The subjective condition is satisfied by the capacity, the objective condition by something external to it. In rejecting any explanation of this structure, Kant is saying that it is one and the same thing, the capacity, which fulfills the subjective and objective conditions. Another way to put it, and, I think, a better way, is to say that in internalizing the satisfaction of the objective condition to that which satisfies the subjective condition, Kant rejects the distinction between these conditions. He tells us that the categorical form of the intellect and the categorical essence of nature

\(^{43}\) Land (2015) considers a form of accidentalism according to which (i) the understanding’s forms are neither grounded in, nor the grounds of, the essence of sensible objects; (ii) there is, for whatever reason, nonetheless some kind of similarity between these forms and the essence of sensible objects, so that the former ‘agree exactly’ with the latter; but (iii) the understanding would operate according to its forms even if they did not agree with the essence of sensible objects. This form of accidentalism is clearly ruled out by Kant’s argument in §27, but it is not the only such form. Consider that an accidentalist could accept (i) and (ii) but reject (iii): she might say that though the understanding’s forms are neither grounded in, nor grounds of, the essence of sensible objects, it is only when there is a match between the former and the latter that the understanding is ‘awakened into exercise’ [B1]. (This is structurally analogous to a position defended by Messina (2014: 24-5).) That Kant’s argument in §27 embodies a rejection of (i), and not just (iii), shows that his concern is not merely to secure a counterfactual condition: if the object were different, so would the forms be. He insists on a direct explanatory relationship between cognition and object.

\(^{44}\) It might be suggested that this condition follows from certain ‘semantic’ assumptions of Kant’s, namely that, as he puts it on a loose sheet, ‘if we would form concepts of [objects] independently from them this would have no relation at all to any object, thus it would be concepts without content’ [*Loses Blatt* B12 (1780s) 23:20]. But any proponent of a third-thing explanation would insist that categories do have a relation of sorts to their objects, one mediated by a third thing. Thus Kant’s semantics cannot be cited as a reason, intelligible independently of his arguments about cognition and knowledge, to resist a ‘third-thing’ explanation of knowledge *a priori*. The reason for this resistance will itself apply equally to the cases of meaning and knowledge.
are one and the same, not *per accidens* but *per se*: ‘[t]he principles of possible experience are, at the same time, universal laws of nature that can be cognized *a priori*’ [Proleg 4:306]; ‘the possibility of experience in general is therefore at the same time the universal law of nature’ [Proleg 4:319]; ‘nature is derived from the laws of the possibility of experience in general and is fully identical with the mere universal lawfulness of experience’ [Proleg 4:319; emphasis mine]. What this means, given that the *a priori* knowledge embodied by the categories is the form of empirical knowledge, is that the human cognitive capacity is itself, and by its own nature, the possibility of empirical knowledge. Thus, contrary to the thought of many of Kant’s predecessors, there is no gap between knowing my own mind and knowing the essence of nature, that knowing which constitutes my readiness to know the natural objects nature throws before me. We can know, not by grace of anything alien to our being, but simply by virtue of our human capability.45

In this connection we might return to Kant’s dismissal, which I discussed in Chapter 1, of the theological account of *a priori* knowledge—of which the ‘preformation system’ of Crusius is one kind—as a ‘*deus ex machina*’ in a letter to Marcus Herz [Briefwechsel (February 21, 1772) 10:131]. A *deus ex machina* is, as I said there, a contrived plot device which advances a narrative in an unnatural way: that is to say, in a way that cannot be accounted to the natures or characters of any of the subjects of the narrative. They cannot move the story forward on their own, and so something external does the job for them. So too, according to the theological account of knowledge *a priori*, the possibility of knowledge cannot be accounted to the nature of the human cognitive capacity alone. Something external to it must supply the condition of its providing for the possibility of knowledge. Thus read, Kant’s point against the *deus ex machina* is not just a point against theological accounts of the possibility of knowledge in particular. It is a point against any account which locates the possibility of knowledge as external to the human cognitive capacity. If knowledge is possible for us, this

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45 For a related discussion of §27 as expressing a conception of a rational capacity, see Kern (2017: 246-253).
possibility must be accounted to our own nature. We must be for ourselves our own light. The *Erkenntnisvermögen* must be, by nature, a capacity to know.

4.5 Sensibility, the subject of the intellect.

At this point, we can see that if Kant’s conception of *a priori* knowledge is what the internal construal captures, then the categories embody such knowledge only if I know them to be applicable to sensible objects because their being so applicable is a necessary condition of my having knowledge of those objects.

But what does this entail about sensibility, and its nature? Recall that the categories embody knowledge *a priori* only if they apply to sensible objects as such. And according to Kant, the form of appearances—sensible objects—is determined by that of sensibility. What is necessary in appearances is determined by the form of sensibility; what is contingent in them is determined by its matter, by sensation [A20/B34]. This he professes to show in the Transcendental Aesthetic, the part of the *Critique* dealing with sensibility as such. There we find Kant stating that it is our subjective constitution—and he means there the constitution of our sensibility, for that is the topic in the context of the passage—is what determines the form of appearance:

>[A]s soon as we take away our subjective constitution, the represented object with the properties that sensible intuition attributes to it is nowhere to be encountered, nor can it be encountered, for it is just this subjective constitution that determines its form as appearance. [A44/B62]46

So the necessary applicability of the categories to sensible objects is grounded in the nature of sensibility. But, equally, on pain of a third-thing explanation, it is grounded in nothing other than the cognitive need of the intellect. We resolve this apparent tension in concluding that sensibility is nothing other than that which, *per se*, grounds the form of appearance in such a way as to satisfy the

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46 This is what is meant also by the statement that ‘[s]ensibility…is that upon which the possibility of outer appearances rests’ [*Prolegomena* 4:287]. It is the ground of their possibility (essence), not of their actuality (existence).
cognitive need of the intellect. It is nothing alien to the intellect, something external to its being, which the intellect begs to satisfy its need; it is, instead, the intellect’s own. Only so can it ground a realm of nature in such a way as allows the intellect to ground that realm itself. Thus, it belongs to the nature of sensibility that its objects are categorically determinable because their being so determinable is a necessary condition of my having knowledge of those objects.47

5. Conclusion.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that the discussion of Kantian conceptualism has focused on the question of whether particular concepts are immanently involved in particular acts of sensibility. And I suggested that we ask, instead, not immediately about acts, but about the capacities themselves. I left it relatively indeterminate why I was saying this, but now, I hope, we can appreciate the point better. The teleological unity of sensibility and understanding for which I have argued is impossible to make out if we speak only of the immanent involvement of one particular in another. For the dependence of sense on intellect I have identified is not a dependence of any act of sense on any act or determination of intellect. It is a dependence, to revert to Aquinas’s terms, not in the order of generation but in the order of nature. And if the capacities are lost to us, the order of nature will be too.

47 It might be thought that the internal conception of knowledge a priori does not demand that sensibility be, by nature, oriented towards the understanding’s cognitive need: we should imagine rather that the categories apply to ‘everything that may ever come before our senses’ [B160] because the understanding determines sensibility, and thus its objects, so as to make them so. Thus, sensible objects are not categorically determinable qua sensible; nor, however, is their categorical determinability an accident. They are categorically determinable because the understanding has, as it were, appropriated sensibility for its own end.

Though this is, in my view, a misleading way to describe the relationship between the capacities—my reasons for this will emerge over the course of the next two chapters, and especially in Chapter 5—it should be noted that there is a kind of essentialism which could embrace it, an essentialism according to which, in determining sensibility, the understanding transforms it: that is, makes it something other than it was before. The ‘product’ of this transformation—the idiom of production will be another topic in the next two chapters—would be, according to the essentialism I am imagining, the topic of the essentialist thesis.
This is, I think, proof enough that a lot depends, even before we get into the details, on our basic image of the shape of the Kantian mind. And in particular, if I am right, among the things dependent on this image is the positive accomplishment of the first *Critique*. Kant’s explanation of how knowledge is possible *a priori*, an explanation which, as we have seen, identifies the human cognitive capacity as, in itself and by nature, the possibility of knowledge. In short, then, what rides on the shape of the Kantian mind is nothing less than the internality of knowledge to human capability. Knowledge is no accident because cognition is no heap. Just insofar as they are two, sense and intellect are one.

For the cognitive capacity to be *per se* the possibility of knowledge requires that its form, and thus the categories, be the ground of that of the sensible object as such. This is, as I have said, Kant’s basic structural solution to the problem of pure reason. At this point, however, we encounter an aspect of Kant’s position heretofore, in this study, unacknowledged. And that is that while the form of sensible objects is owed to the understanding, not everything about that form is so owed. Space and time, the forms of our sensibility, cannot be accounted to our need for an empirically knowable object, because there is, according to Kant, nothing in the mere concept of such an object—equivalently, nothing in the concept of finite knowledge—which demands that it be spatiotemporal [A27/B43; B145-6]. In investigating the complexity introduced by this aspect of his position over the remainder of the study, we shall appreciate that it is no mere complication. It determines not just the manner of our relation to our sensibility, the lower in us, but the manner of our relation to the understanding, the higher. It determines the particular way in which sense and intellect are two, and thereby the way in which they are one.
Chapter 4
The Form of Finitude

1. Introductory.

Kant’s Transcendental Deduction is, by his own assessment, the most important investigation ‘for getting to the bottom of that faculty we call the understanding’, and also the investigation that cost him ‘the most, but I hope not unrewarded, effort’ [Axvi]. There is—there could hardly fail to be—a broad consensus as to the Deduction’s themes: a cursory flip through its pages reveals that it concerns apperception, thought, cognition, judgment, unity, synthesis, experience, and, of course, the categories.¹ But there is a venerable record of disagreement about the argumentative structure of the Deduction and, in particular, about the way in which these themes make their appearance in it. Two of the most important problems about its interpretation are what we might call the problem of the steps and the problem of the premises:

(i) The problem of the steps: how do the two parts of the B-Deduction—the first comprehending §§15-20, the second §§21-27—relate to one another?² Does the second generalize the more restricted conclusion of the first? Does the second prove the antecedent of the first’s conclusion, so as thereby to prove its consequent? Does the second offer an explanation (rather than a justification) for the conclusion of the first? Or is the second, contrary to all of these suggestions, incidental and inessential?

(ii) The problem of the premises: does the B-Deduction assume that empirical cognition is possible or actual? Does it assume merely that we are possessed of a power to attribute to ourselves our own mental states? Does it contain two arguments, one from each of these premises?

There are other problems which must be faced by any interpreter of the Deduction. But these are problems under which others naturally fall. The answer given to these informs an interpretation’s every particular. And so they serve both as a useful point of entry to, and as useful standards for assessment of, readings of the Deduction.

¹ I call the Transcendental Deduction ‘the Deduction’ except where further specification is required.
² My focus here is on the B-Deduction, though I refer occasionally to the A-Deduction.
1.1 The unity of the cognitive capacity.

In this and the next chapter I present and defend a unified reading of the Deduction thematically continuous with what I have said in previous chapters and responsive to these problems. According to this reading, the Deduction exhibits the unity of the human cognitive capacity [Erkenntnisvermögen], one of the three capacities of the human mind [Gemüt], of which the remaining two are the desiderative capacity [Begehrensvermögen] and feeling of pleasure and displeasure [Gefühl der Lust und Unlust]. Like these other two, the cognitive capacity is, as I emphasized in Chapter 3, divided into a higher and a lower part, in this case understanding [Verstand] and sensibility [Sinnlichkeit], respectively, the ‘two stems’ of cognition [A15/B29]. It is distinguished from the other capacities according to its principal act: according, that is, to what it is a capacity to do. While the cognitive capacity relates itself ‘merely to the object and the unity of the consciousness of it’, the desiderative capacity’s relation to the object is ‘at the same time the cause of the actuality [Wirklichkeit] of this object’ [20:206]. In saying this Kant recovers the traditional distinction, rejected by the Wolffian school, between appetite and apprehension. Aquinas, for example, says that ‘the operation of an appetitive power is more like movement’ than that of an apprehensive power because ‘the operation of an apprehensive power is completed when the things apprehended are within that which apprehends’ [Summa Theologica 1a 81.1].

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3 For a contemporary discussion of the character of capacities, see Fix (2020: 36-38, 41-42).
4 For a contemporary discussion of this distinction, and of its difference from the distinction between belief and desire in terms of ‘direction-of-fit’, see Fix (2018). For discussion of the three distinct rational capacities of which Kant writes, see Gorodeisky (2019).
5 Kant alludes to Wolff as follows:

To be sure, philosophers who otherwise deserve nothing but praise for the thoroughness of their way of thinking have sought to explain this disjunction as merely illusory and to reduce all faculties to the mere faculty of cognition. But it can be easily demonstrated, and has already been understood for some time, that this attempt to bring unity into the multiplicity of faculties, although undertaken in a genuinely philosophical spirit, is futile. [EE-KU 20:206]

6 Kant’s notion of a desiderative capacity is not, however, quite the same as Aquinas’s notion of an appetitive power, since according to Aquinas ‘the operation of an appetitive power is completed when that which has the appetite is inclined toward the object of its appetite’ [Summa Theologica 1a 81.1] (at which point a locomotive power takes over), whereas for Kant the operation of a desiderative capacity is completed only when its representation is actualized.
I argued in Chapter 3 that sensibility and the understanding constitute an essential unity—the unity that is the *Erkenntnisvermögen*—lest Kant’s image of the mind be impotent to support his positive conception of knowledge *a priori*. Since knowledge *a priori* is possible, we know already that they constitute such a unity. But we have not yet considered the exhibition of the internal connection of the forms of the human understanding to those of human sensibility. Such an exhibition would explain why our, human *a priori* knowledge is captured by the particular categories of Kant’s table, including *substance* and *cause*. It would thus apply the basic structural conception of *a priori* knowledge, that which necessitates the unity of the cognitive capacity, to the human case, to the case of our cognitive capacity. This is the task of the Deduction, whose prosecution I describe over the course of this and the next chapter.

Since the nature of a capacity is defined by what it is a capacity to do, and since the character of a thing’s unity depends on its nature, what it means to exhibit the unity of a capacity is determined by what it is a capacity to do. If the Transcendental Deduction exhibits the unity of the cognitive capacity, then the character of the Deduction will be everywhere informed by what this capacity is a capacity to do: ‘to relate itself merely to the object and the unity of the consciousness of it’. I shall suggest that this self-relating to the object and to the unity of consciousness of it is nothing other than self-conscious empirical judgment, and, indeed, self-consciously objective judgment, and, indeed, self-consciously true judgment. Not every empirical judgment I make is true, but making self-consciously true empirical judgments is something of which I am capable. And the name of that capacity is ‘*Erkenntnisvermögen*’.

This suggestion immediately generates an answer to the problem of the premises. For the Deduction’s topic is, according to this suggestion, the unity of this capacity, thus, the relation in it.

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7 This is continuous with my emphasis in Chapter 3 on Kant’s claim that ‘everything the understanding draws out of itself, without borrowing it from experience, it nevertheless has solely for the sake of its empirical exercise [*Erfahrungsgebrauch*]’ [A236/B295-6].
of sensibility to the understanding. Each of these elements is in the picture \textit{ab initio}; we do not begin
with, for example, a concept of self-consciousness as the capacity to ascribe to ourselves our own
mental states, generically construed, and argue that such a capacity is possible only alongside an
\textit{Erkenntnisvermögen}. I shall explain in §2.2 below why we should suppose, even before we turn to the
text of the Deduction, that this is right.

To suggest that the Deduction’s theme is the unity of the cognitive capacity is not yet, however, to generate an answer to the problem of the steps. For that, and, indeed, to understand
why an exhibition of this unity is necessary in the first place, we must introduce a third problem:
that of the relation of the B-Deduction as a whole to an important chapter which precedes it.

1.2 The setting of the deduction; its relation to the \textit{Leitfaden}.

In the First Chapter of the Analytic of Concepts, which I shall call ‘the \textit{Leitfaden}’ (‘guiding thread’),
a system of categories is developed on the basis of a corresponding system of functions of unity in
a judgment. Kant says that he has discovered the latter system in examining manuals of logic:
‘[h]ere lay before me now, already finished though not yet wholly free of defects, the work of the
logicians, through which I was put in the position to present a complete table of pure functions of
the understanding, which were however undetermined with respect to every object’ [\textit{Prolegomena}
4:323]. For this he has been reprimanded. His ‘Metaphysical Deduction’ has been called a merely
empirical, or adventitious, or psychological, derivation. Take, for example, this spirited remark of
Hegel’s:

\begin{quote}
[T]o take up again the plurality of categories in some way or other as something we
simply come upon, for example, in judgments, and then to continue to put up with
them in that form, is in fact to be regarded as a disgrace to science. Where is the
understanding supposed to be capable of demonstrating necessity if it is incapable of
demonstrating the pure necessity it has within itself? [\textit{Phenomenology of Spirit} §235]^{8}
\end{quote}

\footnote{In citing the \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit} I indicate the paragraph number as introduced by A.V. Miller in his translation, though the translation from which I quote is that of Terry Pinkard.}
Perhaps Kant’s philosophy is a disgrace to science sensu Hegel—indeed, I expect that it is—but we can acquit Kant of the particular charge Hegel levels here. Kant does not, I wish to urge, ‘continue to put up with’ the categories as ‘something we simply come upon’. The Leitfaden stands to the human understanding as the Transcendental Aesthetic does to human sensibility: it considers it in detachment [Absonderung] from the other part of the human cognitive capacity.9 Or, rather, it allows the understanding to consider itself in isolation from sensibility. Because the understanding is a self-conscious capacity, it is able, in such a consideration, to thematize the form of its activity, which is so determined as indicated in the table of functions of unity in a judgment. But precisely because it ignores its essential relation to sensibility in this elaboration, it does not, in the Leitfaden, understand this form. To do that it must explicate its form as the necessary form of its empirical exercise, its principal actualization under conditions of operation owing to sensibility, since its empirical exercise is the that-towards-which of ‘everything [it] draws out of itself’ [A236/B295-6]. Thus the Deduction of the categories—their transcendental Deduction—is an explication of their necessity for an exercise of the understanding grounded in a sensibly given object.10 The human understanding is essentially united to a human sensibility: one whose forms are space and time. The categories are, therefore, transcendently explicated as the forms by which the spatiotemporal is

9 ‘Absonderung’ is usually translated by ‘isolation’, but I prefer ‘detachment’ for its anatomical connotations.
10 The Leitfaden is sometimes read as purporting to show that the categories belong to the understanding irrespective of whether they have ‘objective validity’: that is, irrespective of whether they are applicable to the objects given by human sensibility as such. This is, perhaps, a natural way of reading Kant’s formula describing the transcendental Deduction as showing ‘how subjective conditions of thinking should have objective validity’ [A89-90/B122]. According to this reading, however, to establish the origin of the categories (in the understanding) and to exhibit their validity are two distinct enterprises. And Kant repeatedly identifies these enterprises, or depicts the description of their origin as itself contained in the exhibition of their validity (e.g., at A128, or when he describes a transcendental deduction as a ‘birth certificate’ [Geburtsbrief] [A86/B119]). This kind of identification does not make sense if Kant’s transcendental method is regarded as permitting a distinction between a psychological description of the human mind, on the one hand, and an investigation of what norms govern it and what it is capable of, on the other. Sensibility and the understanding are capacities, which are constituted by what they are capacities to do. No full and complete description of their structure can be given which is not unified by the idea of their principal acts, what belong to them as their acts most of all. Thus, once we explain why the Leitfaden-categories belong to the human understanding, no work remains to be done, since the understanding is identified as a capacity for empirical knowledge. This means that the Leitfaden cannot be that explanation. That explanation is, rather, the Deduction itself.
judgeable. That is their Deduction, and that is why the Deduction is the exhibition of the unity of
the human cognitive capacity: the understanding must be reminded of its essential connection to a
spatiotemporal sensibility for it to understand its own form.¹¹

Independently of space and time, no transcendental explication of the categories is possible.
This is why the Leitfaden does not provide one; it is not supposed to. It is a mere guiding thread.¹²
Kant does not ‘continue to put up’ with the categories in ‘the form’ of the Leitfaden. For the ‘pure
necessity’ which the understanding ‘has within itself’ is not a necessity it has within itself,
considered in detachment from spatiotemporal sensibility. Here we find expressed the depths of
our finitude. We do not ‘simply come upon’ the categories, but we do ‘simply come upon’ space
and time. Just as empirical concepts are grounded in empirical intuitions, so too a priori concepts are
grounded in a priori intuitions. Even in the structure of our own cognitive capacity, we find a
givenness, a facticity: our understanding of our understanding must assume something—space and
time—which belongs to our given character.¹³

¹¹ This also means that, since everything the understanding draws out of itself is for the sake of its Erfahrungsgebräuch, the logical forms of judgment, no less than the categories, are unexplained except in their connection to sensibility. This means that general logic depends, for its intelligibility as logic—the science of the form of thought—on transcendental logic. In this I agree with Longuenesse (1998: 76). As she puts it, ‘for Kant, transcendental philosophy alone can tell us “what it is to think”’ (1998: 75). As Sebastian Rödl puts it, ‘the intellect is not the complete ground of its own possibility’ (2006: 359).

¹² Many commentators expect more from the Leitfaden than is promised by its title. An exception is Longuenesse:

Before attempting his transcendental deduction of the categories, Kant asserts that the “pure concepts of the understanding” depend on the same “laws of the understanding” as the logical forms of judgment do. This assertion...is expounded before being justified and fully explained. This is also why the parallelism of the categories and the logical forms of judgment is asserted in the metaphysical deduction only as a “guiding thread” or a “clue” (Leitfaden). It will be justified as a genuine identity of the “function of the understanding” at work in the synthesis of the sensible and in the logical forms of judgment only after the transcendental deduction of the categories has been completed. (1998: 29)

I differ from Longuenesse, however, in that I do not think that the (transcendental) Deduction need be read as playing a justificatory role (at least if it makes sense in this context to speak of justification without explanation, as Kant appears to believe); for that, the Leitfaden is sufficient, as ratio cognoscendi of the categories. The Deduction may be read as playing only an explanatory role, as elaborating their ratio essendi.

¹³ I certainly do not mean to suggest that this answer would satisfy Hegel. I mean to suggest only that his objection to the manner of the derivation of the categories in the Leitfaden adds nothing to his objection to Kant’s doctrine of the brute facticity of space and time. For, as I am arguing, the Leitfaden-categories are ultimately explicable only in terms of space and time. If we add to this that they partake of no facticity but that which they inherit from human sensibility—a position which I defend explicitly in Chapter 5 (§3.12)—then it is sensibility alone which is, originally, to blame for the understanding’s self-opacity.
1.3 The cognitive capacity as finite knowledge in general.

With this in hand, let us return to the problem of the steps. Why should an exhibition of the unity of the cognitive capacity be divided in two? I shall argue that the first part thematizes the structure of empirical knowledge in general, human or otherwise: thus, it unfolds the form of finitude, of finite knowledge, as such, in explicit contradistinction to infinite knowledge. This means that it does not, in its transcendental significance, concern the categories presented in the *Leitfaden*, but merely the notion of a system of categories in general. The first part is, in particular, the transcendental explication of the notion of a category. It lays the foundation for the second part by identifying the structural position which the *Leitfaden*-categories must be seen to occupy when we determine sensibility as spatiotemporal. Part 1 gives us the ultimate transcendental characterization of a category in general by showing how the category belongs to the form of finitude.

This chapter is structured as follows. I begin with a clarification and elaboration of the I defend, contrasting it with those defended by some other commentators (§2), by way of a discussion of the problems of the steps and of the premises. In this section I argue that the conclusion of Part 1, announced in §20, is categorical and thus unconditioned: intuitive manifolds admit of synthesis in the mode of the categories. I also in this section present a reading of the

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14 This does not mean that no conclusion can be drawn, after Part 1 alone, concerning the *Leitfaden*-categories. But it is not a conclusion transcendentally drawn, as I explain below.
15 Thus space and time return in Part 2 not because, as Paul Guyer claims, ‘all is not well with [Kant’s] concept of apperception’ (which belongs to the elucidation of finite knowledge in Part 1), so that he must ‘look to the unity of space and time as less controversial ground of the proof of the universal objective validity of the categories’ (1987: 154). The concept of finite knowledge cannot itself yield any particular system of categories, and no such system is at issue in Part 1. Although I agree with Guyer that the move from Part 1 to 2 is a move from genus to species (or, as he puts it, from ‘abstract’ to ‘concrete’ (2010: 143-4), I do not regard this as borne of an attempt to overcome a deficiency. Further, Guyer’s reconstruction, on Kant’s behalf, of what he reads as an in itself failed argument is, in my view, utterly foreign to the text. He presents some, but not all, of the *Leitfaden*-categories as necessary for self-ascriptions, and the rest as necessary for the spatiotemporally informed kind of apperception we have (2010: 124). It is plain that in no part of the Deduction is Kant concerned with some categories and not others; he is concerned either with the category in general (in Part 1) or with the system of the *Leitfaden*-categories as a whole (in Part 2). Moreover, as I argue in §2.2.1 and §3.2, the self-consciousness at issue in Part 1 is not a generic power of self-ascription. A reconstruction would be necessary if Guyer were right about Kant’s own exposition, but he is not. See also §4 below.
statement of the problem of the Deduction in §13. I then present my own reading of Part 1 as an analytic of finitude, exhibiting the availability of a natural reading of §§15-19 which permits us to hold to the categorical conclusion of §20 and yet understand that Part 2 is required (§3). I conclude by discussing some accusations (targeting Kant, to the effect that he has committed gratuitous blunders) and hermeneutic complications (thought necessary to save Kant from suchlike accusations) introduced by commentators who do not read Part 1 in this way (§4).

I should note before I begin that this chapter does not articulate all of the principal aspects of this approach to the Deduction. In particular, I prescind entirely from the distinction between the original act of the understanding and acts of empirical judgment *hic et nunc*, and, correlative, from the distinction between the unity of the thinker in her capacity as thinker and the unity of the thinker in an act of thought. This distinction will figure prominently in Chapter 5.

2. The two problems.

2.1 The problem of the steps.

2.1.1 Categorical vs. hypothetical.

The B-Deduction has, as I have said, two parts, the first comprehending §§15-20, the second §§21-27, of the first *Critique’s* second edition. The problem of the steps is grounded in this, that the conclusion of the second part—roughly, that spatiotemporal intuitive manifolds admit of being synthesized according to the categories—appears to follow immediately from the first—roughly, that intuitive manifolds in general admit of being synthesized according to the categories. If the first part is successful, it seems that there is no work—certainly not six sections’ worth—left to the second.
A wide variety of solutions to this problem have been offered. According to Henry Allison, to take a prominent example of a reading of the Deduction’s structure as that of a hypothetical syllogism, the first part of the Deduction shows that any objective representation—any representation having relation to an object—necessarily stands under the categories. But this does not entail that the categories are \textit{a priori} valid for all, or indeed for any, objects of our senses. For our forms of intuition, space and time, could be so constituted that no objective representation of our objects were possible. This, according to Allison, is a ‘specter’ which it is the goal of the second part of the Deduction to ‘remove’ (2015: 328), and which is, he thinks, announced in §13 of the \textit{Critique}, in a passage I discussed briefly in Chapter 3:

For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity, and everything would then lie in such confusion that, e.g., in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish a rule of synthesis and thus correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would therefore be entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance. [A90/B123]

Thus, according to Allison, Part 1 shows that if a representation has relation to an object, it stands under the categories, Part 2 that spatiotemporal intuitions have relation to an object.\footnote{Some commentators are happy to embrace initial appearances and declare the second part argumentatively redundant. Kemp Smith, for example, calls Part 2 ‘supplementary rather than essential’ (1923: 287). This conclusion can seem available only to a reader (like Kemp Smith) with an overwhelming preference for the \textit{A}-Deduction, whose structure is rather different.}

Béatrice Longuenesse argues on the contrary that in Part 1, Kant establishes that ‘empirical objects can be reflected under the categories’ (1998: 243), whereas in Part 2 he shows how it is that objects conform to the logical forms even in advance of the applicability of those forms to them in

\footnote{Dieter Henrich, on the other hand, argues that while Part 1 shows that if intuition is unified, then it is subject to the categories, Part 2 shows that our intuitions are unified insofar as they are contained in one intuition of space and time. So the antecedent is discharged and the conditional is proved (1969). Allison complains that Henrich’s position suggests, ‘counterintuitively’, that Part 1 shows only that the categories are valid for objects of \textit{some} intuitions, a restricted conclusion which is generalized by Part 2 (2015: 328). But insofar as both depict the Deduction as a hypothetical syllogism, Allison’s and Henrich’s position have the same structure. Both Allison and Henrich say that Part 1 shows that the categories are \textit{a priori} valid for any intuition satisfying such-and-such a description: in Henrich’s case, a unified intuition; in Allison’s case, and less determinately, an apperceptible intuition. Both say that Part 2 assures us that human intuitions satisfy the description in question. Both think that, at the end of Part 1, we do not know whether the ‘specter’ is exorcized; we know only what it would take to exorcize it.}

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judgments. He explains in Part 2 how the understanding ‘affects’ sensibility in order to ensure that is of a form conducive to judgment (1998: 70), so that ‘appearances are in themselves, as objects of empirical intuition, immediately in accordance with the categories, by virtue of the spatiotemporal forms in which they are given’ (1998: 243). Part 1 shows that intuitions are categorically determinable, and Part 2 shows how the understanding makes them so. The ‘specter’ does not remain to be exorcized in Part 2, whose aims are explanatory.\(^{18}\)

I agree with Longuenesse that no ‘specter’ remains to be ‘removed’ in Part 2. Indeed, I think that the reading of the Deduction as a hypothetical syllogism is strongly discouraged by §20. The title of the last section of Part 1, §20, reads as follows: ‘All sensible intuitions stand under the categories, as conditions under which alone their manifold can come together in one consciousness’ [B143]. I read this title as concerning acts of sensibility as such. What it says about those acts is that they stand under categories. Now, it may be suggested that the material following the comma qualifies this claim: thus, that it means that acts of sensibility stand under the categories \(\textit{if}\) they are acts whose manifold can come together in one consciousness. I read this material not as a qualification but as an explicative elaboration: acts of sensibility as such stand under the categories \(\textit{because}\) only under this condition can their manifold come together in one consciousness. This is corroborated by the first sentence of the body of §20: ‘The manifold that is given in a sensible intuition necessarily belongs under the original synthetic unity of apperception, \(\textit{since}\) through this alone is the \textit{unity} of the intuition possible’ [B143; italics mine].\(^{19}\) This is much less easily read as

\(^{18}\) Allison calls the move from Part 1 to 2, on Longuenesse’s reading, regressive—a movement from conditioned to condition—and his own progressive (2000: 36). The reading I develop is, as we shall see, neither. It says that Part 1 unfolds the structure whose determination as human will take place in Part 2. For more discussion see Chapter 5, §4.2.1.

