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On the Possibility of Kant's Answer to Hume:  
Subjective Necessity and Objective Validity

Adrian Haldane

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## SUMMARY

This thesis argues that Kant is able to maintain the distinctiveness of his position in opposition to Hume's naturalism (contrary to the arguments of R. A. Mall and L. W. Beck) without invoking premises which are question begging with regard to Hume's scepticism. The argument of Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, as presented in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is considered in relation to the two sets of criticism that have been levelled at it from its publication up to the present day, both of which aim to demonstrate that synthetic *a priori* judgements are subjectively necessary but without objective validity.

The first set of criticisms involves problems raised with regard to the status of transcendental arguments. The difficulties identified here (by B. Stroud, M. S. Gram, and others) are that the Deduction can either, at best, show that it is necessary for experience to be regarded in a certain way without demonstrating anything as to the nature of experience as such, or the argument is circular in that it begins by making assumptions regarding the nature of our experience.

Alternatively, if the Deduction is taken to establish the objective nature of concepts via an analysis of the conditions under which it is possible for us to have some knowledge of ourselves, then incoherence is said to arise because this requires either an implausible reflective theory of consciousness (according to D. Henrich) or that we have knowledge of the subject-in-itself (as held by J. G. Fichte and other contemporaries of Kant).

Through a consideration of both the historical and contemporary manifestations of these criticisms, the thesis advances an interpretation of the Deduction, with special attention paid to the role and nature of the subject, which does not fall prey to the alleged incoherence. As such, the thesis defends both the distinctiveness and legitimacy of transcendental philosophy.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

Throughout the following Kant's works, with the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, are referred to by means of a Roman numeral, indicating volume number, and an Arabic one, indicating page number. The volume number refers to the standard *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: De Gruyter and predecessors, 1902–). Untranslated citations from Kant retain the punctuation and spelling found within these volumes.

Page references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* have the usual form of 'A' and 'B' designating the pagination 1781 and 1787 editions respectively.

Other abbreviated references employed are as follows:

- Aen* Gottlob Ernst Schulze, *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie* (N.p.: 1792).
- E* David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3rd ed., edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975).
- F* Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Fichtes sämtliche Werke*, edited by I. H. Fichte, vol 1, *Zur theoretischen Philosophie 1* (Berlin: Veit, 1845).
- T* David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd ed., edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978).

Where appropriate further information on reprint editions of these works is given in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

Citation of and reference to other works is made by means of footnotes in conformity with the 14th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Kemp-Smith's translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* has been adhered to in almost all instances. In those cases where some amendment has been necessary this is indicated by means of an asterisk following the page reference. Unless otherwise indicated, in the case of both Kant's other writings and the works of other authors the translations are my own. Translations of these works, when available, have been consulted and are referenced in the bibliography.

Within the body of the thesis the first person plural mode of address is employed. It has been necessary to sacrifice grace in order to avoid confusions arising from discussing the 'I' in the first person singular mode. The reader's tolerance of being co-opted into agreement with me by dint of grammar alone is begged.

# **Introduction**

Philosophy has always been miscast as the understudy to a benevolent deity ready to guarantee that the world will remain orderly and people tolerably decent, even if God is not on the scene. But then, what is the value of these arguments?<sup>1</sup>

In asking the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible Kant casts philosophy in exactly this role. If synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible, then, without having to make appeal to the beneficence of a transcendent deity, one can be assured of some necessary truths. Of course, the question of the value of this as a philosophical position is multifaceted. This is no absurdity involved in assessing the world-historical significance of Kant's thought: its relationship to the development capitalism from feudalism, to Protestantism, or to Modernity *per se*. Within the discipline of philosophy itself Kant's value is said to reside in his ability to defeat scepticism, provide a theoretical matrix for cognitive science, reconcile the dualism of scheme and content, as well as the introduction of a distinctive method of doing philosophy, the transcendental argument.

The aim of this thesis is not to assess the value of Kant in terms of its significance, usefulness, or indeed point. Judgements can be formed on these matters without needing to arrive at any conclusions regarding the worth of what Kant *himself* says — one can even be Kantian while holding that Kant himself failed to muster arguments of sufficient coherence to make his own position viable; indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that this is something of a default position for Kantians. Our concern is more basic than this. It is simply to investigate the question of the possibility of transcendental philosophy — or, more specifically, the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgements having any objective validity.

The possibility of transcendental philosophy has been contested from its inauguration. Broadly speaking, the problems raised take one of two forms: the transcendental is assimilated either to the empirical or to the transcendent. In the first case, the claim is that the very most that can be demonstrated about synthetic *a priori* judgements is that it is necessary for us to make them, but not that these judgements are true. And in the second instance, the judgements are said to be premised upon the assumption of knowledge which itself cannot be accounted for within transcendental philosophy: knowledge of some necessary feature of

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Kitcher, "Kant's Patchy Epistemology," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 68 (1987): 307.

experience from which the transcendental conditions of this experience are (logically) deduced, or knowledge of things as they are in themselves. In either case there is no space for the transcendental. These questions most spectacularly provided the premises for post-Kantian idealism. The distinction between the spirit and the letter of Kantian philosophy was made because it was felt that Kant had failed to articulate the ground of the transcendental and that this remained as a task for others to perform. However, the same problematic has been equally prevalent throughout the last few decades: transcendental arguments have been declared impossible; the first *Critique* rewritten, founded anew in analytic conceptual analysis; rediscovered as advancing a psychological argument. In essence, there is a recurring theme to Kant interpretation: as it stands the first *Critique* is incoherent, but becomes of value when rooted in, or reinterpreted in light of, some context which grounds the transcendental. Typically, however, this ground itself is either empirical or transcendent, and the question addressed in the reinterpretation of Kant is whether this can be justified by bolstering Kant's premises (as occurred in the tradition of post-Kantian idealism) or by weakening his conclusions (as is the current standard).

The relationship between Kant and Hume provides the groundwork for the exploration of this issue. In his own defence of the objective validity of synthetic *a priori* judgements, Kant contrasts his position with that of Hume. More pertinently, Hume can be seen to provide opposition to Kant by giving a naturalistic explanation of (what Kant would call) synthetic *a priori* judgements, while being sceptical as to their objective validity. Hume disallows appeals beyond experience to explain what occurs within it. This immediately problematises the notion that one can claim that there are any necessary features of experience encapsulated within synthetic *a priori* judgements, and that is because we have no experience of necessity. What, therefore, remains to be explained is how we come to *regard* some aspects of experience as necessary when all experience is contingent. Kant's claim is that he remains bound to Hume's strictures that necessity cannot be explained empirically and that appeals to transcendence explain nothing, and yet can still maintain that synthetic *a priori* judgements can have objective validity. This is how Kant answers Hume and the mere possibility of this answer is the topic of this thesis.

The first chapter provides a general account of the relationship between Kant and Hume, concentrating on the opposition between subjective necessity and

objective validity. Kant's own description of his response to Hume is defended and the notion that there might be a reconciliation between the Kantian and the Humean projects is rejected. The internal coherence of both of their respective positions demands that they can be rigorously distinguished from one another. The challenges that have been made, both in the immediate aftermath of the publication of the first *Critique* and also within some current secondary literature, to the possibility in principle of Kant providing an answer to Hume are discussed in the second chapter. It is suggested there that Kant appears to need to invoke some premise that is explicitly rejected by Hume. The problem is twofold: Kant can maintain that synthetic *a priori* judgements have objective validity if he supposes either that there is some necessary order in experience, or if he maintains that the subject imposes order onto a chaotic experience. The first option is question begging in that the condition under which it is possible for synthetic *a priori* judgements to have objective validity is presupposed in order to demonstrate that they have this very quality. Moreover, it is precisely his denial of this point that leads Hume to be sceptical about experience demonstrating any necessary features. If Kant adopts the model of the subject imposing order he fares no better. In this case he cannot merely maintain that it is necessary for us to regard ourselves as giving order to experience. This only establishes how we must think that experience is ordered (a subjective necessity), without demonstrating that we actually do impose order. If, however, we are to know ourselves as imposing order, then we need a knowledge of ourselves which extends beyond the awareness that we have of ourselves as we appear to ourselves, and must have knowledge of ourselves as we are in ourselves; knowledge which transgresses the boundaries of legitimacy upon which transcendental philosophy is founded. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with each of these issues in turn. The third chapter provides an interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories which does not invoke a question-begging premise, and the fourth discusses the role attributed to the subject in the Deduction. In the final chapter the limitations on the defence of Kant that has been offered are assessed; nonetheless, it is concluded that the distinctiveness and possibility of a genuinely transcendental philosophy is established by Kant.



## **Chapter One**

# **Scepticism, Naturalism and Criticism**

## 1. Introduction

This chapter situates Kant's critical philosophy in the context of Hume's sceptical questioning of the origin of the concept of causality. It is argued that Kant's claim in the *Prolegomena* to provide an answer to a question first posed by Hume is correct and the distinctiveness of Kantian and Humean solutions is defended.

That Kant took himself to be responding to Hume's scepticism is not a matter of controversy. However, within the secondary literature this is as far as the agreement on the question of Kant's relation to Hume extends. The points of dispute range from questions concerning what aspect of Hume's scepticism awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber to the denial that the solutions proposed by Kant and Hume differ. It will be argued that whatever Kant's precise intentions were he does provide an answer to Hume's scepticism with regard to causality. In order to establish this, Hume's sceptical arguments are briefly outlined. The naturalistic turn performed by Hume is then contrasted with Kant's transcendental philosophy and the distinctions between their respective positions are highlighted by disputing claims which purport to show that there is an underlying similarity. In conclusion we shall identify what Kant's argument must achieve in order to constitute a successful reply to Hume.

## 2. "The First Spark of Light"

Upon publication in 1781 the *Critique of Pure Reason* met with little interest and even less understanding. Although Kant cannot have expected this work to find an audience with the public at large, the lack of response from within the philosophical community, which Kant says "honours" the book "with silence"[IV 380]<sup>1</sup>, was sufficiently disturbing to Kant for him to write a popular exposition of the central themes of the *Critique* in order to aid the understanding and promulgation of this latter work. To this end Kant identifies the unique selling point of his new critical philosophy as that of being able to provide an answer to "Hume's problem"[IV 261]<sup>2</sup>.

The popularity of Hume in Germany along with disputes concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> "das Stillschweigen ..., womit es ... meine Kritik beehrt hat".

<sup>2</sup> "Humischen Problems".

extent of Kant's knowledge of Hume and questions of both when and how much Kant was influenced by Hume are well documented.<sup>3</sup> It seems certain that Kant was familiar with a wide variety of Hume's doctrines prior to the publication of the first *Critique*: he owned a copy of the *Enquiry* (which was translated in 1755) and was acquainted with some of the *Treatise* through the 1771 publication of Hamann's translation of the concluding chapter of Book 1 in the *Königsberger Zeitung* and from the extensive quotations provided in the 1772 translation of James Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*. Between the publication of the first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* Kant had also read Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, which were translated in 1781.

Kant identifies Hume's problem as "a question regarding the origin of the concept"[IV 259]<sup>4</sup> of causality. In summary, Hume had demonstrated that there is no rational justification for a belief in the principle of causality since there is, in Kant's language, no analytic relationship between the concept of an event and the concept of a cause of that event. However, if the origin of belief in the principle of causality lies in experience, then the necessity of every event having a cause requires radical reinterpretation.

Kant recognises that Hume undertook such a reinterpretation rather than abandon the concept altogether, but Kant asserts that if Hume had realised the extent of the problem that he had uncovered he would never have proposed the solution that he did. Underlying the problematic status of the concept of causality are questions regarding the status of mathematics and natural science. Both these fields, for Kant, employ concepts whose necessity can derive neither from reason nor from experience alone. The threat of any sceptical encroachment within these fields, Kant claims, has been halted though his "execution of Hume's problems to their

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<sup>3</sup> Details of the spread of Hume's philosophy within Germany can be found in E. C. Mossner, "The Continental Reception of Hume's *Treatise*, 1739 – 1741," *Mind* 56 (1947) and Manfred Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1768–1800* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's UP, 1987). The direct and indirect sources of Hume's influence on Kant are enumerated by a number of commentators, for example, Manfred Kuehn, "Kant's Conception of 'Hume's Problem'," in *Immanuel Kant's "Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics" in Focus*, ed. Beryl Logan (London: Routledge, 1996); L. W. Beck, "Lambert and Hume in Kant's Development," in *Essays on Kant and Hume* (London: Yale UP, 1978); R. P. Wolf, "Kant's Debt to Hume via Beattie," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960).

<sup>4</sup> "die Rede von dem Ursprunge dieses Begriffs".

greatest possible extent”[IV 261]<sup>5</sup> in the first *Critique*. The most straightforward understanding of this statement, and that which is the focus of most of the discussions concerning the relationship between Hume and Kant, would lead one to infer that what Kant has in mind here is his attempt to identify the concepts which are open to the challenge posed by Hume, and yet defensible by means of Kant’s newly discovered mechanism of transcendental deduction. This view suffers two weaknesses. Firstly, in the period prior to the *Prolegomena* Kant makes only scant reference to Hume. The letter to Marcus Herz, of 21 February 1772, within which the problem of how intellectual conceptions can come by the “agreement that they are supposed to have with objects”[X 131]<sup>6</sup> is first raised, contains no reference to Hume. Furthermore, the 1781 edition of the first *Critique* makes no reference to Hume within the context of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories where both the answer to the 1772 question and Hume’s problem are located. Secondly, focusing on the Transcendental Deduction eclipses the context within which this argument takes place.

It is Kant’s stated aim not merely both to defend propositions that cannot be justified on the basis of analytic entailment or through experience and to place limits on the range within which these propositions are legitimate, but also to leave room for faith. In this regard, Hume’s arguments (especially those contained in the *Dialogues*) are a provocation for Kant because they challenge the notion that we have any determinate concept of a Supreme Being. Thus, theism, which Kant intended to defend in the first *Critique*, would thereby be undermined. It is within the context of these arguments that Kant says that the *Critique of Pure Reason* shows the “true middle path between Dogmatism, which Hume fought, and Scepticism, which he would introduce in its place”[IV 360]<sup>7</sup>. This wider context of the debate between Kant and Hume has now received some belated attention.<sup>8</sup> However, the concerns of this thesis remain within what is the more traditional focus of debate, and we only consider the differences between Kant’s transcendentalism

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<sup>5</sup> “der Ausführung des Humischen Problems in seiner möglich größten Erweiterung”.

<sup>6</sup> “die Übereinstimmung die sie mit Gegenständen haben sollen”.

<sup>7</sup> “den wahren Mittelweg zwischen dem Dogmatism, den Hume bekämpfte, und dem Scepticism, den der dagegen einführen wollte”.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, J. H. Gill, “Kant, Analogy, and Natural Theology,” in *Kant’s “Prolegomena,”* ed. Beryl Logan.

and Hume's naturalism with regard to questions of knowledge to the exclusion of the (perhaps, for Kant, more pressing) question of faith. This is not to underestimate the difficulties inherent in this account if it is taken to reflect either the historical relation between Hume and Kant, or Kant's intentions in writing the first *Critique*. Nevertheless, we need not be overly concerned about determining these historical questions because the conceptual relationship between Kant and Hume is part of an ongoing debate about the coherence of Kantian philosophy.<sup>9</sup> It is from this analytic perspective that the question of 'Kant's answer to Hume' is here posed. Within the context in which we are working this question is taken not to be a matter of whether Kant knew enough of Hume's works to frame an answer, or whether his answer was incidental to his overall project, but merely a matter of determining where the conceptual frameworks of Kant and Hume collide and where they abut. As we shall see this issue is more complicated than it might be supposed.

The superficial differences between Kant and Hume appear to be indisputable. According to their caricatures, Hume is an empiricist sceptic who takes refuge in a form of naturalism and Kant provides a rationalistic defence of a set of *a priori* concepts. However, this set of distinctions is no longer as secure as it once was. It has been argued that Hume does in fact display a commitment to concepts which have no naturalistic justification in order to support his scepticism with regard to concepts of a more limited range.<sup>10</sup> Concomitantly, Kant's transcendental categories have been interpreted as involving, and being based upon, naturalist claims about the "specific constitution of human mind."<sup>11</sup> The remainder of the chapter will consist in an evaluation of these claims.

### 3. Scepticism and Naturalism

Any attempt to posit a naturalistic theory of the mind alongside sceptical arguments regarding the concept of causality looks to be self-contradictory. On the one hand, the origin of belief is explained by Hume in terms of the force with which

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<sup>9</sup> In particular the question of whether Kant begins the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories with assumptions that are open to sceptical challenge. We shall see, in the next chapter, that this issue is raised both by Kant's own contemporaries (for instance, G. E. Schulze) and in recent discussions on the coherence of transcendental arguments (for instance, Barry Stroud).

<sup>10</sup> L. W. Beck, "A Prussian Hume and a Scottish Kant," in *Kant's "Prolegomena,"* ed. Beryl Logan.

<sup>11</sup> R. A. Mall, *Naturalism and Criticism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 30.

an impression enters the mind. The relation between the force of an impression and the resulting belief is governed by a series of natural laws which mirror the laws of motion that Newton employed to explain the behaviour of material bodies. Explanations of belief, therefore, appeal to an impression as being a sufficient cause for the belief, given the state of the particular mind into which they entered and the universal laws which govern the mind. On the other hand, the belief in causality itself, when explained in these terms, is robbed of any pretence to be either true or rational. The employment of the concept of causality is justified only on the basis of the argument which attributes an irrational origin to this concept. Yet in order to explain the origin of the concept in these terms it is necessary to use this very concept.

For our present purposes it is neither necessary to determine whether the apparent circularity in the above argument is sufficient to undermine Hume's arguments, nor to come to any final conclusion as to whether Hume was a naturalist first and sceptic second or *vice versa*.<sup>12</sup> The contrast between Kant and Hume can be illustrated and 'Hume's problem' can be contextualised without reference to the fundamental coherence or the priorities attached to Hume's scepticism and naturalism, because Kant's arguments respond to both of these positions in equal measure. With regard to scepticism Kant's claim is that it is Hume's failure to distinguish the analytic and the *a priori* which lead to him dismissing the rational justification of the employment of the concept of causality. Hume's naturalism is rejected by Kant not only because Hume has been led to it on the basis of what Kant considers to be a sceptical misapprehension, but also because Kant argues that it is incoherent and even on its own terms unable to provide an account of the origin of the concept of causality.<sup>13</sup> We shall now turn to a short exposition of both the

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<sup>12</sup> Just as there are debates regarding the relative significance of Hume's scepticism and naturalism, so there is disagreement concerning the legitimacy which Hume attributes to the concept of causality. This debate centres on the question of whether we can ascribe causal properties to objects with meaning or whether the only possible reference is to the subjective feeling of necessity. See Jane Broughton, "Hume's Ideas About Necessary Connection," *Hume Studies* 13 (1987) for a discussion of this point. However, it is agreed by all parties in this dispute that, for Hume, there can be no non-naturalistic justification for causal judgements. It is only Hume's arguments for this latter point that we shall be investigating.

<sup>13</sup> Throughout this chapter we shall be focusing exclusively on the Hume's arguments concerning the validity of causal judgements. Causality has been selected in preference to the other obvious points of dispute between Hume and Kant, such as the nature of the

sceptical arguments mobilised by Hume and the naturalistic argument that he advances.

Hume's scepticism with regard to causality proceeds on two fronts. He begins with an attempt to trace this idea back to its origin in an impression and demonstrates that there is no such impression. He subsequently considers and rejects the notion that the proposition that "*Whatever has a beginning has also a cause of existence*" [T 79] is demonstrably certain on the basis of self-evident entailment. This opens the way for his alternative account of causation which rests upon neither the immediate impressions of the senses nor abstract reasoning, but upon the activity of the imagination. Before considering how Kant responds to this argument each of the stages will be briefly outlined.

Hume's sceptical arguments with regard to a possible sensible origin of the idea of causality are extremely familiar.<sup>14</sup> The idea of causality could be derived from either some particular quality of all those objects of sense which are causes (with a reciprocal impression of effect being a quality of the object with which the causal object is in relation), or it could involve an impression derived from the relationship between objects. In the first case Hume claims that it is evident that there is no particular quality which is shared by all the different objects which are taken to be causes. The impression that gives rise to the idea of causality is not, then, like impressions of colour or size which are determinations of the objects, irrespective of their relationship to other objects and according to which objects may

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subject or the existence of external objects, not only because Kant never mentions Hume when discussing these other problems, but also because it is here that Hume's argument is at its clearest. Hume's retraction of his reasoning about the self [T 635] mitigates against the adoption of this argument, and the mechanisms employed to account for the origin of the belief in the external world produce a much less clear-cut answer than they do when he explains the concept of causality. Whereas in the latter case we are necessarily led to the belief via the harmonious effects of association and impression, in the former case there is no impression which generates the belief (as there is in the case of causality), which means that it would be problematic to attribute even a subjective necessity to this belief. Furthermore, in the former case the imagination and reflection have contrary tendencies [T 215] which means that the belief produced has less stability than the belief in causality. The explanation that Hume provides of causality provides, therefore, the clearest expression of his method, and it is for this reason that it is focused upon here. For an account of the relationship between Hume and Kant regarding all three of the issues raised here see Patricia Kitcher, "Changing the Name of the Game: Kant's Cognitivism versus Hume's Psychologism," in *Kant's "Prolegomena,"* ed. Beryl Logan.

<sup>14</sup> Hume's presentation of the arguments outlined in this paragraph and the following one are to be found in T 73–82.

be classified. However, upon turning to the relationships which pertain between objects Hume only discovers impressions of contiguity and priority. That is, the common features of objects which are considered to be in relations of cause and effect are those objects being contiguous to one another in time or place, and the way in which the object taken to be the cause precedes the other in time. In this case the lack of any additional impression of causality is significant because by means of the idea of causality we clearly intend to indicate a distinction between those objects which are contingently related both in terms of contiguity and priority, and those objects where there is “a NECESSARY CONNEXION to be taken into consideration”[T 77]. Therefore, in the absence of any impression of necessary connection we can have no impression of causality.

The second possible source of the idea of causality, for Hume, lies in the relations of ideas. If the proposition that “whatever begins to exist, must have a cause of existence”[T 78] is accepted, then the origin of the idea of causality could be explained without there being any need to refer to any direct impression of it. The mere impression of something beginning to exist would be the source of this idea because the idea corresponding to the impression of something coming to exist logically entails the idea of causality. However, in order for this account to be valid the proposition which attributes a cause to every event must be demonstrably certain. Such certainty is not available to us because, Hume claims, there is no contradiction in the conception of something coming to exist without it having had a cause. There is no necessary relation between these two ideas because they are separable in the imagination. Although it might be claimed that such a necessary relation does pertain between cause and *effect* because the two terms are correlative with each other, this no more establishes that every *event* must have a cause than the correlative nature of the terms husband and wife establishes that “every man must be marry’d.”[T 82]

There are clear weaknesses in both the preceding lines of argument. With regard to Hume’s first contention regarding the absence of any impression of causality we could, for instance, question whether it is necessarily the case that all differences between impressions be consciously recognised. For example, two impressions of smell may be distinguishable from one another only in terms of the



behaviour that they induce. The different ideas produced by some cases of impressions of contiguity and priority could, therefore, lead us to suppose that there is indeed some real difference in these impressions, but one which we simply cannot consciously detect in the impressions themselves. Hume's second argument is also inconclusive. The criterion employed by Hume to determine whether the idea of coming to exist and the idea of having a cause are really distinct is simply that they are separable by the imagination. He states that if we can perform this separation then there is no "contradiction nor absurdity"[T 80] in thinking the one without the other. However, the ability to perform a psychological act of separation is clearly not a sufficient guarantee of logical consistency.<sup>15</sup> Hume's argument establishes only that event and cause are distinct in this first sense and it therefore remains possible that the impression of an event is the logical ground for the idea of causality.

Hume's arguments are undoubtedly more subtle than is indicated by the above cursory summary. However, we shall not pursue them any further because these arguments merely provide the spring-board for Kant's engagement with 'Hume's problem'. Kant accepts that Hume's arguments demonstrate that the origin of the concept of causality cannot lie in either experience or reason.<sup>16</sup> What Kant rejects is the alternative account provided by Hume of the origin of this concept in the subjective activity of the imagination. The Humean concept of causality is famously described by Kant as "a bastard of imagination, which, impregnated by experience, has brought certain representations under the law of Association"[IV 257–8]<sup>17</sup>. We can see what Kant is referring to here if we turn to Hume's account

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<sup>15</sup> See Barry Stroud, *Hume* (London: Routledge, 1977), 42–68 for an extended discussion of this point.

<sup>16</sup> "Hume demonstrated incontrovertibly that it was wholly impossible for reason, *a priori* and from concepts, to think such a combination, when this combination contains necessity. We cannot at all see why, because something is, something else must also necessarily exist, or how the concept of such a connection can arise *a priori*." [IV 257]

[Er bewies unwidersprechlich: daß es der Vernunft gänzlich unmöglich sei, *a priori* und aus Begriffen eine solche Verbindung zu denken, denn diese enthält Notwendigkeit: es ist aber gar nicht abzusehen, wie darum, weil Etwas ist, etwas anderes notwendiger Weise auch sein müsse, und wie sich also der Begriff von einer solchen Verknüpfung *a priori* einführen lasse.]