\(^{19}\) Allison reads this as stating ‘that it is alone through belonging under the original synthetic unity of apperception that the unity of intuition is possible’ (2015: 370). Thus, he reads it as saying that the unity of an intuition is possible \(\textit{only if}\) its manifold stands under the original synthetic unity of apperception. Similarly, Dennis Schulting reads this as stating that ‘unity of intuition is possible only on condition of the subsumption of the manifold of representations in any sensible intuition that requires a discursive running through, under the unity of apperception’ (2019: 296). But what
qualified. Kant concludes that ‘the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under categories’ [B143]. He does not say that the manifold stands under categories in that case in which a unified intuition is possible. He says that because the unification of an intuitive manifold demands categorical applicability, intuitive manifolds stand under the categories. The conclusion of Part 1 is, then, that intuitive manifolds stand under categories.

It is understandable that commentators should resist the categorical character of this conclusion, since it makes it difficult to see why Part 1 does not conclude the Deduction. I wish to suggest, however, that we can hold to this character. We can read Part 1 of the Deduction as concerning the categorical determinability of intuitions in general, and Part 2 as concerning the categorical determinability of spatiotemporal intuitions specifically. We can do this and yet not read Kant as making an immediate inference from genus to species. We can do this by reading Part 1 as an analytic of finitude in general, human or otherwise, whose theme is thereby not the applicability of the system of the Leitfaden-categories but rather the notion of a category in general. Having identified the position of the category in the form of finitude, Kant may then, in Part 2, exhibit the system of the Leitfaden-categories as belonging to that position when the finite knower’s forms of intuition are space and time. Part 1’s conclusion is categorical, as it appears, and the movement from 1 to 2 is a movement from genus to species, as it appears. But this movement is not an inference, hence not a trivial one. Part 1 elucidates the structural position of a category in finite knowledge, and Part 2 places the Leitfaden-categories in that position in human knowledge.

2.2.2 Exorcism vs. exhibition

I have said that, contrary to the reading of the Deduction as a hypothetical syllogism, the reading I favor has it that no specter of chaos, such as is imagined in §13, remains to be exorcized in Part 2. Kant says is that the manifold does, and indeed does necessarily stand under this unity, because that is what is required for the possibility of its unity.
This may seem to suggest that we should regard such exorcism as accomplished in Part 1. Before we return to the main line of interpretation, I wish to say, reprising here a theme of Chapter 3, why I think that this too is wrong. The spectral passage describes a scenario in which no object—none whatever—given by sensibility is determinable by the concept of cause and effect. When generalized, this scenario is one in which sensibility presents no object determinable by any category. Note that to show that the scenario is not our own requires only that we show only that, for each category, some object is determinable by it. This is what we do to show that an empirical concept has reality. This is just to say that we do not, in exhibiting the reality of a concept in this way, exhibit the concept itself as a category, as a concept with universal and necessary application to sensible objects: ‘experiences cannot be cited in its proof, for what has to be established is the objective validity of a concept that is \textit{a priori}’ [A90/B122].\textsuperscript{20} The concept \textit{cat} is objectively real, but not everything we can know is a cat or even implicated in felinity. A transcendental deduction is, on the contrary, intended to exhibit the categories \textit{as categories}: to show that they have universal and necessary application to sensible objects.

Commentators who read the spectral passage as enunciating the problem of the Deduction thus read it as demanding not that Kant show that the spectral scenario is not our own but that he furnish an \textit{a priori} guarantee that no such specter could arise.\textsuperscript{21} Since the \textit{a priori} has the marks of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{20} ‘
  \textit{denn Erfahrungen kann man nicht zum Beweise anführen, weil die objektive Gültigkeit dieses Begriffs a priori muß dargetan werden könnte}'. I have provided Kemp Smith’s translation because it brings out more clearly than Guyer & Wood’s that it is the \textit{a priori} status of the concept that makes an empirical demonstration inapt.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Sometimes, however, it is difficult to understand what commentators have in mind by the idea of the removal of the specter. This—an \textit{a priori} guarantee that the specter could not arise—is the best sense I can make of the notion. Sometimes a different sense is suggested, as by Wolff:
  \textit{The crux of the argument is the assertion that appearances could be given in such a way that the pure concepts would find no application to them. In the words of William James, we would experience a “buzzing, blooming confusion.” Hence, some additional proof is needed that these appearances actually do conform to the pure concepts}. (1963: 93-4)
  Wolff says that, if appearances did not conform to the pure concepts, we would experience a “buzzing, blooming confusion”, and concludes that we need some additional proof that they actually do conform to the pure concepts. But that is true only if our actual situation might—this ‘might’ is epistemic, in the contemporary idiom—itself be (unbeknownst to us?) a “buzzing, blooming confusion”.
\end{itemize}
universality and necessity, the only way to show *a priori* that the categories (must) find some application to the sensible is to show that they apply to the sensible with universality and necessity. That is how the project of the Deduction is said to be necessitated by the passage.

On this reading, to explain why *substance*, *cause* and the like are applicable to objects of our senses as such is not the ultimate end of the Deduction. It is just that we must resort to this method to show that they are applicable to *anything, if* we are to furnish an *a priori* guarantee that the spectral scenario cannot arise. There are two problems with this reading. First, as I explain below, the explanation of why the *Leitfaden*-categories are applicable to our senses as such is itself characterized by Kant as the aim of the Deduction, and not merely as the means to the *a priori* guarantee of the impossibility of the spectral scenario. Secondly, to the extent to which I understand what such an *a priori* guarantee would have to be, I think it would be impossible to give. If the understanding did not find anything sensible to be ‘in accord with the conditions of its unity’, then it could not bring to unity anything given in sensibility. That is to say that the condition of the understanding’s operation would not be met; it could not operate. Thus if there is an *a priori* guarantee of the situation’s not arising, then this is an *a priori* guarantee that the condition of the

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Bennett, on the other hand, says that Kant may be seen as writing against an empiricist who believes ‘that objectivity and causality are at any moment liable to collapse’; ‘Kant wishes to show that this nightmare is impossible’ (1966: 100-101). But Hume’s doctrine of the ultimate ungroundedness of, say, the associative transitions we name ‘cause and effect’ is not about some dangerous prospect; it is about our actual situation. Bennett suggests that this ungroundedness makes for the dangerous prospect. Even if this made sense, the problem, for Kant, is not the prospect, but what makes for it. (It must, however, be admitted that Bennett betrays some recognition of this in writing that the point is not really ‘to remove a fear about what might be the case; but rather to illuminate what is the case’ (1966: 102).)

22 This follows from a principle which Kant applies to the imagination in the A-Deduction. He says there that if appearances themselves were not subject to rules, ‘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]. If the conditions of the operation of the understanding or imagination are not met, those capacities do not operate anyway, so as to produce, for example, an experience akin to the one suffered (or enjoyed) by someone using lysergic acid diethylamide. They just don’t operate, and we don’t think or experience at all. Kant says the following on the subject in a letter to Marcus Herz:

> [All sense data for a possible cognition would never, without those conditions [of our knowledge of things], represent objects. They would not even reach that unity of consciousness that is necessary for knowledge of myself (as object of inner sense). I would not even be able to know that I have sense data; consequently for me, as a knowing being, they would be absolutely nothing. *Briefwechsel* (May 26, 1789) 11:52]
understanding’s operation is met. But that a capacity’s condition of operation is met cannot be guaranteed \textit{a priori}. All that can be described \textit{a priori} is the capacity and the condition of its operation. Whether it is met is up to the actual course of things, and only we for whom it is met, we whose understandings are in operation, can affirm that they are in conditions conducive to their operation. Operation is a matter of the actual, not of the possible.

So what \textit{is} the point of the passage? Kant cannot, if I am right, suggest that he is going to furnish an \textit{a priori} guarantee that the spectral scenario cannot arise. Still, he can explain why it is no accident that sensibility \textit{does} supply us with objects which are categorically determinable: why appearances \textit{are} so constituted, by sensibility, as to be determinable by \textit{substance, cause} and so on. Sensible objects would be so determinable in successful exercises of a properly constituted sensibility, and would be so \textit{because} that is what the understanding requires in order to operate. (This would not, however, \textit{guarantee} that the conditions of the understanding’s operation are fulfilled in every case and for every finite knower, but that is beside the point.) It is as though Kant addresses the reader here as follows: ‘your understanding \textit{does} find sensible things conducive to its operation, in particular in the mode of being substances, causal transactions, and so on. But for all I have said about sensibility to this point, this appears to be an accident; it appears not to belong to the nature of sensibility.’\textsuperscript{23} Why is it \textit{not} an accident? What about the nature of sensibility explains it?\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Thus Kant is certainly not saying here that the spectral scenario is possible because our sensibility is indifferent to the understanding’s conditions of unity. (That, I argued in Chapter 3, would be incompatible with his positive account of knowledge \textit{a priori}.) He is saying that all he has said about human sensibility up to this point leaves it unexplained why such concepts as \textit{substance, cause} and so on apply to the objects it gives us. See further discussion of the ‘didactic’ significance of this passage in Conant (2016) and Grüne (2011).

\textsuperscript{24} I should note that on another reading of the spectral passage, suggested to me by Matthew Boyle, the specter is one of a situation in which though appearances are, as such, categorically determinable, nothing we can recognize as such is presented to us. Perhaps things are, in this scenario, causally connected but not in simple enough a way for us to understand. In my view this is, according to Kant, a real possibility in one sense and an impossibility in another, in neither sense, however, relevant to his concerns in the Deduction. There is nothing which transcendental philosophy could do to vouchsafe a simplicity in nature sufficient for our understanding. (This is a major theme of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic and Introductions to the third \textit{Critique}.) On the other hand, anyone who exercises her cognitive capacity understands the world, up to a point, for in those exercises she applies concepts, which embody such understanding. For no one is it possible to assert that appearances, as they present themselves to her, do not conform to the understanding’s conditions of thought. For anyone who asserts is actually thinking, and actually to be thinking.
This suggestion is supported by the passages preceding the spectral passage:

In the case of the concepts of space and time, we were able above to make comprehensible with little effort how these, as *a priori* cognitions, must nevertheless necessarily relate to objects, and made possible a synthetic cognition of them independent of all experience. […] an object can appear to us only by means of such pure forms of sensibility… [A89/B121-122]

If an object can appear to me only by an act of *per se* spatiotemporal sensibility, then any object which appears to me will be spatial and temporal. Therefore, the concepts *space* and *time* will apply to it. Easy. On the other hand:

The categories of the understanding, on the contrary, do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all, hence objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding, and therefore without the understanding containing their *a priori* conditions. Thus a difficulty is revealed here that we did not encounter in the field of sensibility… [A90/B122]

In Chapter 3 I suggested that we read Kant here as saying that the appearance of an object to me requires *no act* of the understanding. Thus, I said, the problem of the Deduction is to explain, to ‘make comprehensible’, why the categories are applicable to spatiotemporal appearances as such, though the presentation of such an appearance to me requires no act of categorical application, as it does indeed require an act in which space and time, as forms of intuition, are immanently implicated. In this chapter I shall urge something more generic than this: that the problem of the Deduction is to explain why the *Leitfaden*-categories are applicable to spatiotemporal appearances—that is to say, objects of a spatiotemporal sensibility—as such. The idea is simply that there is work to do in understanding why such an object must admit of determination according to the concepts *substance*, *cause*, and the like. ‘[I]t is not clear *a priori*’, Kant says ‘why appearances should contain anything of this sort’ [A90/B122; emphasis mine]. ‘[T]hat [objects of sensible intuition] must also accord with the conditions that the understanding requires for the synthetic unity of thinking is a

requires that one has actually been given a matter suitable to thought. (Allison calls this ‘performative’ necessity (2015: 275-6 n. 61).) That means that for no one can the specter be a specter. This explains, at least in part, the difficulty in reading the passage from §13 as posing an intelligible question: see n. 21 above.
conclusion that is *not so easily seen* [A90/B123; emphasis mine]. In this chapter I thus abstract from the question whether admitting of such categorical determination demands categorical application or some other kind of synthetic act in the act of sensibility itself.  

Thus, contrary to the spectral readings, the reading I propose says that the entire Deduction is explanatory in character. We know already that such concepts as *substance* and *cause* are necessarily applicable to spatiotemporal appearances. We know this because, as we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, this is what actuated the problem of pure reason in the first place: a recognition that we know *a priori* that such concepts as these are necessarily applicable to sensible objects as such, because this *a priori* knowledge is presupposed by familiar exercises of empirical cognition, like inductive inference, which we know to be possible in knowing their happy actuality. We also know, as discussed in Chapter 3, Kant’s basic structural answer to the question of how knowledge like this is possible *a priori*. That is, we know his positive characterization of the theoretical *a priori* as such, announced in the Transition to the Deduction. What we do not yet have in hand is a transcendental explication of the system of human categories: that is, an explanation of why those, and only those, categories must be applicable to spatiotemporal objects for the latter to be judgeable (as we know them to be).

2.2 The problem of the premises.

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25 The question of whether categorical application or, indeed, synthetic activity in general is required in an act prior to judgment, perhaps an act of sensibility (or of the imagination), will come up again in Chapter 5.

26 We do not, however, before the *Leitfaden*, have in mind a system (or, what is the same, a complete system) of such *a priori* concepts. We know that ontology is possible, but we have not yet drawn up a plan of its contents (as the *Leitfaden* does), nor shown why they must belong to it (as the Deduction and Principles do).

27 It might be objected here that I have imposed the ‘analytic’ method of the *Prolegomena* on the *Critique*. It might be said said that the analytic method presupposes the actuality of experience and the sciences and investigates their conditions, whereas the synthetic method proves their actuality from their conditions. I do not think this an apt description of the synthetic method. The synthetic method too presupposes the actuality of experience and the sciences. What distinguishes it from the analytic method is that it develops these conditions from a principle in a systematic way: from the ‘seeds’ of the understanding [A66/B91]. The facts are not to be appealed to *in this development*, because the facts are always the *explananda* and no part of the *explanans*. But they are the towards-which of the development, presupposed by the critical enterprise. When we follow the development of a plant from the seed, we are not in utter suspense as to what the seed will yield.
Chapter 4

The problem of the premises is, at bottom, about whether the Deduction assumes the possibility of empirical cognition. Thus some read the deduction as taking, as its ‘single premise’, that we have a capacity for self-ascription and as demonstrating that, if we do, then we have a capacity to make objective empirical judgments. The point of the Deduction, according to this kind of reading, is to show that any self-ascriptive being is a being who can think or know about some ‘outer’ reality, something that stands over against its mental activity as its standard of correctness.  

According to other readings, the Deduction takes as its point of departure that we have a capacity to make objective empirical judgments, and argues that the possibility of such judgments requires the applicability of the categories. Such readings may suppose either that self-consciousness is also presupposed by the Deduction, or that our self-consciousness is somehow established along the way. According to yet another class of readings, there are two argumentative paths in the Deduction, one beginning with self-consciousness (the ‘top-down’ approach), the other with empirical judgment (the ‘bottom-up’ approach), which converge on the applicability of the categories.

My own answer to this question is already clear, given what I have said about the problem of the steps. I think that neither the possibility of empirical cognition, nor even the \textit{a priori} knowledge embodied in the categories, is in doubt in the Deduction. But I want to say something briefly about where I think the self-ascriptivist—to name the proponent of the first of these kinds of reading—goes wrong.

\textsuperscript{28} Examples include Robert Paul Wolff (1963), Jonathan Bennett (1966), P.F. Strawson (1966), and Paul Guyer (1986; 2010). Some such commentators think that this argument is given not in the Deduction but in the Principles: e.g., Bennett (1966: 134).
\textsuperscript{29} Examples include Karl Ameriks (1978), Béatrice Longuenesse (1998), Patricia Kitcher (2011), and Lucy Allais (2015). Kitcher, for example, writes that the Deduction ‘regresses from the possibility of rational empirical cognition to the truth of the apperceptive principle; it will then argue that the principle of apperception requires that the categorial principles hold across all possible objects of the senses’ (2011: 121).
\textsuperscript{30} See, for example, Pereboom (1995).
\textsuperscript{31} These do not exhaust readings of the Deduction. For example, Ralph Walker claims that Kant’s ‘arguments about self-consciousness and about objects are noteworthy for their own sakes, but they are quite inessential to the deduction of the categories’ (1982: 82).
2.2.1 From self-consciousness to empirical cognition?

P.F. Strawson writes that

> the essential premise of the Analytic is...the thesis of the necessary unity of consciousness. This “necessary unity” is called by many other names in the Critique. Kant’s favourite expression for it is “the transcendental unity of apperception”; and this unity of apperception or consciousness is sometimes also called a unity of “self-consciousness”. (1966: 26)

The conditions for the unity of consciousness, or for self-consciousness (‘self-ascription of experiences’ (1966: 28)) constitute ‘a minimum standard for what is to count as experience’, and the standard-setting requirement, Kant argues, can be satisfied by nothing less than this: that the temporally extended series of experiences which are to form the contents of a possible experience should be so connected among themselves as to yield a picture of a unified objective world, of which these experiences—or some of them—are experiences. The argument to this effect is developed in the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories and in certain sections of the Analytic of Principles… (1966: 26)

This, Strawson thinks, is a project worthy of our interest. For ‘the fulfilment of the fundamental conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness, or self-ascription of experience, seems to be necessary to any concept of experience which can be of interest to us, indeed to the very existence of any concept of experience at all’ (1966: 28-9). It would be a true philosophical accomplishment to show that the conditions of the possibility of experience in this minimal sense are also the conditions of the possibility of objective empirical judgment. On the other hand, it would be a bitter disappointment if Kant were to take experience, in the sense of objective empirical judgment, as his theme:

> If it is to be a matter of the definition of the word “experience” that experience necessarily includes knowledge of objects in the weighty sense, then some interest evaporates from the analytical enterprise. (1966: 73)
I do not begrudge Strawson his enthusiasm for the demonstration that any self-ascriptive being must be capable of empirical judgment. But I cannot find any attempt at it in the Deduction. It has been suggested that Strawson has overestimated Kant’s ambitions, that Kant is more modest than Strawson supposes. But the problem is deeper than this. The problem is that Kantian apperception is not self-ascription. A being is self-ascriptive *sensu* Strawson if it is capable of attributing states of consciousness to itself. It can think as follows: ‘this is a state which is mine’; ‘this too is a state which is mine’. This is what it means, according to Strawson, for the ‘I think’ to be able to accompany all my representations. There are many textual—in the sense of the Deduction’s text—problems with this conception of the ‘I think’. It does not, for example, make sense of Kant’s introduction of the ‘I think’ at the beginning of §16; as I explain below, Kant there explicates the necessary relation of thinking to sensibility in a finite knower, not the relation of self-ascription to representation generically construed.

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32 Wolff argues, rather differently, that unless Kant begins from the single premise of the ‘fact of the unity of consciousness’ and derives the categories and principles, and thereby the possibility of empirical knowledge, from this, he ‘in no sense’ answers Hume and, moreover, does ‘nothing to increase the credibility…of the Table of Categories’ (1963: 55-6). (Wolff singles out Hume as Kant’s interlocutor. Robert Pippin, on the other hand, insists that Kant is entitled to assume only ‘some formal aspect of any possible description of the general structure of human experience…undeniable by skeptical empiricists, rational dogmatists, or any other epistemological claimant’ (1982: 152).) This is, however, because he understands a regress from experience to that to which makes experience possible as a regress from experience to something which would make experience possible, and notes correctly that no such regress shows that that *is* what makes experience possible. But I am construing the conditions of the possibility of experience as our capacity for empirical judgment, so that Kant is asking: what is this capacity like, given that this is what it is capacity to do? No answer to this question is permitted which sketches a mere possibility. The categories and their principles will be shown to be exactly what is required for objective judgment of objects presented by human sensibility. Moreover, Wolff’s sketch would not in any case impress Hume, who would not accept the ‘fact of the unity of consciousness’.

Guyer argues that because Kant wishes the Deduction to show that ‘everything that may ever come before our senses must stand under the laws that arise *a priori* from the understanding alone’ [B160] and that ‘all possible perceptions, hence everything that can ever reach empirical consciousness, i.e., all appearances of nature…stand under the categories’ [B164-5], he must argue that ‘the categories apply to all of our experience, experience in the broad sense of everything of which we are conscious at all’, including ‘dreams and illusions’ (2010: 122). This does not follow. Showing that every appearance of nature—i.e., (empirical) object given by sensibility—stands under the categories does not require showing that every kind of (broadly-speaking) ‘conscious’ psychic condition implicates categorical applicability.
But even before we examine the Deduction’s text, we know that the self-consciousness implicated in it cannot be a free-floating capacity for self-inspection, reminiscent of the practice Kant condemns in writing that
to wish to eavesdrop on oneself when [the various acts of the representative power] come into the mind unbidden on their own…constitutes a reversal of the natural order in the faculty of knowledge, because then the principles of thought do not lead the way (as they should), but rather follow behind. This eavesdropping on oneself is either already a disease of the mind (melancholy), or leads to one and to the madhouse. [Anthropologie 133-4]

It is rather the self-conscious character of the capacity under discussion in the Deduction: the cognitive capacity, the capacity for empirical judgment. This is not the only self-conscious capacity we possess, according to Kant. We are self-conscious in cognition, desire, and the feeling of pleasure: in exercising all three capacities which are divided into higher and lower parts. (Strawson does not, needless to say, propose to show that all three must be possessed by any self-ascriptive being.) Each of these is a capacity and thereby operates according to a law; each is a self-conscious capacity and thereby operates in, through and from a consciousness of this law. Thus, self-consciousness is not an additional, fourth capacity whose exercises may be additional to those of these three others. Their exercises are themselves self-conscious. For example, Kant writes this of empirical cognition:

Experience is empirical cognition, but cognition (since it rests on judgments) requires reflection (reflexio), and consequently consciousness of activity in combining the manifold of ideas according to a rule of the unity of the manifold; that is, it requires concepts and thought in general (as distinct from intuition). Thus consciousness is divided into discursive consciousness (which as logical consciousness must lead the way, since it gives the rule), and intuitive consciousness. Discursive consciousness (pure apperception of one’s mental activity) is simple. The “I” of reflection contains no manifold in itself and is always one and the same in every judgment, because it is merely the formal element of consciousness. [Anthropologie 7:141]

Empirical cognition in itself involves reflection, and consequently ‘pure apperception of one’s mental activity’. Thus in exercising the capacity to make empirical judgments, I am conscious of my
activity; such consciousness is implicated in the activity of which I am conscious.\textsuperscript{33,34} Since that activity, like all activity, like all exercise of any capacity, is law-governed, I act from the law of the capacity I exercise. Longuenesse writes, in illustration of this thought, that

> asserting ‘I think the proof is valid!’ is making explicit my consciousness of being accountable for the sequence and connection of the steps of the proofs, and of my commitment to providing more justification if challenged to do so. (2017: 28)

And, more generally:

> Using ‘I’ in ‘I think’ is just the conceptual expression of a consciousness of the rational unity of an act of thinking for which I take myself to be accountable. (2017: 107)

Self-conscious thinking—also called ‘thinking’—constitutively involves a recognition of my accountability for my act of thinking. That is, it means that I perform this act in and through a recognition of the conditions under which such a performance would be correct. These correctness conditions belong, moreover, to the nature of what I am doing: as Longuenesse writes, the form of judgment is ‘the form proper to an activity of thinking that carries its own norm’ (1998: 193).\textsuperscript{35}

2.2.2 From the empirical to the \textit{a priori}\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{33} As Allison puts it, ‘the consciousness of synthesis, is not another thing that one does when one is thinking (a second-order thinking that one is thinking); it is rather an ineliminable component of the first-order activity itself’ (2015: 341). As Kitcher puts it, ‘[t]he awareness in judging that is essential to cognition is not a perception of an act that could be separate from it. It is an indissoluble component of the self-conscious act itself’ (2011: 130).

\textsuperscript{34} There is a helpful elaboration of this point in the \textit{Metaphysik Vigilantius}: The representation is aimed in part \textit{at the object}, to which I am referring, in part \textit{at that action of the mind} through which I compare something in me with the object. […] The latter is called consciousness… Consciousness is also called apperception, which accompanies the represented object. [29:970]

It is one and the same representation which is aimed both at the object and at itself and its relation to the object.

\textsuperscript{35} It might be suggested that we can modify Strawson’s proposal so that the premise of the Deduction is not the existence of a self-ascriptive capacity but rather the existence of a self-conscious capacity to think, not yet specified as a self-conscious capacity for empirical judgment. The correctness condition of an act of this capacity would be the principle of contradiction [Bxxvi]. Then the Deduction might be taken to show that no being could have such a capacity without the capacity for empirical judgment. But the argument for that claim is, in my view, a short and simple one, and not undertaken in the Deduction, though, as we shall see, the Deduction is amply supplied with premises for it. It is simply that there is no such thing as an intellectual being which does not relate to the real. A being may relate to the real by being the ground of the real. Otherwise, it can relate to the real only if the real’s actuality affects it. But to relate to the real in and through affection by the real’s actuality is nothing other than empirical cognition. Therefore, unless you are God, if you are an intellectual being, you judge empirically.
That, then, is the problem with self-ascriptivism. Closer to the kind of position I defend here is the reading on which the Deduction shows that we must have a priori knowledge embodied in the categories by showing that this is a necessary condition of the empirical cognition we know we enjoy. Thus Allais writes that:

> [t]he aim of [Kant’s] transcendental argumentative strategy is to vindicate a priori representations that are in doubt, by showing them to be the condition of something that is not in doubt: in this case, our having empirical cognition in which we apply empirical concepts to objects—or, in Kant’s term, experience. So the argument is not addressed to the sceptic about the external world. If the argument is addressed to any sceptic, this sceptic is the empiricist who thinks we can account for empirical knowledge without a priori concepts, and not a Cartesian sceptic who doubts our knowledge of the existence of objects outside us. (2015: 262)

It is, to my mind, certainly natural to read the Deduction as animated by Kant’s true appreciation of the significance of empiricism, and of Hume in particular. But for reasons I began to discuss in Chapter 2, I do not think the empiricist is the Deduction’s addressee. For the Deduction presupposes and develops something which Hume does not recognize as a possibility: the theoretical a priori as embodied in Kant’s positive account thereof, according to which the form of human cognition is the ground of that of nature, and thereby identical to the latter not per accidens but per se. That, if anything, is Kant’s response to the empiricist. But that idea is, as we saw in Chapter 3, announced as early as the Transition to the Deduction [A92/B124]: it is merely repeated and elaborated in §27.³⁶ Kant has, to be sure, not yet exhibited the system of categories announced in the Leitfaden as the form of nature. He does not even begin to do that until Part 2 of the Deduction. But by the time we get to that point, he has left the empiricist far behind, at least insofar as he has not only shown that we have a priori knowledge—for that was shown as early as the Introduction—but also explained what a priori knowledge is. What remains is to explain why the Leitfaden-categories in particular belong to our a priori knowledge. This might be construed as contributing to a general response to empiricism, but it is not addressed to an empiricist.

³⁶ Indeed, it might be claimed that it is announced in the Preface [Bxvi-xvii].
3. An analytic of finitude.

3.1 Thinking in relation to intuition.

I turn now to the text of Part 1 and develop a reading according to the principles I have discussed above. Few commentators have identified finitude—finite knowledge, construed according to the tradition in explicit contradistinction to infinite knowledge—as the principal theme of this first part of the Deduction.\(^{37}\) This is, I think, an oversight. Giving pride of place to finite knowledge yields a short, simple, and straightforward interpretation of the first part of the Deduction. In particular, I shall argue that Kant there elucidates the structure of the act of a cognitive capacity in general, the structure of theoretical finitude. He shows that, because it describes the act of a self-conscious capacity for empirical judgment, because it describes finite knowledge as such, it describes an act of synthesis. And in terms of this notion of synthesis he defines a formal notion of category, a concept whose applicability to an intuitively given manifold constitutes it as, or as presenting, an object of possible judgment. This merely elucidatory result concludes Part 1.

What is finite knowledge? Finite knowing is thinking in relation to intuition, because it is knowing what is given, and intuition is what gives.\(^{38}\) Kant has already, by the time the Deduction begins, supplied the basic articulation of this structure in the Introduction to the Transcendental Logic and the part of the First Chapter of the Analytic of Concepts which precedes the Leitfaden.

\(^{37}\) An exception is John McDowell (2009: 316), who says that Part 1 ‘is ... an analytic elaboration of the fundamental structure of [Kant’s] conception of finite knowledge’. Justin Shaddock (2018) rightly draws attention to the difference between finite and infinite knowledge as a theme in Part 1 but appears to regard it as a study of the human cognitive capacity as finite, rather than an analytic of finite knowledge as such, and indeed one which leaves in place the threat that appearances are not, as such, determinable by the Leitfaden-categories, whereas this determinability follows from Part 1, according to my reading; see §3.5 below. Allison claims that ‘the principle of apperception’ is ‘contained in the concept of discursive thinking’, so that ‘[t]he entire argument of the first part of the B-Deduction should be seen as Kant’s effort to spell out the major implications of this analytic principle’ (2015: 347). For Allison, though, to speak of finite (discursive) thinking is not yet to speak of finite knowing, and ‘Kant is [in the first part of the Deduction] concerned with the nature of discursive thought as such and the issue of whether and under what conditions such thought yields cognition does not arise at this point’ (2015: 332 n. 8). In general, I am sympathetic with Allison’s suggestion that Kant’s critical philosophy involves the rejection of a ‘theocentric model’ of cognition (2004: 27-34), though my development of this thought—see especially Chapter 1—is rather different from his.