<sup>17</sup> "ein Bastard der Einbildungskraft sei, die, durch Erfahrung beschwängert, gewisse Vorstellungen unter das Gesetz der Association gebracht hat".

of the origin of the idea of causality.

Briefly stated, having dismissed the notion that causality is either a property of objects (or the relations between them) or analytically entailed by some such property, Hume executes his own Copernican revolution (to use a phrase later adopted by Kant [Bxvii]). The origin of this idea lies in the subjective mechanisms which the mind brings to bear in its operations on impressions rather than in the impressions of the objects themselves. Hume clearly articulates this view when he begins his account of the origin of the idea of causality with the suggestion that

[p]erhaps 'twill appear in the end, that the necessary connexion depends on the inference, instead of the inference's depending on the necessary connexion. [T 88]

Hume's point here is that not all objects which are related by contiguity and priority are also taken to be causally related. What distinguishes these two cases is that a necessary connection is posited between objects which are causally related and it has been assumed that it is on the basis of this necessary connection that the inference from the first object (upon its presentation) to the second is warranted. However, this inference cannot be justified on these grounds for, as we have seen, there is no impression of any necessary connection or causal relation between these objects. It is Hume's contention that we make this inference on entirely different grounds and it is from this inference *itself* that the idea of causality, and the entailed idea of a necessary connection, arises.

The inference from one object to the other does not, observes Hume, take place if we have only experienced this particular conjunction and succession on a limited number of occasions, or if these relations are irregular. Rather the constant conjunction of objects leads to the expectation that upon the presentation of the first, the second will follow. This expectation is not the product of reason for the repeated occurrence of conjunction and succession generates no novel impression of causality in the objects themselves, it is merely an idea generated by the repetition of the same impressions. Such expectation, then, is produced by the mind's own internal propensity to associate impressions which stand in constant conjunction with one another. It is this merely subjective union of ideas in the imagination that is the source of the idea of necessary connection or causality:

Thus tho' causation be a *philosophical* relation, as implying contiguity, succession, and constant conjunction, yet 'tis only so far as it is a *natural* relation, and produces an union among our ideas, that we are

able to reason upon it, or draw any inference from it. [T 94]

This illustrates in outline the point of contrast that we shall be drawing in this chapter between Hume and Kant. This consists not in a simple opposition between an epistemological scepticism and a defence of objective knowledge, but rather a distinction between two different methodologies which are used to explain the application of concepts to objects when these concepts are not derived from experience or reason. For Hume this explanation has a naturalistic form. That is, Hume details the laws governing impressions and ideas, and it is through an account of the mind's propensities as subject to these laws that explanations are provided. Here the necessarily psychological nature of these explanations does not constitute a weakness, but is rather a strength. The psychological need for the attribution of causal relations to objects or the fact that these relations are natural is not something which is subject to sceptical doubt. Hume's treatment of the fact of this attribution is a genuine advance on the straightforward sceptical denial of the validity of the causal judgement because, even within the naturalistic context, Hume can make normative distinctions between causal judgements which are well founded and those based, for example, on prejudice or indoctrination which are not.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4. Transcendental Concepts**

The interpretation of Hume that we have here adopted, in which his naturalistic explanations rather than his sceptical doubts are emphasised, is the one advocated by Kant. This is clear in Kant's description of 'Hume's Problem' as a "question of the origin, not of the indispensable need of the concept"[IV 259]<sup>19</sup> of causality. That is, Kant takes Hume merely to be doubting whether there can be a philosophical justification for the use of this concept and advocating a position where it is necessary to step outside of philosophy into psychology. However, Hume is not doubting, according to Kant, that we actually do employ this concept of causality or that we should continue to do so. In subsequent chapters we shall be

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<sup>18</sup> For detailed accounts on the mechanisms by which one leaves the "vulgar" epistemological class and joins the "philosophers" [T 132] and, in particular, the role that scepticism plays in this transition see Christine Battersby, "Hume's Easy Philosophy" (D.Phil. diss., U of Sussex, 1978) and Lorne Falkenstein, "Naturalism, Normativity, and Scepticism in Hume's Account of Belief," *Hume Studies* 23 (1997).

<sup>19</sup> "die Rede von dem Ursprunge dieses Begriffs, nicht von der Unentbehrlichkeit desselben im Gebrauche".

investigating the claim that Kant takes too much for granted in this respect. For the moment, however, we shall confine ourselves to providing a general account of Kant's non-psychological answer to Hume's problem.

It is Kant's (perhaps revisionist) claim in the *Prolegomena* that reflection upon Hume's problem induced him to provide a deduction of those concepts, including causality, by which, Kant says, "the understanding thinks the connection of things *a priori*"[IV 260]<sup>20</sup>. The nature of the task that Kant undertakes in this deduction is, as Dieter Henrich has shown, a juridical one. It is the process whereby the legal title of possession is established by "explaining its origin, such that the rightfulness of the possession or the usage becomes apparent."<sup>21</sup> In the opening sentence of the chapter entitled "The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding" Kant distinguishes the question which is to be answered by means of the deduction, "the question of right (*quid iuris*)", from the "question of fact (*quid facti*)"[A84/B116]<sup>22</sup>. Both of these questions refer to the source of the acquisition. However, what is established in the case of the latter question is who is in possession of, and how they came to be in possession of, the disputed article. Whether someone came to be in possession of, for example, a particular territory by means of inheritance or through invasion provides a sufficient answer, but it leaves open the question of who has legal claim to the territory. It is by means of a deduction that the right of ownership is established.

The psychological account of the origin of causality given by Hume establishes, for Kant, only how we come to be in possession of this concept and cannot thereby address the question of the right that we have to it.<sup>23</sup> Kant's answer

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<sup>20</sup> "durch den der Verstand *a priori* sich Verknüpfungen der Dinge denkt".

<sup>21</sup> Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989), 35. Henrich provides fascinating background material on the origin and purpose of *Deduktionsschriften*. Decisions of the Imperial Courts within the Holy Roman Empire concerning legal claims between the independent territories of the Empire were reached after each party had submitted a deduction outlining the origin of the claim (particularly with regard to territorial disputes) and how this claim had been, by inheritance or otherwise, transferred.

<sup>22</sup> "die Frage über das, was Rechtens ist, (*quid iuris*) von der, die die Thatsache angeht, (*quid facti*)".

<sup>23</sup> "This attempted physiological derivation concerns a *quaestio facti*, it cannot strictly be called deduction; and I shall therefore entitle it the explanation of the *possession* of pure knowledge." [A86-7/B119]

to Hume, however, does not proceed on this front alone. The deduction that Kant offers attempts to legitimate the claim to the concept of causality on the basis of the fact that the origin of this concept is not psychological but rather synthetic *a priori*. There are, therefore, two different contrasts to be made between Hume and Kant. The first is in regard to the account of how we come by the concept, and the second is in regard to how we justify the concept of causality.

We have seen how the failure of both experience and reason to act as possible sources for the origin of the concept of causality leads Hume to provide a naturalistic account of the origin of this concept. However, Kant claims that the possible sources of this concept which Hume details are not exhaustive. What Hume failed to notice, according to Kant, is that the analytic judgements of reason and the synthetic judgements of experience do not constitute a simple dichotomy. Within this disjunction there lurks another level of complexity which is revealed by Kant's well known distinction between the analytic and the *a priori* and between the synthetic and the *a posteriori*.

In general terms Kant accepts the view espoused by Hume that a judgement is analytic when the subject and predicate are related in such a way that the predicate "cannot be negated without contradiction"[IV 267].<sup>24</sup> Such judgements

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[Diese versuchte physiologische Ableitung, die eigentlich gar nicht Deduction heißen kann, weil sie eine quaestionem facti betrifft, will ich daher die Erklärung des Besitzes einer reinen Erkenntnis nennen.]

Although Kant does not mention Hume in this context and confines himself to a discussion of Locke's "empirical deduction", at other times he does run deductions of Locke and Hume together, e.g. B127.

<sup>24</sup> "ohne Widerspruch nicht verneint werden".

The complexities and potential contradictions inherent in the account of the analytic/synthetic distinction as it is presented by Kant are well documented. One significant problem is that the appeal to the principle of contradiction is not the only criteria which Kant invokes in order to determine the analytic status of judgements. He also employs the metaphor of the predicate being "contained in" the subject. A discussion of these criteria can be found in A. T. Winterbourne, *The Ideal and the Real* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 36–44. More generally, of course, the notion that analyticity is predicated upon the meaning of terms has been famously questioned by W. V. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2d ed. (London: Harvard UP, 1980).

Complications of a similar nature also arise with regard Hume's distinction between "*Relations of Ideas* and *Matters of Fact*." Where the contrary of any matter of fact is possible "because it can never imply a contradiction." [E 25] This distinction (which is drawn in different terms in the *Treatise*, p. 69, although this vocabulary is used elsewhere, e.g., p. 458, and in the *Abstract* to the *Treatise*) does not appear to rest solely on the principle of contradiction, but also draws on a broader notion of conceivability derived

are explicative in that they do not extend the knowledge of the subject term but merely make explicit what was already thought in it. Synthetic judgements are correspondingly ampliative in that they add to the thought of the subject term. The criteria used to distinguish between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* are that *a priori* judgements are, firstly, pure and, secondly, necessary and universal. These two criteria are mutually reinforcing in that the purity of the *a priori* separates such judgements from those containing anything that is given through sensation, and the content given to judgements by sensation can only establish contingent relations between the subject and predicate in the judgement. This also captures an aspect of judgements that Hume agrees with, in that judgements regarding matters of fact, which are dependent upon experience, can never achieve the certainty associated with relations of ideas. However, it is Kant's claim that not all matters of fact are judgements based on experience: there can be judgements which are not governed by the principle of contradiction and yet are necessary and universal. That all events have causes is one such judgement. This is, on Hume's position, ampliative or synthetic because there is no contradiction involved in its denial, yet it is also *a priori* because it is universally and necessarily true of experience that all events have causes.

As it stands it is merely an assertion on Kant's part that synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible. Mathematics provides him with the clearest set of examples, but even with regard to causality Kant's initial contention concerns not so much the validity of the judgement but rather merely attempts to demonstrate the kind of judgement made. That is, although "every event has a cause" is not analytic, the necessity which attaches itself to the judgement is lost if it is treated as a generalisation from experience. The solution proposed by Hume, according to Kant,

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from being imaginable rather than an absence of self-contradiction. The difficulties inherent in any attempt to distinguish between relations of ideas and matters of fact in terms of a straightforward distinction between analytic and synthetic statements are highlighted in Elliot David Cohen, "Hume's Fork," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 15 (1977). For present purposes, however, even if it is accepted that there is a conceptual space within Hume's writings which is *analogous* to Kant's notion of the synthetic *a priori* and if (as we shall see Beck contends, but Hume denies) causality is to be located within this domain, it is not necessary to assimilate the positions of Hume and Kant. With regard to both the explanation of this intermediate domain and the justification offered for the placing of concepts within it, Kant and Hume are radically opposed. It is this latter point, insofar as it bears upon challenges posed to the principle of a transcendental deduction, that is of concern to us here.

changes the nature of the judgement, because rather than being a claim concerning the necessary relation between events and causes, it becomes a statement of the necessity to *attribute* causes to events, which is a “merely subjective necessity”[B5]<sup>25</sup>. Hume’s account explains and justifies the propensity to make the judgement; but the judgement itself, when understood to refer to the objective relations of event and cause in experience, has no validity. The initial manoeuvre that Kant initiates against Hume in introducing the notion of the synthetic *a priori* judgement consists, then, in a clarification of the object over which a right is claimed. What is subsequently necessary is a deduction of legal entitlement.

The task of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories is to explain how the concepts which claim to have universal application within experience “can refer to objects which they do not obtain from any experience,” when no justification for their employment is “obtainable either from experience or from reason”[A85/B117]<sup>26</sup>. The only way to establish that the concepts which claim to have empirical reference are, nevertheless, not derived from experience, is to reverse the order of the deductions that have previously been attempted. Rather than it being the case that the concept is derived from the experience of the object, “the representation alone makes the object possible.”[A92/B124–5]<sup>27</sup> Rather than the universality of causal judgements being purely derived from the particular relation that they hold to a world of objects (such that a judgement is universal when it describes some generalised truth about the world), the Transcendental Deduction attempts to establish that such objectivity is determined purely by judgement itself. The objective validity of concepts is not to be found in the conditions of objects in the world but rather in the subjective condition of thought:

Pure *a priori* concepts, if such exist, cannot indeed contain anything empirical; yet, none the less, they can serve solely as *a priori* conditions of a possible experience. Upon this ground alone can their objective reality rest.[A95]

[Wenn es also reine Begriffe a priori giebt, so können diese zwar freilich nichts Empirisches enthalten: sie müssen aber gleichwohl lauter Bedingungen a priori zu einer möglichen Erfahrung sein, als worauf allein ihre objective Realität beruhen kann.]

<sup>25</sup> “bloß subjectiven Nothwendigkeit”.

<sup>26</sup> “weder aus der Erfahrung, noch der Vernunft anführen kann[.] ... wie diese Begriffe sich auf Objecte beziehen können, die sie doch aus keiner Erfahrung hernehmen.”

<sup>27</sup> “die Vorstellung ... den Gegenstand allein möglich macht.”

The manner in which the objective validity of concepts is established cannot follow the pattern of an empirical deduction; if the concepts are to have objective validity then this needs to derive from their very nature as *a priori* concepts. The subjective quality here attributed to synthetic *a priori* judgements needs to be distinguished from the mere subjective validity which attaches to these judgements on the Humean account. Synthetic *a priori* judgements are subjective only in the sense that they are said by Kant to constitute a condition of experience that cannot be provided by experience. The claim is that experience would not be possible unless the concept of causality is applied to that experience. This concept, however, cannot be derived from experience and must, therefore, have a subjective source. This does not render these concepts merely subjectively valid because it is not the case that we must merely *regard* experience as being subject to the concept of causality, but rather that it is an objective condition of experience that it *is* so subject to this concept.

We have only considered the kind of argument that the Transcendental Deduction must be if it is to establish the validity of synthetic *a priori* judgements without attention to the details of the argument that Kant employs. This is not only because the Deduction is, as Kant says, a matter of extreme difficulty, but also because, while there is a critical consensus regarding the conclusion that Kant must reach, his actual argument has been variously described as “a botch”<sup>28</sup> and a “disjointed summary of significantly different strategies”<sup>29</sup>. It is, however, not necessary to join the *mêlée* of competing interpretations of the Deduction to provide some initial clarification of the conflicting ways in which Hume and Kant respond to the same problem.

The general differences in approach can be summarised under the familiar labels of psychological and transcendental. These terms describe both the method and object of enquiry. Hume’s method is psychological because he appeals to general empirical laws governing the relations between impressions and ideas: what he seeks to explain is also psychological because it treats the subjective propensity to attribute, for instance, causal relations to objects rather than those causal relations themselves. A sceptical attitude is maintained with regard to any attempt

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<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Bennett, *Kant’s Analytic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966), 100.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 73.



to establish the objective nature of these relations. On the other hand, it is precisely this latter question that constitutes the topic of Kant's enquiry and the psychological method cannot accommodate this goal. The synthetic *a priori* nature of the judgements necessitates that the enquiry proceeds not from experience but rather from the conditions under which experience is possible.

Having presented a brief exegetical account of the difference between the Humean and the Kantian projects, we shall now turn to some considerations which, it is claimed, mitigate against the maintenance of the distinctions as they have been presented above.

## 5. A Psychological Kant and a Transcendental Hume

Although Kant and Hume both respond to the same problem of justifying causal judgements, it has been argued both that the Kantian and the Humean programmes are of a fundamentally different nature and that Kant correctly identifies this distinction when he characterises Hume's principle of causality as subjectively necessary. Both of these latter points have been challenged by interpretations which either assimilate the Kantian transcendental into a form of naturalism or identify principles used by Hume which are *a priori*.

The interpretations that we shall consider here are those advanced by R. A. Mall and L. W. Beck. Despite the differences in approach taken by Mall and Beck, both agree that Kant misunderstood Hume, in that he took Hume to be ultimately offering sceptical arguments against the principle of causality. The arguments of both Mall and Beck then proceed in a structurally analogous way. They argue that once it is understood that Hume is advancing his own answer to the sceptical problem, then the distinctions between him and Kant begin to disappear. Thus Mall claims that "Kant saw in Hume only a critical genius who proposes no solution of his own,"<sup>30</sup> and Beck argues that it is on the basis of the confused and second-hand account of Hume provided by Beattie that Kant wrongly concludes that Hume takes the principle of causality to be contingent.<sup>31</sup> It will be argued here that it is incidental to the relationship between Kant and Hume whether the positive principles defended by them both are identical or not, and this is because the significant

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<sup>30</sup> Mall, *Naturalism and Criticism*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Beck, "A Prussian Hume and a Scottish Hume," 144.

distinction, which Kant correctly identifies, resides in the way in which the principles are defended and interpreted rather than in the principles themselves.

The point of similarity shared by Hume and Kant that Mall identifies is that they both adopt positions which display “a foundational and fundamental relativity to the special constitution of human mind, human nature.”<sup>32</sup> In the case of Hume this “special constitution” refers to the working of the imagination which is constitutive of human nature because, as we have seen, it supplements both experience and reason to allow, for instance, causal judgements to be made. That is, on Mall’s interpretation, Hume takes the making of causal judgements to be a natural human attribute. Causal inferences, however, are revealed as part of human nature by Hume in that he shows that experience alone does not provide the sufficient means for the origin of these judgements. It is necessary to posit another faculty to co-ordinate the material given in experience and this faculty is then said to constitute part of our human nature.<sup>33</sup>

There is certainly much evidence in the first *Critique* to support the attribution of a concern for human nature to Kant. With regard to the forms of intuition, for instance, Kant says that they are “not necessarily fitting for every being, though certainly, for every human being”[A42/B59]<sup>34</sup>. It is also a peculiarity of the human constitution that the understanding and sensibility are the two stems of knowledge and other beings will possess only one of these faculties. The categories could then be said to constitute a uniquely human attribute [B145]. If one accepts this, then it appears as if the differences between Kant and Hume only operate at a superficial level; Hume uncovers a human faculty structure on the basis of certain natural yet *a posteriori* judgements, and Kant’s programme is distinct only insofar as he takes these judgements themselves to be *a priori*. With regard to this latter point Mall argues that the *a priori* status of these judgements depends on the “more

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<sup>32</sup> Mall, *Naturalism and Criticism*, viii.

<sup>33</sup> The radicality of Hume’s conception of human nature should not be underestimated. It constitutes a complete break from traditional metaphysics, since his conception of the human completely disinvests the rational at the expense of instinct, propensity or inclination which have commonly been associated with animality. For a discussion of this point see Wolfgang Röd, “Kant und Hume: Die Transzendentalphilosophie als Alternative zum Naturalismus,” *Dialectica* 49 (1995), 322.

<sup>34</sup> “die auch nicht notwendig jedem Wesen, ob zwar jedem Menschen, zukommen muß.”

or less dogmatic ... recourse to the authorities of the sciences like physics and mathematics”<sup>35</sup>. That is, rather than simply investigating the origin of judgements of cause and effect, Mall sees Kant as unjustifiably beginning with a dogmatic assertion as to the nature of these judgements. The interpretation of the relationship between Hume and Kant proposed by Mall, therefore, recognises that the judgements investigated by Kant are distinguished by not being necessary in a naturalistic sense, in that they are not a product of our human nature, but also necessary in that there is an *a priori* connection between the subject and predicate of the judgements. This latter connection is, according to Mall, merely a relation of ideas, and hence, for him, an analytic connection that must be rejected as a dogmatic presupposition; and, yet, this is not to reject the core of Kant’s programme because we “may accept the claims of Kant without necessarily accepting his method of justifying and explaining these claims.”<sup>36</sup>

We can summarise Mall’s argument as follows: (1) Kant’s analysis of human nature begins from the dogmatic assertion that some judgements are logically necessary; (2) although the logical necessity which Kant ascribes to these judgements must be rejected, they are, nonetheless, necessary insofar as they are the natural product of human nature. Therefore, (3) the Kantian programme, with dogmatism removed, gives results which are similar to those of Hume. However, each stage in this argument constitutes a serious misrepresentation of Kant’s position.

Firstly, Mall represents the transcendental necessity which Kant associates with some judgements as being merely formal or logical and posits as the only alternative to this a necessity associated with human nature.: “the so-called logical and transcendental certainty and necessity which Kant speaks of are either fully formal or more or less natural in the Humean sense of the term.”<sup>37</sup> This, however,

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<sup>35</sup> Mall, *Naturalism and Criticism*, 56.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

In contrasting Hume and Kant, Mall repeatedly refuses to accept that there is a distinction to be made between the transcendental and the analytic. This point is made explicit in his association between the Kantian transcendental and Hume’s relations of ideas (which Mall appears to take to be synonymous with analytic). A further example of this occurs on p. 26:

is merely to beg the question against Kant. It is Kant's contention that there are a series of judgements which occupy an intermediate space between the logical and the empirical. Furthermore, Kant does not merely dogmatically assert the existence of such judgements. Although mathematics provides him with what he takes to be an example of a science built upon such judgements, this merely illustrates that it *might* be the case that there are also such judgements to be found within the field of philosophy. This question is investigated in the Transcendental Deduction and it is here that both the distinctive character of Kant's methodology and his conception of what Mall takes to be human nature are revealed. The Deduction aims to establish the validity of certain synthetic *a priori* judgements and does so by showing that these judgements form the necessary conditions for human experience. That the concepts employed in these judgements are an *a priori* feature of human nature, cannot be separated from the method employed by Kant, because it is *only* insofar as they are constitutive of experience that they form a constitutive element of human nature. That is to say, if the method of deduction is eliminated from Kant's approach then there is no human nature to be revealed: Kant *deduces* human nature from the conditions of the possibility of experience. This point reveals inadequacies in the second stage of Mall's argument.

Although in very general terms one can describe the positions of Hume and Kant as being anthropocentric, this obscures the radically different conceptions of human nature that they could be said to be working with. For Hume human nature is revealed by what Mall terms the "supplementary" character of the imagination.<sup>38</sup> That which is given in experience is worked upon by this peculiarly human faculty in such a way that judgements can be made that would otherwise have been impossible. The possession of this faculty is contingent yet shared by all humans and so provides a "factual foundation"<sup>39</sup> for Hume's naturalism. On the other hand, the conception of human nature that we can derive from Kant has a completely different character. Human nature does not supplement that which is given in experience, but rather this experience itself is uniquely human. The contingency of

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"The deduction Hume would accept would also not be a formal-transcendental one, because that would be purely analytic and would mean that the principles should belong not to the field of matters of fact but to that of the relations of ideas."

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, 21 and *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

human nature cannot be revealed by considering what is *added* to a stable field of given experience, because everything that falls within this field is determined with regards to its form *by* our nature. Whereas for Hume the contribution of human nature can be isolated, this is not possible for Kant because we can draw no comparisons (except completely speculatively) between our own beings and that of other creatures.

Mall's claim that there is a "programmatic and architectonic similarity between Critical Philosophy (Kant) and naturalism (Hume)"<sup>40</sup> is, therefore, only remotely plausible if one has first discarded precisely that which is Kantian about Kant. It is necessary to reject synthetic *a priori* judgements, the method by which Kant attempts to demonstrate the validity of these judgements, and the conception of human nature that results. We have seen that these are not incidental aspects which can be disassociated from the results, such as the claim that it is necessary for us to employ causal concepts. Precisely what this result is, and in particular what 'necessity' means in this context, is determined by all those features of Kant that Mall dispenses with.

Turning to Beck's claim that Hume is a Prussian Kant we find similar problems. Although Beck's argument runs the opposite direction to Mall's, it utilises the same distinction between Kant's results and Kant's method to achieve the same end of diminishing the distinctions between Hume and Kant. The particular point at issue for Beck is that "Hume's implicit account of the causal principle is much more like Kant's own than Kant had any reason to suspect."<sup>41</sup> What Beck means by this is that at times Hume calls upon a causal principle which is not grounded in the associative mechanisms of the imagination and which he, therefore, does not account for in a naturalistic fashion. Beck begins by pointing out that for Hume the causal principle manifests itself in two different ways, as either "every-event-some-cause" or "same-cause-same-effect"<sup>42</sup>, and shows that Hume only establishes the same-cause-same-effect principle. Even if we accept that Beck is right in asserting that Hume can only provide evidence for the latter form of this principle, and if we also accept that Beck has successfully established that the

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, vii–viii.

<sup>41</sup> Beck, "A Prussian Hume and a Scottish Hume," 144.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

former principle (every-event-same-cause) is evoked by Hume when he wants to give a causal explanation in the absence of the association necessary for the latter principle, then we need not concur that Hume is a Kantian. What makes Hume a Kantian for Beck is the directionality of the relationship between the principles. The former principle (every-event-some-cause) is more fundamental because it functions as an implicit support for the latter principle (same-cause-same-effect) in those cases where only an effect is witnessed. If the latter principle alone were operating, then we would expect a reduction in our belief in this principle “upon every diminution of force and vivacity of our ideas which occurs when the impression generally associated with an idea is lacking”<sup>43</sup>. That Hume does not accept this conclusion demonstrates for Beck that Hume is implicitly relying on a formulation of the causal principle which is not established via association, in order to ground the formulation which is so established.