\(^{38}\) This is not to say that every act by every thinker of thinking in relation to intuition amounts to knowledge. It is to say that the act of the capacity to know is thinking in relation to intuition. I discuss these themes in the terms of truth and judgment below.
and the structure persists as a theme in Part 1 of the Deduction. Kant’s theme is always (with, again, the important exception of the *Leitfaden* proper) the understanding in its relation to sensibility. I have discussed this character of this pre-Deductive text in Chapter 3, but it bears mentioning again that the Transcendental Logic begins with this characterization of the understanding:

Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind, the first of which is the reception of representations…, the second the faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations…; through the former an object is given to us, through the latter it is thought in relation to that representation… [A50/B74; italics mine]

In this passage Kant tells us that cognition requires the presentation of its object and the thought of the object so presented. The ‘receptivity of our cognitive capacity’, by which we are presented with the object, is sensibility. Its spontaneity, by which we think it, is the understanding. This is the structure which, in all its abstraction, is further articulated in Part 1, and which I call ‘theoretical finitude’.

3.2 Step One, §§15-16: The sensible is thinkable.

Thus Kant’s topic in Part 1 is never mere thinking, but always thinking in relation to intuition. This is why in very first section of the Deduction, §15, he introduces the notions of synthesis and combination with reference to intuition:

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39 Sensibility is the capacity for sensible intuition. It is called sensible because it is not original, i.e., one through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given (and that, so far as we can have insight, can only pertain to the original being); rather it is dependent on the existence of the object, thus it is possible only insofar as the representational capacity of the subject is affected by that. [B72]

To emphasize that ‘sensible’ does not mean ‘spatiotemporal’, Kant continues:

[I]t may well be that all finite thinking beings must necessarily agree with human beings in this regard (though we cannot decide this), yet even given such universal validity this kind of intuition would not cease to be sensibility, for the very reason that it is derived (*intuitus derivativus*), not original (*intuitus originarius*), thus not intellectual intuition, which for the ground already adduced seems to pertain only to the original being, never to one that is dependent as regards both its existence and its intuition (which determines its existence in relation to given objects)... [B72]
The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in our faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected. 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 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, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an act 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, and that among all representations combination is the only one not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity [B129-30]

This passage, standing at the very beginning of the Deduction, suggests that if our terminus ad quem is the notion of a category, this notion will be characterized in terms of synthesis. It tells us explicitly that if a finite knower must combine, then she combines in an exercise of the understanding, not in an exercise of sensibility. It does not tell us why she must combine, if she must, nor does it tell us why combination belongs to the understanding. If, however, Kant can show that she must combine, to know in her finite way, and if the notion of category admits of characterization in terms of that of combination, then he will have shown how the notion of a category figures in the articulation of finite knowledge.

Having introduced synthesis as a theme, he argues in §§16-17 that finite knowledge is as such synthetic, which entails two conclusions, one on the side of the understanding, the other on the side of sensibility. On the side of the understanding, it means that thinking has the character of synthesis. On the side of sensibility, it means that what is given by sensibility admits of being synthetically thought. He begins §16 with this most celebrated of passages:

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

40 Or, at least, not in an exercise of sensibility alone. Recall that I have abstracted from the question whether the understanding’s activity is immanently involved in sensible acts.
would be nothing for me. That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the **I think** in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered. [B131-2]

It has been suggested that the first sentence of this passage expresses the true beginning of the Deduction. This is especially natural for those commentators who take the Deduction to begin with the Cartesian *cogito* or some other generic conception of (self-)consciousness.\(^41\) Even commentators with very different approaches take this passage to concern the relation of representation (generically construed) to that of self-ascription of representation (generically construed).\(^42\) But a careful examination of the passage reveals, in my view, that its topic is thinking in relation to intuition: *i.e.*, finite knowledge.

The first sentence does not concern the relationship between representations, generically construed, so as to include thoughts, and self-ascription. This would make sense if Kant had a conception of thinking as not *per se* self-conscious, so that he could here claim that though all my representations, including thoughts, are not themselves self-conscious, I must be capable of adding self-consciousness to them. But if my thoughts are not *per se* self-conscious, then some reason must be given for supposing that self-consciousness must be able to accompany them. The sentence assumes the character of an hypothesis for which some argument or evidence must be given. And yet Kant provides nothing in the way of such argument or evidence.

This suggests that he is simply taking thought to be self-conscious from the beginning, in keeping with, for example, the passage from the *Anthropology* I discussed above. Further evidence for this is that in the passage itself he identifies that condition under which the ‘I think’ cannot accompany a representation with that condition in which the representation cannot be thought. He can do this because for the ‘I think’ to accompany a representation is the same thing as for that

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\(^41\) Thus Bennett is says that ‘[d]espite the word ‘think’, Kant’s concern here is with representations generally’ (1966: 104).

\(^42\) See, for example, Allison (2004: 164).
representation to be thought. Thus, his claim—’the I think must be able to accompany all my representations’—is about the relation of thinking to representations which are not acts of thinking. He immediately identifies these representations as intuitions, and concludes that they have a necessary relation to the ‘I think’, which is to say that they have a necessary relation to thinking.43 We know that through sensibility a finite knower is given her object, and that through understanding she thinks it. Thus, this passage tells us that the representations by which the object is given must be such that the ‘I think’ can accompany them; that is, they must admit of being thought. The sensible is thinkable. The conclusion—like that of §20, to which we make our slow approach—is categorical. It is not that finite knowledge is possible only if the manifold of intuition admits of being thought. If it were, Kant would then have to provide independent grounds for supposing that the manifold of intuition admits of being thought. But he does not. He concludes, in this very passage, that it does admit of being thought. This categorical conclusion is available to him because he is elucidating the structure of finite knowledge, not arguing that we partake of it.

43 This immediate relation of the ‘I think’ to intuitions and the objects they present makes Kant’s discussion here very different from Descartes’s use of the cogito in the Meditations, on the one hand—see Longuenesse (1998: 64-68)—and from many subsequent discussions of the ‘I’ and the ‘faculty for representation’, such as those of Reinhold and Fichte. Kant, confronted by these latter discussions, responds with irritation. Reinhold’s theory is ‘abstract’ [letter to Reinhold, Briefwechsel (September 21, 1791) 11:289], ‘not yet intelligible to me’ [letter to Beck, Briefwechsel (September 27, 1791) 11:291], and ‘so weighed down with obscure abstractions, making it impossible to explain what he means with examples’ [letter to Beck, Briefwechsel (November 2, 1791) 11:304]. On one occasion he attributes these attitudes to sinus congestion which first began with ‘a cold that lasted a wee k’ in 1791 [letter to Reinhold, Briefwechsel (March 28, 1794) 11:495]. But he persists in this reaction, describing the impression of Fichte’s Wissenschaftslehre given by a review as follows:

[I]t look[s] to me like a sort of ghost that, when you think you’ve grasped it, you find that you haven’t got hold of any object at all but have only caught yourself and in fact only grasped the hand that tried to grasp the ghost’. The “mere self-consciousness,” and indeed, only as far as the mere form of thinking, void of content, is concerned, is consequently of such a nature that reflection upon it has nothing to reflect about… [letter to Tieftrunk, Briefwechsel (April 5, 1798) 12:241]

Reinhold and Fichte claim to improve transcendental philosophy by the discovery of a yet more fundamental premise than Kant has supplied. Kant says not that their premises are false, but that he cannot understand them. Though he abstracts from space and time in Part 1 of the Deduction, it is easy enough for us to know what it means to think what is sensibly given by reference to our own cognitive lives. Reinhold and Fichte, as Kant reads them, insist on beginning with descriptions that, owing to their ambition for what we might call ‘presuppositionlessness’, are unintelligible: we find it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize in their words something we already know. In philosophy we may reimagine the familiar, but we must know what it is that we thereby reimagine.
There is, moreover, an explicit indication in §16 that this is what he is doing, and that he regards this structure, thinking-in-relation-to-intuition, to be not a psychological hypothesis about the human being, but to be the structure of finite knowledge as such. He writes that ‘[a]n understanding, in which through self-consciousness all of the manifold would at the same time be given, would intuit; ours can only think and must therefore seek the intuition in the senses’ [B135].\(^\text{44}\) The alternative to knowledge which grounds the actuality of its object is knowledge which the actuality of its object grounds. For the actuality of an object to ground knowledge is, however, for the object to act on the subject, and that is for the subject to receive the object.

3.3 Step Two, §§16-17: Thought is synthesis, so that the sensible is synthesizable.

Kant has thus far told us two things: (1) if the finite knower synthesizes, then synthesis is an act of her understanding (§15); (2) the manifold given to a finite knower in sensibility must admit of being thought (§16). The sensible is thinkable. He now proceeds to argue that (3) thought is synthetic (that is, is a synthesis), so that (4) the manifold given to a finite knower in sensibility must admit of being synthesized (§§16-17). (3) and (4) are what I have called his conclusions on the side of the understanding and sensibility, respectively. (4) follows immediately from (3) in the context of the elucidation of the structure of finite knowledge.

What is his argument for the synthetic character of thought? We may work backwards from the following statement of his conclusion: ‘this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a

\(^\text{44}\) Similarly, in discussing inner sense in the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant writes that consciousness of itself (apperception) is the simple representation of the I, and if all of the manifold in the subject were given self-actively through that alone, then the inner intuition would be intellectual. In human beings this consciousness requires inner perception of the manifold that is antecedently given in the subject, and the manner in which this is given in the mind without spontaneity must be called sensibility on account of this difference [B68; italics mine]

That finite knowledge, even finite self-knowledge, depends upon sensibility is not a psychological hypothesis or a material position to be defended by a battery of arguments. It, and thereby sensibility itself, is a matter of finitude. See also n. 39 above.
manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of the representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis’ [B133]. What is the ‘apperception of a manifold given in intuition’? It is, I submit, the apperceptive thought of the object presented thus manifoldly by the intuition, by the act of sensibility. It is this thought which ‘contains a synthesis…and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis’. Why does he speak of the ‘thoroughgoing identity’ of this apperception? The point is that the thought is a single act: ‘[t]hat the I of apperception, consequently in every thought, is a single thing that cannot be resolved into a plurality of subjects, and hence a logically simple subject, lies in the concept of thinking, and is consequently an analytic proposition’ [B407-8; italics mine].

That this proposition is analytic does not mean, however, that it does not admit of elucidation. Indeed, the reason the thought is a single act, and the reason it is synthetic, turn out to be the same. Thus, he says:

For the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The latter relation therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my adding one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis. [B133]

I cannot, in thinking the object presented in its manifoldness in an intuition, think seriatis of each element or aspect of the manifold. That would be a manifold of acts, to match the manifold presentation of the object. Each element of the manifold would remain sundered from every other, and so no act would be an act of a subject, which means, in this context, an act of thinking. For thinking is judging, as Kant tells us in the First Section of the Leitfaden [A69/B94]; to think is to judge that things are thus and so. A judgment is not a list of elements; it is a unity, in which the many are grasped in the one. Only so can it, for example, be true (or false), as judgments can be

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45 Here, as I have said, I discuss merely the unity of the thinker in her act, in a particular empirical judgment hic et nunc. In Chapter 5 I discuss the unity of a thinker in her capacity as thinker, and its relation to the unity of the thinker in her act. As this passage from the Paralogisms says, it is the former unity which makes possible the latter.
This is to say, then, that only a unified act would be an act of thinking, an act whose form is expressed by ‘I think’, an act of a thinker as such. To think, I must relate to the elements of the manifold in a single act: consciousness of unity requires unity of consciousness. To do that, I must hold them together in that act. The act is not akin to the basket into which I cast the truffles sniffed out by my trusted piggy. Those basketed truffles are all adjacent to one another, to be sure, but they do not constitute a unity, any more than a list does. The ‘I basket’ must be able to accompany every truffle my piggy sniffs out, but it applies to each truffle independently of every other. The ‘I think’ is not the ‘I basket’, and the elements of the intuitive manifold are not truffles. But why are the elements of the manifold not presented to me, by sensibility, in their unity? Why does combination belong to the understanding, as §15 states? Why must I, the thinker, go to all this trouble? It is sometimes suggested that this is simply an artifact of the theory of perception Kant inherits from his early modern predecessors. But I disagree: I do not think that the need for synthesis is a psychological hypothesis, over and above what is contained in the form of finite knowledge. To hold together the elements of the manifold is to judge that things are thus and so. And I cannot be given a judgment; I can only be given the judgeable. For a judgment is my self-

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46 Well, sometimes they are, or at least I (and Piggy) hope so.
47 -or, worse, that it is ‘a fundamental assumption which Kant does not dream of questioning and of which he nowhere attempts to offer proof’ (Kemp Smith 1923: 284).
48 This is expressed, for example, by Kitcher’s description of a certain ‘representational theory of perception’ as the doctrine that ‘all that cognizers have available to them are particular representations of sensible properties’ (2011: 130). I agree that all a finite knower has available to her is the sensible, and only insofar as she represents it, only insofar as it is given to her by an act of her sensibility. But Kitcher means to identify an assumption that goes beyond what can be extracted from the notion of finite knowledge as such, whereas I do not think Kant’s arguments in the Deduction depend upon such assumptions. (This does not entail that Kant did not hold a ‘representational theory of perception’, just that no argumentative appeal need be made to any such theory in this context.) Similarly, I do not regard the necessity of synthesis as depending on an ‘assumption that all immediate data for our cognition…are not…aspects of complex objects of which we are likewise always conscious’, so that ‘all objects of our cognition must be constituted in acts of judgment, as suggested by Henrich (1976/1994: 151-2). This does not mean that the understanding is uninvolved in the constitution of objects, for as I argued in Chapter 3, sensibility is so constituted as to present judgeable objects to the understanding. I discuss this relation in further detail in my discussion of Part 2 of the Deduction in Chapter 5.
49 I follow Stephen Engstrom (2009: 103-4) in understanding synthesis as a holding-together rather than a putting-together, and thus as an act in the sense of an actualization of the understanding, rather than as a process distinguishable from its product. The full significance of this theme will not emerge until my discussion of the original synthesis in Chapter 5.
conscious act: its actuality depends upon my consciousness of it. I cannot be given something of such a character, because the actuality of what is given to me does not depend upon my consciousness of it. It is prior to that consciousness. What I receive is not my own doing. Combination belongs to the understanding because it is judgment.

An infinite knower does not judge what it is given, because an infinite knower is not given an object to judge. An infinite knower grounds the actuality of an object in knowing it. It would not respond to something received. The character of synthesis is thus a reflex of precisely that character of finite knowledge: that it is a response to something received.50, 51

That understanding...through whose representation the object of this representation would at the same time exist, would not require a special act of the synthesis of the manifold for the unity of consciousness, which the human understanding, which merely thinks, but does not intuit, does require. [B138-9]

50 According to this argument, necessity of synthesis or combination is grounded in the nature of the unity of thought, or, since thought is per se self-conscious, in that of the unity of apperception. I thus disagree with Kitcher when she writes that '[a]pperception enters as a solution to the problem of the unity required for combination' (2011: 117). I do, however, concur in her more general claims: that the cogito is not the first premise of the Deduction (2011: 115-118) and that the Deduction ‘regresses’ from the possibility of empirical cognition (2011: 89-93). Nor do I take issue with her suggestion that apperceptive unity figures in the Deduction owing to its necessity for empirical cognition (2011: 121), given her characterization of empirical cognition as ‘rational’, as an activity whose subject ‘must be aware—as she makes the judgment—of her act as having the appropriate basis’, and indeed aware ‘of judging…on’ that basis (2011: 129).

51 I have taken leave in this discussion to appeal to the notion of judgment and of the possibility of truth and falsehood. I have not, as some commentators would wish, portrayed Kant as arguing that psychological unity, generically conceived—conceived, for example, as a unity of so-called ‘mental states’, or as a unity of mental states which the subject can ascribe to herself—requires a synthesis, nor as arguing that experience must be unified (in whatever way) in the first place. (Pippin, to take a contrastive example, speaks of ‘an experience in which there were no unity at all among representations’, and says that ‘it would be damaging to Kant’s case if a plausible account could be given’ of such an ‘experience’ (1982: 153). According to the reading here developed, even if a plausible account could be given of something so described, it would simply be irrelevant in this context, in which the topic is a finite knower.) I have said that the unity of thought requires a synthesis because it is judgment. I do not know whether an argument can be constructed to show that any being enjoying a unity of ‘mental states’ must synthesize, or indeed that anything we might call a ‘subject’ must enjoy a unity of ‘mental states’. Commentators have attempted to reconstruct such arguments on Kant’s behalf: see, for example, Wolff (1963: 116) and Bennett (1966: 124, 209).

I might note in this connection that I disagree with Longuenesse when she writes that the proposition that ‘[e]ach representation I call my own is related to the original unity of apperception’ is ‘one on which any early modern philosopher would agree, even if they would use quite different vocabulary to make the point’ (1998: 67 n. 13). For I think that the unity Kant has in mind is one which Hume, for example, could not countenance, though he might, to be sure, seek to ‘mirror’ this unity in his naturalistic image of human mentality.

On the other hand, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the unity of thought under discussion in these sections is that of a concept and not that of a judgment. Indeed, in the A-Deduction Kant speaks of the ‘synthesis of recognition in the concept’—not ‘in the judgment’ [A103]. This would complicate the argument but yield the same conclusion, since the unity of a concept is whatever unity it must have for it to be a predicate—that is, the matter of a judgment—in potentia [A68-9/B92-4], and therefore anticipates the unity of judgment.
Kant has now established that (3) thought is synthetic. He immediately concludes, at the beginning of §17, that (4) the manifold given to a finite knower in sensibility admits of being synthesized:

The supreme principle of all intuition in relation to the understanding is that all the manifold of intuition stand under conditions of the original synthetic unity of apperception. All the manifold representations of intuition stand under...[this principle] insofar as they must be capable of being combined in one consciousness; for without that nothing could be thought or cognized through them... [B136-7]

This is another of those passages which admits both of qualified and of unqualified readings. ‘Insofar as’ [sofern] is not unnaturally read as indicating that all Kant claims to have shown is that all manifold admit of synthesis if something can be thought through them. But recall that the ‘I think’ passage from §16 is categorical, as is the conclusion of §20. A categorical reading of this passage simply follows from §16 in conjunction with Kant’s observation that thought is synthetic, and is, moreover, required if we are to arrive at at §20. The same applies to the subsequent text in §17; for example:

The synthetic unity of consciousness is therefore an objective condition of all cognition, not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object, but rather something under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me, since in any other way, and without this synthesis, the manifold would not be united in one consciousness. [B138]

I read this passage as recording, in the idiom of the object introduced in §17, the movement of thought from (3) to (4) which I have already described. Because thinking is synthetic (‘the synthetic unity of consciousness is...something I myself need in order to cognize an object’), intuition is synthesizable (‘the synthetic unity of consciousness is...something under which every intuition must stand’). The expression ‘in order to become an object for me’ may appear to be a qualification: if what is presented in intuition is to become an object for me, then the intuition must admit of synthesis. This, like the ‘sofern’ with which the section begins, I read not as qualificatory but as explanatory. In this case, ‘in order to become an object for me’ [um für mich Objekt zu werden] has this
import, that because what the intuition presents admits of being an object for me, the intuition admits of being synthesized. Indeed, I wish to suggest, in the present context, the elucidation of a capacity, the infinitival construction ‘um…zu’ has a yet more determinate connotation. The way in which the synthesizability of the sensible follows from the synthetic character of thought—that is, by way of the idea of sensibility and understanding as the parts of a cognitive capacity—means that the sensible is synthesizable because that is what thought requires. For the parts of a capacity have the character they have so as to allow for the capacity’s principal act. Thus, the intuition is synthesizable in order that the appearance it gives me may become my object; that is, it is synthesizable for that purpose. This ‘um…zu’ is not qualificatory. It is teleological.

Finally, it should be noted that §17 also contains an unmistakably categorical statement which Kant identifies with the statement made in the ‘um…zu’ passage:

This last proposition is, as we said, itself analytic, although, to be sure, it makes synthetic unity into the condition of all thinking; for it says nothing more than that all my representations in any given intuition must stand under the condition under which alone I can ascribe them to the identical self as my representations, and thus can grasp them together, as synthetically combined in an apperception, through the general expression I think. [B138]²⁵²,⁵³

This does not say that all my representations in any given intuition must admit of synthesis if I am to be able to think what they present to me. It says that all such representations must allow for the

²⁵² Commentators have wondered at Kant’s calling his principle of apperception ‘analytic’, but this is exactly what we ought to expect if his task here is to unfold the form of finite knowledge. Guyer complains that if the principle were analytic, it could yield only the conditional necessity that I must be able to synthesize my representations if I am to be conscious of them as belonging to my identical self. Whereas Guyer insists that the task of the Deduction is to establish that all my representations are synthesizable and ascribable to a singular self (1987: 133-40). Allison responds that Guyer fails to see that Part 1 is not assigned that task (2015: 346-7). I agree on the verdict, but not on case Allison pleads. Kant is not aiming to establish that all my representations are ascribable to a singular self. Empirical judgment is characterized by the unity of thought; to judge empirically, intuitions must admit of being brought to this unity. Therefore, they do so admit.

²⁵³ It may seem that this passage lends support to the self-ascriptivism I criticized above (§2.2.1), since in it Kant writes of representations which I must be able to ‘ascribe [rechnen]…to my identical self as my representations’. But the self-ascriptivism I criticized above is the position that Kantian self-consciousness is a matter of the addition of self- ascription to a representation, generically construed, thus construed as including thoughts, so that self-consciousness even in thinking would consist of thinking and, in addition, awareness of my thinking. What Kant here says is that representations ‘in any given intuition’ must admit of my reckoning them as mine: to reckon them as mine is to take them up into thought, and thus into apperceptive thought, because thought is per se apperceptive.
possibility of my thinking what they present to me (2), and must therefore also admit of synthesis (4).
The sensible is synthesizable.54

3.4 Step Three, §19: Judgment is synthetic thought grounded in the sensibly given.

Thus far, we know that the finite knower is given an object in such a way as allows for its becoming an object of thought. Thought is synthetic, I said, because it is judgment, and to judge is to grasp the many in one, and for the finite knower the object’s being given is a moment distinct from this grasp. In this, I made use of one aspect of our understanding of judgment: that judgment does not have the character of a list, and that judgments can be true or false. In §19 Kant presents his most fundamental understanding, his real definition, of judgment.

He begins by taking issue with the logicians who, he says, explicate judgment as ‘the representation of a relation between two concepts’ [B142]. They at least see that a judgment is not a list: in it, two concepts are related, not simply, as it were, placed next to one another. He complains that they do not, however, explain ‘wherein this relation consists’ [B141]. He proceeds to explain that to say what judgment consists in, we must say how judgment is made necessary; that is, how it is grounded:

If, however, I investigate more closely the relation of given cognitions in every judgment…then I find that a judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception. […] For [the copula is in these

54 The possessive adjective ‘my’ in this passage may appear to be a qualification. That is, it may appear that Kant intends to leave open the possibility that my intuitions might be ‘rogue’: that they might not meet the conditions necessary to admit of being ‘mine’. Such intuitions would not, he says in a letter to Herz, represent objects. They would not even reach that unity of consciousness that is necessary for knowledge of myself (as object of inner sense). I would not even be able to know that I have sense data; consequently for me, as a knowing being, they would be absolutely nothing. They could still (if I imagine myself to be an animal) carry on their play in an orderly fashion, as representations connected according to empirical laws of association, and thus even have an influence on my feeling and desire, without my being aware of them... [Briefwechsel (May 26, 1789) 11:52]

Did my intuitions not admit of being mine, I should not be a rational being but a non-rational animal. The distinction between intuitions which admit of being mine and those which do not is not, this letter suggests, a distinction drawn within a rational being; it is a distinction between kinds of being. That I am a rational animal is not, however, in question in the Deduction, so that ‘my’ and ‘mine’ should be understood not as qualifying the conclusion but as emphasizing its character as elucidatory of a capacity.
judgments] designates the relation of the representations to the original apperception and its necessary unity, though [wenn gleich] the judgment itself is empirical, hence contingent… [B142-3; trans. modified]

A judgment is, to be sure, a combination of concepts. But it is a combination of concepts in the manner of synthetic thinking, as described in §§16-17. It is a combination of concepts, grounded in a sensibly given object, in the manner of grasping the many in one. If to say what judgment is, we must say that it is grounded in a sensibly given object, then that groundedness belongs to the essence of judgment. This is what the logicians have not recognized.

This groundedness is what constitutes the necessity of judgment. Kant’s explication of the unity’s necessity is contradistinctive. That is, there is another kind of unity with ‘only subjective validity, e.g., in accordance with laws of association’ [B142]. This is the kind of unity empirical ‘judgment’ would have if Hume were right: if, that is, in ‘judging’, we applied concepts not because they are applicable but on account of some arbitrary predisposition. In describing the difference between an objectively valid and a merely subjectively valid unity, he writes that ‘[i]n accordance with the latter I could say only that “If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight,” but not “It, the body, is heavy,” which would be to say that these two representations are combined in the object’ [B142]. To call a unity objective is to say that I combine the representations in thought because the realities they represent are combined in the object: in this sense, it is the object which necessitates the unity, and thus makes the unity a necessary one.

This does not mean that every act of judgment is true, for not every act of judgment is successful. When Kant says that judgment is objectively valid [B142], he does not mean that each

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55 I translate ‘wenn gleich’ as ‘though’, rather than as ‘even if’, because the latter suggests that empirical judgment is just one variety of judgment among others under discussion in the Deduction, whereas I am urging the opposite.

56 Thus Longuenesse writes that ‘the connection is “necessary” because it expresses not a contingent association of my sensations, but a connection of properties grounded in the object itself’ (1998: 89). There is, it should be noted, another necessity waiting, as it were, in the wings. Kant will argue in the Analogies that for me to be conscious, in judging, of my judgmental synthesis as enabled (=necessitated) by the object, I must understand what I therein synthesize to be not accidentally but necessarily united in the object itself, the kind discussed in Chapter 2 and to which I return in earnest in Chapter 6.
and every judgment made by each and every finite knower is true. Nor, I think, does he mean, as Allison suggests, merely that judgments, as opposed to merely subjective associative unities, ‘[have] a truth value, i.e., a capacity to be either true or false’ (2015: 366). He means that it is the immanent tendency of judgment to be true: that is what judgment is to be, and insofar as it is not that, it falls short of its nature. As is said in the Introduction to the Jäsche Logic, ‘[t]he logical perfection of cognition rests on its agreement with the object’ [9:36]. Since agreement with the object just is truth [A157/B197, A820/B848], truth is the perfection of judgment. That Kant chooses to express himself in this way is, I submit, further evidence that his task here is the elucidation of the form of a capacity. To elucidate a capacity is to elucidate its act, and not its act undetermined as to success or failure, but its successful act, the act which belongs properly to the capacity. The understanding is the capacity to judge: its act is judgment, and true judgment most of all.

57 He identifies objective validity with truth in the A-Deduction [A125]. It may seem that we can pull apart the thoughts that judgment always pretends to truth, on the one hand, and that judgment always pretends to groundedness in the sensible given, on the other. The latter, it may seem, has epistemological connotation which the first does not. But recall that judgment is, as understood by Kant, per se self-conscious. For me, in judging, to purport to judge truly (which is what it is to judge), I must have an idea of the basis upon which I judge. Truth, as the perfection of judgment as a self-conscious act, cannot be sundered from its groundedness in the given.

58 Three other logical perfections are identified—universality, distinctness, and certainty [Jäsche 9:38]—but ‘truth is the principal perfection among them all, because it is the ground of unity through the relation of our cognition to the object’ [Jäsche 9:39].

59 Longuenesse puts this point by saying that ‘to relate representations to an object (in the second sense) is to strive toward a combination of representations that would prove to be in conformity with the object, that is to say, true. In other words, objectivity, in the full sense of a conformity to the object of the combination of representations is what the activity of judgment tends to achieve. This is the immanent norm, as it were, of judgment, rather than a state of representations one can suppose to be present in judgment from the outset’ (1998: 82). Allison reports Longuenesse as sharing his position (2015: 366). But if truth is the immanent norm of judgment, as Longuenesse says, then judgment does not have ‘a capacity to be either true or false’. We are capable only of true judgment; false judgment is not a capability but a liability, not a Vermögen but an Unvermögen. Kant applies the general point to the practical case in another context: ‘only freedom in relation to the internal law-giving of reason is really an ability; the possibility of deviating from it is an inability. How can the former be defined by the latter? It would be a definition that added to the practical concept the exercise of it, as this is taught by experience, a hybrid definition (definitio hybrida) that puts the concept in a false light’ [MS 6:227]. Just so, if truth is the perfection of judgment, the capacity to judge cannot be defined in terms of the false or even in hybrid terms of the true and the false.

60 Another way to put the point, in a less theoretical idiom, is to consider that I cannot ‘set out’ to judge otherwise than enabled by the given. I cannot say: ‘I shall throw together concepts, the given be damned!’ and nonetheless insist that I am judging. (Or if I say that, I shall not believe it myself.) This is the point Christine Korsgaard makes in saying that ‘even the most venal and shoddy builder must try to build a good house, for the simple reason that there is no other way to try to build a house’ (2009: 29). It is possible to build a bad house, as it is possible to judge falsely, but it is not possible to try to build a house in indifference to whether it is good or bad, and it is not possible to judge in
Thus judgment, since it is a self-conscious activity, and in that sense something I set out to do, has not been given its proper account until it is identified as the principal act of Erkenntnisvermögen, and thereby as grounded in the given. In judging, I am conscious of my judgment as grounded; indeed, I judge in and through that consciousness. And what my judgment is grounded in is the given, for I am a finite knower. That groundedness is not a distinction that some judgments happen to earn; it belongs to judgment as such. This is what the logicians fail to see.

I have emphasized this point because it leads me to another, which affords further support for my general claim, not to be fully defended until the end of this study, that the Deduction exhibits the unity of the human cognitive capacity by explicating the Leitfaden-categories as the forms by which the spatiotemporal is judgeable. The import of §19 is not merely that is supplies a premise needed in the argument of §20, which we are about to broach. That would exhaust its import if Kant had given a fundamental characterization, a real definition, of judgment before the Deduction, so that he might here show that the synthesis of thought described in §§16-17 must involve judgment so characterized. In §20 we are reminded of the claim in the Leitfaden that judgment’s form is articulated as presented in the Urteilstafel. From this, it might be thought, we should reason as follows: synthetic thought requires judgment; judgment is, however, thus-and-so articulated; therefore, the elements of this articulation are required for synthetic thought. If, however, I am right and §19 shows that judgment itself must be understood as synthesis grounded indifference to whether it is true or false. (Though what I say, what I am reading Kant as implying, about judgment may, I imagine, strike some readers as more convincing than what Korsgaard says about domestic construction.)

61 Thus the objectivity under discussion here, and which I have said belongs to judgment most of all, is that of empirical judgment. The objectivity of, for example, mathematical judgments, and of analytic judgments, is related in systematic ways to that of empirical judgment, but is not identical to it. (When, for example, an analytic judgment elucidates an empirical concept—e.g., ‘gold is yellow, malleable, and soluble in aqua regia’; ‘pear trees bloom in the spring’—its possibility presupposes that of the empirical judgments which have supplied the matter of that concept [A728/B756].) In saying that groundedness in a sensibly given object belongs to the essence of the principal act of the capacity to judge, Kant does not deny that there are other acts of that capacity, made possible by this one, which have a different character. Thus Longuenesse says that ‘[t]he primary—not the only—function of the combination of concepts in a judgment is to reflect in discursive form a synthetic unity first present in the sensible given’ (1998: 71).
in the sensible, that it shows that this is the essence of judgment, then we do not merely conclude that the elements into which judgment’s form is articulated are involved in synthetic thought. Rather, we conclude that we do not understand those elements except insofar as we see how they are involved in synthetic thought, because they are the elements of the form of judgment, and the form of judgment is its essence, and the essence of judgment is, we have now learned from §19, its groundedness in the given. Judgment is groundedness in the given; the modes into which it determines itself are, therefore, the modes of its groundedness in the given. This discovery of the essence of judgment enables us to recognize that for a finite knower, the form of its judgment is so articulated as to allow judgment of what is given to her.

If, then, it cannot be excluded that there are different species of finite knowledge, differentiated according to the character of their receptivity, as Kant thinks, then in general, for a finite knower, the form of her judgment is so articulated as to allow judgment of objects given according to her forms of intuition. And so for us human beings, the form of our judgment is so articulated as to allow judgment of spatiotemporal objects. It is not just that our form of judgment makes it possible for us to judge spatiotemporal objects. Our judgment has that form as the form of groundedness in a spatiotemporal given. Until we understand why the form of our judgment is just what is required to judge the spatiotemporal, we have not understood that form. Since it is §19 that occasions these reflections, and since §20 concludes Part 1, we know that we are nowhere near the Deduction’s end.

3.5 Step Four, §20: What is a category?

We are finally ready for the notion of a category. Note that §20 contains (apart from a brief mention of the category of unity in §15 [B131]) the first mention of the categories in the Deduction
proper. That is because the previous sections have been preparing the way for the introduction of this notion. Here is the argument, divided into five steps:

(P-1) The manifold that is given in a sensible intuition necessarily belongs under the original synthetic unity of apperception, since through this alone is the unity of the intuition possible (§17).

(P-2) That action of the understanding, however, through which the manifold of given representations (whether they be intuitions or concepts) is brought under an apperception in general, is the logical function of judgments (§19).

(C-1) Therefore all manifold, insofar as it is given in one empirical intuition, is determined in regard to one of the logical functions of judgment, by means of which, namely, it is brought to a consciousness in general.

(P-3) But now the categories are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them (§13).

(C-2) Thus the manifold in a given intuition necessarily stands under the categories.  

[B143; labels mine]

Here is the way to read this argument, according to the line of interpretation I have been developing. (P-1) means that the manifold in an intuition admits of synthesis; as Kant indicates, as we have seen, he came to this conclusion in §17. The sensible is synthesizable. (P-2) means that judgment is this synthesis, grounded in the sensibly given.

Now, in the Leitfaden, as I have said, Kant professes to show that judgment determines itself into modes which he calls ‘functions of unity’. But judgment is synthesis, so intuitions admit of determination in these modes (C-1). In (P-3) Kant reminds us his notion of a category in general: categories are just these modes into which judgment determines itself, insofar as they are applied to manifolds of intuition [A94/B128]. If intuitions admit of determination in these modes, then they admit of determination in these modes insofar as they are applied to intuitions. That is to say that they are categorically determinable. This is the categorical conclusion which we anticipated at the very beginning.
Note that not a single category, not even a single function of unity in judgment, makes an explicit appearance in this argument. Instead, he says that judgment has an articulable form, and that the moments of that articulation, insofar as they are applied to intuitions, are categories. This does not appeal in any way to the content of the *Leitfaden* table of categories, nor even to that of the *Urteilstafel*. And it is the only premise concerning categories which appears in, or is required for, this argument.

So, what exactly does this argument show? What it shows is exactly what has to be done to exhibit the unity of a cognitive capacity. What has to be done is to describe the higher and lower parts in such a way as to show the necessary applicability of the former's categories to the latter's deliverances, according to their form. This is so in general, whatever system of categories belongs to the higher, and however the lower's form might be constituted a priori.

But why has this not already been done? Is it because it could turn out, at this point, that the *Leitfaden*-categories are not necessarily applicable to objects as presented by our human sensibility? (That is the specter.) No. For that would mean, given that those are our categories and human sensibility is as it is, that we did not possess a cognitive capacity. But we do possess a cognitive capacity, and those are our categories, and human sensibility is as it is: thus, we know that the *Leitfaden*-categories are necessarily applicable to objects as presented by our, human, sensibility. At least, if the *Critique* has been thus far successful, this is so: if the Aesthetic, which considered human sensibility in detachment from human understanding, and the *Leitfaden*, which considered human understanding in detachment from human sensibility, were successful. For in the *Leitfaden* he elucidated the forms of the human understanding in terms of the functions of unity in a judgment. From that elucidation he derived a table of categories. And now he has shown that synthesis grounded in a unified manifold is a finite thinker’s mode of thinking, and that it is nothing
other than judgment. Thus it proceeds according to the modes of judgment in application to manifolds, and those are categories; so manifolds admit of being synthesized according to the *Leitfaden*-categories. This argument can be represented as having three steps:

1. [from TD-B Part 1] A category is a mode of synthesis of a sensibly-given manifold.
2. [from the *Leitfaden*] The human categories are the *Leitfaden*-categories.
3. [From 1, 2] The *Leitfaden*-categories are the human modes of synthesis of a sensibly-given manifold.

One way to put the point I am making is that the content of (2) has not been at all involved in the structural elucidation which has given us (1). And so the contribution of Part 1 can be isolated from that of the *Leitfaden*. The structural notion of a category from the Transition to the Deduction, which Kant uses in his argument in §20, is that of a concept of an object in general, by means of which its intuition is regarded as determined by one of the logical categories. This structural notion has to do with objects; the new structural notion has to do with manifolds. This movement is exactly parallel to the movement of thought I described above in my reading of Part 1, from a basic description of finite knowledge as thinking-in-relation-to-intuition to the characterization of that knowledge as having the character of the synthesis of a manifold. The relation of the category to the intuited object is now elaborated as a relation in the mode of the synthesis of a manifold.

Why, again, does this leave something to be desired: *i.e.*, the second part of the Deduction? Because while the structural elucidation which leads us to (1) is transcendentally explanatory, the *Leitfaden*, which gives us (2), is not. That is to say, the *Leitfaden* does not exhibit the unity of our cognitive capacity. This is not because the *Leitfaden* omits to mention the human understanding’s connection to human sensibility. Indeed, it is a discussion of precisely this connection in §10 which mediates the two tables and thus introduces the table of the categories [A76-80/B102-5].

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63 That this section of the *Leitfaden* concerns the connection of the human understanding to human sensibility, rather than that of understanding in general to sensibility in general, is suggested by the appearance space and time make in the first paragraph of the section [A77/B102].
meant in this chapter and shall mean in the next two: an exhibition of the connection of the categories in the table to space and time. What we want to know, to appreciate the unity of our cognitive capacity, is why a being with spatiotemporal sensibility need use these concepts in particular to think about the objects given by sensibility. Given (1) and (2), we know that they are, but we do not know why: we have not exposed the internal connection between the categories and the spatiotemporal.

Note in this connection that although both Part 1 and the Leitfaden abstract from space and time, they do so in different ways. The Leitfaden considering the form of human understanding in explanatory detachment from that of human sensibility. Part 1 considers the form of theoretical finitude in general. This means that it does not abstract from sensibility. We have seen that sensibility plays a central role in Part 1. But it does abstract from the specific character of human sensibility. So Part 1 takes cognition in general—judgment grounded in the sensibly given—and considers it in abstraction from its specific realization in the human case. The Leitfaden considers the human understanding in explanatory detachment from human sensibility, and for this reason does not explain the relation of its forms to space and time. Part 1 abstracts in the proper sense: it moves from the specific to the general. The Leitfaden does not do this: it detaches, remaining, however, on the same level of generality: that of the human being. What we need, for an explanation of the need of just these categories, is to descend from general to specific without detachment. We need something which, like Part 1, considers cognition in its unity, but, like the Leitfaden, considers the human being. We need, in short, Part 2.

4. Further evidence: the avoidance of blunder

The four major pillars of support for my reading so far have been this: first, it makes sense of why Kant contrasts the finite and the infinite case more than once, and explicitly refers not just to
intuition, but to sensible intuition, in this contradistinctive characterization in Part 1. Second, it
generates a good answer to the question of why the first part of the Deduction is not enough that
does not require a forced hypothetical reading of §20. Third, it allows us to hope that criticisms of
Kant’s ‘deduction’ of the categories in the Leitfaden as adventitious or empirical or psychological, at
least read in one way, are unjust, since the Leitfaden is simply not designed to supply their
transcendental ground. Fourth, it has allowed me to read Kant’s argument as simple, structural (in
the sense of elucidating the structure of finite knowing), and, to my mind, compelling.

Here I am going to show that some purported problems with Kant’s argument, or with its
interpretation, are not problems if we bear in mind that what he is doing is elucidating the unity of
the cognitive capacity. In all of these problems the question of what Kant means by ‘object’ [Object,
Gegenstand] is implicated.

4.1 The petitio charge

The first putative blunder is a case of Kant’s presupposing what he means to prove. In §17 Kant
introduces the notion of an object [Object] [B137]. Here is the introduction, with its context:

Understanding is, generally speaking, the faculty of cognitions. These consist in
the determinate relation of given representations to an object. An object, however,
is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united. Now,
however, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the
synthesis of them. Consequently the unity of consciousness is that which alone
constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity,
and consequently is that which makes them into cognitions and on which even the
possibility of the understanding rests. [B137]

One way of reading this passage is to take it that Kant is supplying a definition of a technical term
‘object’. On this reading, we are supposed to know what a manifold is, and in light of this knowledge
learn to use a new word, ‘object’: that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is
united. And then the ‘unity of consciousness’, grounded in a synthesis, is simply what ‘relation of
representations to an object’ means. Guyer considers such an option:
These comments could…imply a stipulative redefinition of “object” which does away with its ordinary connotations of externality and independence and simply identifies it with whatever concept of unity serves to express the combination of a manifold… (1987: 117)

But Kant’s argument, Guyer says, does not suggest such a redefinition. It suggests rather the introduction of ‘a conception of the object as a concept of the unity of the manifold which must at least include those conditions which are required for the unified self-consciousness of the manifold as such’ (1987: 117). What that conception would include, in addition to those conditions, are ‘connotations of externality and independence’: that is to say, the connotations of the concept of an object of finite knowledge.

Here, however, Guyer says that Kant goes wrong. Kant is unentitled to any ‘connotations of externality and independence’, because he can

produce information about the necessary constituents of the concept of an object only if necessary conditions for the unity of merely subjective consciousness of the manifold has already been displayed. Yet this is exactly what is still missing, and instead of now providing an independent argument from any such conditions, Kant next just identifies them with necessary conditions for knowledge of objects derived from the concept of object and/or judgment. This renders the argument of §17, indeed the progress of the whole new deduction, circular: It sets out to derive the conditions for knowledge of objects from the conditions for self-consciousness, but instead just identifies the latter with the former. (1987: 117-8)

This is not a minor error of which Guyer seeks to convict Kant. It is the most gratuitous of blunders. Kant has, at the crucial moment, the moment at which the objective rabbit is to be pulled out of the self-ascriptive hat, simply identified the conditions of self-consciousness with the conditions of the possibility of empirical cognition.

According to the reading I have developed, no such blunder has been committed. Kant has not ‘just identified’ two independent sets of conditions, with no argument. The conditions are not independent; if you like, they are ‘identified’ from the very beginning of the Deduction, in the constitution of its topic: the self-conscious cognitive capacity. What, then, is the point of the paragraph from §17, in which Kant introduces the term ‘object’? The point is the elaboration of the
form of finite knowledge, an elaboration of the structure which will reveal the role that categories play in cognition. Indeed, the point is not to move from the thought of a manifold to a stipulatively defined notion of an object. Rather, the point is to invoke the notion of an object of finite knowledge and to conclude that, since finite knowledge has the character of a synthesis of a manifold, the object is ‘that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united’. Kant moves here not from manifold to object. He moves from his basic conception of object—object of finite knowledge—to a more elaborated conception of object, made available by his more elaborated conception of finite knowledge.

4.2 The necessity/sufficiency charge

The second putative blunder is the substitution of an unwarranted claim of sufficiency for a warranted claim of necessity. In that same paragraph from §17, Kant says that the unity of consciousness ‘is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity’. Both Guyer and Allison complain that the unity of consciousness is not sufficient for relation to an object. For, they suggest, an object is needed for relation to an object, in addition to the unity of consciousness. But if we bear in mind that Kant’s topic in the Deduction is everywhere and always the self-consciousness, thus the unity of consciousness, of the cognitive capacity, then we see that the unity of consciousness is after all sufficient for relation of representations to an object. For the unity of consciousness in question here is the unity of representations in an act of empirical judgment. This is a unity per se grounded in a given object. Therefore, whenever this unity is successfully attained, there is an objective representation. Therefore, it is sufficient for such a representation.

While Guyer wishes to convict Kant of the charge in question, Allison proposes a reconstruction in an effort to acquit him. According to this reconstruction, §17 tells us that the
unity of apperception is necessary and sufficient for relation to a ‘thin’ or ‘indeterminate’ object, whereas later, in §24, it is revealed that it is merely necessary for relation to a ‘thick’ empirical object (2015: 379-80). For more on the thin and the thick, let us turn to the overgeneralization charge.

4.3 The overgeneralization charge

The third putative blunder is overgeneralization. Guyer again presents this as an accusation targeting Kant. Allison again presents this not as an accusation but as reason to read Kant as saying something rather different from what he appears to be saying.

Guyer accuses Kant of ‘burden[ing] his argument with a problematic conception of judgment itself and an account of the connection between apperception and judgment that undercuts the original premise of the ubiquity of apperception itself’ (2010: 123). The conception of judgment is problematic because it is ‘excessively strong’ (2010: 124) and ‘implausible’ (2010: 139). As for Strawson, for Guyer apperception is the capacity for ‘self-ascription of experiences’. Thus judgment, as a necessary unity—a unity necessitated by an object—cannot be regarded as necessary for apperception, because so regarding it would

*exclude* from the embrace of apperception mere reports about one’s own experience, such as “If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight”, which seem like perfectly good expressions of the self-ascription of experiences that should therefore be included within the scope of the complete unity of apperception whether they can be immediately transformed into judgments about objects or not… (2010: 141)

But as Guyer notes, Kant does in fact claim that the objectivity of judgment is necessary for apperceptive unity. The natural conclusion to draw from this is that apperception is not self-ascription, but the self-consciousness of empirical knowledge, as I have said it is. Apperceptive thinking is thinking I perform from the sensibly grounded consciousness of the truth of my thinking.
If we go this way, Guyer warns that we may leave ‘a vast number of our properly-ascribed experiences outside of the domain of the categories altogether’ (*ibid*). He gives the example of judgments of perception. But Kant can think that the categories are necessary for these judgments *because* they are necessary for judgments of experience, judgments properly so called, and because judgments of perception are derivative exercises of the capacity to judge. Guyer, in speaking of the ‘scope of the complete unity of apperception’, obviates any explanatory structure within this ‘scope’. Nothing within it is explanatorily prior to anything else; it is flat.

Guyer may claim that Kant forecloses this possibility in assuming (as Guyer claims) in Part 1 ‘that there is a subjective unity of consciousness that does not involve the categories at all’ (2010: 147 n. 31). I presume he is referring to such examples as ‘If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight’, as discussed in §19. But there is no suggestion whatever in §19 that Kant believes this subjective unity not to involve the categories ‘at all’. What he says in that section is that bringing the manifold of an intuition to the ‘objective unity of apperception’ is the same thing as judgment as such, and he explains what he means by this by contrasting it with subjective unity. He does not say that the categories are not necessary for such unities; he says nothing about the categories in this section, as we have seen. He then argues in §20 that all manifold stand under the categories because this is the condition of their admitting of being (objectively) synthesized. This does not entail that the categories are not involved in subjective unities. It is compatible with this that they are involved in subjective unities, when they are, because they are essentially involved in judgments of experience.

This is suggested by Longuenesse:

> Yet however subjective the judgment may remain—that is, even when it is most depend on the particular circumstances of my associative combinations—the combination of representations it expresses is possible only because it is required by the unity of apperception that relates sensible representations to objects and thus aims at forming true judgments… (1998: 83)
Longuenesse suggests that judgments of perception might be construed as aiming at truth—objectivity ‘in the strict sense’—this being their conatus, but not yet having got there [ibid]. This would be a determinate way in which judgments of perception are dependent exercises of the capacity to judge: they would be dependent in the sense of being for-the-sake-of-and-towards objective judgment.\(^6^4\)

Allison’s concern about overgeneralization is formulated in terms of the notion of an object. Allison distinguishes between two senses of ‘object’, thin and thick. An object in the thin sense is an intentional object, everything which is not a nihil negativum [A291/B348]. An object in the thick sense is an empirical object, what I have been calling the object of a cognitive capacity. For human beings, such an object is spatiotemporal. Allison insists that ‘object’ in §17 must be meant in the ‘thin’ sense ‘given Kant’s avowed methodology in the first part of the B-Deduction’ (2015: 354), which I have discussed above. He claims further that this reading is given local support in §17 by Kant’s saying at the beginning of the section that unless the manifold representations of intuition are ‘capable of being combined in one consciousness…nothing could be thought or cognized through them’ [B136-7]. He writes: ‘Kant here seems to regard thought and cognition as equivalent acts, which means that the latter is understood in the thin sense’ (2015: 354).

Though Allison clearly does not intend that this one disjunction bear the weight of his case, it is important to point out that Kant often uses the idiom of thinking, activity of the understanding, of the higher part, and so on, to mean cognition in the sense of empirical knowledge. Indeed, this is what we saw at the very beginning of §3, in considering the passage from A50/B74. If I am right that Part 1 is an analytic of finite knowledge, since finite knowledge is thinking in relation to intuition, it is not just possible but natural to take the idiom of thinking as it appears here to be expressive of knowledge. But my main concern here is what else Allison says in

\(^6^4\) For a less determinate suggestion as to such dependence based on a reading of the Refutation of Idealism, see Beck (1978: 47).
support of his ‘thin’ reading. He says, first of all, that unless ‘cognition’ means ‘thought’ (in the thin sense), Kant leaves no room here for our thinking topics that we cannot cognize. And yet he must ensure this. But the fact is that meaning ‘cognition’ in the thin sense is not the only way for Kant to leave room for our thinking topics that we cannot cognize. Allison is presupposing that Kant must account for the possibility of thinking, construed indifferently as to whether it is thinking in relation to intuition or not, and then explicate cognition as the aggregate of thinking and the satisfaction of some further, sensible condition. But this need not be what Kant is doing, and it is not what he is doing if he is concerned, throughout the B-Deduction, with objects in the thickest possible sense, and if he wishes to explicate the conditions on the possibility of judging such objects, thence to explain, in terms of and against this primary act of empirical judgment, the possibility of ‘mere thinking’ as a derivative exercise of the cognitive capacity.

The same should be said in response to Allison’s other pillar of support, which is that if the unity of consciousness is sufficient for the cognition of an object (that is, in the thick sense), then we rule out the very possibility of non-objective modes of awareness like dreams and hallucinations (2015: 353), because these, according to Allison, involve the unity of consciousness but not empirical judgment. But again, in his elucidations of the unity of consciousness, Kant need not be accounting for what belongs indifferently to empirical judgment, judgments of perceptions, dreams, hallucinations, mere cognitively ungrounded thinkings, fantasies, images, and figments of the brain, all in one go, as so many representations piled up at the feet of the thinking ‘I’. Some of these things may be explanatorily prior to others, and are, according to the argument I have presented: empirical judgment is the principal act of the capacity, of which all the others are derivative possibilities of different determinate kinds. 65

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65 With respect to dreams in particular, this thought is familiar at the time of Kant’s writing: ‘Dreams can represent things to us as external which do not exist just then; but we would not even be able to dream of something as external if these forms were not given to us by means of external things’ [R5399 (1770s/80s); 18:172].
Thus, we need not convict Kant of overgeneralizing the need for objective judgment, as does Guyer. Nor need we read ‘cognition’ as ‘mere thought’ and ‘object’ as meaning ‘intentional object’ rather than ‘empirical object’, in the context of a discussion in which the object is said, repeatedly, to be what is given by the senses, or to be that in the concept of which the sensible manifold is united. We can take Kant’s words in their most natural and obvious signification. No hermeneutic contortions are required.

5. Conclusion.

I have in this chapter presented a reading of §§15-20 as an analytic of finite knowledge, whose principal aim is to locate, within the structure of finite knowledge, the category. Finite knowledge is thinking in relation to intuition, and is thereby the synthesis of a manifold. A thinker’s system of categories is that of the modes of such synthesis. Since the human categories are those presented in the *Leitfaden*, those are the modes of synthesis for spatiotemporal manifolds. That is the topic of §§21-27 of the Deduction and of the Analytic of Principles which follows it. In Chapter 5 I turn to §§21-27.
Chapter 5
The Original Unity

1. Introductory.

In Chapter 4 I argued that of the first part, §§15-20, of the Transcendental Deduction in the first Critique’s second edition is an analytic of theoretical finitude. Its aim is to elucidate the form of finite knowledge as such and thereby to identify the position in such knowledge of the category in general. I situated this argument within a reading of the Deduction as a whole, according to which Part 2, §§21-27, is the site of the unity of the parts of the human cognitive capacity, by which the categories of the human understanding in particular receive their transcendental explication in terms of the forms of human intuition, space and time. In this chapter I turn to §§21-27 themselves.

Many of his readers have noticed that, contrary to initial expectation, Kant does not explicate the necessity of each of the Leitfaden-categories until the Analytic of Principles. The second part of the Deduction supplies not these explications but, I argue, their principle (and thus what we might call the ‘principle of the Principles’): the unity of the spatiotemporal, which, when ‘spelled out’ [buchstabiert]¹ as the unity it is, reveals itself to be that of nature.² For the human being, whose forms of intuition are space and time, the categorical determinability of the objects of her intuition is the constitution of the natural form—by this I mean, the form of nature—of those objects as a whole. ‘Nature’ is the name of the judgeability of the spatiotemporal; that is to say, it is the susceptibility of spatiotemporal objects as such to the activity of the understanding.³

¹ ‘[E]ven the pure concepts of the understanding have no significance at all if they depart from objects of experience and want to be referred to things in themselves (noumena). They serve as it were only to spell out [buchstabieren] appearances, so that they can be read as experience… [Prolegomena 4:312].
² Thus, I agree with Guyer when he says that in the transcendental Deduction ‘Kant offers no illustration or explanation of how the specific categories enumerated in the Metaphysical Deduction are in fact involved in, let alone responsible for the unity of space and time as unified wholes’ (2010: 146). But I do not regard this as a deficit of the Deduction.
³ I thus agree with Longuenesse that the ‘real weight’ of §§21-27, and in particular §26, ‘lies in the reexamination of the two questions: what is space, and what is time?’ (1998: 214), rather than in an examination of the necessity of particular categories.
In Chapter 3 I argued that because the understanding’s form is the ground of that of its object, it is the ground of the sensible object *qua* sensible, the object of sensibility as such. But now I am, as anticipated in the Conclusion of that chapter, alleging that it is human sensibility’s form, and thus the form of sensible objects as such, which explains that of the human understanding: we possess these categories *as* the concepts by which the spatiotemporal as such is intelligible. And thus, it may seem, I am claiming precisely the opposite of what I claimed there.

But I am not. I am merely emphasizing an aspect of Kant’s position which I left suppressed in the thematic sections of that chapter but introduced in Chapter 4. If a finite knower is to know anything *a priori* of the sensible object, this knowledge must be as described in Chapter 3: it must constitute the form of the object of her sensibility. And yet, if forms of sensibility are facts, then the understanding cannot itself relate to those facts entirely *a priori*, in the structural sense: it cannot be their exhaustive ground. Thus, for any finite knower, there is an aspect of the form of her sensible object which cannot be accounted to her understanding. In the human being, this aspect is spatiotemporality. Thus, though spatiotemporality as such cannot be accounted to the human understanding, and though the human categories are to be explicated as categories of the spatiotemporal, nonetheless the objects of human sensibility—those given to us in exercises of this capacity—must be *per se* informed by the human understanding.

We can, perhaps, clarify the structure by indulging in a mythological excursion. Imagine the finite ‘I’ which, as such, yields no particular forms of intuition, since forms of intuition are facts. It rummages about for such forms, and what it finds are space and time. These, it says, will do. It asks: ‘what form must spatiotemporal objects have if they are to be intelligible by me?’ Its answer is given by the table of the categories and the principles of their application. In, as it were, taking space and time into itself, as it were, it ensures that all the spatiotemporal objects given to it are *judgeagble* spatiotemporal objects: it constitutes them as categorically determinable. In this mythological mode
we find expressed the complex structure of dependencies which Kant must endorse if everything I have said is right. To put this, now, in its proper philosophical register: that the objects of our sensibility are spatiotemporal is owed to human sensibility. But because human sensibility stands in essential union with the human understanding, they are not just spatiotemporal: they are judgeably so.

So Kant, as I have it, is committed by §27 to thinking. In this chapter, I shall urge that this complex structure of dependencies is expressed by the second part of the Deduction as a whole and especially by §26 in the figure of the original synthesis of the imagination. This synthesis, described as a ‘mere effect of the understanding on sensibility’, actualizes space and time as the sites of objectivity: as that in and by which a judgeable object may be given. As such, I shall suggest, it actualizes space and time not as discursive unities but as a priori intuitive unities, which, I argue, we ought to understand as unities of the actual as such. Recall, in this connection, my discussion in the last chapter of the ‘spectral’ passage of §13: ‘For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity’ [A90/B123]. I characterized the intelligible constitution of appearances as a condition of the understanding’s operation, saying, then, that if that condition were not met, the understanding would not operate, and would remain, as Kant says of the imagination in a similar context, ‘hidden in the interior of the mind, like a dead and to us unknown faculty’ [A100]. The original synthesis of the imagination is therefore, in actualizing the judgeable spatiotemporal, the satisfaction of this condition of the understanding’s operation. It is a condition that is internal to the cognitive capacity, the satisfaction of which constitutes that capacity as a readiness to judge. It is thereby, I shall argue, the first actuality of the cognitive capacity, whose second actuality is empirical judgment. This distinction, of potentiality, first actuality, and second actuality will, I argue, help us to solve several important interpretive problems.
It will be easier to explain and defend what I have just anticipated—in particular, the application of the division of potentiality, first actuality, and second actuality, on the one hand; and the role of the original synthesis as actualizing space and time as unities of the actual, on the other—in the light of a clearer presentation of these problems. And so I begin, in an, as it were, second introduction to this chapter, with a sketch of some of the most important among them (§2). This will generate interpretive tasks which I shall seek, in my own reading, to fulfill. I then present my reading of Part Two (§3) and discuss, with reference to recent commentary, its capacity to fulfill these tasks (§§4-5).

2. ‘As the understanding determines sensibility’.

2.1 A synthesis before all concepts.

§26, whose title declares it to be the Transcendental Deduction itself, contains a footnote whose correct interpretation is necessary for that of the Deduction as a whole. As Henry Allison says, ‘Kant here once again exercises his penchant for locating a key element of his argument in a note rather than integrating it into the main body of the text (2015: 408). The note reads as follows:

[1] Space, represented as object (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the comprehension 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. [2] In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. [3] For since through it (as the understanding determines sensibility) space or time are first given as intuitions, the unity of this a priori intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (§24). [B160-1n.; numerals mine]

How, we are to ask, can this unity which ‘precedes all concepts’ also ‘presuppose a synthesis’, since synthesis is an act of the understanding, the faculty of concepts? How can space and time first be
given as intuitions through a unity which presupposes a synthesis, if this unity ‘belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding’?

Allison proposes a solution to these problems as follows, representative of one of the approaches which I oppose in this chapter. The note, he says, ‘is concerned with two distinct conceptions: one that pertains to space and time themselves as “given”, i.e., as forms of sensibility, and one that pertains to the representation of their unity by the cognizing subject’ (2015: 412).

According to Allison, then, when in [3] Kant writes of space and time’s being given as intuitions, what he means is not, as might first appear, that space and time are given by sensibility as intuitions but that they are given in cognition as intuitions. What it means for them to be given in cognition is for them to be given by sensibility and then synthesized: i.e., represented. As Allison puts it, for something to be given in cognition is for it to be “given and taken” (2015: 413). Thus the note concerns not what belongs to space and time, as they are presented in the Aesthetic, as such. It concerns what belongs to the understanding’s representation of space and time.