As Beck points out, the relationship between these two causal principles functions in the same manner for Kant. The principle that every effect has a cause is established in the Second Analogy, and this supports the regulative principle that the same cause has the same effect. Kant and Hume, therefore, both maintain the distinction between these two principles and do not attempt to derive the one from the other.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, according to Beck, they both maintain, Hume implicitly and Kant explicitly, that the former principle is *a priori* insofar as it is not an induction from experience and is not, therefore, based on association and not vulnerable to disconfirmation. However, as was the case with Mall’s interpretation of Hume and Kant, this similarity in terms of results belies a radical dissimilarity in the means by which these results are reached.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>44</sup> The relation between these two principles in Kant is considerably more complex than is indicated by this brief outline. Some have argued that the evolution in Kant’s thought from the first to the third *Critique* indicates an attempt to render the regulative principle constitutive; because the *a priori* concept of causality is not itself sufficient to unify experience it is also necessary for there be an *a priori* determination of nature as sufficiently regular for this concept to be applied. For an argument illustrating the problems in the relation of these two principles see Burkhard Tuschling, “The System of Transcendental Idealism,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 Supplement (1991). A more general account emphasising the “looseness of fit” between causality on the transcendental and empirical levels is given in Gerd Buchdahl, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), 651–65.

Although Hume does not, as Beck terms it, “sink”<sup>45</sup> the every-event-some cause principle in the same-cause-same-effect principle as an inductive generalisation of it, it is nonetheless only necessary in relation to this second principle. Whereas for Kant the first principle may well be necessary for the second, it is not said to be necessary as such just because it is a condition of the second principle. It is only insofar as the first principle is constitutive of the conditions of possibility of experience that it is necessary and *a priori*. It is precisely this dissimilarity that Kant indicates when distinguishing between the ‘subjective necessity’ of Hume’s principles and the objectivity of his own. Once again we can only appreciate the distinction between Hume and Kant by considering the differences between the objectives and methods of enquiry. The principle for which Hume provides a naturalistic explanation is that the same causes will produce the same effect, but Hume takes this principle to describe a subjective propensity rather than an objective feature of the relations between the objects of experience. If he is implicitly committed to the principle that ‘all events have causes’ in the course of his naturalistic explanation of the principle that ‘same causes have same effects’, then this does not mean that he is committed to the view that it is objectively true that events have causes but merely (and inconsistently) to the existence of a *belief* in this principle. Kant, however, aims to prove the objectivity of this relation and does so not by considering what makes belief in the principle possible, but rather by demonstrating that the principle itself is constitutive of experience.

Despite any of the similarities identified by Mall and Beck there remain fundamental differences between Hume and Kant in terms of both their objectives and methodologies.

## **6. Some Dilemmas**

So far we have only considered the question of whether Kant provides a response to Hume; it has not been asked if the solution offered by Kant is a successful one. This latter question provides the subject matter for the rest of the thesis. However, we are already in a position to identify some criteria which a Kantian solution must meet. These criteria stem from the problems raised in this chapter, in that, if Kant is to reply to Hume in a successful fashion, he must both

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<sup>45</sup> Beck, “A Prussian Hume and a Scottish Hume,” 144.

respond to scepticism and do so in such a way that the objectivity of certain judgements are defended. There are four criteria that we shall draw from these problems: (1) Kant cannot beg any questions against the sceptical opponent; (2) the validity of the synthetic *a priori* as a category must be maintained; (3) the transcendental cannot be assimilated with the psychological; (4) Kant must establish that experience is necessarily conceptually mediated. These criteria correspond to a set of interrelated problems which challenge the possibility of Kant's critical philosophy. Each of them will be dealt with at some length in latter chapters and for the moment it will suffice to indicate the problems that they raise.

The first of these criteria arises naturally from the problem that Kant is responding to and it might be felt that it is too obvious to merit consideration. However, the difficulty is immediately apparent when we consider the argumentative form employed by Kant. At its most general, Kant's argument is of the form that it is a necessary condition of X that Y. Clearly X must be something that the sceptic himself takes for granted, and this cannot, therefore, refer to the objectivity of causal relations. Although the details of Kant's argument are disputed for the moment we can simply call X 'self-conscious experience'. Kant intends to establish that such experience is only possible if certain synthetic *a priori* judgements have objective validity and he does so by demonstrating the necessity of such judgements for self-conscious experience. However, it has been an oft repeated mantra of Kant's opponents that the most that he could be said to have established is the subjective necessity rather than the objective validity of the judgements, and that is because Kant cannot distinguish between it being necessary to think that the judgements have validity and there actually being valid.

The distinction between the synthetic *a priori* and the analytic *a priori* stems from the former being universal and necessary within experience while the latter is universal and necessary *per se*. In order to establish that he is detailing genuine transcendental conditions rather than merely logical ones, it is, therefore, necessary for Kant to make some substantive claim about the nature of experience. This appears to create a dilemma. If any such substantive claim is made, then not only will it be open to sceptical denial, but it also begs the question of the synthetic *a priori* because it is the sceptic's claim that there are no necessary relations to be



found within experience and Kant cannot simply posit such a necessity in order to deduce it. On the other hand, without such an appeal Kant can establish only a necessary relation between the concept of event and the concept of cause, which fails to demonstrate that there is anything in experience corresponding to these concepts.

The criteria which stem from Kant's attempt to distinguish himself from Hume's naturalism are equally pressing. The transcendental and the psychological cannot be assimilated to one another without, once again, raising the problem of establishing the objective nature of the judgements as opposed to their subjective necessity. In addition, Kant is committed not merely to establishing the objectivity of relations but also to the specifically conceptual nature of these relations.

As is detailed in the next chapter, with regard to each of these points it has been claimed that Kant's project must of necessity fail because it is impossible for him to simultaneously defend claims to objectivity without begging the question against the sceptic and that if he does not beg any questions then he cannot avoid naturalism. In this chapter we have seen that the Kantian and the Humean projects cannot be reconciled without the loss of what is genuinely distinctive to Kant's position; the question which remains is whether Kant's answer to Hume is possible.

**Chapter Two**  
**The Sceptical Response**

## 1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the opposition between the objective and the subjective necessity of the concept of causality served to situate the distinction between the programmes of Kant and Hume. It was argued that this contrast provides a site at which the success of Kant's arguments can be judged. The claim to knowledge of objects which Kant wishes to defend cannot merely be a compulsion on the part of the subject to make judgements of a certain form, but must also compel the conformity of objects with the judgement. A sketch of the stages through which this argument proceeds and how it is situated in relation to traditional epistemological claims is given in Section 2 of this chapter. We shall then proceed to detail a number of different arguments which all aim to establish that Kant cannot reach his desired conclusion, because the very form of argument that he employs is inherently problematic.

In the third section it is demonstrated that the initial reception of Kant's philosophy was dominated by the claim that Kant had unwittingly advanced a form of subjectivism which, without some radical reformulation, can provide no conclusive answer to scepticism. The two subsequent sections focus on some of the detailed criticisms that have been levelled against Kant. The centrality of the objectivity of concepts to Kant's position means that there is a wide and varied range of objections to Kant on this specific point. We shall not attempt to provide a survey of all the possible responses to Kant, but rather select a small range of arguments which have been historically significant to Kant's reception and still exert an influence on recent debates on the validity of Kant's arguments. Additionally, the arguments considered mount objections which challenge the possibility *in principle* of the argumentative form adopted by Kant. The first account of this issue, in Section 4, considers the problems raised by one of Kant's early sceptical opponents Gottlob Ernst Schulze, who articulated in 1792, what he took to be a Humean response to Kant. Where Schulze takes Kant to be advancing psychological claims regarding the constitution of the human mind, more recent critics, discussed in Section 5, adopt an anti-psychologistic interpretation of Kant, yet the evaluation is in both cases the same. Their claim being that, at best, Kant can only reaffirm the subjective necessity of some concepts and, at worst, Kant merely begs the question

against Hume or lapses into incoherence.

## 2. The Objectivity of the Categories

In order to contextualise the claims of Kant's critics it is necessary to provide a short overview of the argument advanced by Kant which he claims establishes the possibility of judgements being objective. The intention here is not to provide a comprehensive review of Kant's arguments for the objectivity of any particular concept, but merely to outline the strategy employed by Kant in his demonstration that any claim whatsoever can be justified. This means that we shall be concentrating exclusively on the argument contained in the "Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding" because within this chapter of the first *Critique* Kant displays no commitment to any particular pure concept of the understanding, but rather is concerned with the possibility of there being any such concepts. If, as Kant's critics claim, his argument can be halted at this point, then the subsequent argument for particular concepts, contained in the "Analytic of Principles," would be rendered redundant.

Although the proposed curtailment of Kant's argument removes some of the obstacles that would need to be overcome if a complete account of the objectivity of the categories were to be undertaken, it still leaves us with an argument that is amongst Kant's most complex and is also subject to widely divergent interpretations. For the moment much of the subtlety and intricacy of the argument will be passed over, and those assumptions that Kant carries over from his discussions on the nature of the faculty of sensibility (which are not pertinent to criticisms of the form of the Deduction's argument) will not be investigated. In particular Kant's justification of the transcendently ideal status attributed to space and time will not be subject to critical interrogation.

In the previous chapter it was said that the aim of Kant's argument was to establish the objectivity of judgement and that this is achieved by reversing the relationship between objects and judgements, such that, rather than the nature of objects being independent of the judgements that they are subject to, it is through the activity of judgement itself that objects first become possible:

The concept of cause, for instance, which expresses the necessity of an event under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on an arbitrary subjective necessity, implanted in us, of connecting certain empirical representations according to the rule of causal relation. I

would not then be able to say that the effect is connected with the cause in the object, that is to say, necessarily, but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think this representation otherwise than as thus connected. This is exactly what the sceptic most desires. For if this be the situation, all our insight, resting on the supposed objective validity of our judgements, is nothing but sheer illusion [B168].

[Denn z. B. der Begriff der Ursache, welcher die Nothwendigkeit eines Erfolgs unter einer vorausgesetzten Bedingung aussagt, würde falsch sein, wenn er nur auf einer beliebigen uns eingepflanzten subjectiven Nothwendigkeit, gewisse empirische Vorstellungen nach einer solchen Regel des Verhältnisses zu verbinden, beruhte. Ich würde nicht sagen können: die Wirkung ist mit der Ursache im Objecte (d. i. nothwendig) verbunden, sondern ich bin nur so eingerichtet, daß ich diese Vorstellung nicht anders als so verknüpft denken kann; welches gerade das ist, was der Sceptiker am meisten wünscht; denn alsdann ist alle unsere Einsicht, durch vermeinte objective Gültigkeit unserer Urtheile nichts als lauter Schein].

Within the context of Kant's response to the problem posed by the sceptic, 'objective' does not refer to a truthful description of objects as they exist independently of the judgements that are passed upon them; 'objectivity' is not a property of true judgements about things as they are in themselves. The innovative nature of Kant's conception of the objective can be quickly illustrated by contrasting it with that of Descartes and Hume.

Whereas for Descartes it is God that acts as a guarantor of the correspondence between the subjective idea and objective reality, for Kant a thoroughly secular model of this relationship is all that is required. God is replaced with the activity of judgement performed by the subject itself, in that it is the very structure of subjectivity that provides for the possibility of knowledge. Hume also assumes a godless rendering of, what might be termed, the Cartesian cathedral of subjectivity and substitutes in its place a worldly theatre. As was outlined in the previous chapter, within this theatre of the mind impressions are staged under the direction of mental laws which can lead the viewer into the illusion that he or she is seeing something, e.g. causal interaction, which, in fact, is not there. Although this is to dispense with the distinction between the way in which things appear and how they are independently of their appearing, which requires that the subject have some method of accessing the things that appear without the mediation of its own limited faculties, the cost incurred by this is the loss of the objective altogether. All that is left for Hume to explain how the *illusion* of objectivity is generated from the already subjective order of impressions. Kant's radicality consists in his claim that he can

lay the provisions for knowledge as Descartes wants, without having to step outside of the Humean theatre.

Descartes and Hume both maintain, each in his own way, some distinction between reality and appearance. Replying not merely to Descartes but also to the empiricist distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Kant's denial that there can be any knowledge of things-in-themselves means that knowledge is not a function of a correspondence between the subjective states of the human mind and a domain of objective reality. There is no aspect of appearances that can give us any insight into the nature of the things that affect us in such a way as to give rise to these appearances. The nature of this process in its entirety is unknown to us. According to Kant, however, this is not to say that we are trapped within a subjective theatre of consciousness. The distinction maintained by Hume between two different orders of subjective states and the priority attributed to impressions in relationship between them, such that the failure to be able to reduce an idea to a corresponding impression leads to that idea being designated an illusion, is also rejected by Kant. Legitimacy for Hume, just as it was for Descartes, flows from some original given which is independent of the secondary and distorting influence of the faculties of the subject: error consists in "the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent".[T 415]<sup>1</sup>

The relation of correspondence between appearances and things-in-themselves is denied by Kant in that he maintains that all appearances have a temporal or spatio-temporal form which is itself not a property of things-in-themselves, insofar as the latter are considered "independently of any reference to the form of our sensible intuition." [A35-6/B52]<sup>2</sup> The Humean reworking of this distinction is also rejected because, to translate a Kantian claim into Hume's vocabulary, our access to impressions is itself only possible via the mediation of

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<sup>1</sup> This methodological principle is accorded pride of place within the *Abstract* to the *Treatise*, where Hume explains (in terms which Kant echoes in the opening passage of the Deduction [A84/B116]) that when he "suspects that any philosophical term has no idea annexed to it (as is too common) he always asks *from what impression that pretended idea is derived?*" [T 648-9] As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is the lack of any impression of causality that opens the way from Hume to maintain that this principle only has subjective necessity, in that it is a fictitious idea derived from the natural operation of the imagination.

<sup>2</sup> "ohne auf die Form unserer sinnlichen Anschauung Rücksicht zu nehmen".

ideas. Kant's claim is, therefore, that the objectivity of judgements is not derived from the relation that they hold to a pre-constituted source of legitimacy. We cannot get outside of space and time to establish a correspondence between things-in-themselves and appearances, and we cannot set concepts aside to establish a correlation between impressions and ideas. It is for this reason that neither the Transcendental Aesthetic nor the Deduction answer traditional sceptical questions associated with the distinction between appearance and reality. Instead, the grounds upon which such questions stand are removed. Where the Aesthetic aims to establish that the spatial and temporal determinations of objects are features dependent upon the forms of sensible intuition possessed by the subject, Kant's claim in the Deduction is that objectivity is itself similarly a contribution of the subject. The paradoxical ring of this claim is mitigated by Kant's reversal of the priorities in the dichotomy of impression and idea, or intuition and concept. Somewhat loosely stated, if all knowledge of the manifold of intuition must be mediated via concepts, i.e., if it is only after the manifold has been taken up by the spontaneous activity of the subject that there can be any knowledge of it, then these concepts would be legitimate because they are necessary for any knowledge whatsoever.

Kant's argument for this point centres on a distinctive account of the constitution of knowledge. According to Kant, it is the ability to append the 'I think' to a representation that is constitutive of that representation being an item of knowledge. For the moment we shall assume that by this Kant means that if a representation is to represent something to me, then it is not only necessary that I am aware of the representation but also (potentially) aware of this awareness. More controversially we shall also take self-consciousness to be synonymous with apperception.<sup>3</sup> Hence, his argument attempts to establish an indirect link between intuitions and concepts via the necessity of concepts for self-consciousness: without the possibility of being able to be self-consciously aware of intuitions we cannot be said to have any knowledge of them. Thus, if concepts are necessary for all self-conscious awareness, then all knowledge of intuitions will consequently be mediated by concepts. The legitimacy of the application of these concepts to the manifold of

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<sup>3</sup> The potential difficulties encountered in running these notions together and the nuances of Kant's argument are explored in Chapter 4, pp. 152–165.

intuition is thereby assured, because unless the concepts are applied we can have no knowledge of the manifold. Hence, the dichotomy which allowed both Descartes and Hume to be sceptical about the possibility of knowledge has been undermined:

That nature should direct itself according to our subjective ground of apperception, and should indeed depend upon it in respect of its conformity to law, sounds very strange and absurd. But when we consider that this nature is not a thing-in-itself but is merely an aggregate of appearances, so many representations of the mind, we shall not be surprised that we can discover it only in the radical faculty of all our knowledge, namely, in transcendental apperception, in that unity on account of which alone it can be entitled object of all possible experience, that is, nature. Nor shall we be surprised that just for this very reason this unity can be known *a priori*, and therefore as necessary. [A114]

[Daß die Natur sich nach unserm subjectiven Grunde der Apperception richten, ja gar davon in Ansehung ihrer Gesetzmäßigkeit abhängen solle, lautet wohl sehr widersinnisch und befremdlich. Bedenket man aber, daß diese Natur an sich nichts als ein Inbegriff von Erscheinungen, mithin kein Ding an sich, sondern blos eine Menge von Vorstellungen des Gemüths sei, so wird man sich nicht wundern, sie blos in dem Radicalvermögen aller unsrer Erkenntniß, nämlich der transcendentalen Apperception, in derjenigen Einheit zu sehen, um deren willen allein sie Object aller möglichen Erfahrung, d. i. Natur heißen kann; und daß wir auch eben darum diese Einheit *a priori*, mithin auch als nothwendig erkennen können].

At its most schematic Kant's argument can be represented as three claims regarding the conditions of self-consciousness:

- 1) that the manifold of intuition be synthesised;
- 2) this synthesis must be conceptual;
- 3) this synthesis must take place *a priori*.

Each of these stages to Kant's argument contributes something to establishing his overarching commitment to the possibility of objectively valid judgements regarding objects of knowledge. With (1) Kant establishes that the object of knowledge is presented in a mediated manner. It is necessary for there to be some subjective intervention in the manifold of intuition before we can be aware of it and, therefore, the Humean notion of given impressions *untainted* by beguiling associative mechanisms can be rejected. Kant has a further commitment, in (2), to the manner in which the synthesis takes place. It is here that the claim that concepts can be legitimately employed in judgements regarding intuitions receives its validation, because if it is necessary for there to be a conceptual synthesis of intuition in order for those intuitions to be anything to us, then there is no possible space for sceptical



doubt regarding their applicability. It might be felt that (3) follows analytically from the preceding points because if a conceptual synthesis has been shown to be necessary for any experience, then that synthesis must itself take place prior to any experience and is, therefore, by definition *a priori*. However, the universality and necessity of the synthesis would not thereby be guaranteed. It remains possible for the manifold of intuition either to be such that it simply cannot be synthesised or that concepts employed be subject to variation. Stage (3), therefore, requires justification if Kant is to claim that any particular concept has an objective application to the manifold.

### 3. The Initial Reception of Transcendental Philosophy

Although it would certainly be wrong to say that the critical philosophy did not have any popular success, many of the proponents of this new philosophical form found it necessary to advance it only after some (at times idiosyncratic) alteration. Such revisions were deemed necessary because Kant's philosophy was regarded as subjectivist. Having withdrawn the right to establish the validity of judgements by reference to things-in-themselves, it was argued that all of Kant's efforts to reconstitute this notion were open to sceptical rebuttal.

The Garve-Feder review was amongst the first and most provocative replies to the first *Critique*.<sup>4</sup> The main charge of this review concerns an alleged lack of distinction between reality and illusion; since representations are "modifications of ourselves"<sup>5</sup> and the criteria used to distinguish the objective from the subjective are themselves merely subjective, there is no way to differentiate between the kind of experience that we have while dreaming from that which we have while awake. The only criterion that Kant offers is that of being ordered according to the rules of the

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<sup>4</sup> [J. G. Feder and Christian Garve], review of *Der Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Göttinger Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* Supplement vol. 1 (1782); reprint *Rezensionen zur kantischen Philosophie 1781–87*, ed. Albert Landau (Bebbra: Landau, 1991). A translation by James C. Morrison is provided as appendix C in Johann Schultz, *Exposition of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995). Page references are to the Landau edition. The review was published anonymously in January of 1782. It was the work of Christian Garve, a figure respected by Kant for his work in the *Aufklärung*. Garve, however, disowned the review because of emendations that had been made to it by the editor, J. G. Feder, of the journal in which it was published; it is Feder who makes explicit the accusation that Kant has merely reformulated Berkeley's idealism. For a historical account of the controversy which surrounds this review see Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason* (London: Harvard UP, 1987), 172–7.

<sup>5</sup> [Feder and Garve], *Review*, 10.

understanding, but since we are conscious of our dream states these too must constitute an objective experience; all experience is then reduced to a dream. A second early criticism is related because it also rests upon the notion that a set of representations is given to consciousness and synthesised to produce objective experience; here the point at issue is whether Kant relies upon a notion of unified experience in order to establish what the transcendental conditions for such experience are. Such an assumption is deemed to be necessary because, without it, Kant would merely be repeating the very argument advanced by Hume that the experience we think that we have of causation is merely illusory. Upon reception of unsynthesised representations the mind finds it necessary to connect these representations to one another according to certain formal criteria. The criteria identified by Kant and Hume certainly differ, but this is irrelevant to the sceptical conclusion drawn by Hume; such criteria are merely necessary conditions for how the mind thinks about experience, but not necessary conditions for that experience as such. This line of criticism is best summed up by another of Kant's early critics, Solomon Maimon:

Kant takes it as indubitable that we have propositions of experience which express a necessity, and from this proves their objective validity, since he shows that without them experience would be impossible; experience, however, is possible, because according to Kant's presuppositions it is real, and these concepts consequently have objective reality. ... Things could stand in this relationship to one another; but whether they in fact are in these relationships remains in question.<sup>6</sup>

Kant specifically responds to the charges made by Garve and Feder in the *Prolegomena*, judging it merely to be a case in which the very metaphysics that the first *Critique* calls into question is used to pronounce judgement upon the *Critique*.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that Kant judged this review to be philosophically inept, it induced him to rewrite some significant portions of the first *Critique* in order to make his position clearer.

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<sup>6</sup> Solomon Maimon, *Versuch über die Transscendentalphilosophie mit einem Anhang über die symbolische Erkenntnis* (Berlin: Friedrich Voß, 1790); reprint, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. V. Verra, vol. I (Hidesheim: Georg Olms, 1965), 186–7. Page references are to the original edition.

<sup>7</sup> “the reader from his own metaphysics pronounces judgement on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which was intended to investigate the very possibility of this metaphysics” “der Leser aus seiner Metaphysik über die Kritik der reinen Vernunft (die allererst die Möglichkeit derselben untersuchen soll) ein Urtheil fällt” [IV 372].

In the *Prolegomena* the charge that Kant's transcendental idealism is a disguised form of subjective idealism, and indistinguishable from the position adopted by Berkeley, is disputed by reinforcing the doctrine that appearances are the way in which things-in-themselves are presented to us, although the actual nature of these things-in-themselves remains unknowable:<sup>8</sup>

Idealism consists in the assertion that there are none other but knowing beings; all other things which we believe are perceived in intuition are only representations in the thinking beings, to which nothing external to the sensible object corresponds. On the contrary, I say that things as external and sensible objects of our senses are given to us, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves, knowing only their appearances, i.e., the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses. [IV 288–9]

[Der Idealismus besteht in der Behauptung, daß es keine andere als kennende Wesen gebe, die übrige Dinge, die wir in der Anschauung wahrzunehmen glauben, wären nur Vorstellungen in den denkenden Wesen, denen in der That kein außerhalb diesen besinnlicher Gegenstand correspondierte. Ich dagegen sage: es find uns Dinge als außer und befindliche Gegenstände unserer Sinne gegeben, allein von dem, was sie an sich selbst sein mögen, wissen wir nichts, sondern kennen nur ihre Erscheinungen, d. i. die Vorstellungen, die sie in uns wirken, indem sie unsere Sinne afficiren.]

There is no doctrine within the entire critical philosophy more widely disputed and flatly rejected as self-contradictory than this positing of an unknowable entity as the cause of our sensations.<sup>9</sup>

Within the immediate aftermath of the series of attacks upon Kant's references to things-in-themselves, there were those only too willing to drop this notion and carry on the Kantian programme without it; throughout the 1790s J. G.

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<sup>8</sup> The association with Berkeley, which Kant takes extreme objection to, constitutes little more than a passing reference within the review itself. See [Feder and Garve], *Review*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Another early and lasting criticism of Kant centres on the supposedly contradictory nature of Kant's commitments to the notion of a thing-in-itself. This debate was sparked by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus* (Breslau: Loewe, 1787); reprint, *Werke*, ed. F. Roth and F. Köppen, vol. 2 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 222–3. Page references are to the original edition. Jacobi's argument can be summed up in the slogan the thing-in-itself is necessary if one is to enter into the Kantian system, but once inside there is no place for this notion. The most sustained treatment of this issue is presented by Gerold Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974). It should also be noted that the *Prolegomena* passage [IV 288–9] is not without ambiguity. It is not entirely clear that it is Kant's claim that it is things-in-themselves that are affecting our senses. Another possibility, and one which is advocated by Prauss in his interpretation of this passage, pp. 201–4, is that Kant is merely referring to empirical affection by empirical things.