Allison does not describe in detail the application of this reading to each sentence of the footnote. And when we attempt that application ourselves, we find that it impossible. To be sure, [1] may at first suggest a clean distinction between two unities (though it only mentions one explicitly, that given by the formal intuition). But how can [2] be so read as to say that while the unity attributed to space and time precedes all concepts and is one thing, there is another unity which depends on a synthesis? The sentence reads:

*Diese Einheit hatte ich in der Ästhetik bloß zur Sinnlichkeit gezählt, um nur zu bemerken, daß sie vor allem Begriffe vorhergehe, ob sie zwar eine Synthesis, die nicht den Sinnen angehört, durch welche aber alle Begriffe von Raum und Zeit zuerst möglich werden, voraussetzt.*

In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible.
This sentence says that there is one thing such that (a) it is a unity; (b) in the Aesthetic it was attributed merely to sensibility; (c) it precedes all concepts; and (d) it presupposes a synthesis through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. It concerns one unity. This is why commentators like Lorne Falkenstein have pronounced it, not just a difficult text to interpret, but an inconsistent one (1995: 91). Allison wishes to acquit Kant of this charge by reading the sentence as concerning two unities, but the sentence cannot be so read.4

The same is true of the next sentence:

\textit{Denn da durch sie (indem der Verstand die Sinnlichkeit bestimmt) der Raum oder die Zeit als Anschauungen zuerst gegeben werden, so gehört die Einheit dieser Anschauung a priori zum Raume und der Zeit, und nicht zum Begriffe des Verstandes.}

For since through it (as the understanding determines sensibility) space or time are first given as intuitions, the unity of this \textit{a priori} intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (§24).

This says that \textit{because} space and time are first given as intuitions through a synthesis, the unity of this \textit{a priori} intuition belongs to space and time, and not to ‘the concept’. Space and time are first given as intuitions ‘before any concept’ [\textit{vor allem Begriffe}]. Therefore, since they are given as intuitions through a synthesis, the unity which that synthesis gives to them does not belong to ‘the concept’, presumably because intuitions are given in a moment distinct from that of conceptual application. This sentence concerns one unity and one synthesis \textit{vor allem Begriffe} but nonetheless a determination [\textit{Bestimmung}] of the understanding by sensibility.

Thus, we are secured in our puzzlement. This examination of [2] and [3] shows that we have a choice to make. We must conclude either that this footnote is inconsistent with the rest of the \textit{Critique}—however possible it may be to rearrange its words in quite different configurations expressive of an entirely different sense— or that, according to the position of that book, the unity

\footnote{4 Thus James Conant, remarking upon the ‘horrified manner’ in which commentators have responded to this ‘(so-called) “notorious” footnote’, notes that it ‘makes clear…that Kant takes himself to have shown that categorial synthesis is a condition of the possibility of the sort of unity which the Transcendental Aesthetic treats’ (2016: 113 n. 56).}
Chapter 5

of space and time, the very unity described in the Aesthetic, in some sense ‘presupposes’ a synthesis which is in some sense vor allem Begriffe.⁵

2.2 The interpretive task.

The latter of these positions is defended by Béatrice Longuenesse. I shall consider aspects of her position in its own right in §4. For now, I wish to consider two objections raised to her decision to hold fast to the text of the note, on the one hand, and one to her general strategy for doing so, on the other. Though these objections are often raised by commentators who read it differently, if the conclusion of §2.1 is right, we may construe them as setting tasks for anyone who wishes to hold fast to it. I shall also, in the course of this, introduce a problem I have not encountered in commentary but which strikes me as even more important than the problems most often discussed.

First, problems attending any attempt to hold fast to the footnote. Allison mentions two of these, the second more determinate than the first. First, he says, of Longuenesse’s position, that ‘it calls into question the distinctive contribution of sensibility to cognition and with it the qualitative distinction between sensibility and understanding, which we have seen was a centerpiece of Kant’s thought since the “great light” of 1769’ (2015: 412). This amounts to the allegation that to account the unity of space and time to a synthesis is to fall foul of Kant’s insistence that the two capacities ‘cannot exchange their functions’ and that ‘one must not mix up their roles, rather one has great cause to separate them carefully from each other and distinguish them’ [A51-2/B75-6]. But this allegation is easily dispatched. To say that sensibility and the understanding are mutually dependent is not to deny that they are distinct. Indeed, it presupposes that they are. This came out in my

⁵ That is to say that the footnote expresses Kant’s embrace of what Onof and Schulting call a ‘broadly conceptualist’ doctrine: ‘the understanding’s role is…prediscursive, that is, prior to any actual conceptual unification in an actual judgment’ (2015: 10). It should be noted that their application of the terms ‘broadly conceptualist’ and ‘strictly conceptualist’ is to interpretations of the passage, but I am applying it to the passage itself, since our consideration of sentences [2] and [3] has already foreclosed the possibility of what they call ‘non-conceptualist’ interpretations.
discussion in Chapter 3 of the ways in which Kant’s image of the relation of intellect to sense is similar to that of Aquinas and different from that of some of his more immediate predecessors.

If there is to be a difficulty in maintaining that something belonging to sensibility depends on something belonging to the understanding, it must be a difficulty arising from something more specific than the mere distinction of the capacities from one another. And indeed, Allison levels a more specific charge. He, like many other commentators, claims that the kind of unity attending space and time, which he identifies with their ‘singleness’ (2015: 412), is not the kind of unity grounded in apperceptive synthesis.\(^6\) That kind of unity is discursive, whereas the unity of space and time is intuitive. Allison is right that an intuitive unity is not a discursive unity, and that apperceptive synthesis, as the mode of empirical judgment, grounds discursive unity. The unity of space and time is not the unity of the concept, nor is it the unity of the judgment. Thus, our task, in defending the footnote, will be to explain how a non-conceptual, non-discursive unity could be grounded in an act of the understanding.

Next, a problem alleged to attend Longuenesse’s general strategy for defending the footnote. She addresses head-on the question we have seen Allison to raise of how an act of the understanding, which exhibits or grounds a discursive unity, could ground an intuitive unity. She agrees that the understanding, in its characteristic act, that of judgment, could not do this. Thus, she proposes, it is not in any act of judgment that it does this; it does it as the capacity to judge. Allison responds that he does not understand how a capacity, as opposed to its exercise, can ‘do anything’ (2012: 44).\(^7\) I am sympathetic with this expression of incomprehension and shall accordingly seek, in developing the reading of Part 2, to address it.

2.3 What is the intuitive unity?

\(^6\) See also McLear (2015) and §2.3 below.

\(^7\) Similar puzzlement is expressed by Allais (2007: 171).
I wish, as I said, to mention another objection to the friend of the footnote. It is sometimes asked what exactly it is about space and time, which is in the note called ‘their unity’, which is supposed to be grounded in a synthesis. Is it the singularity of space and time—that is, that there is only one space, and only one time? Is it the priority in space of time of the whole to its parts? These are a good question. But those who ask it ordinarily wish to know how a synthetic act could ground such properties. They do not, as far as I know, ask the, to my mind, more urgent question of how those properties are supposed to constitute spatiotemporal objects as categorically determinable. For recall that this is the aim of Part 2 of the Deduction: to explain why the categories are applicable to everything that may come before our senses. None of these properties, considered independently of the conception of space and time as forms of our sensibility, the lower division of finite knowledge, suffices for the categorical determinability of spatiotemporal objects. So even if these properties were added to space and time by a synthetic act, as Longuenesse (2005: 34-5) and John McDowell (2009: 73), for example, propose, this would not explain why the categories are applicable to ‘everything which may come before our senses’.

I wish to suggest that in their focus on these properties of space and time, commentators have tended to lose track of their position in Kant’s image of cognition. They are described as though they were abstract objects. But for Kant, space and time are essentially the forms of our sensibility: they are that in and through which the actual, that which stands in readiness to ground finite knowledge, may be given to us. Because they are the forms of our sensibility, they are oriented towards the provision of objects we can judge self-consciously. What they give us is judgeable in the way in which a spatiotemporal object may be judgeable; what they give us is not unjudgeable in the way a spatiotemporal object may be unjudgeable. Thus, it is not their singularity, nor their mereological structure, nor any other such property, which constitutes the categorical determinability of the objects they give us, for any such property or collection thereof is compatible with their
giving unjudgeable objects. That is how space and time would be, indifferent to the possibility of judgment, if sensibility were only accidentally related to the understanding. That sensibility's spatiotemporal objects are judgeable spatiotemporal objects is owed to its unity with the understanding, and the actuality of that unity is, I shall argue, the original synthesis.

Thus, the unity Kant ‘ascribed’ to space and time in the Aesthetic, mentioned in the B160 footnote, is the unity of that which admits of grounding finite knowledge. That, I shall argue, is to say that it is the unity of the actual qua actual. And that is, as we shall see, precisely what Kant says, in the Aesthetic, space and time are.8

2.4 The urgency of the task.

Why worry so much about a footnote? Why address ourselves to these tasks? I think that the footnote is crucial to the success of the project of the Deduction because in it Kant satisfies the demands of his conception of knowledge a priori, and of the categories as embodiments of such knowledge, the demands I discussed in Chapter 3. Indeed, Allison himself betrays some acknowledgment of this:

[I]t must also be admitted that to insist upon the independence of the sensibly given from the conditions of apperception or, what amounts to the same thing, the requirements of understanding (in Longuenesse’s terms the capacity to judge) is not without problems of its own. Specifically, it seems to leave the specter intact or, at best, to suggest that the agreement of the sensibly given with the requirement of the understanding is a merely contingent matter, a kind of pre-established harmony, which is likewise a view that Kant emphatically rejects. (2012: 47)

As confirmation of Kant’s rejection of the conception of the relationship between sensibility and understanding as a pre-established harmony, Allison refers to the final paragraph of §27, which was the centerpiece of my argument in Chapter 3. Allison characterizes this as a problem with his—to

8 I have not encountered this position—that the actual is the heart of the matter—in any commentary on the B160 footnote, even among readers, like Jessica Williams (2017) and Justin Shaddock (2018), who rightly, in my view, seek ‘conceptualist’ alternatives to the thought that the original synthesis adds properties like individuality and whole-to-part priority to space and time.
use the term I used there—accidentalist position. I repeat what I said in Chapter 3: this is not a, but the problem with accidentalism. It means that the categories cannot embody knowledge \textit{a priori}, because such knowledge grounds the form of its object. If the form of sensible objects is constituted independently of the categories, they do not ground the form of their object and thereby do not embody knowledge \textit{a priori}. And if they do not embody knowledge \textit{a priori}, Kant’s positive project in the first \textit{Critique} fails. Thus, I wish to urge, this is not a matter of weighing considerations, of pitting one passage against another, of amassing objections of diverse origin and import. Unless we can find a way to preserve the footnote of §26, we cannot keep faith with the basic and essential structural answer Kant gives to the problem of \textit{a priori} knowledge enunciated in his letter to Herz in 1772. If the Aesthetic and the Analytic cannot be read as his elaborations of that answer, they cannot perform the tasks Kant sets them.\textsuperscript{9, 10, 11}

\textsuperscript{9} Onof and Schulting remark that since ‘Longuenesse does not in fact construct her interpretation of the CPR centrally around her understanding of the footnote’, ‘\[i\]t is…all the more remarkable that her interpretation should provide her with a coherent understanding of it’ (2015: 17). I wish to claim a similar advantage for the reading I have developed over the course of this study, according to which the content of the footnote is not just incidentally entailed by, but expresses the very essence of Kant’s basic structural conception of \textit{a priori} knowledge, given the facticity of space and time.

\textsuperscript{10} I shall not in this study discuss an essential aspect of the footnote: what it says about the possibility of geometry. For a consideration of this issue which takes seriously Kant’s characterization of the intuitive unity of space and time as grounded in the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, see Friedman (2012).

\textsuperscript{11} Onof and Schulting propose that while ‘the independent function of a nonconceptual unity of space [is] a condition of empirical knowledge, such nonconceptual content is relevant to the acquisition of objective knowledge only when determined in accordance with the functions of the understanding by means of the synthesis of the imagination’ (2015: 53). It is, they say, ‘insofar as the unicity of space \textit{is to be something for me}, and therefore to contribute to my experience of an objective world, that it requires a synthesis’ (2015: 28; emphasis in the original). That is to say that, for them, the form of sensible objects is not as such owed to that of the understanding; it is only the way in which I ‘take up’ the sensible object that is owed to the understanding. Indeed, sensibility is, in its nature, indifferent to cognition: what it supplies is ‘relevant to the acquisition of objective knowledge’ only if it happens that the understanding can act upon it. Thus when sensibility’s deliverances are susceptible to the understanding’s operation, this is an accident. Schulting says that Kant ‘cannot exclude the real possibility that occasional intuitions or perceptions do not agree…with the transcendental unity of apperception, in which case no perceptual knowledge would result and no objectivity could be established’ (2019: 318). But the problem with his interpretation is not that it does not depict Kant as seeking to \textit{guarantee} the impossibility of an exercise of sensibility which gives us nothing intelligible; as I said in Chapter 4, the elucidation of a capacity cannot guarantee that its conditions of operation are met. The problem is that on this interpretation, to the extent that sensibility \textit{does} give us something intelligible, this is an accident: and this means that we cannot, after all, explain why the categories are applicable to spatiotemporal intuition as such, which is the aim of the Deduction. Now Schulting would have a response to this, and I want to explain here why I should deem it inadequate. He would say that the categories are indeed non-accidentally applicable to spatiotemporal \textit{objects} as such because such objects, ‘not just their knowledge, are in some sense first constituted by the transcendental synthesis of the imagination’ (2019: 317). To be sure, according to the reading I develop below, such objects depend, in a particular way, on that synthesis. But because Schulting thinks that this synthesis constructs objects in an act of the imagination out of what is given by sensibility \textit{independently of this}
3. The original synthesis.

I turn now to the text of Part 2. While the heart of Part 2 is, as I have suggested, §26, material in the preceding sections is presupposed by that one. I begin with §21, in which Kant situates Part 2 in relation to Part 1. I then move to §§24 and 26.

3.1 §21: The return of space and time.

3.1.1 Quod est demonstrandum.

Kant reminds us in this section of the character of Part 1:

In the above proof, however, I still could not abstract from one point, namely, from the fact that the manifold for intuition must already be given prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently from it; how, however, is here left undetermined. For if I wanted to think of an understanding that itself intuited (as, say, a divine understanding, which would not represent given objects, but through whose representation the objects would themselves at the same time be given, or produced), then the categories would have no significance at all with regard to such a cognition. They are only rules for an understanding whose entire capacity consists in thinking, i.e., in the action of bringing the synthesis of the manifold that is given to it in intuition from elsewhere to the unity of apperception... [B145]

Kant says in this passage that that the job of Part 1 is to explain what a category is by showing us the position assumed by categories in general in the form of finite knowledge. Finite knowledge is synthesis grounded in a given object. The modes of that synthesis are categories. Since infinite knowledge would not be synthesis grounded in a given object, because infinite knowledge would give the object and know it always already as a whole, categories do not pertain to infinite

construction, he must reject both Kant’s characterization of sensibility in the very first sentence of the Aesthetic as giving us the objects of our cognition [A19/B33] and Kant’s claim to show in the Deduction that the categories are applicable to ‘everything [alles] that may come before our senses’ [B160] since for Schulting objects do not come before our senses, but after them.

To be sure, perhaps further fine distinctions, undrawn by Kant himself, can be drawn by the reader in the attempt to accommodate these remarks of Kant’s. But I think that we should not indulge in them. Kant wishes to exhibit the possibility of empirical knowledge. But empirical knowledge is not the fabrication of what is not there antecedent to its act; it is the comprehension of what is there antecedent to its act. Kant’s idealism does not, as I read it, say that I construct the objects of my knowledge in my act of knowing them; it says that in such acts I know objects which are, as it were, already prepared for such knowledge by my cognitive capacity and its original act (as I explain below). This must be, if Kant thinks, as indeed he does, that what is made possible by the synthetic a priori is the synthetic a posteriori; i.e., empirical knowledge.
knowledge. Thus the theme of Part 1, to serve as the beginning of a deduction of the categories, is not knowledge in general, finite or infinite. Nor, however, is it the human Erkenntnisvermögen in particular. It is, rather, finite knowledge as such. The principal claim of Chapter 4 is here corroborated.

We saw also in that chapter that Kant shows not only that finite knowledge is synthetic—what I called his conclusion on the side of the understanding—but also, as an immediate consequence of this, that the objects given in intuitions are categorically determinable—his conclusion on the side of sensibility. Of this he reminds us in the first sentence of the section:

A manifold that is contained in an intuition that I call mine is represented as belonging to the necessary unity of self-consciousness through the synthesis of the understanding, and this takes place by means of the category. [B144]

In accordance with the arguments of the previous chapter, and in particular with my reading of §20 as containing a categorical conclusion, I read ‘that I call mine’ here not as a qualification but as an explanation: intuitive manifolds must admit of belonging to the necessary unity of self-consciousness because they must admit of being mine (i.e., mine insofar as I am a thinker, a finite knower). For them to be brought to this unity, for me to think the objects they give, I must synthesize, and synthesis ‘takes place by means of the category’: the categories are, as we have seen, the modes of synthesis.

But, I said, this does not explain why the categories of the Leitfaden, those of the human understanding, are applicable to objects given in the form of human sensibility, space and time. This remains to be explained. And this, Kant now tells us, is what will be explained:

In the sequel (§26) it will be shown 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; thus by the explanation of its a priori validity in regard to all objects of our senses the aim of the deduction will first be fully attained. [B144-5]
The ‘way in which empirical intuition is given in sensibility’ is that from which he abstracted in Part 1: thus, space and time. In Part 1 we saw that sensibility gives objects in such a way as allows them to be thought, and so gives them for that very reason. Kant here expresses this explanatory relationship in the idiom of ‘prescription’ [Vorschrift]. The manifold must exhibit a unity so that it may admit of judgmental synthesis; this is the unity prescribed by ‘the category’, since ‘the category’ is a mode of judgmental synthesis in general. Now, the form of our sensibility, spatiotemporality, has a unity, he here tells us, and it will be shown that this unity is ‘prescribed’ by ‘the category’. That is, it will be shown that spatiotemporality has this unity because it must, given that only then can it perform its function of providing the human understanding an object to think. It has that unity because otherwise it cannot serve as the ground of a synthesis; in this sense, that unity is prescribed to it by ‘the category’. Kant does not yet say what character this unity has; it is the unity I shall discuss with reference to the B160 footnote below.

In depicting the unity of space and time as grounded in our need to know, Kant will do two things, both of which I have said he must. First, he will satisfy his positive account of knowledge a priori: the form of the understanding will be seen to ground that of the sensible object. Second, he will introduce a principle for the systematic explication of the Leitfaden-categories as the forms of intelligibility of the spatiotemporal as such. For he will tell us what makes spatiotemporal objects intelligible as spatiotemporal objects: the unity which pertains to space and time. He can then describe the categories in their role as ‘spelling out’ that unity.

3.1.2 An inherited facticity.

This section concludes with a reminder of the facticity of space and time, central to the structure of the Deduction, as I have argued. But Kant here also tells us that the human forms of judgment and categories partake of facticity too:
But for the peculiarity [Eigentümlichkeit] of our understanding, that it is able to bring about the unity of apperception a priori only by means of the categories and only through precisely this kind and number of them, a further ground may be offered just as little as one can be offered for why we have precisely these and no other functions for judgment or for why space and time are the sole forms of our possible intuition. [B145-6]

Here I address a promissory note issued in Chapter 4 to show that according to the reading of the Deduction developed here, Hegel’s charge that Kant allows the categories to remain in an ‘adventitious’ condition after the Leitfaden is unjust. This passage may, to be sure, be so read as to suggest that both human sensibility and human understanding partake of facticity, and do so, as it were, in parallel with one another. Thus, according to this reading, the forms of the one are determined independently of those of the other, though they may harmonize, in which case cognition is possible. This is, however, as I have said, incompatible with §27, which is itself nothing but an elaboration of Kant’s conception of knowledge a priori.

On a second reading, the passage tells us that the human understanding partakes of facticity in its possession of the functions of unity and categories presented in the Leitfaden, as sensibility partakes of facticity in its spatiotemporality. Nonetheless, these categories ‘prescribe’ to spatiotemporal sensibility its unity, that unity whose character will be described in §26. This prescription accounts for the agreement between the faculties, which is, then, no accidental harmony. We may add to this what we have already said in reflecting on §19 in Chapter 4: that we understand the Leitfaden-system as a system of categories only as we understand their necessity for judgment of the spatiotemporal. In this sense, then, the facticity of our understanding depends on that of our sensibility. This second reading keeps faith with the structure of knowledge a priori.

It might be objected that Kant seems sometimes to write as though our understanding partakes of no facticity at all. Consider, for example, this passage from §23:

Space and time are valid, as conditions of the possibility of how objects can be given to us, no further than for objects of the senses, hence only for experience. Beyond these boundaries they do not represent anything at all, for they are only in the senses
The parallelism in the passage suggests that Kant is concerned to contrast space and time, the forms of human sensibility, with the *Leitfaden*-categories, the forms of the human understanding. The latter, he says, ‘extend to objects of intuition in general’. It is unclear, at first, what this means. It could mean—this would be a denial of facticity—that the *Leitfaden*-categories belong to every finite understanding as such, so that whatever a finite knower’s forms of intuition, it is in terms of the *Leitfaden*-categories that she ‘spells out’ appearances. But if so, it would contradict the *Eigentümlichkeit* passage. It could also mean that though we do not know whether these categories belong to every finite understanding as such, nonetheless in *our* use of them—in the use that human beings make of them—they admit of extension to ‘objects of intuition in general’. This second reading is, all else equal, to be preferred, since it does not require that we reject the *Eigentümlichkeit* passage. And, indeed, it is corroborated by the subsequent text:

But this further extension of concepts beyond *our* sensible intuition does not get us anywhere. For they are then merely empty concepts of objects, through which we cannot even judge whether the latter are possible are not—mere forms of thought without objective reality—since we have available no intuition to which the synthetic unity of apperception, which they alone contain, could be applied, and thus could determine an object. *Our* sensible and empirical intuition alone can provide them with sense and significance. [B148-9]

If what Kant meant by the previous passage is that the *Leitfaden*-categories belong to every finite knower, he could not say that they are ‘merely empty’ except insofar as they are related to *our* forms of intuition. For insofar as they belong to a finite knower, they embody knowledge, and are thus not empty. Thus, he means by an ‘extension’ of the categories an extension *we* may attempt, one which does not, however, ‘get us anywhere’. What does it mean to say that the categories *do* extend to objects of intuition in general, though this extension does not ‘get us anywhere’? The key is in his contradistinctive characterization. The forms of our sensibility do not extend to objects lying outside
the humanly sensible, because it is only by virtue of being a humanly sensible object that something partakes of those forms. Thus, it is a *contradictio in adiecto* to speak of an object of a non-human sensibility which is spatiotemporal. Whereas there is no contradiction in such expressions as ‘non-spatiotemporal substance’. To be sure, such constructions express no reality: ‘it is not yet a genuine cognition if I merely indicate what the intuition of the object is not, without being able to say what is then contained in it; for then I have not represented the possibility of an object for my pure understanding at all’ [B149]. But that is not because they are self-contradictory. In that sense, an ‘extension’ is not impossible, though it gets us nowhere.\(^{12}\)

We thus have good reason to think that Kant means what he says in claiming that the human understanding partakes of facticity. It partakes of facticity, indeed, but its facticity is inherited—in the sense I have repeatedly emphasized—from that of sensibility. Thus, we cannot explain why its categories are as they are any more than we explain why sensibility’s forms are space and time, because we explain those categories in terms of space and time.\(^{13}\)

\[3.2 \text{§24: The original synthesis.}\]

\[3.2.1 \text{Intellectual and figurative, finite and human.}\]

Kant begins §24 by reminding us, yet again, of what he did in Part 1:

The pure concepts of the understanding are related through the mere understanding to objects of intuition in general, without it being determined whether this intuition

\(^{12}\) Similar remarks apply to *Fortschritte* 20:272.

\(^{13}\) There is another way of reading the passage as negatively consistent with—that is, orthogonal to—the position I am defending, and that is to say that the kind of ‘further ground’ Kant has in mind is not at all what I mean by an explication of the categories as constituting the intelligibility of the spatiotemporal. He may well mean an explanation of the origin of our cognitive capacity and its parts, such as he says, in a letter to Herz, could only appeal to our ‘divine creator’ [*Briefwechsel* (May 26, 1789) 11:51]. In Chapter 3 I said that in that letter Kant imagines a teleological explanation for the unity of cognition analogous to the explanation of the emergence of organized beings which he imagines in the third *Critique*. I said that we should take care to distinguish between a description of a being as organized and an attempt to explain how an organized being could ‘come about’, which explanation must always be posterior to an initial description. And I said that I remained, in that chapter, entirely on the earlier side of this distinction. The same is true now. If the *Eigentümlichkeit* passage concerns the kind of question Kant dismisses in the letter to Herz, then it is compatible with the line of interpretation I defend simply because it is irrelevant to it.
is our own or some other but still sensible one, but they are on this account mere **forms of thought**, through which no determinate object is yet cognized. The synthesis or combination of the manifold in them was related merely to the unity of apperception, and was thereby the ground of the possibility of cognition *a priori* insofar as it rests on the understanding, and was therefore not only transcendental but also merely purely intellectual. [B150]

In Part 1, we are told in the second sentence, the synthesis of the manifold in an intuition in general was related to the unity of apperception. It was related to it in the following way: to think something given in intuition, a finite knower synthesizes. Therefore, it was concluded, the intuitive manifolds given by her sensibility admit of synthesis. Kant now calls this synthesis—the synthesis, insofar as it pertains to finite knowledge in general—the ‘intellectual’ synthesis. The first sentence is connected to the theme of the immediately precedent §23, which I have discussed above: the ‘extension’ of the *Leitfaden*-categories, the human categories, to ‘objects of intuition in general’. This, we learned, though it implicates us in no contradiction, yields no positive thought and thereby no knowledge, as Kant says again.14 Thus, if the *Leitfaden*-categories are to embody *a priori* knowledge, they must do so in their relation to spatiotemporal sensibility:

But since in us a certain form of sensible intuition *a priori* is fundamental, which rests on the receptivity of the capacity for representation (sensibility), the understanding, as spontaneity, can determine the manifold of given representations in accord with

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14 It is strange that the first sentence is about §23, and the second sentence about Part 1—though this accounts for the difference in tense between the sentences—but this has to be case. Allison reads both as concerning §23 and Part 1 indifferently, and indeed as telling us that

what the first part of the Deduction showed is that through their connection with the “mere understanding” the categories relate to objects of intuition in general, which, due to the argument of §§22 and 23, we can now recognize establishes only that they are merely “**forms of thought**, through which no determinate object is cognized.” (2015: 379)

I do not see how the conclusion of §20 (which, I have said, concerns finite knowledge in general) can be identified with the conclusion of §§22-23 (which concern the attempt by the human knower to extend her categories beyond spatiotemporal application). Consider the way in which §19 must be read, if this is to work. Kant says that in a judgment, the representations ‘belong to one another in virtue of the necessary unity of the apperception in the synthesis of intuitions’ [B142; boldface in the original]. But synthesis has categorical modes; therefore, he concludes, these modes are applicable to intuitions (§20). Thus this conclusion is founded in part on the premise that a judgment is grounded in the intuitively presented object: the object can be a ground of judgment; therefore, the modes of judgment are applicable to it. This argument cannot, as Allison must claim, concern the human thinker's relation to a manifold of intuition, spatiotemporal or not, since a non-spatiotemporal manifold cannot present a human thinker with a ground of judgment. It makes no sense to conclude that the *Leitfaden*-categories are applicable as ‘mere forms of thought’ to non-spatiotemporal objects, on the basis of an argument which appeals to the possibility of objectively grounded judgments, since, *ex hypothesi*, I cannot ground a judgment in a non-spatiotemporal object, and therefore no conclusion about the character of such an object can follow from the observation that it must be thus-and-so if I am to ground a judgment in it.
the synthetic unity of apperception, and thus think \textit{a priori} synthetic unity of the apperception of the manifold of \textbf{sensible intuition}, as the condition under which all objects of our (human) intuition must necessarily stand, through which then the categories, as mere forms of thought, acquire objective reality… [B150-1]

This is simply the application of the conclusion of §20 to the case of the human species.

Thus, the theme of this section is established as the transition from ‘intuition’—and thus cognition—‘in general’ to human cognition. This transition is a specification. It is not a division within a particular thinker, as though you or I could contain some bits more generic, others more specific. Nor is it a process which befalls a particular thinker. I cannot begin as a thinker-in-general and then descend into the specificity of the human being, any more than an animal can begin as an amphibian-in-general and then descend into the specificity of the toad. If we interpret the notion of synthesis related ‘merely to the unity of apperception’, the ‘intellectual’ synthesis, as I have, then the intellectual synthesis is not something which occurs in me before, after, or alongside another synthesis. Rather, the synthesis of a spatiotemporal manifold is the specific form which synthesis related ‘merely to the unity of apperception’ assumes for human cognition.\textsuperscript{15} This must be borne in mind as Kant proceeds to introduce another adjective qualifying ‘synthesis’ which he opposes to ‘intellectual’:

This \textbf{synthesis} of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary \textit{a priori}, can be called \textit{figurative} (\textit{synthesis speciosa}), as distinct from that which would be thought in the mere category in regard to the manifold of an intuition in general, and which is called combination of the understanding (\textit{synthesis intellectualis}); both are \textbf{transcendental}, not merely because they themselves proceed \textit{a priori} but also because they ground the possibility of other cognition \textit{a priori}. [B151]

This passage is not perspicuously written, because Kant seems at first to contrast ‘sensible intuition’ with ‘intuition in general’. But given that synthesis is supposed to apply to both, this cannot be what he means. For intuition in general is a genus that includes, at least negatively, a species with which no synthesis is associated: intellectual intuition. In the context of this section, however, it is clear that

\textsuperscript{15} This does not entail that there is not, in any sense, more than one synthesis in human cognition. These remarks apply only to the \textit{intellectualis/ speciosa} distinction that Kant is about to introduce.
Kant means to contrast ‘human intuition’ with ‘sensible intuition in general’. He again calls the synthesis associated with the latter ‘intellectual’. He calls the synthesis associated with the former ‘figurative’.¹⁶

Let us pause to collect our argument as heretofore developed. The *Leitfaden*-categories are applicable to things given by our human sensibility. They are applied in acts of what we have now learned to call ‘figurative synthesis’. Recall that Kant’s task in Part 2 is twofold: first, he must depict this applicability as somehow grounded in the form of the human understanding. And second, he must identify a principle for the explication, in the Analytic of Principles, of each of his categories as a necessary form of intelligibility of the spatiotemporal. At this stage he turns to the first of these tasks, by drawing a distinction within the concept of figurative synthesis. But before we can broach that, we must make a brief return to Part 1 and discuss something I set aside in Chapter 4: the distinction between the original unity of apperception and the unity of a particular act of thinking.