Fichte, J. S. Beck and Maimon all do this to different extents and in different ways.<sup>10</sup> This is not simply to say that the first step in the development of German idealism after Kant came with the acceptance that Kant was Berkeleyan. Rather it appears that the first post-Kantian idealists realised something concerning the nature of Kantian idealism that, judging from his response in the *Prolegomena*, Kant himself appears to be largely oblivious to, namely, that the very structure of the critical system, based as it is on the notion of the synthetic *a priori*, is sufficient to differentiate Kant from Berkeley. The universal and necessary nature of the conditions of possibility of experience means that problems concerning the ontological status of the objects of our experience or the source of such experiences become redundant. As even Kant is keen to stress, the ontological question is derivative of an epistemological one; he says that his “so-called idealism concerns not the existence of things ... but merely the sensible representation of things.”[IV 293]<sup>11</sup> The discoveries made in the investigation of the conditions of such representation, as we have already seen, render the introduction of an external arbiter for the reality of such experiences unnecessary; the objectivity follows from the necessary features of our experience given the faculty structure that we possess. Within the context of the argument advanced in the Deduction, it would appear that Kant simply makes a blunder by appealing to the thing-in-itself.

If the first wave of post-Kantian idealists embody a response to the charge of subjective idealism, then the same can be said of their attitude toward the (inextricably related) problem of scepticism. Indeed the notion that Kant has failed in this regard provides one of principles from which Maimon takes his departure and

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<sup>10</sup> See J. G. Fichte, *Fichtes sämtliche Werke*, ed. I. H. Fichte, vol. 1, *Zur theoretischen Philosophie 1* (Berlin: Veit, 1845); reprint, *Fichtes Werke* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 480–90. Page references are to the reprint edition. Jakob Sigismund Beck, “The Standpoint from which Critical Philosophy is to be Judged,” edited, annotated and translated by George di Giovanni, in *From Kant to Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, ed. George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, (Albany: SUNY, 1985), 230–2. Maimon, *Transscendentalphilosophie*, 205, 219, *passim*. Secondary material on this issue is to be found in Beiser, *Reason*, Chapters 4 and 10; Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1995), Chapters 2a and 3a; Ingrid M. Wallner, “A New Look at J. S. Beck’s ‘Doctrine of the Standpoint’,” *Kant-Studien* 75 (1984): *passim*; and Samuel Atlas, *From Critical to Speculative Idealism: The Philosophy of Solomon Maimon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), Chapter 2.

<sup>11</sup> “sogenannte Idealism betraf nicht die Existenz der Sachen ... sondern blos die sinnliche Vorstellung der Sachen”.

guides his search for a rationalistic reconciliation between the conditions of thought and the conditions of intuition in the mind of God. In the case of Fichte we find that the sceptical challenge motors his philosophical development<sup>12</sup>; this applies equally to the question of whether Kant appeals to a notion of experience as a premise which is open to sceptical challenge, and the question of whether the logic of the Deduction simply proves that the categories are necessary for thought but not for experience. With regard to the first of these problems the solution is to be found in the discovery of a first principle from which it is possible to deduce logically a system of philosophy<sup>13</sup>, and the second is dissolved though the denial of anything external to this first principle. Fichte draws this second point from the rejection of the notion of the thing-in-itself; the subject of experience is not merely presented with a given material to be synthesised and determined according to the categories, but rather “*determining [Bestimmen] and producing [Produzieren] always go together*”[F 384]. It is certainly true (and Fichte frequently reiterates the point) that Kant says no such thing, but that is not to rule out the possibility that it may be consistent with Kant’s own position. Furthermore, if Kant is to escape the coils of scepticism we should, perhaps, interpret Kant in this manner. Fichte states his case by claiming that Maimon, in questioning the relationship between the categories and objects [*Objekte*], creates a problem that is not there, and hence opens the door to scepticism:

The error, which the letter of Kant confirms but is in complete contradiction to his *spirit*, merely lies in the fact that the object is supposed to be something other than a product of the imagination. To assert this is to be a transcendent dogmatist and to remove oneself completely from the spirit of the critical philosophy. [F 388]

On the basis of what has so far been said, it can already be seen that Fichte

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<sup>12</sup> “The author of this treatise, through his reading of the new sceptics, in particular *Aenesidemus* and the excellent writings of Maimon, has become convinced of something that already seemed highly probable to him. Philosophy, even after the most recent efforts of the most quick-witted of men, has not yet been raised to the level of a clearly evident science [*Wissenschaft*].” [F 29]

<sup>13</sup> “This idealism proceeds from a single basic law of reason ... If the idealism’s assumption is correct, and correctly followed in the derivation, then, as a final result, as the embodiment of all the originally accepted conditions, the system of all necessary representation or the whole of experience, a comparison not to be employed within the philosophy itself, but only afterward, will be produced. For idealism does not have this experience in mind as an already known goal at which it must arrive; in the course of its proceedings it knows nothing of experience.”[F 445–6]

has some justification in claiming that his first principle, “I am”[F 95], “is indicated by Kant to be the absolutely basic principle of all knowledge [*Wissen*] in his deduction of the categories”[F 99]. Kant certainly expresses himself in different terms. However, pure or original apperception is identified by Kant with self-consciousness [B132] and could indeed be said to function as a first principle of the Deduction. The conditions under which representations can belong to this pure apperception are the conditions of possibility of those representations representing something. As has already been outlined, the argument for the necessity of categories (as the conditions under which representations can represent) begins with an investigation into the conditions of apperception. The possibility of the faculty of the understanding itself rests upon pure apperception; the unity in the object of the understanding, brought about through synthesis and concept application, is simply the unity of pure apperception [B137]. Furthermore, Kant repeatedly stresses [B135,B138] that this principle is analytic: it is analytic that all representations must belong to one self-consciousness; in so belonging the representations must be synthesisable. Within this synthesis, representations are unified under concepts, and this unification involves a judgement upon the representations, relating them conceptually. Representations are thereby “brought to the *objective* unity of apperception”[B141]<sup>14</sup>. This argument is deductive in the logical sense, as required by Fichte, and (given the Table of Judgements) leads us directly to the categories.

Upon initial inspection Fichte’s second point looks to have much less application within the Deduction; Kant expends several sections on the denial that the understanding can know any object through the categories alone, much less produce the objects of knowledge — “to *think* an object and to *know* an object are not the same.”[B146]<sup>15</sup> This, however, is not to invalidate completely the point that Fichte makes, for Kant too places the imagination at the service of the understanding. The imagination is introduced as “the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is *not itself present*”[B151]<sup>16</sup>. Taken empirically this is completely familiar, but the transcendental imagination does not simply have the

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<sup>14</sup> “zur objectiven Einheit der Apperception zu bringen”.

<sup>15</sup> “Sich einen Gegenstand denken, und einen Gegenstand erkennen, ist also nicht einerlei.”

<sup>16</sup> “das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen”.

task of re-presenting a once-given object, rather it synthesises the pure forms of intuition. It carries out this task by means of the categories of the understanding such that the *a priori* manifold of sensible intuition is determined *a priori* “in respect of its form in accordance with the unity of apperception”[B152]<sup>17</sup>. Such a determination creates no objects *ex nihilo*, but it is nonetheless productive.

If it is this that distinguishes the position of Kant from that of Fichte, then Fichte would appear to have the stronger argument, since Kant seems to be relying on an appeal to some notion of a thing-in-itself. The object which gives rise the intuition cannot itself be an object of knowledge, since objects of knowledge are themselves a categorical synthesis of intuitions and, as such, are the form through which intuitions are presented. However, the intuition does not arise through its presentation as an object of knowledge. Instead, for Kant, the source of intuitions appears simply to be that object which is the cause of intuitions, an object itself outside of the field of knowledge — an object which introduces a gamut of problems that Fichte dissolves.

The charge of subjectivism, and way in which Kant’s response to this in the *Prolegomena* was interpreted, induced the generation following the publication of the first *Critique* to attempt to set the critical philosophy upon new foundations. Each of these charges picks up on a common theme that the claims that Kant makes for objectivity have no grounds. The first and least sophisticated of these arguments proposes that because reality is reduced to appearance, a mere modification of ourselves, Kant has no grounds to distinguish between the objective and the illusory. Kant’s apparent reliance of the notion of things-in-themselves in response to this charge does little to dissipate the impression of sophistry. However, the other objections do not rely on the blunderbuss of the thing-in-itself to problematise the objective status attributed to concepts: rather the subjectivism arises because, it is claimed, the application of the transcendental concepts to experience cannot be established. The accusation against Kant is that, within his attempt to demonstrate the objective validity of the categories, Kant implicitly assumed a certain form of experience, namely experience as categorised. It is further claimed that without this assumption Kant could only show the subjective necessity of these concepts. In the

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<sup>17</sup> “den Sinn seiner Form nach der Einheit der Apperception gemäß bestimmen kann”.

following sections we shall turn to a more detailed investigation of the arguments rallied against Kant.

#### 4. The Scepticism of *Aenesidemus*

*Aenesidemus, or Concerning the Foundations of the Philosophy of the Elements issued by Prof. Reinhold in Jena, together with a defence of Scepticism against the Pretensions of the Critique of Reason*<sup>18</sup> was published anonymously in 1792 and marks a turning point in the popularity of Kant's philosophy. All of the earlier attacks on Kant had come from sources which were predictable, mainly (in Kant's terms) rationalists and enthusiasts. Given that these were the very people that Kant had subjected to rigorous criticism, the counter claims that they made carried little weight. *Aenesidemus*, however, came from an unexpected source and challenged not only Kant but the possibility of a critical system of philosophy. Rather than arguing that Kant had failed to refute the claims to knowledge that are made within other systems of philosophy, Schulze accepts these points but refuses Kant's claim to be able to establish objective knowledge claims. That is, the critical method is accepted, but the critical system is rejected.

The main thrust of the attack that *Aenesidemus* makes against Kant is the sceptical claim that, at the present moment, it is not possible to make claims to any knowledge of things-in-themselves, but it nonetheless remains a completely open question as to whether it might be possible for us to obtain knowledge of them in the future. The absolute limits that Kant is judged to have placed on human knowledge are challenged; and this challenge takes on a critical form, because the question that Schulze asks of Kant is 'how is it possible to make the judgement that we can never have any knowledge of things-in-themselves?'. Kant obviously thinks that the question has already been answered with the Transcendental Expositions of the forms of space and time and with the Deduction. What Schulze is therefore claiming is that, in the very presentation of the arguments establishing the limits to

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<sup>18</sup> [Gottlob Ernst Schulze], *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie* (N.p.: 1792); reprint, ed. A. Liebert (Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1911). Partial translation by George di Giovanni as "Aenesidemus," in *From Kant to Hegel*, ed. di Giovanni and Harris. Page references are to the original edition. The name Aenesidemus is taken from the sceptical follower of Sextus Empiricus. Further information on Schulze can be found in Beiser, *Reason*, Chapter 9 and George di Giovanni, "The Facts of Consciousness," in *From Kant to Hegel*, ed. di Giovanni and Harris, 20–7.



experience, Kant is going beyond these limits. Schulze is not questioning the critical philosophy from the outside, but rather presenting an immanent critique, in a language that the critical philosophy has justified, and this is why Schulze's criticisms presented such a problem.

The bulk of the criticisms that Schulze makes about critical philosophy are directed at the most renowned Kantian of the time, K. L. Reinhold.<sup>19</sup> Schulze rightly acknowledges that there are differences between Kant and Reinhold, but our attention will be directed toward the places where he deals specifically with Kant. The main point that he has to make in this regard is to challenge the inference that is made from experience to the subject of that experience. In other words, the focus of Schulze's attack is the argument of the Deduction which attempts to show that there could be no experience of objects without a transcendental subject of that experience — a transcendental subject that synthesises the manifold of intuition by means of the categories.<sup>20</sup> The argument is here taken by Schulze to be one which moves from the assumption of the possession of coherent experience to asking the question of how that ordered experience is possible. Assuming that the manifold of intuition is

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<sup>19</sup> Karl Leonhard Reinhold was the first populariser of Kant's critical philosophy. However, he was not content with the task of underlabourer and also argued that the first *Critique*, because it fails to justify its own procedures and assumptions, is nothing more than an analysis of a hypothetical justification of metaphysics. Like pre-critical metaphysics, the critical philosophy uses concepts which cannot be subject to analysis within its own domain. Thus, for example, Reinhold argues that, in investigating the conditions under which knowledge is possible, Kant employs the genus concept of representation without any investigating of its conditions. It is, therefore, Reinhold's claim that, in addition to the first principle of metaphysics, we also need a first principle of the critical philosophy which could account for representation. The supposedly self-evident principle from which philosophy must begin — the Proposition of Consciousness — consists in a definition of representation: "Representation is that which is distinguished in consciousness by the subject from object and subject, and is referred to both." See his *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* (Jena: Widtmann und Mauke, 1791); reprint, ed. Wolfgang H. Schrader (Hamburg: Meiner, 1978), 81. Partial translation by George di Giovanni as "The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge," in *From Kant to Hegel*, ed. di Giovanni and Harris. Background material on Reinhold is provided by Daniel Breazeale, "Between Kant and Fichte: Karl Leonhard Reinhold's 'Elementary Philosophy,'" *Review of Metaphysics* 35 (1982), passim and Beiser, *Reason*, Chapter 8.

<sup>20</sup> Although Kant does not employ the term 'transcendental subject' regularly, and not at all within either version of the Deduction, it usefully captures the psychological nature of Schulze's understanding of Kant. This consists in the identification of the locus of synthetic activity with the subject that is self-consciously aware. It is precisely at this point that the modern logical interpretation, outlined in the following section, disagrees. The conditions of self-consciousness, which it is meaningful to investigate, are analytic and give no insight into how it is that the conditions are fulfilled.

not given as ordered, this order must come from elsewhere, from an act of spontaneity. The transcendental subject, the I, is therefore introducing law and objectivity to the manifold. Schulze feels that there are three problems with this.

(1) The notion that the transcendental subject orders the manifold is illegitimate because, in drawing the inference from regularity to a regulator, the objectivity of causal laws is presupposed, and it is precisely to prove the objectivity of causality that this manoeuvre is carried out in the first place:

Obviously the writer of the critique of reason arrives at his answer to the general problem — How are necessary synthetic propositions possible in us? — only by bringing the principle of causality to bear on certain judgements that we make after experience. That is, he subsumes these judgements under the concept of the effect of something, and, in accordance with this subsumption, assumes and discloses that the mind [*Gemüth*] is their effective cause. [*Aen* 137]

(2) If the inference is not to be considered one tracing a cause from an effect, then all that has been proved is that the existence of the subject of experience is necessary for thought, it has not been shown that such a subject is real:

from the constitution of representations and thoughts in us, the critique of reason infers the objective and real constitution of what is external to our representations. Alternatively, it proves that something must be constituted in some manner or another, because we cannot think of it in any other way. It is the validity of exactly this kind of inference that Hume doubted. [*Aen* 140]

(3) Even if the argument could legitimately be made from experience to the subject of experience, this presupposes a set of experiential facts which must be explained by reference to the subject of that experience. In Kant's case he presupposes synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and yet it is Kant's intention to prove that we do in fact have experience of this kind — Kant, as Maimon also claims, is therefore begging the question:

It is completely false that these [necessary synthetic] judgements must be thought of as available *a priori* and as originating in the mind in order for them to be thought of as possible. ... One can certainly think that all our knowledge [*Erkenntniß*] originates from the efficacy of objects present *realiter* on our mind [*Aen* 142–3].

It is clear from even this brief outline of the arguments that Schulze has a psychological reading of Kant: his claims rest upon an understanding of Kant as either making empirical claims about the subject of experience, or about the nature of the experience of that subject. This does not make the arguments redundant. Rather they serve to give focus to some of the more obscure and difficult

consequences of the critical philosophy, and it was in bringing these obscurities to the forefront that *Aenesidemus* had an effect, at least insofar as they caused Fichte to reflect upon them and develop an explicit account of them.

Throughout the first *Critique* Kant devotes relatively little attention to developing an account of the subject of experience, or as Schulze would have it, the mind. Schulze argues, echoing criticisms already advanced by Reinhold,<sup>21</sup> that in order to understand how it is possible for this undeveloped notion to function as a support for the critical system, it needs to be filled out in greater detail. It is already clear from possible relationships that can hold between that which determines (the transcendental subject) and that which is determined (the manifold of intuition), as laid out in the first and second criticisms that *Aenesidemus* makes, that the options will be the following:

The mind, insofar as according to the critical philosophy it is supposed to constitute the source of the necessary in our knowledge, is either to be understood as a *thing-in-itself*, or a *noumenon*, or a *transcendental idea*.  
[Aen 154]

All the possible options open to Kant are divided up into either something real or something intellectual. If the transcendental subject is something real then, because it is not an object of experience for us, it is automatically a thing-in-itself. By thing-in-itself Schulze simply means something that is not conditioned intellectually and something that we have no experience of, so his point here is for him true by definition. If it is not something real but rather something intellectual, then there are two possible ways in which the transcendental subject can be understood. If this intellectual I is understood to be a real condition of experience, then it is a noumenon (by which Schulze means “intelligible object”[Aen 159] as opposed to the real but unknowable thing-in-itself), and if it understood to be merely necessary for us to think the I as intellectual, then it is a transcendental (regulative) idea. On the basis of understanding the I as a thing-in-itself, it is understood to be “a real and objectively actual thing”[Aen 155]; and this is thought to be necessary because it is assumed that the

*real existence [Dasein] of something presupposes the real existence of something else, which is the ground of it, and the first can only be explained by the second insofar as the ground constitutes something existing [Existierendes] realiter.* [Aen 154]

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<sup>21</sup> Reinhold, *Fundament*, 67–68.

On this interpretation of the I it is clear, as Schulze is keen to point out, that the notion of causal connections (which are established on the basis of the relationship that holds between the transcendental subject and the experience of that subject) would have been presupposed before the objective validity of such relationships had been established. However, there is no evidence that Kant thinks of the conditioning relationship between the I and experience as a causal one. And this interpretation forces the I into the position of a thing or entity, which is a point that runs directly against the little that Kant does say. On this point we can therefore agree with *Aenesidemus* that Kant would be betraying his own critical principles if he were to derive the presence of synthetic *a priori* judgements in us from the I *qua* thing-in-itself.

When Schulze turns to consider whether the I could be a noumenon, much the same considerations apply, in that this would also make Kant's position self-contradictory. It is acknowledged that there can be no knowledge of noumena, and if the I were to be interpreted in this way then Kant would be "promoting an empty thought object [*Gedankding*] ... to the source of a constituent component of our knowledge." [*Aen* 159] A similar argument is produced in *Aenesidemus* with respect to the I as a transcendental idea. In this case, the I would merely be of regulative employment and serve as an *a priori* unity which experiential knowledge needs in order to be, as far as reason is concerned, perfect. No objective reality of the idea would be possible, because a regulative idea is not something that is constitutive of experience; it must merely be something that serves to produce a coherent understanding of experience. Again Kant is perfectly clear that if the regulative transcendental ideas are treated as constitutive of experience, then this generates a transcendental illusion. Given that a substantial portion of Kant's work (especially in the *Dialectic*) is directed at exposing such illusion for what it is, he would again be falling into a contradictory position if this is what he takes the I to be.

Having outlined these alternatives and having illustrated that each of them is internally self-contradictory Schulze acknowledges that nowhere in the "*Critique of Pure Reason* has Kant declared himself clearly and expressly on this matter." [*Aen* 165–6] Rather than this lack of clarity in any way diminishing the force of the points that *Aenesidemus* has made, he feels that it merely strengthens it. Kant was

forced into a position of obscurity on this matter because all of the possibilities that are open to him are clearly inadequate.<sup>22</sup>

There is a final and significant point that is made in *Aenesidemus* with regard to both of the last two options:

according to the critique of reason it is a mere illusion, if the understanding believes itself, through *thought*, to have reached the objectively actual *being* [*Sein*], and if it believes that the composition of being follows from the determinations proper to thought. Furthermore, it is also considered an illusion, arising from the understanding's lack of self-knowledge, if one believes oneself to have discovered the proper and real ground of necessity, just because the ground of necessity can only be thought of as contained in the mind. [*Aen* 172]

This point has a more general application in that it forces the I into the position of being a thing-in-itself, but as it has already been illustrated this is not a tenable position for Kant to hold. Therefore, if this point is right, the whole of the critical enterprise is impossible. The fault that he is pointing to is that if, as Kant wants, the distinction is maintained between what can be thought and what there can be, then the I cannot be elevated to the status of anything other than a condition which we *think* of as necessary for objective experience, and this fails to establish the reality of this condition. Without this final stage in Kant's argument, it is not possible to move from the I to objective experience and experience would remain subjective. Rather than being the condition of possibility for experience in general, the I would be the condition of possibility for how we must think about that experience. The fact that we need to *regard* experience as conditioned by the I would not tell us whether or not that experience was, in actual fact, so conditioned — and yet this, as we saw in the previous chapter, is precisely what is at issue for the Humean sceptic and, indeed, for Kant.

To provide an answer to the question of *quid juris* on this subjective basis would not give us a right to regard the I as an actual condition of experience, but rather it would be merely illustrate that there was an indispensable need or a subjective necessity for such a concept. To do other than this would be to fall into

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<sup>22</sup> A more recent and influential account of the ambiguities surrounding the Kantian subject, which draws conclusions similar to those of Schulze, is given by Peter F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966), 170–4, 247–9. The relationship of Schulze's criticisms to problems raised within recent secondary literature, interpretations which avoid these difficulties, and the ambiguities within Kant's own account of the subject in the first *Critique* are detailed throughout Chapter 4 of this thesis.

error that Kant himself points out in the Transcendental Dialectic: of hypostatizing the conditions of thought as a being, positing an entity that corresponds to the thought-object. Alternatively, if critical consistency were to be maintained, then the discussion would turn away from discussing real conditions of possibility and become merely an exercise in conceptual analysis without any real content. This is a potentially devastating criticism because,

if *all* grounds, which the critique of reason offers for the origin of the necessary synthetic propositions in the mind, are to be *merely subjective* grounds, which one and all stem from the already present determinations of our mode of thought, ... then one can indeed ask: What could the results of these grounds be other than a *semblance* [*Schein*], appropriate for and corresponding to the laws of our knowledge? And this semblance is meant to lead to a *true* insight into the explanation of our entire knowledge? [*Aen* 175]

Kant seems to have been placed between a rock and a hard place: either it is admitted that the I is not merely subjective and it can therefore serve as an objective ground of experience — in which case Kant would be claiming to have knowledge of a thing-in-itself — or, if Kant is consistent in not claiming to have any knowledge of things-in-themselves, then the I is merely subjective and formal ground for experience — in which case the objective reality of the categories has not been established. In terms of our previous outline of Kant's argument, the objections proposed by Schulze target the contention that the knowledge that Kant lays claim to in accounting for the conditions of self-consciousness does not constitute a knowledge of the mind as it is in itself. Schulze's claim is that the transcendental can only be elucidated on the presupposition that we have knowledge of the mind as it is in itself. Thus, in a manner reminiscent of Jacobi's objection to the role that things-in-themselves play for Kant, Schulze makes knowledge of the mind as it is in itself necessary for the objective validity of the categories. Although this contradicts both the spirit and letter of transcendental philosophy, without this knowledge all claims to have justified synthetic *a priori* judgements must be relinquished.

## **5. Transcendental Arguments as Subjective and Circular**

The objections raised in *Aenesidemus* are not merely a matter of historical interest. During the last thirty years there has been a vocal debate concerning the possibility of, what has come to be called, 'transcendental arguments'. This debate was largely triggered by the claims made for these arguments by P. F. Strawson in

*Individuals* and reinforced in his *The Bounds of Sense*. Strawson was concerned to advance a particular kind of anti-sceptical argument which is summed up in the claim that the sceptic “pretends to accept a conceptual scheme, but at the same time quietly rejects one of the conditions of its employment.”<sup>23</sup> Within this context the purpose of the transcendental argument is to demonstrate that the position of the sceptic is inherently self-contradictory, because the ground of his scepticism is only possible on the assumption of the very thing that he rejects: the sceptic, in effect, denies the existence of the tree which supports the branch upon which he sits. The clearest case of an argument with this form in Kant is to be found in the Refutation of Idealism, presented in the second edition of the first *Critique*, where it is claimed that the sceptical denial of an experience of outer objects is incoherent because this experience is a condition of possibility of the inner experience to which the sceptic lays claim.

An argumentative strategy such as this suffers from the problem that it establishes only that there exists some inconsistency within a particular set of propositions rather than establishing the necessity and validity of a particular set of concepts. Hence, it provides an answer to *a* sceptic, but not to sceptics or revisionary metaphysicians in general. Indeed, it is argued that the same objection has equal applicability to the argument advanced in the Deduction.<sup>24</sup> At its most general, the objection is that Kant cannot successfully demonstrate that any concept has objective validity; the most he can do is to describe the necessary relations inherent in some conceptual scheme without establishing the necessity of that scheme itself. This contention has manifested itself in two principal forms. The first is advanced by Barry Stroud and consists of the assertion that the claims to objectivity advanced within transcendental arguments, can be reduced to the application of a verification principle.<sup>25</sup> The second form is raised by Moltke S.

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<sup>23</sup> Strawson, *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1959), 35.

<sup>24</sup> This line of criticism is pursued in most detail and in a form that we shall not be concentrating on by Stephan Körner, “The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions,” in *Kant Studies Today*, ed. L. W. Beck (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1969); Rüdiger Bubner, “Kant, Transcendental Arguments and the Problem of Deduction,” *Review of Metaphysics* 28 (1975); Richard Rorty, “Verificationism and Transcendental Arguments,” *Noûs* 5 (1971) and “Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference, and Pragmatism,” in *Transcendental Arguments and Science*, ed. Peter Bieri, Rolf-Peter Horstmann, and Lorenz Krüger (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979).

<sup>25</sup> Stroud’s argument takes a number of different forms and is advanced in numerous

Gram who argues that there is nothing distinctive about transcendental arguments and that they are merely deductive arguments which contain some question-begging epistemic premise.<sup>26</sup> There is no internal conflict between these objections, they are both ways of describing how transcendental arguments fail: they can either fail by relying on the questionable use of verificationism, or they can fail by being circular.

The requirement of a transcendental argument to employ some verificationist principle issues from the demand that these arguments establish the objectivity of some concept or set of concepts.<sup>27</sup> Within the debate surrounding transcendental arguments it is generally supposed that the advocates of transcendental arguments take this objectivity to follow from the necessity of concepts. That is, if a concept can be shown to be a necessary condition of experience or, since the discussion has also migrated into Wittgensteinian territory, a necessary condition of language, then that concept has objective validity. The problem posed by Stroud is that this by itself does not constitute an answer to the sceptic because the sceptic can

plausibly insist that it is enough to make language [or experience] possible if we *believe* that S is true, or if it looks for all the world as if it

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papers. See, for example, Barry Stroud, "Transcendental Arguments," *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968); "Transcendental Arguments and 'Epistemological Naturalism'," *Philosophical Studies* 31 (1977); "Kant and Skepticism," in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. Myles Burnyeat (London: U of California Press, 1983); *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), Chapter 4; "The Allure of Idealism." *Supp. Proc. Aristotelian Society* 58 (1984).

<sup>26</sup> Moltke S. Gram, "Transcendental Arguments," *Nouûs* 5 (1971); "Must Transcendental Arguments be Spurious?" *Kant-Studien* 65 (1974); "Must we revisit Transcendental Arguments?" *Philosophical Studies* 31 (1977).

<sup>27</sup> Stroud's definition of verificationism is that it maintains that some sentence is meaningful "if and only if it is verifiable or falsifiable at least to some degree, and the confirmation or disconfirmation ultimately comes from sense-experience," *Philosophical Scepticism*, 171. The conflict between verificationism and transcendental arguments arise, however, from the distinction made by R. Carnap between questions internal and external to a "linguistic framework." See, for example, his "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," in *Meaning and Necessity*, 2nd ed. (London: Chicago UP, 1956), 206. Carnap, for Stroud, stands opposed to Kant because the questions which the transcendental argument is meant to answer, such as those concerning the existence of external objects, are not theoretical questions answerable within a linguistic framework, but rather practical decisions regarding the choice of framework. It is thereby, according to Carnap, meaningless to propose to provide any theoretical justification for the belief in external objects because "there is no such belief or assertion or assumption, because it is not a theoretical question" *ibid.*, 208. A sympathetic discussion of the relationship between Carnap's notion of a framework and Kant's notion of the transcendental is provided by Graham Bird, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," in *Idealism Past and Present*, ed. Godfrey Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982), 87-92.



is, but that S needn't actually be true.<sup>28</sup>

If the sceptic can undermine a transcendental argument in this fashion, then the most that can possibly have been established is that some concepts possess subjective necessity, but not that there is any correlation between the concepts and whatever it is that they are applied to. It is at this point that it becomes necessary for the transcendental argument to introduce some kind of verificationism in order to establish a link between the satisfaction of the subjectively necessary criteria and the knowledge that those criteria have application. With regard to the main target of Stroud's analysis, Strawson's argument for the continued existence of unperceived objects,<sup>29</sup> this means that it is necessary for Strawson to draw not merely upon the capacity for identification and re-identification of objects, but also to assume that we can know that the application of this capacity can be successful. The employment of a transcendental argument is thereby rendered redundant because it is from the initial premise that we can successfully re-identify objects that the argument proceeds, and it can proceed deductively from this point to the conclusion that objects continue to exist unperceived.<sup>30</sup>

Stroud himself does not attempt to provide any detailed account of how verificationism manifests itself in Kant's own arguments, but if we consider the schematic account of the conditions that Kant is imputing to self-consciousness, then we can see at which point it is supposed that Kant's arguments fail.<sup>31</sup> Upon first glance it looks as if the application of Stroud's objection to Kant is somewhat tenuous. Regarding the overarching claim that the conditions of self-consciousness themselves have been satisfied, it is not at all clear that any meaningful distinction could be drawn between the belief and the fact of self-consciousness.

Similar considerations apply to the condition that the manifold of intuition be synthesised. This first condition can be glossed with the argument that if each representation in the manifold of intuition were to be discretely apprehended, then

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<sup>28</sup> Stroud, "Transcendental Arguments," 255.

<sup>29</sup> Strawson, *Individuals*, passim.

<sup>30</sup> For a defence of Strawson's argument against Stroud see Eckart Förster, "How are Transcendental Arguments Possible?" in *Reading Kant*, ed. Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 14–18. However, Strawson in his later *Skepticism and Naturalism* (London: Methuen, 1985), 5–10, 20–22, appears to accept the limitations placed on transcendental arguments by Stroud.

<sup>31</sup> See above p.36.

the consciousness of this manifold would itself be discrete. Such awareness could, it is further supposed, never constitute self-consciousness because this requires that one be conscious of oneself as the subject of multiple representations. It is, therefore, necessary that there be some relations which pertain within the manifold of intuition for the 'I think' to be able to accompany any of the representations within the manifold. A consideration of the validity and detail of this argument can be postponed for the moment, because all that is at issue, for the present, is whether it is possible to draw a distinction between an apparent and a real synthesis of representations. The separation of the real and the apparent in this case cannot be maintained, because the conditions under which it is possible for it to seem as if there is a synthesis, or a belief in a synthesis to arise, are the same as the conditions under which a real synthesis also takes place. That is, if we take it that in order to believe in synthesis it is necessary for there to be an awareness of more than a single discrete item, i.e., one must also be aware of something that it is taken to be synthesised with or aware of some manifold that it has been synthesised from, then some synthesis must really have taken place simply insofar as multiple items are held together in a single consciousness.

Regarding the other conditions, however, it does appear as if they are vulnerable to Stroud's objection that some form of verification is required for Kant's argument. Kant's reasoning behind the claim that the manifold of intuition must be subject to a conceptual synthesis is amongst the most opaque parts of the already murky argument of the Deduction. Between the first and second editions of the *Critique* the argument is subject to substantial revisions, and, furthermore, it is mediated by the widely dismissed distinction, introduced in the *Prolegomena*, between judgements of perception and judgements of experience.<sup>32</sup> In both editions Kant appears to introduce the need for concepts on the basis of an analytic relationship between objects and concepts: "an *object* is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*." [B137]<sup>33</sup> A partial reconstruction of an

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<sup>32</sup> For an overview of the secondary literature dealing with this problem see Theodore E. Uehling Jr, "Wahrnehmungsurteile and Erfahrungsurteile Reconsidered," in *Kant's "Prolegomena"*, ed. Beryl Logan.

<sup>33</sup> "Object aber ist das, in dessen Begriff das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung vereinigt ist."

The corresponding argument in the A-edition is found at A103-4.

argument by which Kant could justify this claim can be seen in the distinction that Kant makes between the objective and the subjective unity of consciousness [B139].<sup>34</sup>

Kant appears to hold that there is a subjective unity of consciousness which can arise from the association of intuition, without the need for any categorical intervention. Exactly what Kant has in mind is difficult to determine, except to say that it is possible for there to be some associations between representations in the manifold, and that this is taken to introduce some regularity into the manifold. Here, however, there is no consciousness of the intuitions as representations of objects within which the subjective associations are united: e.g., a bright-type intuition is associated with a warm-type intuition, without there being the recognition of an object with the properties of being warm and bright — “the perceptions find themselves customarily so combined,” but have no objective relationship or “*necessary* connection” to one another.[IV 301]<sup>35</sup> If this is the case, then not only is there no distinction to be made here between intuition and the object represented in the intuition, but there is also no distinction between the representation and the subject to which that representation occurs. This is for the reason that there are only discrete associated items without an awareness of the association. Whereas within the objective unity of consciousness, the consciousness of the association itself unites the discrete associated intuitions. Furthermore, this is to judge them to be something and to unite the intuitions under a concept.

Although this is merely presents the broad outline of an argument, we can already see that that it remains possible for Stroud to object that all that has been shown is that it is only necessary for us to employ concepts, not that this employment is, in fact, the source of the unity which allows for self-consciousness. In other words, it is not necessary that the employment of concepts actually does the work of synthesising the manifold. It is enough that it seems as if concepts can be applied to experience, because the unity of the manifold is necessary, but such unity does not establish that concepts actually are employed, because the source of the unity could lie elsewhere.

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<sup>34</sup> This point is subject to more detailed investigation in Chapter 3, pp. 91–95.

<sup>35</sup> “die Wahrnehmungen finden sich nur gewöhnlich so verbunden. ... notwendig verknüpft”.

If we cannot be guaranteed that the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition follows from the result of a conceptual synthesis, then the necessity which Kant attributes to this synthesis also cannot be certain. It could, for example, merely be a fortunate accident that the manifold is given in such a unified and regular manner that self-consciousness is possible, but this unity and regularity cannot be legislated for in advance.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, the criticism levelled by Gram is also aimed at showing that Kant cannot close the gap between concepts and intuitions. It is Gram's contention that Kant must either beg the question by invoking a premise which assumes that the objects of experience have already been subject to a conceptual synthesis, or if what he terms a weaker notion of experience is employed, then the need for there to be any concept application, which would open the way for the objectivity of the categories, cannot be established. This objection stems from Kant's description of a proposition which lays claim to a transcendental status as having the peculiar character "that it makes possible the very experience which is its own ground of proof"[A737/B765]. In the proof of such a proposition it is therefore necessary to employ a premise like "S knows (perceives) that *p*."<sup>37</sup>

The first point made by Gram is that the conclusion cannot follow merely from the subordinate clause of such an epistemic premise, because this would result

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<sup>36</sup> As Rorty points out in his "Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference, and Pragmatism," 90–5, the defence of transcendental arguments undertaken by Jay F. Rosenberg in his "Transcendental Arguments Revisited," *The Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975) and "Reply to Stroud," *Philosophical Studies* 31 (1977), does little to mitigate the objections raised by Stroud. Rosenberg conceives of the task of a transcendental argument as defending a particular conceptual core against a competing one by means of a comparison as to their success in contributing to some epistemic end. See "Transcendental Arguments Revisited," 620–2. This could legitimate the practice of transcendental arguments even as Stroud conceives them, but cannot provide any definitive answer to the question of whether a Kant is right to claim that the categories are universal, necessary and objectively valid. A rather different approach which also divorces transcendental arguments from claims regarding the relationship between conceptual schemes and an independent reality is presented by Ralph C. S. Walker, "Transcendental Arguments and Scepticism," in *Reading Kant*, ed. Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl.

<sup>37</sup> Gram, "Must transcendental Arguments be Spurious?," 305. Gram calls premises such as this one 'epistemic' and, in "Transcendental Arguments," 22, they are defined as claims "about how we know something under a certain description." This is spelt out by Gram, *ibid.*, with regard to the example of Kant's Refutation of Idealism:

"The existence of something that is permanent through time does not, then, follow merely from the existence of successive perceptions. It must follow, if at all, from a fact about how we know these perceptions."

in nothing more than an elucidation of the implications of the “concepts involved in describing what we perceive”.<sup>38</sup> Given that any of the results of this analysis could equally well be arrived at via a consideration *p* without reference to the epistemic main clause, it cannot be Kant’s intention to prove the validity of synthetic *a priori* propositions in this fashion. The argument must therefore centre on an epistemic aspect of the premise: on how something is known, rather the description of what is known. As Gram points out, Kant employs the term ‘experience’ [*Erfahrung*] in two distinct ways.<sup>39</sup> It can refer either to the awareness of objects as appearances subsumed under a necessary synthesis according to the categories, or to the objects presented in intuition without any conceptual mediation.<sup>40</sup> Neither of these alternatives allows us to reach the conclusion that concepts can have objective validity in a satisfactory manner because, Gram argues, if the first strong sense of experience is employed, then Kant will have produced nothing more than a definition of an object without demonstrating that anything correlates to this definition. Alternatively, if the weak notion of experience is used, then Kant can only demonstrate that it is a subjective condition of our experiencing that we employ concepts without showing that objects themselves conform to the concepts (i.e. the concepts are subjectively necessary but without objective validity). In this case there remains a gulf between “what can be shown about the conditions of knowing something and the characteristics of what is known”<sup>41</sup>. The only possible arguments that Kant can advance on this reading are, therefore, either circular or establish only the subjective necessity of concepts.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gram, “Must transcendental Arguments be Spurious?,” 305.

<sup>39</sup> See also Michel Meyer, “Why Did Kant Write Two Versions of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories?” *Synthese* 47 (1981), for an analysis of the problems that Kant encounters because he, allegedly, employs the term experience in two conflicting ways.

<sup>40</sup> The two distinct notions of experience first arise on the first paragraph of the second edition introduction. A clearer contrast, however, is to be found between B161 and A91/B123.

<sup>41</sup> Gram, “Must transcendental Arguments be Spurious?,” 313.

<sup>42</sup> In “Transcendental Arguments: Gram’s Objections,” *Kant-Studien* 68 (1977), 71–4, Oliver Leaman responds to the Gram by claiming that the distinction that he makes between a strong and a weak sense of experience is a spurious one because the weak sense is already conceptually invested and, therefore, that there are valid transcendental arguments cannot be ruled out. Leaman’s argument, however, does not extricate Kant from the charges levelled by Gram. Leaman’s claim is that the notion of perceiving an object makes no sense in the absence of some conceptual rendering of that experience. It is, however, precisely Gram’s point that from subjective need for us to regard experience

In a more recent article by Quassim Cassam the danger of the Kant's arguments acting as a confirmation of Hume rather than a refutation is explicitly thematised.<sup>43</sup> The point made by Cassam is that the place where Kant oversteps the boundary of acceptable argumentation is precisely the point at which he seeks to determine the nature of the synthesis that the manifold of intuition is subject to, and the point at which Kant claims to establish that this synthesis is universal and necessary. The difficulties raised by both Stroud and Gram centre around the problems that Kant faces in moving from an analysis of the subjective conditions of experience to the objective validity of the categories. If Kant can only successfully delineate the subjective conditions of experience, then it would remain possible for him to argue that one of the conditions is that there is degree of unity within the manifold of intuition, but what he cannot establish is that there is unity *because* this is a condition of experience. This is perfectly compatible with the, as Cassam calls it, "*broadly Humean*"<sup>44</sup> perspective which attributes a principle of union to ideas, such that when

ev'ry individual of any species of objects is found by experience to be constantly united with an individual of another species, the appearance of any new individual of either species naturally conveys the thought to its usual attendant. [T 93]

This principle lies, according to Hume, at the basis of our reasoning concerning cause and effect, but there is no *a priori* guarantee that objects will present themselves in such a way as to be compatible with this principle. We can neither know that there will be species of objects nor that there will be any constant union between them. All that we can say is that if we have experience it will be ordered.

## 6. Hume and Kant Revisited

In the previous chapter it was argued that the maintenance of the objective

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as conceptualised nothing follows regarding the nature of that experience. The response to both Stroud and Gram offered by A. C. Genova in "Good Transcendental Arguments," *Kant-Studien* 75 (1984), which broadly accords with the interpretation of the Deduction advanced in later chapters, is discussed on pp. 68–70. The defence offered by Bird, "Kant's Transcendental Arguments," in *Reading Kant*, ed. Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, who reviews the debate surrounding transcendental arguments, and in particular the pertinence of the relationship between Kant and Hume in this regard, is discussed in the same place.

<sup>43</sup> Quassim Cassam, "Transcendental Arguments, Transcendental Synthesis and Transcendental Idealism," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1987).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

validity of the categories was essential for an understanding of the distinctiveness of Kant's position in relation to Hume. However, we have now turned full circle. If the objections to Kant's programme presented in this chapter cannot be assuaged, then the only valid arguments that Kant can present also undermine any means by which Hume's arguments can be advanced upon. This can be made clear by reconsidering the criteria suggested at the end of the previous chapter which Kant must meet if he is to be successful in providing an answer to Hume's problem. These were that (1) Kant cannot beg any questions against the sceptical opponent; (2) the transcendental cannot be assimilated with the psychological; (3) the validity of the synthetic *a priori* as a category must be maintained; (4) Kant must establish that experience is necessarily conceptually mediated.<sup>45</sup>

The problems raised in this chapter have a thematic unity, in that each presents an argument to the effect that unless Kant falls foul of (1) then at least one of the other criteria cannot be fulfilled. Although each of the objections can be seen to have pertinence to at least one the criteria, we can, in the interest of clarity, present a ledger of the debts that Kant will incur if he does not beg the question against the sceptic. By associating each of the major objections raised with one of the other criteria, we see that in the case of *Aenesidemus* the pay-off is between (1) and (2), with Stroud it is (1) and (3), and for Gram it is (1) and (4).

With regard to Schulze the conflict arises because he disallows the supposition that we can know that experience already has a form prescribed by the transcendental concepts. Schulze then regards it as necessary to appeal to some knowledge of how the mind is in itself, in order to differentiate between the cases of it merely being necessary to think the manifold as categorised and it actually being so categorised. In this case, the method by which Kant moves from the subjective claim regarding how we must think about experience to the objective nature of that experience, is mediated by a claim to knowledge which is itself dismissed by Schulze as illegitimate in terms of the critical philosophy. We can only know that the manifold is categorised because we know something about our own minds, namely, that the mind as it is in itself acts as the cause of the synthetic unity of the manifold

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 28 for the original discussion. The order of the presentation of the criteria is slightly altered here for the sake of a clear mapping to the order of objections as they have arisen in this chapter.

of intuition.

The reasoning behind Stroud's objection is similar, in that it also arises out of the difficulty in moving from subjective necessity to objective validity. Here, however, an alternative account of the problem presents itself. Rather than seeing Kant as making invalid psychological claims, Stroud takes Kant to be elucidating a set of fundamental propositions which are logically entailed by non-theoretical commitments to a particular linguistic framework. If this is correct, then conflict arises between (1) and (3) because it is not possible for Kant to establish anything about the real nature of experience from within the linguistic framework. This means that if Kant is to claim the universality and necessity of the categories, he must simply be assuming that the framework and the manifold are congruous. Kant, then, has simply misconstrued the nature of the necessity dealt with by transcendental arguments; he can establish necessary commitments within a linguistic framework but not, as he wishes to, the necessity of the framework itself. To make such a claim is to beg the question that the sceptic poses.<sup>46</sup>

In highlighting the distinction between the conditions of knowing and the conditions of the known, Gram is also demonstrating that there is a conflict between the criteria which Kant attempts to fulfil. Unless the epistemic premise of the transcendental argument already contains some question-begging reference to experience as conceptually ordered, the necessity for concepts remains restricted to the domain of subjective validity. In the absence of such an ordering, it remains possible for Kant to propose some delimitation as to the nature of the experience that it is possible for us to have (given that it must be sufficiently ordered that the subjective conditions can be met), but Kant goes astray in equating the *source* of the order with the subjective conditions. The validity attributed to the categories also follows from Kant's confusion regarding the domain of the necessities in experience that he can account for. In this case the subjective necessity that we think experience as conceptually mediated is confused with the claim that the manifold must be so ordered that these subjective conditions can be met. Kant attempts to legislate for the nature of the manifold, and this he cannot do without making

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<sup>46</sup> For an analysis that also proceeds along these lines, although using a distinction between uniquely *a priori* and non-uniquely *a priori* statements, see Körner, "The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions," 234–6.



presuppositions as to what its nature is in itself.

Each of these accounts reinforces the single point that, insofar as Kant manages to distinguish himself from Hume and to provide an answer to Hume's problem, his position becomes in some way or other incoherent. We have seen that the difficulties faced by Kant's proposed solution are neither recent nor transitory, but rather embedded in the reception of the Kantian philosophy from its very inauguration. In the next two chapters an interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction is advanced. This interpretation is specifically orientated around the question of whether Kant successfully establishes that it is possible for concepts to have objective validity rather than being merely subjectively necessary. We shall be dividing our analysis into two parts. Within the first (Chapter 3) the problems associated with Stroud and Gram are tackled, and it is shown that the argument of the Deduction is not limited in scope by making question-begging assumptions regarding the framework or nature of experience. This analysis, however, raises the questions posed by Schulze regarding the nature of the subject of experience. In the second part of the analysis (Chapter 4), the coherence of Kant's account of the subject is investigated. Eventually we shall conclude that the apparent oscillation between begging the question with regard to the nature of experience, and begging the question with regard to the nature of the subject, rests on mistaken interpretations of the Kantian subject. A detailed analysis of the Transcendental Deduction is, however, necessary before this can become clear.

**Chapter Three**  
**Kant's Transcendental Deduction**

## 1. Introduction

The conclusion that we have reached on the basis of both of the preceding chapters is, on the one hand, that it is Kant's argument that concepts have objective validity that provides the crucial point of demarcation in the relationship between Kant and Hume and, on the other, that there is a weight of argumentation to suggest that it is precisely at this point that the Kantian project is at its weakest. The first section of this chapter considers the claim advanced by both Kant's detractors and advocates that the argument for the objective validity of the categories has been deemed to be a failure without considering the context of transcendental idealism in which the argument is advanced. The remainder of the chapter, however, presents an account of the Transcendental Deduction where Kant draws only minimally upon the tenets of transcendental idealism. It is argued that the Deduction offers a coherent and defensible argument for why associationism must be supplemented by an *a priori* conceptual synthesis. Contrary to the arguments of Stroud, Gram and Cassam, it is concluded that the Deduction successfully establishes that this synthesis of the manifold of intuition is a transcendental condition of the possibility of experience and that Kant neither draws on a question-begging notion of experience nor limits himself to how experience must, as a matter of subjective necessity, be regarded.

Our reconstruction of the Deduction divides Kant's argument into four steps. The first step, outlined in Section 3.1, consists simply in an description of what is designated by Kant's notion of the manifold of intuition. It is Kant's initial claim that there must be some synthesis of the manifold of intuition if there is to be the requisite diversity of representations upon which associationism can build. Kant's point here is entirely general in scope and indicates that the diversity of intuitive content can only be experienced under the condition that the manifold of intuition has already been subject to a synthesis which relates it across time. As such, Kant's answer to the question of how intuitions came to be united is different from the answers that the associationists — and Hume — provided.

The remainder of Kant's argument is an attempt to demonstrate, firstly, that the representation of this synthesis cannot be accounted for on the basis of associationism and, secondly, that concepts can be validly employed in this

representation. In the second step of the argument, described in Section 3.2, Kant shows the representation of objects requires a unity of consciousness. That is to say, if the manifold of intuition is subject to a synthesis which ascribes an objective ground to the resultant unity of the manifold, then it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany the representation. The significance of this claim becomes apparent in the third step, presented in Section 3.3, where it is argued that it is only under the condition of the employment of a conceptual synthesis that objective representation is possible. Together these points constitute an argument to the effect that there is a correlation between what Kant terms the objective unity of consciousness and the experience of objects, and that it is only under the condition of a conceptually determined synthesis that either of these can arise. However, it remains to be established whether the employment of concepts itself has any validity, i.e. the attribution of an objective ground to the synthesis of the manifold may be illegitimate. It is only in the final step of the argument, undertaken in Section 3.4, that the possibility that a conceptual determination is mistakenly or invalidly applied to mere association is ruled out. Kant establishes this point by showing that the synthesis described in the first step can be legitimately represented by concepts. In total, therefore, the argument demonstrates that the awareness that we have of the diversity of the manifold of intuition upon which associationism builds can only occur under the condition that the categories have objective validity.

## **2. Transcendental Idealism and Objectivity**

Although the point is made in different ways, Stroud, Gram and Cassam each raise the question of whether Kant's Transcendental Deduction can establish that the pure concepts of the understanding have objectivity. We have seen that with Stroud the problem is posed in terms of his distinction between the necessity for a belief in a concept and the necessity that the concept relate to some objective fact; with Gram the distinction is between the conditions under which something is known and the characteristics of the known; and with Cassam the distinction is between a conditional and an unconditional necessity of the synthesis of the manifold of intuition. Rather than challenging the need for there to be some synthesis in order for experience to be possible, each of these distinctions only has pertinence to questions regarding the nature or manner of the synthesis which is necessary for

experience.

As was outlined in the previous chapter, Kant is not merely claiming that it is necessary for us to be able to employ concepts if we are to have any self-conscious experience.<sup>1</sup> He also intends to establish that this conceptualisation is legitimate, and not merely a subjective necessity, because it is this capacity which guarantees that the manifold of intuition will display sufficient characteristics of unity that are the condition of us having a self-conscious awareness of that manifold. In other words, Kant is committed to the view that the unity of the manifold is a condition of our being self-consciously aware of it, *and* that this unity must have a specifically conceptual form. It is with regard to this latter point that Stroud, Gram and Cassam raise the challenge of how Kant can support the claim to conceptual unity. Stroud's objection is that it is necessary for Kant to invoke some verificationist principle; Gram's is that Kant must either simply assume the conceptual nature of the unity or admit that the ability apply concepts to experience is merely a subjective condition of that experience; and Cassam's is that Kant has not provided an answer to Hume's problem.