### 3.2.2 The original act of finite knowledge.

In the last chapter, to simplify matters, I prescinded from the qualification ‘original’ as applied to ‘unity of apperception’. At this point, however, the intelligibility of the Deduction demands that we introduce it. This is what Kant says in §16, of the representation ‘I think’:

> [T]his representation is an act of **spontaneity**, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it the **pure apperception**, in order to distinguish it from the **empirical** one, or also the **original apperception**, since it is that self-consciousness which, because it produces the representation **I think**, which must be able to accompany all others and which in all consciousness is one and the same, cannot be accompanied by any further representation. I also call its unity the **transcendental** unity of self-consciousness in order to designate the possibility of *a priori* cognition from it. [B132]

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¹⁶ In this I agree with Guyer, who writes that in §24 Kant moves ‘from abstract to concrete’, arguing that the *synthesis intellectualis* ‘must be called in our case…a “figurative” synthesis’ (2010: 144).
In Chapter 4 I wrote of apperceptive unities grounded in objects and identified these as empirical judgments. Each such unity is an act of thought, an act of empirical thought, and thus an actualization of the capacity to judge. Here, however, Kant says that there is a pure act which produces a representation that ‘must be able to accompany all others’ and ‘cannot be accompanied by any further representation’. How is this act related to empirical judgments? Recall that those acts, as thoughts, are apperceptive, because thought is apperceptive. That is to say that even though I may not utter the words ‘I think’, in judging I am conscious of myself as judging, and indeed judge in and through that consciousness; in this sense, the ‘I think’ belongs to every empirical judgment as its form. Kant here says that this representation, which belongs to every empirical judgment as its form, is ‘produced’ [herorgebracht] by an act. This act, the original apperception, is thereby the condition of the possibility of all acts of empirical judgment.

Since in an empirical judgment I think something—‘the body is heavy’, ‘the cat is on the mat’—it is natural to ask what I think in this act called ‘original apperception’. Kant’s answer is that, insofar as this act is construed as belonging to the understanding in detachment from sensibility, in this act I think nothing. Here is how he puts it in §25:

In the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general, on the contrary, hence in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This representation is a thinking, not an intuiting. …for the cognition of ourselves, in addition to the act of thinking that brings the manifold of every possible intuition to the unity of apperception, a determinate sort of intuition, through which the manifold is given, is also required… [B157]

The original act is a consciousness of my existence, containing no consciousness whatever of my essence. That is, it is a consciousness of no material determination. It may seem clear enough that it cannot be a consciousness of a material determination by virtue of being a consciousness of my existence, since existence is not a predicate.
Elsewhere Kant emphasizes the point that the original act is, construed in isolation from sensibility, merely a consciousness of my existence in which I think nothing. In a footnote to the B-Paralogisms he says that the ‘I think’ expresses an ‘indeterminate perception’,

which ‘here signifies only something real, which was given, and indeed only to thinking in general, thus not as appearance, and also not as a thing in itself (a noumenon), but rather as something that in fact exists and is indicated as an existing thing in the proposition “I think.” [B423]

And, finally, in a footnote in the *Prolegomena*, he writes that

>[i]f the representation of apperception, the I, were a concept through which anything might be thought, it would then be able to be used as a predicate for other things, or to contain such predicates in itself. But it is nothing more than a feeling of an existence without the least concept, and it is a representation only of that to which all thinking stands in relation (relatio accidentis). [Prolegomena 4:334n.]

Kant is absolutely clear here that the ‘I’ of the ‘I think’ contains no material determination. It may seem problematic for him to call it ‘nothing more than a feeling of an existence’, since it is supposed to be something active—or, rather, activity itself, since it is not anything—not something passive. Feeling is a matter of the lower capacities of the soul, not of the higher. He is thinking already of the ‘I think’ in the context of cognition and, indeed, the mind as a whole.

This is a clue that though we are first introduced to the act as detached, that is not how we are always to understand it. But even without this clue, we could come to this conclusion. For though there is nothing which is thought in this original act, considered in detachment from sensibility, Kant promises, in his very introduction of the idea of this act, that we can think something through it. He calls it ‘the transcendental unity of self-consciousness’ and explains that he so labels this act ‘in order to designate the possibility of a priori cognition from it’ [B132]. If there is to be a priori cognition from this act, then it cannot be that its final and proper description identifies it as the original act of the understanding in detachment from sensibility. For he repeatedly insists that, so considered, the act has no content.

Thus he writes, in a footnote to §25 that
[t]he I think expresses the act of determining my existence. The existence is thereby already given, but the way in which I am to determine it, i.e., the manifold that I am to posit in myself as belonging to it, is not yet thereby given. For that self-intuition is required, which is grounded in an a priori given form… [B157]

When only the understanding is in the picture, the ‘I think’ is depicted as produced by, as expressive of, an act by which I am conscious of my existence but in which I think nothing, even about myself. The act is depicted as complete in my consciousness of myself. But now Kant tells us that such consciousness does not constitute completion of the act, because in the act I determine my existence, and for that, he says, an a priori given form of intuition is required.17 The original act of the understanding is, then, not a consciousness of my existence in which I am indifferent to my essence. We might put it this way: in this act, as soon as I am conscious that I am, I strive to know what I am. The understanding, in the performance of its original act, that which makes possible all its acts hic et nunc, its empirical judgments, turns, as it were, towards sensibility. The completion of this turning-towards is knowledge of what I am, the cognition a priori that Kant promised from this act.

Let us pause and connect this to our main thread. I have said that Part 2 must depict the human understanding and human sensibility as so related that the form of the understanding is the ground of the form of the sensible object. I have said that unless Kant so depicts these parts of the cognitive capacity, he does not depict the categories as embodiments of knowledge a priori. This is because for them to be grounds of knowledge a priori is for them to ground the form of their object. I have also described Part 1 as locating the category in general in the form of finite knowledge: categories are modes of synthesis grounded in a sensible given. That synthesis, grounded as it is in a sensible given, is an empirical synthesis, an act of empirical judgment. So, I have said, the modes of

17 Allison remarks about this passage that since existence is not a predicate, to determine an existence ‘consists in attributing a determinate nature to something that is already taken as an existent because it is given in intuition’ (2015: 397). But intuition is invoked in this passage not as the ground of the consciousness of my existence, which precedes the determination, but as the ground of the determination itself.
the act of empirical judgment embody knowledge \textit{a priori}, because they are the ground of the form of the object of empirical judgment, the sensible object as such.

Why, if the modes of \textit{empirical} judgment embody knowledge \textit{a priori}, does Kant say that such knowledge is yielded by a \textit{non}-empirical, original act of the understanding, one which precedes every empirical judgment, and, moreover, one in whose completion I know what I am? Knowledge \textit{a priori} of the form of sensible objects is knowledge of that form as grounded in the form of my cognition. In Chapter 3 I characterized it in this way: knowledge that objects are thus-and-so in and through knowledge of my own cognitive requirements as the ground of their being thus-and-so. I have insisted that the categories must be understood as the ground of the form of the sensible object. I have laid less emphasis on this, that for this to be knowledge, I must know them as that ground. For recall that this \textit{a priori} knowledge is the possibility of empirical knowledge, acts of the understanding \textit{hic et nunc} in which I apply empirical concepts, the categories \textit{in concreto}, in recognition of their applicability. My readiness to do this in general is my recognition of the applicability of the \textit{Leitfaden}-categories and can be no less than this. Suppose that the form of my understanding were unbeknownst to me the form of nature. Then, in applying the categories in the guise of empirical concepts \textit{hic et nunc}, I should not apply them in consciousness of their applicability. My self-conscious act would be explanatorily sundered from the condition of its success, whereas to be a self-conscious act is to contain a consciousness of this condition.

Thus, it does not suffice, for me to know the form of sensible objects \textit{a priori}, for their form to be grounded in that of my cognition. I must know it as so grounded, and this knowledge is itself a readiness for empirical judgment, a readiness which can be nothing less than this knowledge. This readiness, whereby I actually know the categorical determinability of the sensible object, is, I submit, what Kant means by the original act of the understanding which ‘precedes’ every empirical judgment. It is an act in whose completion I know myself: know myself, that is, as thinker and
knower, and thereby know the identity of the form of my understanding and that of nature. In summary, my cognitive capacity is the ground of the form of nature and thereby, as a self-conscious capacity, the possibility of my knowledge of it as this ground. Its original act is the actualization of this possibility, in which it knows itself and its form as the ground of that of nature and is thereby itself the readiness for empirical judgment. In the traditional idiom, the cognitive capacity is potentiality, or first potentiality; the original act is first actuality, or second potentiality; and empirical judgment, the derivative act, is second actuality. In the sequel I elaborate and apply this threefold division towards the solution of various important interpretive problems.

3.2.3 The transcendental synthesis of the imagination.

Let us collect the results of §§3.2.1-2. I said in §3.2.1 that ‘intellectual synthesis’ is Kant’s term for synthesis considered as belonging to finite knowledge in general, ‘figurative synthesis’ his term for synthesis considered as belonging to human knowledge specifically. I concluded with an allusion to something to come: divisions within the concept of figurative synthesis. To understand these divisions, which I am about to introduce, we had to return to Part 1 of the Deduction, and in §3.2.2 I did so, introducing the distinction between the original and derivative acts of the understanding in general, the former that by which the understanding actualizes its a priori knowledge, the latter the empirical judgment thereby made possible. This is a division within the concept of intellectual synthesis: that is, it applies to finite cognition in general. There is a corresponding division within the concept of figurative synthesis: that is, one which applies to human cognition specifically, and in §24 Kant introduces one member of this division:

Yet the figurative synthesis, if it pertains merely to the original synthetic unity of apperception, i.e., this transcendental unity, which is thought in the categories, must be called, as distinct from the merely intellectual combination, the **transcendental synthesis of the imagination**. [B151]
Keeping to our observation that §24 concerns the transition from the general to the specific, we conclude that the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is the original act of the understanding insofar as that understanding is human. This is borne out by what follows. Recall that the original act is an act by which I determine myself: an act of the understanding which turns, as it were, towards sensibility. This is what Kant proceeds to describe:

Now since all of our intuition is sensible, the imagination, on account of the subjective condition under which alone it can give a corresponding intuition to the concepts of understanding, belongs to sensibility; but insofar as its synthesis is still an exercise of spontaneity, which is determining and not, like sense, merely determinable, and can thus determine the form of sense a priori in accordance with the unity of apperception, the imagination is to this extent a faculty for determining sensibility a priori, and its synthesis of intuitions, in accordance with the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility and its first application (and at the same time the ground of all others) to objects of the intuition that is possible for us.

In this description we find confirmed much of what I have said of the original act. It is an act whereby the understanding turns towards sensibility; Kant expresses this here by attributing it to the imagination, which belongs both to sensibility and to the understanding. It is an act which ‘determine[s] the form of sense a priori; a priori determination is grounding, and so this act is the actuality of a priori knowledge, according to Kant’s structural characterization. It is the first act of the human understanding and thereby the ground of all others, i.e., of empirical judgments. Empirical judgments are possible, recall, only if a priori knowledge of the applicability of the modes of their synthesis is actual. The transcendental synthesis of the imagination constitutes this actuality by so determining the form of sense that the objects given in it are determinable in empirical judgments: i.e., by the categories.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) On this reading, we do not at this point need an ‘argument’ for the claim that ‘the figurative synthesis is an expression of the spontaneity of the understanding’, as Allison claims (2015: 386). The transcendental synthesis of the imagination is the original act of Part 1, insofar as it is specified as human. But that original act is constitutively an expression of the spontaneity of the understanding.
Thus, in the figure of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, Kant depicts the understanding’s form as the ground of that of sensible objects, and as thereby constituting our readiness for empirical judgment. At this stage, however, an initial problem of this chapter reemerges. How can the form of sensible objects be accounted to sensibility, in detachment from the understanding, if the human understanding in its original act, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, grounds the form of (humanly) sensible objects as such? To witness Kant’s response to this question, we must turn, finally, to §26.

3.3 §26: Space and time actualized.

3.3.1 Divisions within the figurative synthesis.

Kant begins this section with a summary of what has happened thus far: the discovery of the human categories in the Leitfaden, and the conclusion that a finite thinker’s categories are applicable to the objects given in its intuition [B159]. He then turns to the task of Part 2:

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 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]

The human categories, as articulations of the form of the human understanding, must be depicted as the ground of—as ‘making possible’—the lawful form of objects as nature. In so depicting them, Kant will show us ‘why everything that may ever come before our senses must stand under the laws that arise a priori from the understanding alone’ [B160]. The understanding’s form will be depicted as the ground of the lawful form of the sensible object as such. We know already that this groundedness is expressed in Kant’s notion of the original synthesis of the imagination. Before he proceeds, he introduces the second member of the division of figurative synthesis: the synthesis of apprehension.
First of all I remark that by the synthesis of apprehension I understand the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance), becomes possible. [B160]

Just as the original act of the understanding in general makes possible empirical judgment in general, so too the original synthesis of the imagination makes possible the synthesis of apprehension. This is the same relation, of first to second actuality, but at the level of human cognition.  

Kant continues:

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. [B160]

Since the synthesis of apprehension is the empirical synthesis pertaining to human cognition, it occurs only in accordance with the human forms of sensibility, space and time.

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). [B160-1]

This is the crucial move. Kant is approaching the conclusion that because the empirical synthesis occurs in accordance with space and time, because the object of the synthesis is in space and time, the Leitfaden categories are applicable to it. He has just begun to fill in this explanation: it is because space and time are not merely forms of sensible intuition, but intuitions themselves, that this is so. What matters about their being intuitions is that intuitions partake of unity, and in particular the unity discussed in the Transcendental Aesthetic. It is to this remark that appends the infamous footnote with which we began:

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19 On this reading, we do not at this point need an ‘argument’, demanded by Allison, which connects the conditions of the possibility of the synthesis of apprehension to those of the original act of apperception, by way of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination (2015: 415). We do not imagine these syntheses to be presented by Kant as a pile of psychological operations, to be placed in the proper order, because we read Kant as elucidating the structure of a capacity. If the transcendental synthesis is the first actuality, and the empirical synthesis the second, then the conditions of the former’s possibility are conditions of the latter’s. Allison reads Kant as needing to add here to his ‘long list of premises’ [ibid.,] each of which is logically independent of every other, any one of which is open to dispute. The reading I have presented does not have this disadvantage. (Allison notes that Kant identifies his syntheses as ‘one and the same spontaneity’ [B162n.] (2015: 420). But he must read this as itself a premise, rather than as belonging to the nature of the philosophical exercise.)
[1] Space, represented as object (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the comprehension 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. [2] In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. [3] For since through it (as the understanding determines the sensibility) space or time are first given as intuitions, the unity of this a priori intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (§24). [B160-1n.; numerals mine]

As I have already urged, [2] tells us that the unity—the very unity—Kant ascribed ‘merely to sensibility’ in the Aesthetic is a unity which ‘presupposes a synthesis’, but which ‘precedes all concepts’. [3] tells us that in this synthesis, the understanding determines sensibility. The synthesis described in this footnote matches the original synthesis of the imagination in at least this respect: it is a determination of sensibility by the understanding. But does it match the original synthesis in ‘preceding all concepts’? The original synthesis is, recall, the actuality of a priori knowledge, which constitutes my readiness for empirical judgment. In an empirical judgment, I apply concepts. In the original act, I constitute myself as ready to apply concepts. In this sense, the original act itself precedes all concepts—precedes the application of concepts hic et nunc—and so matches the synthesis here described. The distinction I introduced between first and second actuality, or second potentiality and first actuality, is here put to work in our understanding how there can be a synthesis which ‘precedes all concepts’. It precedes all concepts in the manner of preceding, of grounding the possibility of, the application of concepts hic et nunc.

3.3.2 The unity of the actual.

We have seen how Kant can (i) depict the constitution of sensibility as depending upon that of the understanding; (ii) acknowledge the facticity and space and time; and (iii) describe this dependence in terms other than that of judgment (or of concepts), in accordance with the B160 footnote. But we
have yet to approach the question of what it is about space and time that is grounded in the original synthesis. Kant says in the footnote that it is ‘the unity’ he ‘ascribed merely to sensibility’ in the Aesthetic. What is that unity?

It is natural, at this point, to turn to the Metaphysical Exposition of space and time in the Aesthetic. Commentators have, naturally enough, tended to focus on the third moment of the exposition of space the and fourth moment of the exposition of time [A24-5/B39; A31-2/B46], in which Kant denies that space and time are discursive unities. But this moment alone will be of no help. The unity of space and time, that which constitutes the categorical determinability of the spatiotemporal, is not merely the singularity of space and time, if this is so read as to mean that space and time are individuals. Nor is it merely the priority in space and time of the whole to the parts. Neither of these properties entails that space and time are home to a community of interacting substances.

We come closer when we turn from the third (fourth, in the case of time) to the second moment, which concerns the status of space and time as a priori [A24/B38-9; A31/B46]. In the second moment of the exposition of the concept of space we are told that ‘[s]pace is a necessary representation, a priori, that is the ground of all outer intuitions’ and that ‘[i]t is therefore to be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances’ [A24/B38-9]. These passages may seem not to concern unity at all. But they do. They tell us that space, in grounding all outer intuitions, is the a priori unity of those intuitions. The third moment then tells us that this unity is not discursive but intuitive. Thus, the point of the third moment is not that space shares with other things, individuality and the priority of the whole to its parts. The third moment is a comment upon the unity introduced by the second: the unity of all outer intuitions.

The second moment of the exposition of the concept of time is even more informative. In it Kant says that ‘[t]ime is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions’ and that ‘[i]n it alone is
all actuality \([Wirklichkeit]\) of appearances possible' \([A31/B46]\). By analogy, we can say that in space alone is all actuality of outer appearances possible. And this is, I urge, the heart of the matter: space and time are sites, and indeed the sites, of actuality, and therefore the unity of the actual \(qua\) actual. In being in space, in being in time, something is thereby actual. Actuality is not a predicate, which is why space and time are not discursive unities, as explained in the third (or fourth, in the case of time) moment of the exposition.

No such property of space and time as singularity, whole-part priority, given infinity, or even the complete set of these properties, entails anything about the categorical determinability of spatiotemporal objects. But if space and time are sites of the actual—as they are, since they are nothing other than the forms of our sensibility, our capacity to receive the actual for thought—then this does entail that spatiotemporal objects are categorically determinable.

This is confirmed in Kant’s discussion of actuality in the Analytic of Principles. In the Postulates of Empirical Thinking, we are told that modal concepts like that of possibility \([Möglichkeit]\), necessity \([Notwendigkeit]\), and actuality \([Wirklichkeit]\) ‘do not augment the concept to which they are ascribed in the least, but rather express only the relation to the cognitive capacity \([Erkenntnisvermögen]\)’ \([A219/B266]\). In saying ‘such-and-such is possible’, ‘…is actual’, or ‘…is necessary’, I answer the question: ‘how is the object itself…related to the understanding and its empirical exercise \([dessen empirischen Gebrauche]\), to the empirical power of judgment, and to reason’ \([A219/B266]\)? These three aspects of the intellect in the broad sense—understanding, power of judgment, and reason—are that in relation to which the question whether something is possible, actual, or necessary, respectively, is answered:

If [a concept] is merely connected in the understanding with the formal conditions of experience, its object is called possible; if it is in connection with perception (sensation, as the matter of the senses), and through this determined by means of the understanding, the object is actual; and if it is determined through the connection of perceptions in accordance with concepts, then the object is called necessary. \([A234/B286-7]\)
Why does Kant mention, in connection with actuality, the empirical power of judgment at A219/B266, but perception and sensation at A234/B286? Why does he reinforce the latter point in the following footnote?

**Through the actuality** of a thing I certainly posit more than possibility, but not in the thing; for that can never contain more in actuality than what was contained in its complete possibility. But while possibility was merely a positing of a thing in relation to the understanding (to its empirical exercise [dessen empirischen Gebrauch]), actuality is at the same time its connection with perception [A234-5/B287].

Recall what I said in Chapter 3: empirical judgment is an actualization of the understanding enabled by the empirical presentation of an object. When we receive an object in such a presentation, we stand in readiness to make an empirical judgment grounded in it. To put it in the terms of the German *Schulpiefahofie*, our capacity [Vermögen] stands in a condition of power [Kraft] with respect to (at least some) judgmental acts grounded in that object. Thus, in this context, we may say either that actuality belongs to perception or that it belongs to the power of judgment [Urteilskraft]. For the perception by which we receive the object is the enabling condition which places our Vermögen zu urteilen in a state of Urteilskraft: in readiness to judge.

This may appear to suggest that, absurdly, the domain of the actual is limited to that which we actually perceive *hic et nunc*. Kant is at pains, however, to emphasize that this is not so. Rather, the actual extends to that which is connected [zusammenhängt] with some perceptions in accordance with the principles of their empirical connection [Verknüpfung] (the analogies). For in that case the existence of the thing is still connected [hängt…zusammen] with our perceptions in a possible experience, and with the guidance of the analogies we can get from our actual perceptions to the thing in a series of possible perceptions. [A225-6/B273]

I shall discuss the Analogies in some detail in Chapter 6. For now, it is sufficient to note this: that the actual *qua* actual pertains the power of judgment. That is, it pertains to our readiness to make an empirical judgment: it pertains to the act of empirical knowledge. It is not thereby limited to that
which we actually perceive. We might say that it is limited to that which stands in readiness for our perception: that is, to that which stands in readiness of being a ground of empirical judgment.

At the very beginning of this study, in Chapter 1, I emphasized that our dependence for our knowledge on the actual is what makes us finite knowers. What we did not know then—the ‘secret lying hidden’ [es liegt also hier ein gewisses Geheimnis verborgen; A10]—is that this very dependence on the actual is made possible by an original act whereby the actual is first constituted as standing ready to serve as the ground of finite knowledge. When Kant says that time is the ground of all actuality, and when we say that, by analogy, space is the ground of all outer actuality, in these very words he says, we say, that space and time are grounds of the actual as judgeable. For that the actual is judgeable belongs to the very notion of actuality. The actual is per se that which stands in readiness to let us stand in readiness: that is, which stands in readiness to actualize the Vermögen zu urteilen as Urteilskraft.\(^{20}\)

We have not, to be sure, yet seen why the actual, and hence the judgeable spatiotemporal must be determinable by such concepts as substance, cause and the rest. Kant is about, in the remainder of §26, to introduce the explanation for this in its most abstract description, and will then elaborate it in the Analytic of Principles. But we now have in hand what we sought in this subsection, the answer to the question of what unity, pertaining to space and time, refers to the understanding, and which in this sense is grounded in the understanding. And our answer is that this unity is the unity of the actual.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{20}\) Kant’s conception of actuality makes essential reference to finite knowledge. As Kant says in the Critique of the power of judgment, for an infinite knoweue would be no distinction between the possible and the actual [KU 5:401-3].

\(^{21}\) This also suggests a reading of Kant’s infamous distinction between the form of intuition and formal intuition, introduced in the first sentence of the B160 footnote: the formal intuition is the actuality of the form of intuition. As such, the formal intuition has no properties—singularity, whole-part priority, and so on—over and above those of the form of intuition. It is the form of intuition as actualized by the original synthesis. Thus the form of intuition is prior to that synthesis, but not independent of its possibility: belonging to sensibility, which is per se the lower cognitive capacity, it is per se such as to be actualized as the formal intuition. This agrees idiomatically with Longuenesse’s characterization of the form of intuition as ‘potential form’ (1998: 221), though I have departed from her view that the actualization of this form involves the addition of properties.
3.3.2 Nature and the actual.

Among what I have said about the actual have been the following two things. First, the main point thus far: the actual is that which stands in readiness to ground an empirical judgment. Second, the point I said Kant would not elucidate until the Analytic of Principles: every actuality is connected with every other according to the Analogies of Experience. In the Analogies Kant will show that this interconnectedness of the actual is entailed by the basic characterization of the actual as that which stands in readiness to ground an empirical judgment. That interconnectedness will be characterized in terms of the Leitfaden-categories, among which the relational categories substance, cause, and community will enjoy pride of place. He will show that the spatiotemporal can serve as the ground for an empirical judgment only if it is determinable according to these categories. In Chapter 4’s discussion of §19 I discussed a kind of necessity which, I said, lies between the object and me: the necessitation of my judgment by the object. For an object to admit of playing such a necessitating role is for it to be actual. Now Kant tells us that this necessity, lying between the object and me, is grounded in a necessity lying within the object itself: the interconnectedness expressed by the categories. For now he anticipates this by giving a name—indeed, the familiar name—to this interconnectedness: nature [B163-5]. This can be characterized as the ‘principle of the Principles’: the spatiotemporal, insofar as it admits of grounding judgment, has the form of a nature.

Kant has succeeded in one of his tasks. The human understanding has been depicted as the ground of the form of the humanly sensible object, though there is something of that form which is owed entirely to human sensibility. The form of sensibility is spatiotemporal, but the unity of space and time—the unity of the actual—is owed to the understanding. The promise of his basic structural answer to the problem of pure reason has been kept.

4.1 Internal problems: capacities & acts.

4.1.1 If cognition is a capacity, why is there an original synthesis?

I have repeatedly said that since the Deduction explains the unity of a capacity, it is never in question whether the parts of the capacity are such as to allow the capacity’s successful exercise. For in describing a capacity, we describe it as oriented towards its exercise. The exercise of the human cognitive capacity, empirical judgment, requires that the objects given by sensibility be categorically determinable, and they are, I have said, so determinable for that reason. But if they can be so determinable on account of sensibility’s unity with the understanding as one cognitive capacity, why does Kant attribute this determinability to an act of the understanding, even if an ‘original’ one? Why is this the way in which he chooses to express the dependence of the form of the sensible on the end of cognition?

Let me sharpen the question. To characterize the original act as a first actuality, as I have, means to distinguish between three modalities of the cognitive capacity: potentiality, first actuality, and second actuality. If the original act is the first actuality of the cognitive capacity, then the cognitive capacity is potentiality. The first actuality of a potentiality does not transform the potentiality, in the sense of altering its nature; it simply actualizes the nature it already has. Thus, if the original act is the first actuality of cognition, it cannot account for any capability not already accounted for by the capacity which it actualizes. It cannot be that sensibility, insofar as it belongs to the cognitive capacity merely as potentiality, is not yet by nature such as to contribute to cognition, only to have its nature transformed by an original act. All the original act can do is to actualize what already lies in the nature of sensibility. This may seem to rob the original act of the explanatory

22 Longuenesse writes:
import Kant attributes to it, and thus falsify my reading of the Deduction as elucidating a capacity in the relevant sense. For now, it may seem, it really is the structure of the capacity, and not any act thereof, however original, which explains why sensible objects are categorically determinable.

But this is not so. We may distinguish three modalities of the object, parallel to those of the cognitive capacity. The object may be in potentiality with respect to my knowledge of it, or in first actuality, or in second actuality. We may speak in this way: in the first condition the object is potentially knowable; in the second it is knowable; in the third it is known. Since knowledge of the object is my determination of the object by categories, in the first condition the object is potentially categorically determinable; in the second it is categorically determinable; in the third it is categorically determined. What determines that an object is in the third of these conditions is that I make an empirical judgment grounded in it: it is judged, it is known, it is categorically determined. What, however, is the difference between the first and second conditions? The difference is the difference made by the first actuality of cognition, since that puts me in a position to know the object in a second actuality. So, although the object is already, by nature, potentially categorically determinable prior to the original act of cognition, it is not yet categorically determinable, and is so constituted by that act.

The categorical determinability of an object is, then, in this sense not something prior to my knowledge of it, which I may come to know. It is constituted by the original act. Thus we may preserve Kant’s doctrine—as I have interpreted it above—that the categorical determinability of the sensible object is constituted by an act which is itself the knowledge of that determinability. As we

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*Space and time as presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic are products of a figurative synthesis. But for such a production to be possible, its potentiality must be contained in the receptivity itself.*

(1998: 221)

That she characterizes this structure in terms of ‘Kant’s evolutionary, “epigenetic” conception of the conditions of representation’ *(ibid)* suggests that this production is a kind of development. For the acorn to become an oak, it must be the oak *in potentia*. (It does not, as according to the “preformative” rival to the epigenetic position, contain a miniscule oak.) Thus, her idiom suggests not just that it is possible for receptivity to be so affected by spontaneity, but that this is needed for sensibility to actualize what belongs to it by nature. I agree.
have seen, however, this does not require us to say that the sensible object is, apart from this act, by nature indifferent to the possibility of being judged. And so we may hold to our conception of the Deduction as elucidating the cognitive capacity, even as we recognize the import of the original act as actualizing the categorical determinability of the object and thereby constituting my *a priori* knowledge of that determinability. So recognizing it, we recognize the original act not as the principle of the possibility of the original unity of cognition, but as the principle of its actuality. This agrees with Kant's characterizations of the act as a consciousness or feeling of my existence.

4.1.2 How can the original synthesis be an act?

Since empirical judgment is possible only upon the ground of a sensible object, and since sensible objects come before me in particular places and at particular times, an empirical judgment is determined as to time and space (that is, my location when I make it). On the other hand, these very temporal and locative determinations refer essentially to the one space and the one time which, Kant tells us, as I have read him, is constituted by the original act, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Thus, this act has itself no temporal or locative determinations. As an act which constitutes time, it cannot presuppose time. It has no beginning and no end, no before and no after.

As such, I do not think it can be regarded as an act in the narrow sense: that is, something to which temporal determinations belong *per se*. This problem has not, to my knowledge, commanded the attention of participants in the recent discussion about whether space and time might be constituted by an act of the understanding. It seems to me, however, a major issue, on whose resolution the intelligibility of the Deduction depends. Towards such a resolution we might note that the original synthesis can be described in the terms I have already used: as an *actuality*, rather than as a mere potentiality. Since it has no before and no after, it cannot be taken, as might otherwise seem natural, as a process whose product is a singular space and time and, thereby, my
readiness to judge objects sensible to me. In Chapter 4 I suggested, following Stephen Engstrom, that we understand empirical synthesis not as a process but as an activity, not as a putting-together but as a holding-together. In an activity there is no distinction between process and product. Here too, I wish to suggest, this idea may be applied. I do not perform an act whose product is my readiness to judge objects sensible to me. The original act does not produce this readiness; it constitutes it. It is this readiness. And for this reason, temporal determinations do not pertain to it per se.

This is true of first actualities in general. Consider, for example, the capacity to speak French. All human beings (and only human beings, as far as we know) possess this capacity. This means that every human being is susceptible, if exposed to French at an appropriate age or otherwise instructed in the language, formally or informally, to develop her capacity to speak it. Once she has developed this capacity, it is, in her, in first actuality. When she utters a French sentence, drawing on her acquired competence in doing so, it is in second actuality. Now, doing what we call ‘learning French’, moving from mere potentiality to first actuality, takes time, and has a before and an after. Before, no French utterances are forthcoming. After, there are plenty. But these temporal determinations pertain to the transition from potentiality to first actuality, not to the first actuality itself. Once one is in first actuality with respect to speaking French, one is, is actually, a speaker of French, and has knowledge, actual knowledge, of the grammar and vocabulary of the language. So too, we who are in first actuality with respect to cognition are, are actually, empirical knowers, and have knowledge, actual knowledge, of the applicability of the categories to the empirically knowable, and thereby, in this state we are in, constitute empirical objects as so determinable, by constituting space and time as sites of the actual.

In order to win some systematic plausibility for this thought as an interpretation of Kant’s notion of the original act, I wish to compare it to another original act he discusses, in the *Religion*
within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, which is, I shall suggest, also profitably understood as a first actuality. He discusses this act because he wishes to make room for the possibility of an original evil predisposition in human nature. Here is his problem. To be an evil predisposition, it must be imputable to the human being; it cannot be an affliction, and must be an act. But to be an evil predisposition, it must be the ground of acts, and not itself an act:

Nothing is...morally (i.e. imputably) evil but that which is our own deed. And yet by the concept of a propensity is understood a subjective determining ground of the power of choice that precedes every deed, and hence is itself not yet a deed. There would then be a contradiction in the concept of a simple propensity to evil, if this expression could not somehow be taken in two different meanings, both nonetheless reconcilable with the concept of freedom. [Religion 6:31]

A ‘subjective determining ground of the power of choice’ is, in this context, a propensity which constitutes the fundamental orientation of that power (a ‘supreme maxim’), towards either good or evil. Good and evil are not here functioning as two material objects, as though I could also be fundamentally oriented towards, say, the consumption of biscuits. The orientation towards good would be my embrace of the principle of the will, the orientation towards evil my rejection of that principle. Such a fundamental orientation is, in a sense, more than the power itself, though it is not yet an actualization, a second actualization of that power, which is called a ‘deed’. Thus, I suggest, the fundamental orientation towards the good is the first actuality of the power (since the good is the power’s object). The fundamental orientation towards evil is a distortion of this first actuality. The fundamental orientation towards the good is the practical analogue of our knowledge of categorical applicability.23 The fundamental orientation towards the good is the practical analogue of our knowledge of categorical applicability.24

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23 Some commentators have argued that the power of choice is by nature indifferent as between good and evil, and that this explains the possibility of evil action. Though this is obviously not the place to argue this point, I believe that on this reading, good action is impossible. For discussion, see Fix & Pendlebury (ms). This is parallel to the point I made in Chapter 4 about judgment and the true: the understanding is not, by nature, indifferent as between the true and the false.

24 Is there a theoretical analogue to the propensity for evil? The propensity for evil consists in the allowance of self-love beyond its proper bounds, those of morality. Similarly, transcendental illusion is borne of the allowance of categorical application beyond its proper bounds, those of appearance. Transcendental illusion can thus be understood as a distortion of the first actuality of cognition. I hope to develop this theme in other work.
I say that ‘actuality’ applies to the first actuality just as to the second; Kant says that ‘deed’ applies to the predisposition just as to the performance of actions *bic et nunc*.

[T]he term “deed” can in general apply just as well to the use of freedom through which the supreme maxim (either in favor of, or against, the law) is adopted in the power of choice, as to the use by which the actions themselves (materially considered, i.e., as regards the objects of the power of choice) are performed in accordance with that maxim. The propensity to evil is a deed in the first meaning (*peccatum originarium*), and at the same time the formal ground of every deed contrary to law according to the second meaning…. The former is an intelligible deed, cognizable through reason alone apart from any temporal condition; the latter is sensible, empirical, given in time (*factum phenomenon*). [Religion 6:31]

Kant here portrays the supreme maxim, which constitutes the original predisposition of the agent, as adopted in an act, ‘deed’ in the first sense, just as in the Deduction he portrays the readiness for empirical judgment as the product of an act, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Like the latter, this act must be said not to have any temporal determinations. That is to say that it has no before and no after.

Kant says that since this deed in the first sense has no temporal determinations, we must consider it as the origin of the fundamental propensity not ‘according to time’ [*Zeitursprung*] but ‘according to reason’ [*Vernunftursprung*], and that in describing something’s *Vernunftursprung*, only its ‘existence [*Dasein*] is considered’, and not its ‘occurrence’ [*Geschehen*] [Religion 6:39]. The fundamental propensity is not to be considered in its coming-to-be, its becoming-actual, which would have temporal determinations. It is to be considered only in its existence, in its actuality, in its relation to the nature of the capacity of which it is a propensity. This is, however, how we consider a first actuality, that is, a first actuality in its own right, when we do not attend to the contingencies of its generation and corruption.

Kant notes that it is difficult for us not to represent a *Vernunftursprung* as a *Zeitursprung*, and even endorses one exemplar of such a representation:

[T]he mode of representation which the Scriptures use to depict the origin of evil, as having a *beginning* in human nature, well agrees with the foregoing; for the Scriptures
Thus, what I am suggesting is that the original synthesis of the imagination be understood as the first actuality of cognition, as having an origin, but not a beginning, in the *Erkenntnisvermögen*. As such, it is not that it is much like a second actuality, something which has temporal determinations, except that it has no such determinations, being outside of space and time. Nor is Kant, in calling it an act, indulging in a mere *façon de parler*. It is a logically distinct kind of actuality, to which spatial and temporal determinations simply do not pertain *per se*.

4.2 States & Productions.

The reading I have given of Part 2 has been everywhere informed by the work of Béatrice Longuenesse. Here I wish to draw attention to the respects in which the reading I have developed here is at variance with hers, which are, in spite of many affinities, significant.

4.2.1 A manifold synthesis.

In the last chapter I said that although for Longuenesse, as for Allison, both parts of the Deduction concern human cognition, she does not read Part 1 as concluding merely hypothetically: if intuitions have such-and-such a character, then they stand under the unity of apperception. Rather, she says, in Part 1 Kant establishes *that* ‘empirical objects can be reflected under the categories’ (1998: 243). Part 2 is an explanation of how the understanding ‘affects’ sensibility in order to ensure that it is of a form conducive to judgment (1998: 70), so that ‘appearances are themselves, as objects of empirical intuition, immediately in accordance with the categories, by virtue of the spatiotemporal forms in which they are given’ (1998: 243). Allison describes Longuenesse’s reading as ‘regressive’, because it moves from a conditioned (the *that*) to its condition (the *how*).
In accordance with the thought that the Deduction moves from conditioned to condition, remaining, however, at the level of human cognition, Longuenesse interprets the *synthesis intellectualis* as the conditioned, and the *synthesis speciosa* as the condition. Kant offers us ‘an account of their organic unity, in which the one, the discursive synthesis or *synthesis intellectualis*, is the goal to be reached by means of the other, the intuitive synthesis or *synthesis speciosa*’ (1998: 203). The *synthesis speciosa* is not to be understood as an immanently discursive act: it is, rather, an act which is oriented towards making discursive acts—judgments—possible.

On this point the reading I have presented is different: I have said that the *synthesis speciosa* is the *synthesis intellectualis* specified as human, that the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is the original synthetic unity of apperception specified as human. I think that this has the advantage of making better sense of Kant’s characterizations of the intellectual synthesis, such as this one which we have already seen:

This *synthesis* of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary *a priori*, can be called *figurative* (*synthesis speciosa*), as distinct from that which would be thought in the mere category in regard to the manifold of an intuition in general, and which is called combination of the understanding (*synthesis intellectualis*); both are *transcendental*, not merely because they themselves proceed *a priori* but also because they ground the possibility of other cognition *a priori*. [B151]

I said above that Kant means here to contrast spatiotemporal intuition with sensible intuition in general, rather than sensible with non-sensible intuition (since categories do not pertain to the latter at all). If these are intended to be two syntheses both of which human beings perform, this is a very strange way of introducing such a distinction. We know that Kant is concerned with synthesis as the mode of judgment. So, suppose that I, a human thinker, perform an act of *synthesis intellectualis* as such. In performing this act I must relate to a manifold, for otherwise I have nothing to synthesize. To what manifold do I relate? According to Kant’s description, I relate to a manifold of sensible intuition in general. But I have no such manifold available to me. Nor does any finite knower of any species, since each of us has a specific kind of manifold: in my case, spatiotemporal. It might be said...
that I have missed Kant's point: he means that in the *synthesis intellectualis*, I relate to whatever kind of manifold is available to me. Well and good. But what he has in mind here is the synthesis described in Part 1 of the Deduction. Several indications are given of this in the preceding paragraph, as when he says that ‘[t]he synthesis or combination of the manifold in [the pure concepts of the understanding] was related merely to the unity of apperception’ [B150]. I have argued in Chapter 4 that the register of his discussion of that synthesis in Part 1 is such that it means a synthesis of a finite thinker in general, and not one act among others which a human being performs, but set that argument aside. Consider the conclusion of Part 1: that intuitive manifolds in general stand under categories, the mode of synthesis. If that conclusion is taken to concern the human being specifically, then we must read Kant as concluding, in Part 1 of the Deduction, that intuitive manifolds, spatiotemporal or otherwise, stand under the human categories. And we must read him as coming to this conclusion because the human categories must be applicable to an intuitive manifold, spatiotemporal or not, if the object it presents us is to be judgeable. But a human thinker cannot be presented with a non-spatiotemporal intuitive manifold. So we must read Kant as, absurdly, concluding that even non-spatiotemporal intuitive manifolds must have such-and-such a character, because that is the character they would have to have, were we human beings in a position to judge their objects, which we are not and cannot be. And yet, if the *synthesis intellectualis* as described in §24 is the same as the synthesis of Part 1, and if reflection upon that synthesis yields the conclusion of §20, this is what we read Kant as concluding.

There is a way of out of this, and that is to say that the *synthesis intellectualis* of the human being is indeed related to a spatiotemporal manifold, and nonetheless distinct from the *synthesis speciosa*, though this aspect of the *synthesis intellectualis* was not thematized in Part 1 of the Deduction. Thus, according to this suggestion, the conclusion of Part 1 is, from the point of view of the reader: ‘my intuitive manifolds, whatever their form, are determinable by the *Leitfaden*-categories in an act of
The ‘whatever’ here means merely that the forms are not named; it does not express a higher level of generality than that of the human being. From this the reader can conclude, upon reminder that her forms of intuition are space and time: ‘my spatiotemporal intuitive manifolds are determinable by the Leitfaden-categories in an act of synthesis intellectualis’. And then, in Part 2, the reader can be put in a position to say: ‘my spatiotemporal intuitive manifolds are determinable by the Leitfaden-categories in an act of synthesis intellectualis because they have been made so determinable by a prior act of synthesis speciosa’. This reading, therefore, allows that though no premises pertaining to the form of the human being’s sensibility were involved in the argument in Part 1, still it was about the human being as such; therefore, it concerned one act of the human being, the synthesis intellectualis, whereas Part 2 concerns another, synthesis speciosa.

This is a coherent alternative. Moreover, I do not think I can prove that it is wrong. Nonetheless, Kant persists, in Part 2, in writing of the synthesis intellectualis as though it concerned an intuition in general, as though its connection to spatiotemporal manifolds in particular did not pertain to it. I do not know whether the matter can be definitively settled, but I have, in any case, given my reasons—in addition to those mentioned in the development of my reading in §3 above—for preferring to understand the intellectualis/speciosa distinction as one between genus and species, rather than as one between distinct acts within a single (species of) thinker.

I want to close this subsection by gesturing to a more general difference suggested by that one. According to Longuenesse’s reading, the significance of the intellectualis/speciosa distinction is expressed in her understanding of Kantian cognition as a process with the following steps: ‘synthesis (of intuition) for analysis (into concepts) for synthesis (of these concepts in judgment)’ (2005: 22). The first of these is the synthesis speciosa, the last the synthesis intellectualis, both are involved in human
cognition.\textsuperscript{25} I have not written of a cognitive process at all, and my view is that Kant’s arguments in the Deduction, towards explicating the \textit{Leitfaden}-categories as embodiments of knowledge \textit{a priori}, do not depend on an understanding of cognition as a process, though they do depend on a distinction between the general (finite) and the specific (human). Cognition is, as I have portrayed it, an activity with two moments, the moment of reception and the moment of thought. The capacity I exercise in receiving must be such as to allow the object it thereby receives to be thought in an act of the capacity I exercise in thinking. And, as we have seen in Chapter 3 and in this chapter, the receptive capacity must have this character on account of its unity with the capacity to think. The original synthesis is the first actuality of this capacity considered as a whole, and judgment, cognition in act, is the second. That is Kantian cognition, as I have described it. And since cognition is a single activity with two moments, we do not need to speak, for the purposes of the Deduction, of more than one synthesis, as an act performed \textit{hic et nunc} by the human being. We need only the transcendental synthesis, the first actuality of cognition; and the empirical synthesis, the second actuality; and we need terms to designate each of these at both levels of generality, finite and human. Each has multiple aspects, to be sure, in relating the understanding to sensibility.\textsuperscript{26} But each is one thing, and neither need be portrayed, in the present context, as the element of a process. Neither need be so portrayed, that is, for Part 2 of the Deduction to play its part in the solution to the problem of pure reason.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} I have not discussed the intermediate step at all, because it does not correspond immediately to, or contrast immediately with, anything in the reading I have given of the Deduction, but it is a crucial aspect of Longuenesse’s position which she develops in great detail. I agree with her that, for Kant, we analyze the sensible given by comparison, abstraction, and reflection towards the development of empirical concepts. But I do not think that this act is prior (in time or otherwise) to empirical judgment. I think that some empirical judgments just are this act: for example, the observations I make of the behavior of an animal whose species is only now, with my observations, being discovered.

\textsuperscript{26} One aspect of this relating from which I have prescinded entirely is perception \textit{[Wahrnehmung]} and the activity of the imagination involved in it.

\textsuperscript{27} I might suggest more speculatively that to the extent that Kant indulges a proceduralist idiom in the B-Deduction, he has not made a complete departure from the (apparently) psychological and, perhaps, psychologistic concerns of the ‘subjective deduction’ in the \textit{Critique}’s first edition.
4.2.2 A non-discursive synthesis.

I have already said above that the idea of a first actuality of the cognitive capacity can help us to understand how there could be a synthesis vor allem Begriffe. I have interpreted this as the notion of a synthesis prior to, because grounding the possibility of, the act of conceptual application. Here I can sharpen this thought with reference to the response of commentators like Allison to Longuenesse’s position.

As in much else, I follow Longuenesse in seeking to characterize an act of the understanding which is not conceptual application. She describes the synthesis speciosa as an “action of the understanding on sensibility,” that is, an action of the Vermögen zu urteilen, the capacity to form judgments. Nonetheless, it is prior to the actual production of any discursive judgment, hence prior to the reflection of any concept and a fortiori to the subsumption of intuitions under the categories. Kant can thus say that space and time are given only if understanding determines sensibility, and yet also that space and time are intuitive (immediate and singular representations) and not discursive (universal or reflected representations). (1998: 216)

Similarly:

[I]f one reads “the understanding” [in §26n.] as das Vermögen zu urteilen, the capacity to judge [rather than as “the pure concepts of the understanding”], then one can understand, I suggested earlier, that the capacity to form judgments, “affecting sensibility,” generates the pure intuitions of space and time as the necessary intuitive counterpart to our discursive capacity to reflect universal concepts… (1998: 224)

As I have said, I find this idea illuminating. It has inspired much of what I have said over the course of the last three chapters. But I have also said that I find myself in sympathy with Allison’s confession that he does not understand how a capacity, rather than its exercise, can ‘do anything’ (2012: 44). If the capacity in question is the Vermögen zu urteilen, then its exercise is judgment, and to judge is to apply concepts. So how could this capacity, whose act is the application of concepts, do something which is not the application of concepts?

The distinction between first and second actuality helps here once again. A capacity’s second actuality is its act: it is the actuality of that which it is a capacity to do. Thus judgment, the
application of concepts, is the second actuality of the Vermögen zu urteilen. And the transcendental synthesis, I have suggested, may be understood as its first actuality. This solves Allison’s problem of understanding. It is not that this capacity does something other than what it is a capacity to do. Its original act is its first actuality: its readiness to do what it is a capacity to do.

5. Conclusion.

I have in this chapter presented and defended a reading of Part 2 of the Deduction as the site of the unity of the human understanding (with its Leitfaden-categories) and human sensibility (with space and time, its forms of intuition). In Part 2 Kant has done two things that are requisite to the exhibition of this unity. First, he has depicted the form of the sensible object as grounded in the understanding, though space and time are facticities of sensibility, in such a way as to constitute the categories as embodiments of a priori knowledge. Since sensibility is per se ‘at the disposal’ [Anthropology 7:145] of the understanding, space and time ‘serve’ for the application of the categories ‘in concreto’ [R5934 (1783-84); 18:393]. This belongs to human sensibility by nature: in this sense it is, as capacity, dependent upon the understanding. But this alone is not a priori knowledge, because it is not knowledge at all: I must know this dependence, and the categorical applicability that is thereby grounded. Thus, the first actuality of cognition, the original synthesis of the imagination, is my knowledge of this applicability, and thus the actualization of space and time as the unity of the actual: the unity of everything which stands in readiness to ground my empirical judgments. For nothing stands in readiness to ground my empirical judgments unless I stand in readiness to make empirical judgments, and that standing-in-readiness is the first actuality of cognition.

Second, he has introduced the principle for the exhibition of the necessity of each and every category of his Leitfaden-system for judgment of spatiotemporal objects. This ‘principle of the Principles’ is that the applicability of the Leitfaden-system to the spatiotemporal is the natural form of
the spatiotemporal: that is, the form of space and time as nature. In the Analytic of Principles he will explain, by discussing each division of the *Leitfaden*-system, why space and time must constitute a nature (and thus be intelligible in the way in which nature is) if spatiotemporal objects are to be judgeable. In Chapter 6, I describe the execution of part of this final step: the Analogies of Experience.
Chapter 6
The Meaning of Objectivity

1. Introductory.

In Chapter 5 I argued that the unity pertaining to sensibility and which depends upon the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is the unity of the actual \textit{qua} actual. Spatiotemporality, being this unity, is the ground of the actual’s actuality: of its standing in readiness to serve as the ground of finite knowledge. As such, spatiotemporal objects have whatever character is required for me to ground judgments in them. Kant purports to show in the Analytic of Principles that that character is expressed by the \textit{Leitfaden}-categories. Making objective judgments of succession, simultaneity, relative position, and the like, \textit{the modi} of the spatiotemporal as such, requires, in particular, that those \textit{relata} be substances in thoroughgoing interaction.

I have leapt immediately to the categories of relation: \textit{substance}, \textit{cause}, and \textit{community}. And on these my focus will remain in this chapter. To give a full reading of Kant’s exhibition of the necessity of the \textit{Leitfaden}-system for judgment of spatiotemporal objects would require more than one chapter. Why, then, discuss any of the categories, and why, if any, these three? The answer to the first question is grounded in the character of this study. I have claimed that in the Analytic of Principles Kant elaborates the ‘principle of the Principles’ enunciated in §26 of the Deduction: that the applicability of the \textit{Leitfaden}-categories to the spatiotemporal constitutes the latter as a nature and thereby as judgeable. My claims about the Deduction itself—about its structure and about the achievement of Part 2—are defensible only if this one is. And so I must at a minimum gesture to a reading of the Principles which corroborates it. The second question has an answer grounded in Kant’s philosophy. The relational categories enjoy several different but related exaltations relative to the other members of the \textit{Leitfaden}-system. First, an, as it were, external exaltation: they embody the most highly prized claim to knowledge of the traditional ontology, that which, Kant sometimes
claims, has been secure since the time of Aristotle [Fortschritte 20:260], but which has been targeted most famously by Hume, the topic of Chapter 2. Second, an, as it were, internal exaltation: it is the applicability of *substance, cause, and community* which bears the title of nature, the central concept of the ‘principle of the Principles’. Kant in many places identifies nature with the interconnectedness expressed by the relational categories in particular [A216/B263; *Prolegomena* 4:296f.]. Their applicability presupposes, to be sure, that of the categories of quantity and quality. But the former two belong to the system of categories, I submit, as to be determined by the relational categories. Thus, in leaping over the categories of quantity and quality, I consign this study to incompleteness but not to distortion. For it is the applicability of the relational categories which is most of all the meaning of objectivity.

And so in this chapter I consider the section of the Principles in which Kant professes to articulate the necessary applicability of these categories in the three Analogies of Experience. I show the way in which, in the proofs of the Analogies, Kant purports to exhibit the necessity for judgment of the determinability of spatiotemporal objects as such by *substance, cause, and community*. I should note, before I begin, three limitations of this chapter. First, my readings of the Analogies are, with respect to certain details, reconstructive. Though I do not depart from Kant’s argumentative aims and strategies, I fill in moments not easily recovered from the text, though in a way which, I hope (and hope to show), is tightly constrained by Kant’s stated intentions. This is, it seems to me, more or less unavoidable given the way in which the Analogies are written. Second, I follow Kant in his emphasis on the judgment of temporal relations and—in spite of his willingness to use spatial examples—silence, in the Analogies themselves, on the question of how exactly space figures in the

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1 I take the ‘conformity to law of all objects of experience’ mentioned in this latter passage to be equivalent to the applicability to those objects of the relational categories, since the Principle of Generation concerns the law-governedness of experiential objects.

2 By ‘judgment’ I mean, here and throughout the chapter, ‘objective’ judgment: that which is, as Kant tells us in §19 of the Deduction (and as discussed in Chapter 4), judgment most of all.
story. And third, mine is an attempt to exhibit the argument in each Analogy as the purported contribution to showing the relational categories to be the meaning of objectivity for human beings. Even if I could show that these arguments, or arguments tolerably like them, were successful, I do not have the space to do so here.

I begin by briefly considering the schemata of relation presented in the Schematism (§2), which give me occasion to comment on the general orientation of this treatment of the Analogies. This orientation, which might be characterized as ‘ontological’ (as opposed to ‘epistemological’ or ‘cognitive’, in a sense to be clarified), is entailed by the reading of Kant’s positive conception of knowledge a priori which I introduced in Chapter 3. I then discuss each of the three Analogies in turn, whose principles are those of Persistence, Generation, and Community (§§3-5).

2. **Judging the temporal: an anticipation.**

In the Schematism we are told the following about the categories of relation:

> The schema of substance is the persistence of the real in time, i.e., the representation of the real as a substratum of empirical time-determination in general, which therefore endures while everything else changes. (Time itself does not elapse, but the existence of that which is changeable elapses in it. To time, therefore, which is itself unchangeable and lasting, there corresponds in appearance that which is unchangeable in existence, i.e., substance, and in it alone can the succession and simultaneity of appearances be determined in regard to time.) [A144/B183]

> The schema of the cause and of the causality of a thing in general is the real upon which, whenever it is posited, something else always follows. It therefore consists in the succession of the manifold insofar as it is subject to a rule. [A144/B183]

> The schema of community (reciprocity), or of the reciprocal causality of substances with regard to their accidents, is the simultaneity of the determinations of the one with those of the other, in accordance with a general rule. [A144/B183-4]
In describing these schemata, Kant anticipates the conclusions of his proofs in the Analogies of Experience. In the case of substance, he sketches part of the proof in parentheses, and this sketch, compressed as it is, tells us what the Analogies will be all about. He says that correspondent to the permanence of time is the permanence of something in it, which is thereby called ‘substance’. Why can time not be permanent, while everything within it is ephemeral? The clue is given by the last clause: ‘in it’—the permanent contained in time, not time—‘alone can the succession and simultaneity of appearances be determined in regard to time’. What is it to determine the succession and simultaneity of appearances? As we shall see when we turn to the Analogies, to determine the succession and simultaneity of appearances is to judge in the form ‘A succeeds B’; ‘A is simultaneous with B’. Since succession and simultaneity are what belong to the temporal just insofar as it is the temporal, judgments of this form are judgments of temporal objects qua temporal. Thus, this sketch suggests, insofar as the temporal is determinable as to succession and simultaneity, it admits of our judging it in the way in which the temporal, as such, is to be judged. In this proof sketch, Kant tells us that if temporal objects admit of being so judged—if they are such as to enable us to judge in the form ‘A succeeds B’; ‘A is simultaneous with B’—then there is something persistent within time, i.e., substance. Thus, the applicability of the category substance to the temporal is necessary, for the temporal is judgeable.

This establishes in advance the theme of the Analogies is: the relational categories characterize the way the temporal is, for the temporal, belonging to sensibility, is judgeable. The First Analogy is the Principle of Persistence, whose proof is to show that for me to judge a succession, the object must be articulated as substance-accident. The Second Analogy is the

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3 It does not belong to my aims here to supply a reading of Kant’s notion of a schema. Suffice it to say that these three descriptions articulate the positive content of substance, cause, and community insofar as they figure in human knowledge: i.e., in relation to the spatiotemporality of our sensibility. And in general, I pass over the problem of the Schematism itself, which is, to be sure, not merely an anticipation of the System of Principles.
Principle of Generation, whose proof is to show that for me to judge a succession, the object must be understood as expressive of an efficient causal law. The Third Analogy is the Principle of Community, whose proof is to show that for me to judge a simultaneity, the object must be understood to belong to an actual whole of mutually interacting substances. Thus, the Third Analogy gives complete expression to the character of nature, the temporal which is judgeable.4

In anticipating the import of the Analogies, I have written of the ‘applicability’ of the relational categories, and it is important to clarify what this means. I have, over the course of this study, suggested that a concept is applicable to an object when it expresses a reality pertaining to it. *Cat* is applicable to cats, and is so because they *are* cats. Thus I read the Analogies as explaining why, for the spatiotemporal to be judgeable, it must *be* a unity of substances in law-governed interaction. We might call this kind of reading of the Analogies ‘ontological’, because according to it, they tell us what the spatiotemporal must be in order to be judgeable. Knowing this—what the spatiotemporal must be in order to be judgeable—we know the spatiotemporal to be determinable by those categories in and through knowing the identity of the conditions of our cognition with the form of the object of our sensibility, as according to the internal conception of knowledge *a priori* I introduced in Chapter 3.5

This ontological orientation might be contrasted with readings on which the Analogies describe or allude to a cognitive procedure for the interpretation of sensible data or otherwise the imposition of something uncalled for by the character of the sensible itself. Béatrice Longuenesse

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4 As such, the three Analogies are not three juxtaposed principles. As Béatrice Longuenesse puts it, ‘the First Analogy is only the first step of a continuous argument that Kant pursues in the Second and Third Analogies’, and ‘the First…remains extremely obscure if considered in isolation from the Second and Third’ (1998: 335).

5 This is not to say that the arguments of the Analogies do not admit of extraction from the context constituted by this internal conception of knowledge *a priori*. For it seems intelligible to reflect, in the manner of a ‘third-thing’ explanation of the kind I considered in Chapter 3, roughly as follows: ‘in order for spatiotemporal things to be judgeable by me, according to the arguments of the Analogies, they must constitute a unity of substances in law-governed interaction.’ Thus, since my author wishes spatiotemporal things to be judgeable by me, they constitute a unity of substances in law-governed interaction.’ This would not, however, be knowledge *a priori* in Kant’s sense, since that sense is elucidated by the internal conception.
writes of her own reading, which finds in the Analogies a kind of interpretive procedure, that ‘[i]t could be objected…that…the tone [of Kant’s exposition] is more “objectivist” than my interpretation would lead one to believe’ (1998: 345). On her reading, ‘the representation we have of objective simultaneity and succession is the result of the way we interpret the succession of perceptions in our apprehension’ (1998: 335). Nor does this interpretive procedure yield knowledge of what is constituted independently of its application (as would be the case according to an ‘objectivist’ reading): rather, we should ‘acknowledge in the objects themselves the results of the acts of synthesis that make them, according to the Critique, objects for us’ (1998: 345). The reading I present here agrees with Longuenesse’s in this, that these objects are per se objects for us. But I do not think that we construct such objects in second actualizations of our capacity to judge: that is, in judgments bic et nunc, or in acts of pre-judgmental synthesis. Rather, it is our capacity itself which constitutes them as potentially objects for us (with all that this entails), and its first actuality which constitutes them as actually objects for us, as I argued in Chapter 5. In second actualization, in judgment bic et nunc, all I need do is spell out [buchstabieren] what is presented to me [Prolegomena 4:312]. No interpretation, in the sense of imposition, is required. Thus I seek to emphasize the ‘objectivist’ tone of the Analogies without, I hope, making them seem any less Kantian. For though this orientation is ontological, it is not dogmatic but transcendental. As I suggested in Chapter 5, the applicability of the relational categories to the spatiotemporal is not a condition satisfied by anything in potentia independently of the structure of my cognitive capacity, nor is it a condition actually satisfied by anything independently of my knowledge of such satisfaction in that capacity’s first actuality.