The difficulty that Kant is said to encounter in each case can be made clearer by considering the distinction, drawn by Cassam, between a "Conceptual" and a "Satisfaction Component" of Kant's argument.<sup>2</sup> In Cassam's terms, on the basis of a conceptual analysis of the notion of experience the Conceptual Component of an argument establishes claims regarding that which is constitutive of experience. In other words, the Conceptual Component makes the claim that it is a necessary aspect of experience that we be able to apply some particular concept to experience. The Satisfaction Component, on the other hand, describes the conditions that must pertain if it is to be possible for the conditions outlined in the Conceptual Component to be met. When this distinction is applied to the argument of the Deduction, Cassam finds that the Conceptual Component is the claim that "for experience or knowledge to be possible, individual experiences must belong to a unified consciousness". On the other hand, the Satisfaction Component is that,

for the unity of consciousness to be possible, appearances must display such unity and interconnectedness as is possible only if they are appearances of objects. That is, only experience of objects could provide

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter 2, pp. 55–56.

<sup>2</sup> Cassam, "Transcendental Arguments," 357.

a basis for the unity of consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty that Cassam raises with regard to this argument is not that there is any inherent problem with it such that we can rule out the possibility of such an argument ever being valid, but rather the particular manner in which Kant advances the argument places an impossible demand upon it. As we have already said, it is not sufficient for Kant that it is a merely contingent fact that the world is such that conditions outlined in the Satisfaction Component are met.<sup>4</sup> It is not only conditionally necessary that intuitions be unified in order that we can have any experience, but it is also necessary that they be unified *per se*. According to Cassam, Kant provides no actual argument for this latter point in either the Deduction itself or elsewhere. Kant's commitment to the unconditional necessity of the unity derives, rather, from his overarching commitment to transcendental idealism.<sup>5</sup> According to Cassam's interpretation, Kant intends to form a bridge between the Conceptual and the Satisfaction Components with the assertion that the world described in the Satisfaction Component is not the world of things as they are in themselves, but rather the world of appearances.<sup>6</sup> From this assumption, it is possible for Kant to claim that we can be guaranteed that the conditions of the Satisfaction Component will always pertain precisely because they are provided by the Conceptual Component. The world must conform to the conditions under which we can experience it because these conditions are, at one and the same time, the conditions of the world. The point at which problems arise for Kant, therefore, is the point at which he attempts to step beyond the description of conditions of possibility of experience and attempts to ascribe an unconditional necessity to these conditions being *satisfied*. That Kant does this is clearly evident in passages such as the following:

Now if this unity of association had not also an objective ground which makes it impossible that appearances should be apprehended by the imagination otherwise than under the condition of a possible synthetic unity of this apprehension, it would be entirely accidental that appearances should fit into a connected whole of human knowledge. For even though we should have the power of associating perceptions, it would remain entirely undetermined and accidental whether they would themselves be associable; and should they not be associable, there might

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Chapter 2, pp. 58 and 60.

<sup>5</sup> A similar point is also made by Stroud, "The Allure of Idealism," 249.

<sup>6</sup> An example of this would be the A114 passage quoted on p. 36.

exist a multitude of perceptions, and indeed an entire sensibility, in which much empirical consciousness would arise in my mind, but in a state of separation, and without belonging to a consciousness of myself. This, however, is impossible. [A121–2]

[Würde nun aber diese Einheit der Association nicht auch einen objectiven Grund haben, so daß es unmöglich wäre, daß Erscheinungen von der Einbildungskraft anders apprehendirt würden, als unter der Bedingung einer möglichen synthetischen Einheit dieser Apprehension, so würde es auch etwas ganz Zufälliges sein, daß sich Erscheinungen in einen Zusammenhang der menschlichen Erkenntnisse schickten. Denn ob wir gleich das Vermögen hätten, Wahrnehmungen zu associiren, so bliebe es doch an sich ganz unbestimmt und zufällig, ob sie auch associabel wären; und in dem Falle, daß sie es nicht wären, so würde eine Menge Wahrnehmungen und auch wohl eine ganze Sinnlichkeit möglich sein, in welcher viel empirischen Bewußtsein in meinem Gemüth anzutreffen wäre, aber getrennt und ohne daß es zu einem Bewußtsein meiner selbst gehörte, welches aber unmöglich ist.]

If Kant's argument rests upon the claim that there is an objective ground to the unity displayed in experience, then Cassam judges this to be a failure.<sup>7</sup> Cassam correctly points out that the objective ground of association is provided by what Kant terms a 'transcendental' or 'productive' synthesis. Such a synthesis is distinguished from the merely associative or empirical synthesis in that it unites intuitions in such a way that it becomes possible for any given intuition to be associable with some other intuition. Borrowing from Strawson, Cassam, therefore, characterises the task of transcendental synthesis as producing the "connectedness of perceptions."<sup>8</sup> Given that Kant does not intend to imply that this synthesis produces perceptions as connected, i.e., it is not the case that Kant thinks of transcendental synthesis as productive with regard to the *matter* of intuition itself, he must, according to Cassam, assume that the matter of experience has a peculiarly characterless nature, such that it is in every case possible for the transcendental synthesis to introduce the possibility of connections within it. In other words, if Cassam's view is correct, Kant must simply assume that matter is given in a sufficiently characterless state that it can never interrupt the work of the transcendental synthesis. As Cassam points out, there appears to be no justification

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<sup>7</sup> For a similar argument regarding this point, see Paul Guyer, "Kant on Apperception and A Priori Synthesis," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 17 (1980): 205–9. An extended defence of Kant's argument in the A-Deduction is given by Philip McPherson Rudisill, "Circles in the Air, Pantomimics and the Transcendental Object = X," *Kant-Studien* 87 (1996).

<sup>8</sup> Cassam, "Transcendental Arguments," 371. The phrase is used by Strawson in *The Bounds of Sense*, 94.

for making the assumption that the matter of experience is always characterless. Thus, it appears to be the case that Kant is open to the charge that he requires yet another faculty to guarantee this. The alternative is that it is necessary for the content of experience itself to be a product of transcendental synthesis.<sup>9</sup>

There appear, therefore, to be compelling reasons for rejecting the validity of transcendental arguments, at least in their Kantian form, where the claim is made that what would otherwise be subjective conditions of thought are rendered objective by virtue of the fact that they stipulate conditions that must pertain in the world. This is due not merely to the defects identified in the previous chapter, but also to the fact that even if one accepts the presuppositions of transcendental idealism (which, as we shall see, is often claimed not to be supported by the argument of the Deduction), then independent difficulties arise concerning the way in which the objective ground provided by transcendental synthesis can be guaranteed unless the content of experience itself is produced.<sup>10</sup>

Although it is their intention to praise rather than to bury Kant's claim to have provided an answer to Hume's problem, Bird and Genova's defences of Kant against Stroud and Gram also draw away from the Transcendental Deduction and focus, instead, on Kant's transcendental idealism. It is claimed by both Bird and Genova that the criticisms raised by Stroud and Gram are misdirected because they mistakenly assume that Kant intended the Deduction itself to constitute a fully formed and self-contained argument for the objectivity of the categories. This, according to Bird and Genova, leads the critics to point to a fault in Kant's argument where there is none. The weakness that critics such as Stroud and Gram find in the Deduction, therefore, does not constitute any inherent failing within the argument itself, but is rather a consequence of the critics' own failure to place the argument within the wider context of transcendental idealism.<sup>11</sup> According to Bird,

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<sup>9</sup> Cassam, "Transcendental Arguments," 371–2.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth R. Westphal, "Affinity, Idealism, and Naturalism: The Stability of Cinnabar and the Possibility of Experience," *Kant-Studien* 88 (1997), 139–40, expresses the same point when he says that "Kant's views on transcendental affinity show that there are transcendental, but non-subjective, conditions for the possibility of unified self-conscious experience which are *both* material and formal (though not intuitive or conceptual)."

<sup>11</sup> Bird, "Kant's Transcendental Arguments," 34–8; Genova "Good Transcendental Arguments," 485–88. and "Kant's Notion of Transcendental Presupposition in the First Critique," in *Essays on Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason,"* ed. J. N. Mohanty and R. W. Shahan (Norman: U of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 121–5.



the way in which this problem manifests itself in Stroud's argument is that the Deduction is interpreted as an attempt to disarm some completely general or global scepticism regarding the relationship between the subjective conditions of thought and some domain of objective reality. Yet, the very question that Stroud takes the Deduction to answer is, for Kant, not one that can even coherently be posed, because it assumes a realist position incompatible with transcendental idealism.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Genova defends the Deduction on the basis of the claim that "Kant's Copernican reorientation [is] the metaphilosophical context within which his TD [Transcendental Deduction] achieves relevance and validity."<sup>13</sup>

We can see, therefore, that there is, in fact, some consensus amongst both the opponents and defenders of the Deduction. The consequence that we can draw from this is that the Deduction provides no solution to Hume's problem, because the argument can only work upon the presupposition that there exists some objective ground for the unity of the manifold of intuition — and yet this is precisely the point at which a disagreement between Kant and Hume arises. In short, whereas from Hume's perspective "we cannot penetrate into the reason of the conjunction" but "only observe the thing itself, and always find that from the constant conjunction the objects acquire an union in the imagination" [T 93], we can know the objective ground of conjunction for Kant simply because this is a consequence of his idealism or Copernican revolution.<sup>14</sup>

It is Bird's contention that although the Deduction itself does not provide a solution to Hume's problem, there, nonetheless, remain substantive points of disagreement where it could be said that Kant provides an answer to Hume. The Second Analogy, according to Bird, is just one such place. However, it has already been argued that the Second Analogy by itself does not provide sufficient grounds

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<sup>12</sup> Bird, "Kant's Transcendental Arguments," 35.

<sup>13</sup> Genova, "Good Transcendental Arguments," 486.

<sup>14</sup> An alternative perspective is offered in Henry E. Allison, "Transcendental Affinity — Kant's Answer to Hume," in *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974). The manner in which Allison takes Kant to be responding to Hume are similar to the account that we present, i.e., that the unity of consciousness required for the representation of association has as its transcendental condition of possibility the conceptual synthesis of the manifold. Within this paper Allison presents only a broad sketch, as the details are filled out in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (London: Yale UP, 1983) differences between his approach and the interpretation offered here emerge. X

for Kant to distinguish himself from Hume.<sup>15</sup> It is, once again, only when this argument is placed in the context of the wider debate concerning whether the subjective conditions of thought have any objective validity that the real disagreement between Kant and Hume — and the one that Kant himself is concerned with — is brought into focus. Previously, this point lead us to draw criteria that it would be necessary for Kant to satisfy if he were to be successful in his attempt to answer Hume. We have now seen that serious questions have been raised regarding the extent to which Kant is successful in meeting the criteria. Furthermore, we have found that a defence of Kant is mounted on the basis that it is not actually necessary for him to provide an argument which establishes that he has satisfied the criteria because success in this regard, supposedly, follows directly from the idealist perspective. Furthermore, the argument presented by Cassam regarding transcendental synthesis suggests that this already weak defence of Kant's claim to have answered Hume suffers from internal difficulties which render it incoherent even its own terms.

### **3. The Argument of the Transcendental Deduction**

We have reached the conclusion that there is some consensus regarding the fact that the only justification that Kant can give for his claim that it is not merely contingent that appearances have the prerequisite unity which is required for experience, is derived from his overarching commitment to transcendental idealism. It is further maintained that this is not actually a part of the argument that Kant advances in the Deduction, but rather stems from the experiment undertaken in the critical philosophy of prioritising epistemology over ontology and idealism over realism, in order to re-establish the good name of philosophy and withdraw from the battlefield of speculative metaphysics.

The contention that will be made in the remainder of this chapter is that, at the very least, within the Deduction Kant does attempt to provide a specific response to the problem of how the subjective conditions of thought have objective validity, and that, although this argument draws on some of the resources of transcendental idealism, it constitutes a coherent defence of the objectivity of this position.<sup>16</sup> We

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<sup>15</sup> See the discussion of Mall and, in particular, Beck presented in Chapter 1, pp. 21–27.

<sup>16</sup> Within this chapter, however, we shall not be providing any conclusive evaluation of the success of the Deduction. Thus, for instance, the problems raised by Schulze regarding

shall, therefore, be investigating the Deduction with the specific purpose of establishing what material it contains that can contribute an answer to Hume's problem. The major steps of the argument that we shall be most concerned with are those that were outlined in Chapter 2: that the manifold of intuition be synthesised; that this synthesis must be conceptual; and that this synthesis must take place *a priori*.<sup>17</sup> Our analysis of these three points will draw almost exclusively on the second edition version of the Deduction, reverting to the A-Deduction when a more detailed account of the same point is presented by Kant there than is contained in the B-Deduction. It is, however, necessary to begin with the first edition because it is there that Kant provides his clearest answer to the question which must precede any discussion of the nature of synthesis: the question as to the nature of that which is said to be subject to this synthesis, the manifold of intuition.

### 3.1 Step One: The Manifold of Intuition

Within this section it is our intention to demonstrate that the manifold of intuition is not some obscure Kantian presupposition derived from transcendental idealism, but rather a restatement of a fundamental tenet of Kant's empiricist opponents. That is to say, if it is part of the problematic of empiricism to explain how ideas become associated, then the empiricist must begin by positing diversity. By considering the notion of the manifold of intuition, we shall see that the challenge that Kant raises against Hume is a question concerning the very conditions of diversity from which Hume begins.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Kant's claim will *not* be that the association of ideas is inadequate to the task of accounting for experience because it

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the status of the mind or subject within the Deduction will not be considered until the following chapter.

In addition to the secondary literature already introduced we shall also be engaging with the interpretations of the Deduction offered by Paul Guyer and Allison. Guyer's *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* and Allison's *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* are the two most highly regarded and widely debated interpretations of the first *Critique* of recent decades. The Transcendental Deduction figures large and is given highly divergent interpretations by both of them. The most recent interpretative innovation comes from Patricia Kitcher, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> The original discussion is to be found in Chapter 2, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> In considering the relationship between Kant and Hume, what falls outside of the scope of our investigation are the challenges offered to the (broadly speaking) empiricist premise that there is some manifold which needs to be synthesised or associated. For an examination of Kant with respect to this point see, for example, Robert Stern, *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990).

fails as account of how unity is introduced into experience. Indeed, on this level Kant has no objection to associationism. The problem, however, that Kant does identify is that for the conditions of associationism to be met, *such that it is possible for there to be any self-conscious awareness of the association*, it is also a requirement that a transcendental synthesis should take place. The A-Deduction, however, begins with a discussion of matters to which the italicised restriction does not apply. The initial point of investigation is intended merely to demonstrate why some kind of synthesis is necessary for all experience of the temporal or spatio-temporal diversity of intuitions. The scope of both ‘synthesis’ and ‘experience’ is broad. Rather than taking place by means of categories, the synthesis could be based simply on association; and the experience need not be self-conscious.<sup>19</sup> In other words, if the data of sense are to be subject to discrimination on the basis of any temporal or spatial properties, then the manifold of intuition must be synthesised.

That Kant will be concerned with the conditions under which a temporal diversity of experience can arise is apparent in one of the first sentences that follow the preamble to the A-Deduction:

Every intuition contains in itself a manifold which can be represented as a manifold only insofar as the mind distinguishes the time in the sequence of one impression upon another; for each representation, *insofar as it is contained in a single moment*, can never be anything but an absolute unity. [A99]

[Jede Anschauung enthält ein Mannigfaltiges in sich, welches doch nicht als ein solches vorgestellt werden würde, wenn das Gemüth nicht die Zeit in der Folge der Eindrücke auf einander unterschiede: denn als in einem Augenblick enthalten kann jede Vorstellung niemals etwas anderes als absolute Einheit sein.]

Kant is not arguing that intuitions take place in time, that they have relations of being before or after one another in time and, therefore, must be temporally distinguishable. Nor is he just making the point that it is impossible for there to be simultaneous yet distinct representations. Both points would involve the denial of the possibility of simultaneity: that, for example, there cannot be either a

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<sup>19</sup> In order to maintain the distinction between the general point that we are attributing to Kant within this first step of the Deduction and the specific claims that Kant makes regarding the conditions under which it is possible for us to have a self-conscious awareness of representations, the term ‘experience’ [*Erfahrung*] will be used within this section to cover both the case of conscious or unconscious representations.

representation or an intuition of red and white at the same time, or perhaps that the intuition of white and the intuition of a star shape are somehow temporally distinct or can be temporally distinguished. But then it is not clear what point Kant is making. As Kitcher says, “Kant’s reasoning in this passage is very dark.”<sup>20</sup>

If we take Kant’s points individually, however, his reasoning can be elucidated. Whatever the details of the process involved, intuitions are the result of objects affecting the senses, yielding bodily sensations which are represented in the mind in terms of the qualities of objects — its “impenetrability, hardness, colour, etc.”[A20–1/B35]<sup>21</sup> Given the problems associated with this empiricist explanation of the source of sensations, Kant is not committed to any particular account of the origin of this intuitive information, but he does have clear commitments regarding its nature: including the claim that intuitions contain a manifold. This is indeed one of Kant’s fundamental assumptions, but it is not one that the empiricist sceptic would deny. It might be thought that due to the synthetic *a priori* nature of space and time that whatever is intuited must, minimally, have duration and extension; and, given that Kant argues that space and time, as the forms of intuition, are both infinitely divisible it would, therefore, seem possible to draw the conclusion that all intuitions are manifold. They are manifold in the sense that they are divisible.

Kant seems to be making this point in the Transcendental Aesthetic:

Space is essentially one; the manifold in it, as well as the general concept of spaces in general, rest solely on limitations. [A25/B39]

[Der Raum ... ist wesentlich einig, das Mannigfaltige in ihm, mithin auch der allgemeine Begriff von Räumen überhaupt beruht lediglich auf Einschränkungen.]

If, however, we take this to the sense of manifold that Kant is employing at A99 then it would, in fact, be false to say that it was necessary for the mind to make temporal distinctions, because the manifold of space is only intuitable because the intuitions themselves are temporally distinct. To illustrate this point, the representation of, for example, a flag, such as the Stars and Stripes, can only contain a diversity of intuitive elements (in this case colours) insofar as these intuitions have occurred one after the other. Thus, there is a representation of red and white stripes (as opposed to a representation of pink?) only because the mind makes a distinction between the

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<sup>20</sup> Patricia Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 149.

<sup>21</sup> “Undurchdringlichkeit, Härte, Farbe etc.”

different times at which these intuitions have occurred. Otherwise, the claim would be, there is simply an intuition of red, then one of white, then one of red, then one of white; in such a case the mind would be in a kind of eternal present, and in that present either red or white could be intuited, but never the combination of red and white. There are, however, immediate and obvious problems with this interpretation: what area of colour is intuited at an instant? Could we not make the strips of colour sufficiently small that they can be intuited together?<sup>22</sup>

While the infinite divisibility of the forms of intuition is indeed an issue for Kant, the manifold nature of intuition is not simply a reference to this. Rather, we are aware of the manifold of intuition as being not just divisible but *diverse*. In other words, intuition can contain a manifold without that manifold being represented in time. The logic of Kant's argument here is quite straightforward. Within the empiricist tradition the diversity of intuitions is not taken to be a problem or a premise which in itself requires explanation.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, for the empiricists the problems lie in explaining how the diversity of intuitions, its manifold nature, can relate to objects.

Kant's account of the synthesis of apprehension as outlined in the A-Deduction can, then, be regarded as a direct engagement with Hume. In Kant's terms, Hume shows that there are merely subjective relations between intuitions which are brought about via the association of impressions. According to Hume, this is (at least in part) due to the temporal relations of contiguity and succession, but he never considers that the experience of the manifold of intuitions *as a manifold* could be at all problematic. Kant's point is that in representing matter in this way, the manifold must be represented, at least minimally, according to the form of time — it must be represented as either simultaneous or successive in time. While the manifold can be associated merely according to the properties it possesses as diverse, the association of the manifold with regard to contiguity or succession

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<sup>22</sup> It is possible that this reading was adopted by Maimon, and accounts for his reintroduction of the Leibniz inspired notion of infinitesimals of sensation. See, for example, Maimon, *Transscendentalphilosophie*, 22, and Atlas, *Critical to Speculative Idealism*, 109–23.

<sup>23</sup> At the very beginning of the Treatise, for instance, Hume says that  
“Tho' a particular colour, taste, and smell are qualities all united together in this apple, 'tis easy to perceive they are not the same, but are at least distinguishable from each other.” [T 2]

requires the representation of the manifold in time. Such representation presupposes a synthesis, because the manifold itself has no intrinsic temporal quality; sensations do not bear, as it were, any temporal stamp and yet the representation of them requires that they are represented in time. When representing this manifold it is, therefore, necessary for there to be a synthesis of the manifold bringing non-temporal qualities into a temporal relationship.

The case is clearest with regard to the representation of succession. For Hume the abstract idea of time is derived from the “perceivable succession of changeable objects.”[T 35]<sup>24</sup> In order to be able to perceive the succession of changeable objects, what is required is that the perceptions themselves are synthesised in time, they must be run through and held together. If this did not happen, what would be experienced would be a succession of perceptions rather than what we take to be a succession of states of an object. Similarly with regard to the simultaneity, the simultaneous perception of the manifold is not a perception of the manifold as simultaneous, i.e., not an awareness of a diversity occurring together in time, but rather some singular grouping of sensations.

This point is clear if we return to the earlier example of the flag. In this case we experience a manifold of intuition (e.g., red, white, blue) not as a manifold but as a unity (e.g., flag); but if we now place the flag against the backdrop of another colour, what do we then experience? A flag on an orange field or an orange, red, white and blue picture? Kant’s argument is that there is nothing in the manifold of intuition itself which connects the latter three colours together in contradistinction to the first; that is to say, there is, exactly as Hume had argued, no experience of connections between the manifold of intuition — there, simply, is the manifold of intuition. If this manifold is experienced as it is in a single moment, then there is a single experience of all that is manifold; there is a single experience of orange-white-red-blue. This diversity is experienced as one, the experience is an absolute unity; that is to say that at any particular moment in time, if it were to be taken in isolation, the experience of this manifold would not divide the manifold, there would be no red-white-blue-flag-experience as distinct from the orange-field-experienced. If, however, we consider not merely the intuition of the manifold at a particular

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<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that the account of the origin of the abstract ideas of space and time is only to be found in the *Treatise*.

instant, but also how it persists through time, or indeed fails to do so, then we can experience the manifold as manifold. The orange field is replaced by a green field, now a distinction can be made between the experience of the flag and the experience of the field, because there is a connection which exists between the manifold of the flag in contradistinction to the rest of the manifold, a connection which rests upon “sequence of one impression upon another”.

What Kant has identified is a process which must be occurring in order for the empiricist problematic of the association between intuitions in terms of contiguity and succession to arise at all. In order for the universally acknowledged representation of the manifold as, for instance, successive to occur a the manifold is “run through and held together”(A99)<sup>25</sup>. Rather than all the impressions at any moment being represented as an absolute unity, the impressions which are intuited together in time are unified.

### 3.1.1 Step One: Summary

The first step of the Deduction consists not so much in an argument as in a general observation:

all our knowledge is thus finally subject to time, the formal condition of inner sense. In it they must all be ordered, connected, and brought into relation. This is a general observation which, throughout what follows, must be borne in mind as being quite fundamental. [A99]

[alle unsere Erkenntnisse [sind] zuletzt doch der formalen Bedingung des innern Sinnes, nämlich der Zeit unterworfen, als in welcher sie insgesamt geordnet, verknüpft und in Verhältnisse gebracht werden müssen. Diese ist eine allgemeine Anmerkung, die man bei dem folgenden durchaus zum Grunde legen muß.]

The scope of this observation is not limited to syntheses which take place according to the categories, or to syntheses the result of which we can become self-conscious, it merely notes that, insofar one is committed to the general tenets of empiricist epistemology, it is necessary for there to be some kind of synthesis of the constituent matter of experience which brings elements into a temporal relationship with each other.

### 3.2 Step Two: The Analytic Unity of Consciousness

It is important immediately to acknowledge and re-emphasise that Kant’s

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<sup>25</sup> “das Durchlaufen der Mannigfaltigkeit und dann die Zusammennehmung desselben”



attempt to undermine the assumptions of associationism is limited in scope. The objection could be raised against him that it is of absolutely no concern whether at a single moment there is an absolute unity or not, all that is pertinent to whether association occurs or not is diversity as it occurs across time. We can, for example, construct cases where association can occur, at least in so far as we can know that it has occurred, because it manifests itself in behaviour, merely by virtue of a biochemical process.<sup>26</sup>

It would certainly be something of a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Transcendental Deduction if it were to be a consequence of Kant's argument that the transcendental unity of apperception and the capacity for self-consciousness is attributable to invertebrates. Kant's point, however, is not made as an objection to associationism at this level; his claim is that *association of representations* does not constitute a sufficient condition for the *representation of association* and that whenever such a representation can occur it has objective validity. Although this claim is weaker than the initial one, it is nonetheless forceful. This is because, in order for there to be any self-conscious awareness of, or representation of, association, associationism must be supplemented and, at the very least, in the context of Hume's argument for the origin of the idea of causality precisely in such awareness, Kant's point is pertinent — *if* he can establish the objective validity of this representation. The limited nature of the claim is made explicit by Kant when he says that association can occur but would be in vain without synthesis. Empirical association requires a transcendental ground:

It is a merely empirical law, that representations which have often followed or accompanied one another finally become associated, and so are set in a relation whereby, even without the presence of the object, one of these representations can, in accordance with a stable rule, bring about a transition of the mind to the other. [A100]

[Es ist zwar ein bloß empirisches Gesetz, nach welchem Vorstellungen, die sich oft gefolgt oder begleitet haben, mit einander endlich vergesellschaften und dadurch in eine Verknüpfung setzen, nach welcher auch ohne die Gegenwart des Gegenstandes eine dieser Vorstellungen einen Übergang des Gemüths zu der andern nach einer beständigen Regel hervorbringt.]

The introduction of rules into the law of association which occurs in this

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<sup>26</sup> See, for example, the discussion of "Skinnerian" or behaviourist creatures, which places this kind of learning in the context of Hume's associationism, in Daniel C. Dennett, *Kinds of Minds* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), 112–5.

passage is not an illegitimate intellectualisation of the process of association but merely a restatement of it. The associations are not merely random, for if they were, then it would not be an association. There is nothing then to prevent this law from being merely statistical: it is merely describing the relationship which exists between the presence of a representation and the other representations which arise in the mind. We are dealing with the empirical and contingent regularity of which Cassam speaks. Kant immediately goes on to make the claim that,

this law of reproduction presupposes that appearances are themselves actually subject to such a rule, and that in the manifold of these representations a coexistence or sequence takes place in conformity with certain rules. [A100]

[Dieses Gesetz der Reproduktion setzt aber voraus: daß die Erscheinungen selbst wirklich einer solchen Regel unterworfen seien, und daß in dem Mannigfaltigen ihrer Vorstellungen eine gewissen Regeln gemäße Begleitung oder Folge statt finde]

It would appear that Kant is making the straightforward point that there would be no association if nothing were associated; which is to say, that the regularity which is to be found in the order of representations is not introduced by the law of association, but is rather found there by the empirical reproductive imagination. However, Kant's argument is subtly different. From the mere observation that oranges are orange it would be impossible to derive a transcendental condition for the empirical fact of the orangeness of oranges. It does, indeed, appear that Kant is saying exactly this with his infamous example:

If cinnabar were sometimes red, sometimes black, sometimes light, sometimes heavy ... my empirical imagination would never find opportunity when representing red colour to bring to mind heavy cinnabar. [A100-1]

[Würde der Zinnober bald roth, bald schwarz, bald leicht, bald schwer sein, ... so könnte meine empirische Einbildungskraft nicht einmal Gelegenheit bekommen, bei der Vorstellung der rothen Farbe den schweren Zinnober in die Gedanken zu bekommen].

It seems to be the case that Kant is identifying the tautological point that association requires regularity, yet the conclusion which he draws is that there

must then be something which, as the *a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of appearances, makes their reproduction possible. [A101]

[muß also etwas sein, was selbst diese Reproduktion der Erscheinungen möglich macht, dadurch daß es der Grund a priori einer notwendigen synthetischen Einheit derselben ist.]

The reference here to the necessary synthetic unity of appearances makes it clear that Kant is not drawing a conclusion regarding the transcendental necessity of a regular pattern of representations in order for the empirical faculty of the imagination to have material with which it can work, hence creating associations between representations — as is the case on the empiricist account.<sup>27</sup> It is not the regularity of representations which is a transcendental condition for the reproduction of representations, but rather the unity of appearances themselves that is the condition. It is not the case that we can simply substitute the unconditional for conditional necessity as Cassam would have it. It is not a mere prejudice on Kant's part that he claims that there must be an *a priori* ground of association, because it is not an *a priori* claim regarding the nature of the regularity of the manifold but rather a claim regarding the conditions under which any regularity is *representable*. Assuming that a conditional regularity happens to pertain in the world or in the order of appearances does not obviate the problem of how any such regularity is represented as such. Kant states this explicitly in two of the above quotations: the “law of reproduction presupposes that appearances are themselves actually subject to such a rule”, there is an “*a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of appearances [which] makes their reproduction possible.”<sup>28</sup>

It does, however, remain obscure why the synthesis of representations required for the representation of synthesis or association cannot itself be provided through association. In order to place definite limitations on what can be achieved

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<sup>27</sup> “It is evident that there is a principle of connexion between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and that, in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity.” [E 23]

<sup>28</sup> Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 78, makes the valuable observation that, as it stands at this point, Kant's argument is incomplete:

“Even if the law of association operates on representations, Empiricists could reply that something like this law explains how various cognitive states are united in representations. When cognitive states occur together, they tend to become associated, and through this association produce representations of objects and properties.”

The defence that Kitcher provides of Kant's argument is that the kind of association to which the empiricists refer for support is that of spatio-temporal contiguity, but this fails to provide a convincing account of how objects are represented because there are very many spatio-temporal contiguities that do not become associated. Although this defence is clearly an argument that Kant presents, and it could be employed to critique the law of association, it is not the one that Kant himself is presenting in his account of the synthesis of reproduction. The reproduction of representations is not what distinguishes an object from an event.

through association, Kant moves on from the initial observation that, unless there is synthesis, the manifold can be nothing other than an absolute unity. He now goes on to consider the conditions under which the representation of this synthesis can occur. It is at this point that Kant demonstrates that any account which takes this representation of synthesis to be based upon a merely “empirical law” must be inadequate. Kant’s argument for this point is two-fold. Firstly, he claims that in any representation of synthesis it must be possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany the representations synthesised and, secondly, that association does not provide sufficient conditions for the ‘I think’ to be able to accompany representations.<sup>29</sup>

The first point is advanced in one of Kant’s most notorious and disputed statements:

It must be *possible* for the ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would either be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me. [B131–2]

[Das: Ich denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können; denn sonst würde etwas in mir vorgestellt werden, was gar nicht gedacht werden könnte, welches eben so viel heißt als: die Vorstellung würde entweder unmöglich, oder wenigstens für mich nichts sein.]

This opening statement is gradually elucidated throughout the course of §16 of the B-Deduction, but it is worthwhile pausing here just to establish the general parameters of the argument. As Kant makes clear, “representation” [*Vorstellung*] is his most general term for any kind of mental or cognitive state: be that state conscious or unconscious, objective or subjective, intuitive or conceptual, empirical or pure, it will fall under the genus of representation.<sup>30</sup> The very generality of such

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<sup>29</sup> The latter point constitutes what we are calling step 3 of the Deduction.

<sup>30</sup> “The genus is *representation* in general (repraesentatio). Subordinate to it stands representation with consciousness (perceptio). A *perception* which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is *sensation* (sensatio), an objective perception is *knowledge* (cognitio). This is either *intuition* or *concept* (intuitus vel conceptus.) The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. The concept is either an *empirical* or a *pure concept*.” [A320/B376–7] [Die Gattung ist Vorstellung überhaupt (repraesentatio). Unter ihr steht die Vorstellung mit Bewußtsein (perceptio). Eine Perception, die sich lediglich auf das Subject als die Modification seines Zustandes bezieht, ist Empfindung (sensatio), eine objective Perception ist Erkenntniß (cognitio). Diese ist entweder Anschauung oder Begriff (intuitus vel conceptus). Jene bezieht sich unmittelbar auf den Gegenstand und ist einzeln, dieser mittelbar, vermitteltst eines

a claim raises an immediate difficulty, in that not everything that falls under the definition of representation does in fact constitute a representation of something. Thus, for example, sensation is an affection of an object on the faculty of sensibility, is but not a representation of the object.<sup>31</sup> Neither, however, is sensation nothing to me: non-representative representations can contribute to the representation of something to me. This fits with Kant's claim that empirical intuitions are "in relation to the object through sensation." [A20/B34]<sup>32</sup> In what follows, then, it will be necessary for Kant, if he is to avoid this apparent contradiction, to provide some account of the relationships between representations — what it means for an intuition to relate to an object through sensation — such that non-representative representations are, in some sense or another, representations of something. Such an account is necessary for the simple reason that, as it stands, his opening statement of Section 16, B edition, is incoherent: there are representations which are something to me, yet do not represent.<sup>33</sup>

The main point does, nonetheless, appear to be clear: that unless it is possible to become conscious of a representation then that representation cannot be a representation of something. This does not involve Kant in the denial of unconscious representations as such, it is merely that he is — as Allison and others have put it — committed to the "necessity of the possibility"<sup>34</sup> of consciousness.<sup>35</sup> Clearly implied in this, however, is the denial of modes of knowledge which are not just non-conscious, but which are, in principle, unconscious. The opposition between the, in principle, unconscious and the potentially conscious representations raises questions as to how and under what circumstances is it possible for the 'I think' to accompany representations. That is to say, Kant needs to provide an answer to the question of wherein the possibility of consciousness lies, for otherwise

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Merkmal, was mehreren Dingen gemein sein kann. Der Begriff ist entweder ein empirischer oder reiner Begriff].

<sup>31</sup> It is this point which leads Kitcher to translate "Vorstellung" as "cognitive state" and "Erkenntnis" as "representation". See Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 66.

<sup>32</sup> "sich auf den Gegenstand durch Empfindung bezieht".

<sup>33</sup> It will also be noted that this is a position that Kant is not committed to in the A-edition; as stated there there are representations given which do not fall within consciousness, but which are brought to consciousness via the process of synthesis.

<sup>34</sup> Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 140.

<sup>35</sup> For Kant's discussion of representations which are not accompanied by consciousness (*dunkle Vorstellungen*) see XII, 135–6.

there is no way in which a distinction can be drawn between the representations which are unconscious in fact, and those which are unconscious in principle. This, in turn, raises a problem with regard to the statement as a whole: if representations are possible that we are never conscious of, i.e. if the consciousness of these representations is never actualised, then what is it that makes the possibility of the accompaniment of the 'I think' decisive?<sup>36</sup>

What is the difference between a representation which could possibly be brought to consciousness but is not, and one which cannot ever be brought to consciousness? More generally we could question where the emphasis is placed in the quotation. Is it the case that the 'I think' must be able to accompany *all representations* which are something to me, or that it must be able to accompany all representations which are something *to me*? Paul Guyer makes the claim, which supports Cassam's argument, that Kant is committed to the former emphasis because it is only here that the notion of an imposition of order on nature, or transcendental synthesis, can be coherent.<sup>37</sup> If the stress is placed on the 'to me', then it remains possible for there to be representations which it is not possible to bring to self-consciousness simply because they fail to meet whatever conditions Kant wishes to claim are necessary for this consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Kant, however, wants to argue that it is an unconditional necessity that *all* representations conform to these

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<sup>36</sup> Discussions of some of the difficulties raised by the apparent counter-example of 'blind-sight' — a perceptual consciousness which is not attributed to a subject — are to be found in Hector-Neri Castañeda, "The Role of Apperception in Kant's Deduction of the Categories," *Noûs* 24 (1990): 153–5, and Susan Hurley, "Unity and Objectivity," in *Objectivity, Simulation and the Unity of Consciousness*, ed. Christopher Peacocke (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), 51–4. Although an issue of some complexity, we shall assume that no straightforward contradiction of Kant's position is entailed by blind-sight. Kant certainly allows for consciousness without the possibility of self-consciousness — he attributes this state to animals (see below, note 81, p. 107). Furthermore, perceptions can also be brought into some contrastive relations (of identity and difference) without requiring the objective unity of consciousness which allows for the possibility of the 'I think.' [IX 65] In these cases there is no consciousness of the relation itself, and presumably only imagination rather than understanding is required.

<sup>37</sup> Guyer, "Kant on Apperception and *a priori* Synthesis," *passim*. The same point is also raised by Robert Howell, "Apperception and the 1787 Transcendental Deduction," *Synthese* 47 (1981): 388–9.

<sup>38</sup> "If the *a priori* certainty of self-identity is understood only as the conceptual truth that whatever representations one ascribes to oneself must be ascribed to the same continuing set of representations to which belong all other representations ascribed to oneself, in accordance with the rules for constructing such sets, it would not imply any *a priori* synthesis." Guyer, "Kant on Apperception and *a priori* Synthesis," 208.

conditions and he must, therefore, be committed to the former view: but this is far from the analytic proposition that Kant seems to take it to be.<sup>39</sup> In other words, while it is acknowledged that it might be possible for Kant to establish that there are certain conditions which must be met by intuitions if it is to be possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany them, this would not show that all of the intuitions which I have (or the whole of my experience most broadly construed) conform to these conditions. However, unless this more general point is established, the categories (if they are necessary for the ‘I think’ to accompany representations) remain merely subjectively necessary, in that they provide a condition under which experience must be regarded, but are irrelevant in relation to the nature of experience as such.

Kant begins to answer these questions with the introduction of the reciprocal relation between the ‘I think’ and a synthesis of representations:<sup>40</sup>

This thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold which is given in intuition contains a synthesis of representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis. [B133]

[Nämlich diese durchgängige Identität der Apperception eines in der Anschauung gegebenen Mannigfaltigen enthält eine Synthesis der Vorstellungen und ist nur durch das Bewußtsein dieser Synthesis möglich.]

This is both a qualification and an explanation of his introductory statement. The “thoroughgoing identity of apperception” qualifies the notion of the ‘I think’ being able to accompany representations, because it is now clear that it is the ability to accompany representations with an identical ‘I think’ which provides the criteria of representations being able to represent. In other words, Kant is not (yet) advancing the synthetic proposition attributed to him by Guyer, but is rather only concerned

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<sup>39</sup> This leads Guyer to claim that there is confusion on Kant’s part as to which kind of argument he is employing in the Deduction. See pp. 110–113 for a discussion of Guyer’s dissection of the Deduction. A clear discussion of the of Guyer’s point is given by Allison, “Apperception and Analyticity in the B-Deduction,” *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 44 (1993):234–6.

<sup>40</sup> The reciprocal relationship between apperception and synthesis is also central to the account of the Deduction that Allison presents; in *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 144, he speaks of the “reciprocal connection between the transcendental unity of apperception and the representation of objects”. The analysis presented in this section regarding the relationship between apperception and synthesis is broadly in accord with Allison’s discussion of this issue. But there is an important difference. Rather than relying on Kant’s definition of an object to account for the specifically conceptual nature of the synthesis necessary for the transcendental unity of apperception, we shall draw this conclusion from Kant’s distinction, to be discussed in the Section 3.3, between an objective and a subjective unity of consciousness.

with a restricted class of representations, those of which there can be any self-consciousness.

The precise nature of the proposition that Kant is advancing can be discerned from Kant's discussion of the nature of the representation 'I think'. The empirical consciousness of oneself — that is, the representation of oneself as being in a certain state — is distinguished from the empty representation 'I think' which "in all consciousness is one and the same"[B132]<sup>41</sup>. This notion of the identity of apperception is somewhat weak, in that the identity consists in the 'I think' not being a representation of something from which any other representations could differ, unless, of course, they were actually representations of something, in which case that representation would not be the representation 'I think'.<sup>42</sup> This weakness is, however, compensated for by two factors. Firstly, if this account is coherent, then the problem identified by Hume — that when he considered his experience he could find no experience of himself — would be made consistent with Kant's own position without involving him in the denial of the validity of Hume's observation.<sup>43</sup> Secondly, the representation 'I think' is produced, with regard to its nature, by the unity of apperception. It is not merely then that there are multiple simple, empty representations, 'I think', which are the same, but rather that all instances of the 'I think' are "one and the same." This is brought out in relationship between the identity of apperception and the synthesis of representations:

For through the 'I', as simple representation, nothing manifold is given; only in intuition, which is distinct from the 'I', can a manifold be given; and only through *combination* in one consciousness can it be thought.  
[B135]

[Denn durch das Ich als einfache Vorstellung ist nichts Mannigfaltiges gegeben; in der Anschauung, die davon unterschieden ist, kann es nur gegeben und durch Verbindung in einem Bewußtsein gedacht werden.]

The consciousness of the manifold of intuition cannot in itself be manifold

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<sup>41</sup> "in allem Bewußtsein ein und dasselbe ist".

<sup>42</sup> "I say that I think something as completely simple, only because I have really nothing more to say of it than merely that it is something." [A400]  
[Ich sage nur, daß ich etwas ganz einfach denke, weil ich wirklich nichts weiter als blos, daß es Etwas sei, zu sagen weiß.]

<sup>43</sup> "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception." [T 252]



since, if it were, it would be merely be the consciousness of the constitutive elements of the manifold as an absolute unity rather than an awareness of the manifold as such. Each of these individual states of consciousness is “without relation to the identity of the subject”[B133]<sup>44</sup> in the sense that it is only possible to represent the identity of the subject, or indeed identity as such, insofar as there is a consciousness of more than one manifestation of this representation. This follows as a direct consequence of the lack of any intuition of the subject and is expressed by Kant in the statement that “the *analytic* unity of apperception is possible only under the presupposition of a certain *synthetic* unity.”[B133]<sup>45</sup> The representation ‘I think’ is a common property of a diversity of other representations, a somewhat peculiar general concept, and it is only through the representation of the ‘I think’ as something common to a diversity of other representations that it itself can first be represented, since, as Kant makes clear through his example of “red in general”[B133]<sup>46</sup>, the unity of the representation consists in it remaining invariant throughout representations which have it in common.<sup>47</sup>

To extend Kant’s example, the representation of red is common to the representation of post boxes, cinnabar and (portions of) the Star Spangled Banner, but not equivalent to any of these representations. Furthermore, and most significantly for Kant’s argument, the representation of general concepts lies not merely in the fact that they are common to, or can accompany, diverse representations, but rather in the requirement that those diverse representations of which red, for example, is a common property need to be synthesised, such that red can be represented as a common property. The argument, then, is that if it were somehow impossible for the various representations with the shared property of red to be thought together and synthesised, then the representation of the analytic unity of red would also be impossible.

If we consider the result of this argument with regard to the analytic unity of consciousness, then some of the puzzles of Kant’s opening statement of Section 16

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<sup>44</sup> “ohne Beziehung auf die Identität des Subjects.”

<sup>45</sup> “die analytische Einheit der Apperception ist nur unter der Voraussetzung irgend einer synthetischen möglich.”

<sup>46</sup> “roth überhaupt”.

<sup>47</sup> See, Ralf Meerbote, “Apperception and Objectivity,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986): 116–8, for another account of this point which accords with our own.

can be resolved. Having made clear that synthesis of representations is a necessary condition for the representation of the analytic unity of consciousness, we can provide an account of why a representation which could not be accompanied by the ‘I think’ would indeed be nothing to me. A representation which could not be so accompanied would be a representation which could not be synthesised with any other representations. This follows as a direct consequence from the discussion of what it is for there to be an identity of apperception, namely a synthesis of representations. The original synthetic unity of apperception is, in fact, nothing other than a necessary synthesis of representations.<sup>48</sup> This original synthetic unity of apperception allows for the generation of the representation ‘I think’ because all synthesised and synthesisable representations have, as their most general and common feature, the fact that they are synthesisable, and that they belong to, or indeed constitute, the original synthetic unity of apperception. This feature is identified as the representation ‘I think’.<sup>49</sup>

The absence of the ability of the ‘I think’ to accompany any representation means then that the representation would lack all features that are attributable to it on the basis of synthesis, because synthesis is a necessary condition for the ‘I think’ being able to accompany a representation.<sup>50</sup> We have already seen precisely what

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<sup>48</sup> “I am conscious to myself *a priori* of a necessary synthesis of representations, which is entitled the original synthetic unity of apperception”[B135]

[ich mir einer nothwendigen Synthesis derselben *a priori* bewußt bin, welche die ursprüngliche synthetische Einheit der Apperception heißt]

Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 140, points out a curiosity in Kant's phrasing when considering A116 which is also to be found in this passage, namely, “conscious *a priori*”. We are in full agreement with his reading of this as “referring to the awareness of something as necessarily the case.”

<sup>49</sup> It might be objected that this attribution somewhat jumps the gun. After all, why not the representation “we think”, “mind” or something else entirely. However, given the role that unity plays and that this unity is a result of syntheses which are not a feature given in the manifold of intuition, Kant has some justification. Unfortunately, it also opens up the possibility for reading Kant as providing an, at least, semi-Cartesian argument. This point will be developed in the chapter on the subject. For a discussion on this see also Howell, “Apperception and the 1787 Transcendental Deduction,” 409–13.

<sup>50</sup> There is considerable debate within the secondary literature regarding the status of this claim. This debate centres on the twofold issue of whether it is an analytic or synthetic proposition that the ‘I think’ can accompany representations. If analytic, then the extent to which Kant's argument can proceed on the basis of this claim is also questioned. Within recent discussions Guyer, Henrich and Allison all regard it as analytic but disagree as to whether this constitutes a flaw within the Deduction, and Kitcher regards it as synthetic. An overview of the disagreements is given by Allison, “Apperception and Analyticity in the B-Deduction,” *passim*. See Chapter 4 of this thesis, pp. 120–124, for a discussion of

aspect of synthesis Kant has in mind the previous discussion of the property 'red':

If I think *red* in general, I thereby represent to myself a property which (as a characteristic) can be found in something, or can be combined with other representations [B133]

[wenn ich mir roth überhaupt denke, so stellte ich mir dadurch eine Beschaffenheit vor, die (als Merkmal) irgend woran angetroffen, oder mit anderen Vorstellungen verbunden sein kann]

That is to say, that if a representation could not be connected with other representations, it will correspondingly be impossible for it to represent anything — such a representation would be “nothing to me”. This constitutes a second step in the argument against associationism. The first point established by Kant was that the manifold of intuition needed to be synthesised if it was to be anything but an absolute unity. The second point is that any such absolute unity cannot constitute a representation of anything to me. What Kant must now demonstrate is that it is only a synthesis of representations according to concepts, as opposed to an association between them, that provides the conditions under which it is possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany those representations.

### 3.2.1 Step Two: Summary

The claim that Kant advances here concerns the relationship between the analytic unity of consciousness and the synthesis of representations: we can become conscious of a representation, attach the ‘I think’ to it, only under the condition that there has been a synthesis of representations. This is an analytic proposition because the representation ‘I think’ is a general concept abstracted from the synthesis of representations. Synthesis is, therefore, the necessary condition of the analytic unity of consciousness. This, however, does not imply that synthesis in general is a necessary *and* sufficient condition of the analytic unity of consciousness; it may be the case that there are both synthesised or unsynthesised representations which the ‘I think’ cannot accompany. It thus remains possible to advance Guyer’s objection that Kant has failed to demonstrate that all representations which I have meet the conditions required for the ‘I think’ to be able to accompany them. Furthermore, Kant has not even successfully been shown that in every case where synthesis has occurred the ‘I think’ can accompany the

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this issue.

representations.

### 3.3 Step Three: Synthesis and Concepts

The remainder of Kant's argument proceeds with remarkable speed toward his conclusion that "the manifold in a given intuition stands necessarily under categories"[B143]<sup>51</sup>. There has been no mention of the categories since the introductory section (§15) of the Deduction until this conclusion is drawn, and Kant legitimates it through the link between functions of judgement and the categories.<sup>52</sup> Within the Deduction itself, however, the stage in the argument which bears the weight is the following:

That act of understanding by which the manifold of given representations (be they intuitions or concepts) is brought under one apperception in general, is the logical function of judgement. [B143]

[Diejenige Handlung des Verstandes aber, durch die das Mannigfaltige gegebener Vorstellungen (sie mögen Anschauungen oder Begriffe sein) unter eine Apperception überhaupt gebracht wird, ist die logische Function der Urtheile.]

We have already considered Kant's argument for the necessity of a synthesis of representations if these representations are to represent anything; the additional argumentative step is, then, to demonstrate that this synthesis is, necessarily, judgmental. The manifold of intuition is united through the judgement that it is something: 'it is a —'. That it is in such judgements alone that the manifold of intuition is related to an object is a definitional point for Kant; an object [*Objekt*] is simply that "in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united." [B137]<sup>53</sup> Although it is absolutely crucial that this definition be convincing, Kant provides no explicit support for it: his assumption would appear to be that it is self-evident. The significance of the definition for the Deduction lies in the fact that

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<sup>51</sup> "steht also das Mannigfaltige in einer gegebenen Anschauung nothwendig unter Kategorien."

<sup>52</sup> Exactly where Kant thinks he has established this link is somewhat confusing. In the Deduction itself he simply says:

"Now the categories are just these functions of judgement, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined in relation to them (cf. §13)."[B143]

[Nun sind aber die Kategorien nichts andres als eben diese Funktionen zu urtheilen, so fern das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung in Ansehung ihrer bestimmt ist. (§ 13)]

The situation is confused because in §13 there is no reference to the relationship between the categories and judgements. It is, however, possible that Kant had his short discussion at the end of §14 (unnumbered in the first printing of the B-edition) in mind.