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6 For a helpful discussion of the distinction, see Fortschritte 20:260.
7 This means also that the development of this ontology is guided by one, and only one, principle: that of the possibility of experience, that of what is required for the exercise of the cognitive capacity I possess, whose object is spatiotemporal. No further principles familiar from dogmatic metaphysics or contemporary metaphysical theorizing may be applied here, and that includes any principle of parsimony. Thus when, for example, Eric Watkins argues, in
3. The Principle of Persistence.

I now consider each of the Analogies in turn. In each case I introduce the principle as formulated by Kant in both editions; sketch the shape of the argument I find for it in the body of the Analogy in question; run through the argument in more detail, supplying textual anchors; and conclude by connecting the argument to the theme of the Analogies in general.

3.1 Persistence: principle and theme.

The First Analogy is called, in the A-edition, the ‘principle of persistence’, in the B-edition, ‘the principle of the persistence of substance’. Kant’s formulations in the two editions are as follows:

All appearances contain that which persists (substance) as the object itself, and that which can change as its mere determination, i.e., a way in which the object exists. [A182]

In all change of appearances substance persists, and its quantum is neither increased nor diminished in nature. [B224]

I shall reconstruct Kant’s argument in two stages: the first stage, which is meant to capture the explicit thematic emphases of the text of the First Analogy; and a second, which introduces further complexity in response to an objection. The major theme emphasized in the first stage is the perception of change. A change is a change of, or in, something: it is an alteration against a steady backdrop. To perceive a change, Kant suggests, I must perceive both the alteration and the backdrop. This means that time itself cannot serve as the backdrop, since time is imperceptible. For me to perceive a change, I must perceive a temporally immanent backdrop. And that, he says, is nothing other than substance. I cannot judge a change unless I perceive one; and to judge a

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discussion of the Principle of Persistence, that ‘[w]ith no possible evidence supporting the proliferation of merely relatively permanent substances, it would be more economical to posit absolutely permanent substances’ (2010: 160), he appeals to a principle unavailable in the context of transcendental ontology.

8 I shall ignore the addition of the notion of quantum to the principle in the second edition, as it does not concern the aspects of the proof to which I wish to draw attention.
succession, I must judge a change. Thus judgment of succession requires that the sensible object be articulated as substance-accident.

In the second stage I consider this objection: that given my a priori intuition of time, it would seem that all I need, to perceive a change, is to perceive the displacement of one actuality by another. Why need I perceive the substrate, when I know a priori that all this occurs against the backdrop of time itself? And to this objection, I shall suggest, Kant’s answer should be that unless I perceive a substrate of change, I cannot exclude that what I perceive is not a change, even if it is. That is, my perception of the substrate is necessary for my being in a position to distinguish succession from simultaneity.

3.2 Persistence: the argument.

3.2.1 Stage 1: The perceptible persistent.

The principal theme of the proof of the first Analogy, the necessity to a judgment of change of a perceptible persistent, is clearly expressed in the first paragraph of the body, added in the second edition. Kant begins by elucidating the structure of change, as alteration against a steady backdrop:

> All appearances are in time, in which, as substratum (as persistent form of inner intuition), both simultaneity as well as succession can alone be represented. The time, therefore, in which all change of appearances is to be thought, lasts and does not change; since it is that in which succession or simultaneity can be represented only as determinations of it. [B224-5]

The steady backdrop is time itself, which does not change even as things change within it. To perceive change, it is not enough to perceive the displacement of one actuality by another within time. For to perceive change is to perceive both the displacement and the backdrop, and time, though the backdrop of all change, is not perceptible:

> Now time cannot be perceived by itself. Consequently it is in the objects of perception, i.e., the appearances, that the substratum must be encountered that represents time in general and in which all change or simultaneity can be perceived in apprehension through the relation of the appearances to it. However, the substratum
of everything real, i.e., everything that belongs to the existence of things, is substance, of which everything that belongs to existence can be thought only as a determination. [B225]

For change to be perceptible, its substratum must be perceptible. But a perceptible substratum of change is nothing other than substance. Thus, if change is perceptible, there must be substance available to be perceived. Kant does not mention judgment in this first paragraph. But we can connect the perceptibility of change to the judgeability of change as follows: I cannot judge a change unless I perceive a change, for it is only by perceiving it that I am in a position to judge it. Thus the judgeability of change requires the spatiotemporal to have the structure substance-accident.

The perceptible persistent itself persists in the exposition which follows this paragraph. Kant describes substance as a kind of representative of time itself, writing that ‘persistence gives general expression to time as the constant correlate of all existence of appearances, all change and all accompaniment’ [A183/B226] and that substance is the ‘sole condition of the empirical unity of time’ [A188-9/B231-2]. Substance is, as it were, time’s emissary to the human knower. And this is, perhaps, why Kant says that the necessity of the substance-accident structure cannot be proved ‘dogmatically’ but only ‘in relation to possible experience’ [A184/B227-8]. For substance is necessary, he says, that we may perceive the substrate of change, and that is necessary that we may judge a change. Absent that need, though change presupposes a substrate, to be sure, imperceptible time itself is ready to serve.⁹ There is nothing in the notions of succession or simultaneity, considered independently of the possibility of our making empirical judgments in which they figure, which demands elucidation in terms of substance. All we need to define such notions is that of a

⁹ This is incoherent if we adhere to the Kantian meaning of ‘time’. Time is, after all, per se a form of human sensibility, which is per se oriented towards the provision of a judgeable object. But that is not how the tradition has understood it, so that we might put Kant’s claim in this way: unless time is understood to be per se the venue of the judgeable (as it is if it is the form of sensibility, according to the teleological conception of the latter), no proof of the necessity of a temporally immanent persistent is forthcoming.
temporal series. It is only when the human knower is in the picture, Kant says, that the necessity of substance makes itself felt.

3.2.2 Stage 2: The perceptible persistent?

The argument of §3.2.1 depended upon these premises: that to judge a change I must perceive it, and that to perceive a change I must perceive not merely the displacement of one actuality by another but the backdrop against which the displacement occurs. Either or both of these premises seem susceptible to challenge. For Kant himself emphasizes that time is the backdrop of all change, and though time is, to be sure, imperceptible, it is, according to his account, an object of my knowledge a priori. Why is this knowledge not enough for me to judge a change if I perceive a displacement of one actuality by another?

A clue to Kant’s answer to this objection is supplied in such passages as the following:

Our apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive, and is therefore always changing. We can therefore never determine from this alone whether this manifold, as object of experience, is simultaneous or successive, if something does not ground it which always exists, i.e., something lasting and persisting, of which all change and simultaneity are nothing but so many ways (modi of time) in which that which persists exists. [A182/B225-6]

This passage concerns what is required for me to be in a position to determine ‘whether [the manifold of appearance], as object of experience, is simultaneous or successive’. That is, it concerns what is required for me to distinguish simultaneity from succession in the object. And one thing

10 I agree with Sebastian Rödl that this passage and others like it in the Analogies (e.g., at A189/B234-5) concern not the connection between my apprehension of the succession of my representations and my apprehension of the succession in the object (2012: 121-2). I thus disagree with Longuenesse when she writes, in comment upon this passage, that ‘[w]e believe that we perceive the succession or simultaneity of the states of things. Actually, all we perceive (apprehend) is the succession of our representations’ (1998: 335). On the other hand, I should depart from Rödl’s characterization of the connection between subjective succession and apprehension, or perception, of objective succession when he says that ‘the topic of the Analogies…is the step from perceiving successively to perceiving (being conscious of) succession’ (2012: 121-2). For I do not think the connection should be understood as a step of any kind. Rather, the Analogies tell us, inter alia, what it takes for a succession of representations to be a perception of objective succession. In this I agree with Longuenesse
which is required for the possibility of judging that something is a change, and thus a succession, rather than a case of simultaneity, is that the backdrop of change be perceptible.

To see why he might suppose this is true, considering two abstract casual descriptions. In neither kind of case is there a temporally immanent substance-accident structure. In the first kind of case, I am presented simultaneously with two actualities, A and B: thus, my perceptions of A and B are simultaneous. In the second, I am presented first with A and then with B: thus, there is succession in my perceptions of A and B. In examining these casual descriptions, I shall consider the implications for objective succession and simultaneity—that is, succession and simultaneity in the object—of subjective succession and simultaneity—that is, succession and simultaneity in my perceptions of the object.

In the case of simultaneous perceptions, I am empowered to judge that B is simultaneous with A. I can, after all, perceive them simultaneously only if they are simultaneous. But in the case of successive perceptions, I am not, just by virtue of the succession of my perceptions, empowered to judge that B succeeds A. For that I perceive B after I perceive A does not entail that B itself succeeds A: the succession of my perceptions entails no succession in the object. It could be that, at the moment of my perception of A, there is also, unperceived by me, B; and that at the moment of my perception of B, there is also, unperceived by me, A.

In order for me to exclude the simultaneity of A and B when I perceive first A and then B, my perception must empower me to understand that A and B could not be simultaneous. This, Kant

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11 For the purposes of this study, I treat my perception of something and its being presented to me as identical. This is, to be sure, to suppress important aspects of Kant’s notion of perception [Wahrnehmung], but, as I hope to illustrate, at least a preliminary and summary presentation of the arguments of the Analogies is possible before that topic is broached in earnest.

12 Kant says, to be sure, that ‘[o]ur apprehension of the manifold is always successive, and is therefore always changing’, but this does not entail that we are presented with only one actuality at a time.

13 This is excluded if all actuality is presented to me at each moment of time. But I am, of course, unentitled to assume that, since it is not entailed by my being a finite knower whose forms of intuition are space and time.
wants to say, my perception does when it includes perception of a temporally immanent substrate. It is not clear, to me at least, exactly how to understand his argument for this. What follows is a gesture towards a reconstruction. For my perception to empower me to understand that A and B could not be simultaneous, it must empower me to understand that A excludes B and *vice versa*. This it would do if A and B were contraries: the warm and the cool, the red and the blue, the musical and the unmusical. But contraries do not, of course, exclude one another *sans phrase*. There is, in our own world, both the warm and the cool, both the red and the blue, both the musical and the unmusical. Contraries exclude one another insofar as they pertain to a single substance at a single time. Thus, for me to exclude the simultaneity of A and B, having perceived first A, then B, they must be contraries, and I must perceive the substance which they qualify. Even if this reconstruction is ultimately unpersuasive, it exemplifies the kind of argument which must be given, which is, after all, my principal aim in this chapter.

Thus, Kant suggests, it is not enough, for me to judge succession rather than simultaneity, for me to perceive the displacement of one actuality by another. I must perceive a substance which they qualify. Substance is secured in the status emphasized by Stage 1 of the First Analogy’s argument as I presented it in §3.2.1: it is the necessary emissary of time to the human knower.

### 3.3 Persistence: the first moment of nature.

The Analogies together tell us that the spatiotemporal, to be judgeable, must assume the form of nature: that of a unity of substances in law-governed interaction. Thus far, in considering the First Analogy, we have tried to understand why the applicability of *substance* to the spatiotemporal is a condition of the possibility of judging a succession. Subsequent reflection will reveal that the applicability of *substance* is inextricably connected to the applicability of *cause* and *community*: that is, that there is no such thing as *substance’s* being applicable if *cause* and *community* are not. It is no
accident that the First Analogy concerns substance as the substrate of change: this tell us that the themes of the Second Analogy, which we are about to broach, lurk implicit in the First. In this sense, the Analogies do not amount to a mere conjunction of principles. Rather, the capacity to judge the temporal in general, and thereby to judge simultaneity and succession as \emph{modi} thereof, presupposes the applicability of the relational categories considered as a system. Thus, it is proper to say that in describing the necessity of a temporally immanent persistent to judgments of succession, Kant has described not a condition of a particular member of that capacity but one moment of its possibility. As he proceeds, he considers two further such moments.


4.1 Generation: principle and theme.

In the second edition this is called the ‘principle of the temporal sequence according to the law of causality’. It is thus formulated:

\begin{quote}
Everything that happens (begins to be) presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule. [A189]
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect. [B232]
\end{quote}

This principle says that becoming is not arbitrary, but rule-governed.\(^\text{14}\) That is to say that succession is rule-governed if it is judgeable: a necessity which lies between the object and me—its enabling my judgment—depends upon one lying within the object itself. Kant’s argument here, like the argument I reconstructed as Stage 2 of the proof of the First Analogy in \S 3.2.2 above, hinges on the impossibility of distinguishing objective succession from something else when the succession is not rule-governed. But there are two variations on this line of argument discernible in the text. One,

\(^{14}\) That is, it must be governed by an empirical law whose form is the principle of generation. It has been wondered whether Kant can really show that B must follow A according to a (universal) empirical law, rather than just that B must cause A, though not according to such a law; I shall not go into the matter here. For discussion, and a defense of Kant’s own intent, see Friedman (1992).
which is less emphasized, is analogous to, and builds upon, the argument of Stage 2 of the proof of the First Analogy, and thus concerns the distinguishability of objective succession and objective simultaneity in cases of successive perceptions. We might call this the *objective argument*. Another, which is more emphasized but whose place in the Second Analogy is somewhat less sure, concerns the distinguishability of subjective succession grounded in objective succession, which is thus non-arbitrary, and arbitrary subjective succession. We might call this the *subjective argument*. As I explain in §4.3 below, this argument’s place is less sure in this context because it appears to express a lesson of the Analogies as a whole, rather than something pertaining to *cause* in particular, though *cause* may be the most accessible exemplar of the lesson in question.

### 4.2 Generation: the argument

#### 4.2.1 Generation: the objective argument

The body of the Second Analogy, insofar as it is common to the first and the second editions, begins with a sentence almost identical to that introducing the body of the First: ‘The apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive’ [A189/B234]. He continues, saying that a succession of perceptions does not by itself entail succession in the object: ‘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]. His famous example is that of the successive perception of parts of a house which themselves exist simultaneously with one another [A190/B235]; this, he says, illustrates the general truth that ‘in all synthesis of apprehension’, even of what is not itself successive, ‘a perception follows another one’, so that ‘the apprehension of an occurrence is not yet thereby distinguished from any other [apprehension]’ [A192/B237]. Thus, to judge a succession—which is to say, a succession in the object—I must ‘derive the subject sequence of apprehension from the objective sequence of appearances’ [A193/B238]. We saw this in our consideration of the
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First Analogy. There we said that for the object of my successive perception of actualities A and B to exclude that A and B are simultaneous at both moments of perception, one unperceived by me in each case, A and B had to be contraries qualifying the same substance. Now, Kant wants to say, in the first instance, A and B must be contraries united by a law determining the displacement of one by another. If A and B are the warm and the cool, for example, the law might say that if this substance touches another, cooler substance, it itself cools. If A and B are the unmusical and the musical, the law might say that if this substance is exposed to the requisite training, it becomes musical. (I say ‘in the first instance’ because, of course, not every formulation of an efficient causal law need describe the connection of contraries pertaining to a single substance. But this allows that a system of such laws ultimately depends upon laws of such connections.)

Why does the displacement of one contrary by another have to be law-governed? Why is it not enough for there to be implicated in the scenario a single substance presented to me now with one contrary qualifying it, now with another? As I said in §3.3 above, we ought not to expect the principle of each Analogy to be isolable in the explanation of the possibility of judgments of succession and simultaneity. And so we should consider whether it might indeed be enough for there to be implicated a single substance presented to me now with one contrary qualifying it, now with another, but that in the Second Analogy a further condition of such presentation is exposed. We should consider, that is, whether for me to be empowered by my perception to recognize that it is indeed a single substance qualified now by one contrary, now by another, rather than more than one substance, each qualified at both moments of perception by a different contrary, itself requires that my perception empowers me to recognize a law-governed connection.

And this indeed appears to be so. For consider Kant’s example of an objective succession: ‘a ship driven downstream’ [A192/B237]. We may, by modifying this example and making a somewhat different use of it than he does, see that the exclusion of simultaneity requires that perception
empower me to recognize a law-governed connection. I can exclude simultaneity if I perceive a single ship now at this point further upstream, now at that point further downstream. For no one ship could be in two places at once. But can I exclude that there are two ships, one at a point further upstream, another at a point further downstream? Not unless what I am given in perception permits me to recognize the identity of the ship: one thing, now at one point, now at another. And this, we may suggest on Kant’s behalf, requires that this one thing in its movement be governed by a law, a law connecting it insofar as it is at first upstream with it insofar as it is then downstream.\footnote{This reconstructed objective argument is informed by Rödl’s discussion of the Second Analogy (2012: 180-186), though the modified example of the ship is my own.}

This kind of objective argument takes the condition disclosed in the First Analogy and uncovers its condition, keeping, however, to the topic of distinguishing objective succession from objective simultaneity. The subjective argument we are about to broach is of a rather different character.

4.2.2 Generation: the subjective argument.

This argument might be more properly called the ‘subject-objective argument’, since its theme is the distinction between the objective and the merely subjective. Kant wants to tell us that the kind of rule-governedness captured by the Principle of Generation is part and parcel of our conception of objectivity: that is, of the groundedness of our representations in a given object, an object upon which we depend in our cognitive activity. Our recognition of the groundedness in an object of the course of this activity depends, he proposes, on our recognition of that object as law-governed. The moments of this argument are interwoven with fragments of the objective argument in the body of the Analogy but admit of tolerably easy distinction.

First, Kant reminds us of the conception of objectivity elaborated in §19 of the Deduction and which I discussed in Chapter 4:
Since the agreement of cognition with the object is truth..., appearance, in contradistinction to the representations of apprehension, can thereby only be represented as the object that is distinct from them if it stands under a rule that distinguishes it from every other apprehension, and makes one way of combining the manifold necessary. That in the appearance which contains the condition of this necessary rule of apprehension is the object. [A191/B236]

Our conception of objectivity is one of one thing’s being grounded in another, distinct thing: our cognitive activity must be proceed in a particular way on account of the character of the object. If the body is heavy, I must unify body with heavy in my judgment; I may not unify body with light. This is the necessity of objectivity: the necessity which lies between the object and me. In emphasis of this point, Kant says that ‘the dignity’ that our representations ‘receive’ by their ‘relation to an object’ is ‘nothing other’ than this, that ‘the combination of representations’ is made ‘necessary’ [A197/B242].

Next, Kant argues that my consciousness of this necessity depends upon my recognition of another, one which lies within the object itself. Since the topic of the Second Analogy is the representation of generation, he argues that my consciousness of the groundedness of my representation of a generation in the generation it represents requires recognition of that generation as law-governed. For this is what necessity comes to in the case of a generation:

If, therefore, my perception is to contain the cognition of an occurrence, namely that something actually happens, then it must be an empirical judgment in which one thinks that the sequence is determined, i.e., that it presupposes another appearance in time which it follows necessarily or in accordance with a rule. Contrariwise, if I were to posit that which precedes and the occurrence did not follow it necessarily, then I would have to hold it to be only a subjective play of my imaginings, and if I still represented something objective by it I would have to call it a mere dream. [A201-2/B246-7]

Whereas earlier Kant wrote of a determinate succession of my representations—that is, a succession determined by the succession in the object—here he writes of the determinate succession in the object—that is, a succession determined by a law. For he writes of an empirical judgment in which is presupposed a prior appearance—not representation of an appearance—by which a subsequent appearance necessarily follows. He says that I could not judge an appearance to follow another
without necessity. For if I did, ‘I would have to hold it to be only a subjective play of my imaginings’. But then I should not be judging anything about an appearance at all. We may put this point more perspicuously in terms of the relation between judgment and perception. If I perceive an appearance following another without necessity, I am not in a position to judge that one appearance has followed another. From my point of view, it is just as it would be if there were no objective succession at all and my subjective succession were ‘a play of my imaginings’. It is characteristic of imaginings and dreams, Kant suggests, that they depict objects ungoverned by constant laws. Were appearances also governed by constant laws—‘[i]f 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 day the land were covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow’ [A100-101]—I should be unentitled to judge, presented with them, that they were appearances. For their presentation would be indistinguishable from an imagining or dream. Thus, I could not hold the succession of my representations to be grounded in any succession in the object, and so the subjective succession would have no pretense to objectivity.\footnote{It has been suggested, famously by Strawson (1966: 137-8), that Kant slides here between these two kinds of necessity: the necessity of the order of my representations, on the one hand, and the necessity of the order of occurrence in the object, on the other. This is supposed to vitiate his argument, because, it is suggested, though he may be right that a determinacy in my representations serves as a criterion of objective groundedness, this does not entail the need for any law-governed determinacy of occurrence in the object itself. Now, it is true enough that the determination of the order of my representations by the object would not itself entail any law-governed determinacy of the object, if the kind of determination in question were one of which I need not be conscious. But since Kant’s topic is a self-conscious capacity, one in whose exercise I am conscious of the groundedness of the exercise, the determination in question must be recognizable to me as the determination it is, since it belongs to the exercise’s groundedness. Kant’s argument is, as I read it, that it is not so recognizable unless determinacy pertains to the object, since unless determinacy pertains to the object, it is, from where I stand, exactly as it is when no object determines my representations, and they belong to an imagining or dream.}

4.3 Generation: the second moment of nature.

I said in §3.3 that we should discover that there is no such thing as substance’s being applicable to the spatiotemporal if cause and community are not. We have now, in reconstructing Kant’s argument in the
Second Analogy in §4.2.1, seen one way in which the applicability of *cause* is implicated in that of *substance*: to judge a succession by judging the displacement of one contrary by another, both pertaining to a substance, requires that this displacement be governed by a law, and thus an efficient causal law (since this is the kind of law which pertains to an occurrence).\(^{17}\) In considering the Third Analogy we shall see Kant’s focus shift to judgments of simultaneity, in which, in the figure of a unity of interacting substances, both *substance* and *cause* will appear again.

I said, in introducing the two strands of argument in the Second Analogy, that the subjective argument has a less sure place. For its theme, of objective groundedness as showing itself in recognizable determinacy and regularity, does not pertain to the Second Analogy alone but, it would seem, to all three. It concerns not the distinguishability of simultaneity and succession but the distinguishability of groundedness from groundlessness. However different the character of this argument might be, however, it is still an argument which hinges on the possibility of objective judgment grounded in the spatiotemporal, and the applicability of the relational categories as condition of such judgment.

5. The Principle of Community.

5.1 Community: principle and theme.

In the second edition this is called the ‘principle of simultaneity, according to the law of interaction, or community’. It is formulated thus:

\[
\text{All substances, insofar as they are *simultaneous*, stand in thoroughgoing community (i.e., interaction with one another). [A211]} \\
\text{All substances, insofar as they can be perceived in space as simultaneous, are in thoroughgoing interaction. [B256]}
\]

\(^{17}\) This is not the only way in which, in the Second Analogy, *cause* is supposed to be revealed to be implicated in *substance*. Kant writes that, with *cause* in hand, we may appreciate that substance ‘seems to manifest itself better and more readily through action’—to whose concept that of ‘causality leads’—‘than through the persistence of the appearance’, the face of substance emphasized in the First Analogy [A204/B249].
Whereas the First and Second Analogies were concerned with the conditions under which judgments of succession are possible, the Third is concerned with the possibility of judgments of simultaneity. Kant says that unless two substances are in causal interaction, that some determination A pertains to the first and some other B to the second cannot be judged simultaneous, because it cannot be excluded that A’s pertaining to the first precedes and determines B’s pertaining to the second, or vice versa, in which case in this respect the object exhibits not simultaneity but succession. Here, then, Kant abandons the subjective argument of the Second Analogy and, as in the case of the First Analogy, presents only an objective argument.\(^\text{18}\) My discussion of the Third Analogy will be briefer than my discussions of the first two. Kant’s argument in this case is more compressed and presents greater difficulties of comprehension. We can, however, develop a preliminary understanding of its structure and contribution to the Analogies as a system.

5.2 Community: the argument.

The argument is presented as follows:

[I]f you assume that in a manifold of substances as appearances each of them would be completely isolated, i.e., none would affect any other nor receive a reciprocal influence from it, then I say that their simultaneity would not be the object of a possible perception, and that the existence of the one could not lead to the existence of the other by any path of empirical synthesis. For if you thought that they were separated by a completely empty space, then the perception that proceeds from one to the other in time would certainly determine the existence of the latter by means of a succeeding perception, but would not be able to distinguish whether that appearance objectively follows the former or is rather simultaneous with it. [A212/B258-9]

\(^\text{18}\) This is not entirely true, since his ‘elucidation’ in conclusion of the Third Analogy concerns the groundedness of the ‘subjective’ community of apperception in the ‘objective’ real community of substances [A214-15/B261-2]. But this reads as a comment on the Third Analogy rather than as part of its proof, as thematically similar remarks read in the case of the Second Analogy.
To say that the spatiotemporal must assume the form of a unity of interacting substances is to say, in part, that there are no causal gaps in the spatiotemporal. (Or, at least, no gaps insofar as it may serve as object of our cognition: for Kant ‘[does] not in the least hereby mean to refute empty space; that may well exist where perceptions do not reach, and thus where no empirical cognition of simultaneity takes place; but it is then hardly an object for our possible experience at all’ [A214/B261].) Such gaps would make judgments of simultaneity impossible, Kant says. Now, as I said in discussion of the First Analogy above, if I perceive two things at the same time, I may judge them simultaneous. But it is clear that what Kant has in mind here is a judgment that two things are simultaneous though my perception of them is successive, as when I ‘direct my perception first to the moon and subsequently to the earth, or, conversely, first to the earth and then subsequently to the moon’ [B257].

I do not claim to have the firmest possible grip on Kant’s argumentative idea. What follows is a sketch of what he appears to have in mind. Suppose there is a causal gap between two substances, \( S_1 \) and \( S_2 \). Neither affects the other. Suppose A pertains to \( S_1 \) and B to \( S_2 \). Suppose that I perceive first \( S_1 \), then \( S_2 \), and that A pertains to \( S_1 \) and B to \( S_2 \) at both moments of perception. Though A pertains to \( S_1 \) simultaneously with B’s pertaining to \( S_2 \), the succession of my perceptions does not exclude that first \( S_1 \) is A and \( S_2 \) is not B, and then \( S_2 \) is B and \( S_1 \) is not A. And so I am not empowered by my perception to judge simultaneity. If, on the other hand, \( S_1 \) and \( S_2 \) are in interaction, then A’s pertaining to \( S_1 \) has bearing on B’s pertaining to \( S_2 \) and \textit{vice versa}. Perhaps \( S_1 \)’s being A and \( S_2 \)’s being B are mutually reinforcing. If so, neither precedes the other. Thus my perception, first of \( S_1 \) to which A pertains, then of \( S_2 \) to which B pertains, can empower me to judge them simultaneous.

5.3 Community: nature itself.
Having presented his argument for the Principle of Persistence, Kant writes that ‘the local community (communio spatii) could never be empirically cognized’ without the ‘dynamical community’, the commercium [A213/B260]. The communio of the spatiotemporal is the unity of everything in space and time: the unity, as we saw in Chapter 5, of the actual. Kant tells here, in explicit expression of the theme of the Analogies as a whole, that the spatiotemporal communio is no object of empirical cognition except insofar as it is a commercium. And since the communio is per se the object of empirical cognition, being the object of the lower cognitive capacity, it is a commercium.

We may, at this point, summarize the relation of the commercium to the judgeability of the communio in the following way. We may judge succession when our successive perceptions empower us to recognize that what follows in our experience must follow in the object, for there is a causal law that makes it so. We may judge simultaneity when our successive perceptions empower us to recognize that what follows in our experience does not follow in the object, for what precedes and what follows in experience are in the object mutually sustaining. And we may judge both succession and simultaneity when our successive perceptions empower us to recognize the substances whose causal powers these laws describe, and whose action is responsible for the mutual sustenance of each other’s accidents.

6. Conclusion.

I have suggested that each of these proofs is intended as a demonstration that unless a relational category is applicable to the temporal object, its temporal determinations—succession and simultaneity—are not judgeable. Therefore, the applicability of the relational categories has been shown to be necessary for the judgeability of the temporal as the temporal. This judgeability is nothing other than the temporal’s having the shape of nature:
Our analogies therefore really exhibit the unity of nature in the combination of all appearances under certain exponents, which express nothing other than the relation of time (insofar as it comprehends all existence in itself) to the unity of apperception, which can only obtain in synthesis in accordance with rules. Thus together they say: All appearances lie in one nature, and must lie therein, since without this a priori unity of experience, thus also no determination of the objects in it, would be possible. [A216/B263]

This ‘since’ is, I propose, in line with what has preceded in this study, a teleological connective. The temporal has the form of nature because, without this, no determination of its objects would be possible: no judgment of them as temporal. That temporality has the shape of nature, then, is owed to its being our form of sensibility, the form of a sensibility which is oriented towards the provision of a judgeable object. The transcendental synthesis of the imagination actualizes this character of sensibility, and is thus the act by which the understanding frees the temporal object to be intelligibly temporal: i.e., natural. The unity of time, considered apart from its role in our cognition, does not explain the judgeability of its objects. But since time belongs by essence to our cognition, it gives us objects which are not just temporal but judgeable, determinable, as such. Therefore, the Analogies show, the relational categories are applicable to them.

Because nature, the whole of the actual, is that character of the temporal which constitutes its objects as possible objects of our judgments, as that the relation to which constitutes our judgments as objective, nature is, for human beings, the meaning of objectivity. Our most abstract conception of objectivity may, as Frege thinks, make no mention of the actual [das Wirkliche] as such (1884/1953 §26). But as Kant teaches us, our first and most fundamental conception of objectivity lies in the self-consciousness of our sensuous relation to that which affects us and of its spatiotemporal character. For we are finite knowers, who are affected by the object of our knowledge. And we are human knowers, whose object is spatiotemporal. Objectivity is, for us, the intelligibility of space and time: it is our sensible world’s being, just insofar as it is sensible, intelligible.
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