<sup>53</sup> "in dessen Begriff das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung vereinigt ist."

it is here, and only here, that a link is established between the unity of the synthesis of the manifold and concepts. As we have seen in the preceding section, the argument that a synthesis of representations is required proceeds without any reference to the conceptual nature of the unity. Indeed, on the basis of his previous argument it is not obvious that such conceptual unity is required. There it was merely the synthetic unity of apperception which functioned as a condition of representation, and on the basis of the evidence provided in the same paragraph in which concepts are introduced, Kant would appear to hold that the synthetic unity of apperception is not only a necessary condition for representation, but a sufficient one as well: “it is the unity of consciousness that alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object.”[B137]<sup>54</sup> It would appear that Kant affirms the unity of consciousness as the sole condition which must be satisfied for there to be representations of objects, and simultaneously introduces a further condition: a concept in which representations are united.<sup>55</sup> Superficially, this constitutes a direct contradiction of the argument outlined in stage two.

One possible solution to this problem lies in the previous identification which Kant has made between the faculty of apperception and the understanding.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> “ist die Einheit des Bewußtseins dasjenige, was allein die Beziehung der Vorstellungen auf einen Gegenstand”.

<sup>55</sup> Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 145, notes this change from necessary to sufficient condition, but he does not regard the introduction of the need for concepts to be problematic because he argues that the notion of object that Kant is employing throughout the first part of the Deduction is a logical one. That is to say, an object is simply the subject of a judgement. This does, however, beg the question as to whether Kant is entitled to use this conception of an object, since what is at issue is whether representation requires concepts. Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 81, points out that this assumption is a point of dispute among Kant's contemporaries and provides the following quotation from Tetens questioning this assumption:

“Nevertheless the major issue in the dispute over the existence of mere representations is not yet decided ... Are there representations in us that are regarded as images and signs, sufficiently articulated, and sharply enough separated from others in the imagination, so that they themselves and though them, their objects, can be differentiated from others?” J. N. Tetens, *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung*, vol I, (Leipzig: M. G. Weidmans Erben und Reich, 1777), 266. For the sake of consistency with Kemp-Smith, Kitcher's translation has been altered.

<sup>56</sup> “the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point, to which we must ascribe all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy. Indeed this faculty is the understanding itself.”[B134] [ist die synthetische Einheit der Apperception der höchste Punkt, an dem man allen Verstandesgebrauch, selbst die ganze Logik und nach ihr, die Transscendental-Philosophie heften muß, ja dieses Vermögen ist der Verstand selbst.]

This claim, however, rests upon the argument that the synthetic unity of apperception is a necessary condition of analytic unity. Such analytic unity is found in concepts, which, as we have seen, are representations combined with a diversity of other representations from which they can be isolated (as in Kant's example of red). Kant's argument establishes the possibility of a representation being accompanied by the 'I think' as the general condition of representations representing. If representations can be so accompanied, then they are thereby unified in one consciousness. His argument, however, makes no reference to any further conditions which have to be met by the representations themselves, such that the 'I think' can accompany them. That is to say, at the point at which Kant identifies the faculty of apperception and the understanding, there is only one "*conceptus communis*" [B134] which is required for representations to be unified, and that is the 'I think'. His claim, then, that representations are not merely united under the analytic unity of consciousness but also under the concept of an object, is clearly introducing an additional and unargued for condition. Yet it is upon this very condition that this first part of the B-Deduction rests.

A solution to this problem can be arrived at, however, through a consideration of the distinction, which Kant draws in the subsequent pages of the Deduction, between an objective and a subjective unity of consciousness. In the passage under consideration Kant fails to make this distinction and refers simply to the unity of consciousness — which "alone constitutes the relation of a representation to an object". The opening of the next section (§18) bears witness to the need for the distinction:

The *transcendental unity* of apperception is that unity through which all the manifold given in an intuition is united in the concept of the object. It is therefore entitled *objective*, and must be distinguished from the *subjective unity* of consciousness [B139].

[Die transscendentale Einheit der Apperception ist diejenige, durch welche alles in einer Anschauung gegebene Mannigfaltige in einen Begriff vom Object vereinigt wird. Sie heißt darum objectiv und muß von der subjectiven Einheit des Bewußtseins unterschieden werden].

In Kant's presentation of this distinction he is assuming that the need for concepts in the presentation of objects is already established, and the subjective unity of consciousness is so called because it does not employ concepts in the synthesis of

representations. However, this could constitute an indirect argument for the need for concepts. If he can illustrate that no objects are represented though the subjective unity (and of particular value to this argument is the fact that Kant provides an account of the subjective unity which ties it to the association of representations, as opposed to conceptual connection), then the need for a conceptual synthesis would follow from the failure of the alternative account. In other words, this step of the argument would establish that the necessary *and* sufficient conditions for the ‘I think’ being able to accompany any representation are that the synthesis of representations is conceptual. In this case, however, the domain of our self-conscious awareness would be completely isomorphic with representations synthesised according to concepts.

### 3.3.1 The Subjective Unity of Consciousness

Kant’s discussion of subjective unity in the B-Deduction is confined to three short passages, none of which are a model of clarity. However, it will be argued that together they constitute a coherent doctrine. The first passage consists in the statement that the subjective unity of consciousness,

*is a determination of inner sense. ... Whether I can become empirically conscious of the manifold as simultaneous or as successive depends on circumstances or empirical conditions. Therefore the empirical unity of consciousness, through association of representations, itself concerns an appearance, and is wholly contingent. [B139–40]*

[eine Bestimmung des inneren Sinnes ist ... Ob ich mir des Mannigfaltigen als zugleich, oder nach einander empirische bewußt sein könne, kommt auf Umstände oder empirische Bedingungen an; daher die empirische Einheit des Bewußtseins durch Association der Vorstellungen selbst eine Erscheinung betrifft und ganz zufällig ist.]

Although there is a somewhat confusing array of vocabulary employed in this passage the point that Kant is attempting to get across is clear. The subjective unity of consciousness consists in the relations that pertain between representations on the basis of the properties that they possess as determinations of inner sense — and the form of inner sense is time.<sup>57</sup> It follows from this that the subjective unity will merely be a matter of the temporal relations of the manifold — in particular,

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<sup>57</sup> “Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state.” [A33/B49]

“Die Zeit ist nichts anders als die Form des innern Sinnes, d.i. des Anschauung unserer selbst und unsers innern Zustandes.”

simultaneity and succession.

The contingency to which Kant refers is further explicated by the empirical unity of consciousness being tied to association. It is a completely contingent and empirical matter as to whether the manifold given in inner sense presents features which are associable. That is to say, it is not *a priori* determinable whether the manifold of intuition will be such that the subjective unity of consciousness, which is present in the association of representations, is realised. Thus far the argument is clear and works with empiricist assumptions; but it still remains unclear why this unity of consciousness, although merely empirical and contingent, should only involve the association of representations and not the representation of that which is associated.

In the above-quoted passage this claim is made through the statement that the “empirical unity of consciousness, through association of representations, itself concerns an appearance”. An appearance, as an “undetermined object of an empirical intuition”[A20/B34]<sup>58</sup>, is to be contrasted with modes of knowledge [*Erkenntnisse*] which “consist in the determinate relation of given representations to an object”[B137]<sup>59</sup>. There is no determination of the object of an appearance and, hence, nothing represented thereby. On one level, Kant’s reasoning is clear: association does not involve a conceptual determination, hence it concerns appearances as opposed to modes of knowledge. Despite this apparent clarity, however, Kant has not yet provided sufficient justification for the claim that association does not represent in a non-conceptual manner. If there is association then there is a subjective determination, simply in that intuitions are associated, but the determination of intuitions through concepts is equally subjective in the sense that conceptual determination is performed by the subject.<sup>60</sup> However, in the

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<sup>58</sup> “unbestimmte Gegenstand einer empirischen Anschauung”.

<sup>59</sup> “bestehen in der bestimmten Beziehung gegebener Vorstellungen auf ein Object.”

<sup>60</sup> Later in the passage under consideration Kant presents an unsatisfactory method of making the distinction between the subjective and objective unity:

“Only the original unity is objectively valid; the empirical unity of apperception, upon which we are not here dwelling, and which besides is merely derived from the former under given conditions *in concreto*, has only subjective validity. To one man, for instance, a certain word suggests one thing, to another some other thing; the unity of consciousness in that which is empirical is not, as regards what is given, necessarily and universally valid.”[B140]

[Jene [ursprüngliche] Einheit ist allein objectiv gültig; die empirische Einheit der Apperception, die wir hier nicht erwägen, und die auch nur von der ersteren unter



discussion on judgements Kant does present a more convincing case, which both illustrates the difference between subjective and objective unity, and presents an argument for why it is that an account of the representation of objects by means of association is inadequate. When connections are made according to the law of association,

all that I could say would be, 'If I support a body, I feel an impression of weight'; I could not say, 'It, the body, is heavy', which is the same as to say, that both representations are combined in the object.[B142]

[würde ich nur sagen können wenn ich einen Körper trage, so fühle ich einen Druck der Schwere; aber nicht: er, der Körper, ist schwer; welches so viel sagen will als: diese beide Vorstellungen sind im Object ... verbunden].

The account of judgement is intended to explain how “modes of knowledge are brought to the *objective* unity of apperception”[B141]<sup>61</sup> — although this phrasing is slightly misleading, since without being brought to the synthetic unity of apperception representations are not modes of knowledge. Indeed, the point under investigation is how it is possible for a representation, merely as a determination of inner sense, to function as a representation of an object; how properties, attributes, the manifold of intuition, are brought together and unified. The question is not one as to whether there are such unities, since both association and concepts provide a method for providing them, but rather whether these unities can have representational status.

In the case of association what we have are representations which have been found through the course of experience to have been in constant conjunction, in this case, ‘bodies’ and ‘heaviness’.<sup>62</sup> The unity of these representations consists in the

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gegebenen Bedingungen in concreto abgeleitet ist, hat nur subjective Gültigkeit. Einer verbindet die Vorstellung eines gewissen Worts mit einer Sache, der andere mit einer anderen Sache; und die Einheit des Bewußtseins in dem, was empirisch ist, ist in Ansehung dessen, was gegeben ist, nicht nothwendig und allgemein geltend.]

This provides no solution to the problem at hand, because the argument for the original synthetic unity of consciousness has been presented (so far) without any further argument devoted to the need for some further conceptual determination. We can argue that the subjective unity is a concrete instantiation of the original unity, i.e. that it is possible to accompany particular given intuitions with the ‘I think’, but still maintain that there are no further necessarily and universally valid features. Indeed, that the mere fact that we all employ a concept of, say, causality is itself an empirical feature of our constitution. It is a concept which (in all cases considered) is universal, but not thereby necessary.

<sup>61</sup> “Erkenntnisse zur objectiven Einheit der Apperception zu bringen”.

<sup>62</sup> We can assume that if association in this case is able to form a unity which is representational, then it is equally well able to form the unities which go to make up this

relation between two states of consciousness. Upon the representation of ‘body’ being given, the representation of ‘heaviness’ follows without there being any need to actually weigh the body. It is this division of the representation of an object into two separate states that Kant problematises. The representation of a ‘body’ and the representation of ‘heavy’ are not equivalent to the representation of a ‘body as heavy’. This follows straightforwardly from the previous discussion of the original unity of apperception. It was established there that one of the conditions for a representation representing is the ability of the ‘I think’ to accompany it. In the case of association, there simply is no representation which the ‘I think’ could be said to accompany, but rather two separate representations. It may indeed be possible for us to be ‘aware’ of the association in the sense that upon the presentation of the first representation we act — or, better, *react* — accordingly. In this case, however, it is not a representation of unity of the associated representations in an object, but merely a consequence of a contingent and subjective unity of representations in inner sense.<sup>63</sup>

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subsequent unity, i.e. ‘body’ and ‘heavy’.

<sup>63</sup> In Kant’s discussion of subjective unity Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 148–58, finds in the B-Deduction a residue of the distinction, drawn in the *Prolegomena*, between judgements of experience and judgements of perception. Judgements of perception only have a subjective validity, and do not require any categorical determination. A return to this doctrine would be problematic in the context of the first *Critique* where all judgements about objects require that there be an objective unity of consciousness. Were it possible, within this context, for there to be a subjective unity of consciousness through which objects were represented, then the whole argument of the Deduction for the transcendental status of the original synthetic unity of apperception would be bypassed. This would no longer be a necessary condition for representation.

Allison argues that Kant has fallen into this incoherence through the identification of the subjective unity of consciousness with a unity of self-consciousness. That is to say, the only legitimate sense of subjective unity is the association that occurs, since this does not involve the use of concepts; but as soon as there is an awareness of the association itself then there is an awareness of an object of inner sense, and hence an objective unity. Allison’s diagnosis, on p. 156, is that “the subjective unity of consciousness is here being identified with the consciousness or representation of one’s subjective states rather than with the subjective states themselves.”

However, on the basis of the interpretation that has been proposed here, the unity introduced by separate representations being accompanied by the ‘I think’ is not a sufficient condition for these representations together representing something - whether that be an object of inner or outer sense. That is to say, it is possible to be aware that I am aware of representations without this reflective awareness being a representation of something, because all that the non-reflective representations have in common is the fact that I am aware of them. In this case, there need be no further conceptual determination. Without this conceptual determination the awareness does not constitute the representation of an object, it is merely the subjective unity of consciousness.

On the negative side, therefore, Kant does provide grounds for rejecting any account of self-conscious representation which employs association, and, positively, concepts would provide the requisite unity for representation. Concepts unify intuitions under them: thus, heaviness, extension, etc., are synthesised and represented under the concept of 'body'. The 'I think' can only accompany the representations if the latter are unified in the representation of an object.

### **3.3.2 Step Three: Summary**

In step two we saw that, if the manifold of intuition is to represent something to me, then it is necessary that the manifold be unified in such a way that the 'I think' is capable of accompanying it. Kant's claim now is that association provides a mechanism of synthesising the manifold of intuition in inner sense and that it is possible for there to be a subjective unity of consciousness. However, what associationism fails to account for is the unity attributed to the manifold in the representation of the association when an objective ground is posited as a correlate of the subjective association. In other words, in order to be able to account for the distinction between an association of properties, e. g. heaviness and extension, and the attribution of a unity to these properties in the representation of an object, e. g. a body with extension and weight, it is necessary to go beyond association and employ concepts in the synthesis of the properties. This move establishes a correlation between the 'I think' being able to accompany representations and the employment of concepts in the synthesis of representations. Only where there is a conceptually determined relationship between representations is it possible for those representations to be anything to the I, because it is only then that the representations satisfy the conditions of unity under which the 'I think' can accompany them.

### **3.4 Step Four: *A priori* Conceptual Synthesis**

From the interpretation of the first part of the Deduction it is clear that Kant still has a significant way to go before the challenges of the Stroud, Gram, etc., are

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The interpretation provided here not only enjoys more textual support than that of Allison, in that it can account for the references which link subjective unity and self-consciousness, but it also makes, as we will see in the next section, the task of the second half of the Deduction comprehensible.

met and Hume's Problem answered. Even at this stage in the argument Kant has not yet demonstrated that Hume was wrong in denying the objective validity of conceptual synthesis. It remains possible that there is no underlying objective ground for the conceptual synthesis of the manifold of intuition, but rather merely a subjective unity of consciousness constructed from association. It is here that we find an answer to the commonly asked question as to why the second half of the Deduction is required. Within the contemporary secondary literature it is now commonplace for the actual structure of the argument to be brought into question. This follows from Henrich's notion that the B-edition offers a 'two-steps-in-one-proof'.<sup>64</sup> Henrich points out that about half way through the B-Deduction Kant appears to signal that he has completed his argument when he draws the conclusion that "the manifold in a given intuition is necessarily subject to categories"[B143]<sup>65</sup>, but he then goes on to say that with this only a "beginning is made of a *deduction* of the pure concepts of understanding"[B144]<sup>66</sup> This throws up the interpretative puzzle as to what, if anything, is added by the latter half of the Deduction. Although there is a general consensus — following Henrich's suggestion — that this divide within the Deduction corresponds to two steps within a single unfolding argument, as opposed to two separate arguments toward the same end, there is little agreement as to what these two stages of argumentation actually are.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Dieter Henrich, "The Proof-Structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction," in *Kant on Pure Reason*, ed. Ralph C. S. Walker (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), 68.

<sup>65</sup> "Also steht auch das Mannigfaltige in einer gegebenen Anschauung nothwendig unter Kategorien."

<sup>66</sup> "ist also der Anfang einer Deduction der reinen Verstandesbegriffe gemacht".

<sup>67</sup> An excellent review of the both the criticism levelled by Henrich against previous accounts of the Deduction and the adequacy of Henrich's own proposal is provided by Hoke Robinson, "Intuition and Manifold in the Transcendental Deduction." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 22 (1984). For further discussion see also Allison, "Reflections on the B-Deduction," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986); Viktor Nowotny, "Die Struktur der Deduktion bei Kant," *Kant-Studien* 72 (1981); Hans Wagner, "Der Argumentationsgang in Kants Deduktion der Kategorien," *Kant-Studien* 71 (1980); and J. Claude Evans, "Two-Steps-in-One-Proof: The Structure of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (1990). An exhaustive review of the debate is provided by Peter Baumanns, "Kants transzendente Deduktion der reinen Verstandesbegriffe (B). Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht," *Kant-Studien* 82 (1991): 329–48 and 436–55; *Kant Studien* 83 (1992): 60–83 and 185–207.

Henrich's proposal is that in the first half of the Deduction Kant is restricting the applicability of the categories to the manifold where the manifold is given through single intuitions. If intuitions already contain some element of unity, then the categories have application. The task of the second half of the Deduction is therefore to show that insofar as intuitions are given in accordance with the forms laid out in the Aesthetic, then they do

The interpretation provided here attempts to illustrate how the second half of the Deduction demonstrates the validity of the objective unity of consciousness by showing that, given the modes of our intuitive faculty, it is necessary for the intuitions themselves to be categorised. In other words, the condition for the representation of synthesis is not that the resultants of the synthesis are able to be conceptualised, but rather that intuitions have been subject to an *a priori* conceptual synthesis. The manifold of intuition can be something to me precisely because of this synthesis and not because of any characteristics or order that it possesses independently of this synthesis. Furthermore, any manifold of intuition can be subject to this synthesis because it applies to intuition by virtue of its mere form and, therefore, I can have no intuition which cannot be accompanied by the ‘I think’. This is made explicit by Kant at the beginning of §21; he there provides an account of what he has already established and of what he hopes to establish in the argument to follow. What has been established is that in order for the manifold of intuition to be represented as belonging to the necessary unity of apperception, a concept is employed in this representation [B144], and what will be shown is that the unity of the intuition itself is that of the categories [B144–5].<sup>68</sup>

Kant has established a set of conditions for the understanding of any object, but he goes on to point out that the understanding and sensibility are cleaved; this raises the challenge that these intellectual conditions may not be met, and there would, therefore, be no valid knowledge of objects. The conceptual understanding

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possess the necessary unity. On the reading presented here, Kant advances from the claim that if a representation is to be something to me, then it must be conceptually synthesised, to the claim that all intuitions can be something to me because space and time must themselves be conceptually synthesised and all intuition is limited to these two forms.

<sup>68</sup> The claim that Kant advances is stronger than the one that we shall be defending. The link between judgements and the categories has, for Kant, already been established in the Metaphysical Deduction and it is because of this that he claims to have demonstrated that the categories are necessary for the objective unity of consciousness. The controversial nature of both the Table of Judgements and its relationship to the Table of Categories is notorious and we shall not be drawing upon the this portion of Kant’s argument. Our reconstruction of the Deduction defends only the weaker claim that concepts can have objective validity. For some indication of the problems contained in the Metaphysical Deduction see, for example, Arthur O. Lovejoy, “Kant’s Classification of the Forms of Judgment,” in *Kant: Disputed Questions*, ed. Moltke S. Gram (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1967).

For a discussion of the role of synthesis within the Metaphysical Deduction and Kant’s *Logic* see, Michael J. Young, “Synthesis and the Content of Pure Concepts in Kant’s First Critique,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994): 331–57.

that we think we have of objects may be illusory, for as Hume made clear, it may be that concepts, such as cause, may be employed to describe events, but this has no bearing on the question as to whether we have any awareness of causes or not. Kant agrees that

if no intuition could be given corresponding to the concept, the concept would still be a thought, so far as its form is concerned, but would be without any object. [B146]

[könnte dem Begriffe eine korrespondierende Anschauung gar nicht gegeben werden, so wäre er ein Gedanke der Form nach, aber ohne allen Gegenstand, und durch ihn gar keine Erkenntniß von irgend einem Dinge möglich].

Thus, it ought to be clear how Kant answers the questions as to why it is necessary to provide a second stage for the argument of the Deduction, and why with the first part of the Deduction only “a beginning is made of a *deduction* of the pure concepts of understanding”[B144]<sup>69</sup>.

Although the necessity for a conceptual synthesis of representations is established if there is to be an objective unity of consciousness, intuitions may simply fail to be sufficiently regular for there to be either any subjective or objective unity of consciousness. Furthermore, nothing that Kant has said demonstrates that the order that intuitions have such that they can be conceptually synthesised is itself a conceptual order. In other words, if intuitions happen to display successive features such that a subjective unity of consciousness is possible, then this does not imply that they are actually related according to the relation of cause and effect. Kant has shown only that if we are to have any self-conscious awareness of these intuitions, then they must be understood in accordance with conceptual relations; but whether the attribution of conceptual determinations to intuitions is legitimate or not remains an open question — although subjectively necessary, they may not have any objective validity.

### 3.4.1 Figurative Synthesis and Synthesis of Apprehension

The first step that Kant takes in relating what he now calls “synthesis *intellectualis*”[B151] to sensible intuition is accomplished via the introduction of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination (or figurative synthesis) and has the appearance of an argument by fiat. He simply claims that since we have *a priori*

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<sup>69</sup> “ist also der Anfang einer Deduction der reinen Verstandesbegriffe gemacht”.

forms of sensible intuition:

the understanding, as spontaneity, is able to determine inner sense through the manifold of given representations, in accordance with the synthetic unity of apperception [B150].

[kann der Verstand als Spontaneität den inneren Sinn durch das Mannigfaltige gegebener Vorstellungen der synthetischen Einheit der Apperception gemäß bestimmen].

The figurative synthesis does not function with regard to any of the specific properties of intuitions as they appear to us, but rather bears upon the ways in which such intuitions can be synthesised given the nature of our sensible faculty.

The explication of this notion is aided by recalling our earlier discussion of the synthesis of apprehension as Kant presented it in the A-Deduction. We saw there that whatever the particular characteristics of the manifold of intuition are, whether there is any regularity to the sequence of intuition or whether they are completely disordered, the manifold is nonetheless subject to the *a priori* condition that it conforms to time as the form of intuition. The scope of this claim is restricted only by the consideration that awareness of anything other than absolute unity, be it self-conscious or not, requires that intuitions are synthesised or associated in time. Rather than synthesising particular intuitions according to their specific properties, the figurative synthesis is a synthesis of the form of the intuitions; intuitions are synthesised merely according to the temporal relationship that they have with one another and the figurative synthesis is, therefore, “able to determine sense *a priori* in respect of its form in accordance with the unity of apperception”[B152]<sup>70</sup>.

The figurative synthesis is able to determine intuition *a priori* because it is a universal and necessary feature of intuitions that they possess a temporal form, and we shall see that this figurative synthesis can be in accordance with the unity of apperception. In other words, Kant is making the claim that this synthesis can be conceptual, because of the unitary nature of time. Furthermore, we can begin to see how a convergence of the unity of apperception and figurative synthesis can provide an argument for the objective validity of conceptual synthesis. If it can be shown that it is only under the condition of an *a priori* conceptual figurative synthesis that it is possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany any intuition, then it is not the case that

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<sup>70</sup> “a priori den Sinn seiner Form nach der Einheit der Apperception gemäß bestimmen kann”.

there is something given to the mind which is then subject to the categories.<sup>71</sup> The manifold of intuition is made subject to the categories in an *a priori* way simply by virtue of being given in space and time, because space and time are themselves subject to a conceptual synthesis. Kant's argument at this point eradicates the notion that there is an original complexity unconsciously received and subsequently rendered coherent through the application of the categories to it. The distinction between space and time as *forms of intuition* and space and time as *formal intuitions* provides the basis of this argument.<sup>72</sup>

On the basis of what Kant says within the first *Critique*, the distinction between “forms” and “formal” remains somewhat opaque. He merely indicates that “the *form of intuition* gives only a manifold, the *formal intuition* gives unity of representation.”[B160]<sup>73</sup> In the latter case we are told that the form of intuition is represented as an object and that this consists of the “*combination of the manifold ... in an intuitive representation*”[B160]<sup>74</sup>. This point is crucial for Kant; he not only wants to establish that there is a combination of the manifold such that the form of intuition can be represented as an object, but that he thinks that in confirming this he will have reached the point of having proved that the conceptual synthesis of the manifold of intuition has objective validity.

We can give an initial gloss of this argument by again recalling our original discussion of the synthesis of apprehension in the A-Deduction. We have seen that,

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<sup>71</sup> For an analysis which proceeds along these lines see Michel Meyer, “Why did Kant Write Two Versions of the Transcendental Deduction?” *passim*.

<sup>72</sup> Patricia Kitcher, “Connecting Intuitions and Concepts at B160n,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986), presents an interpretation of this passage which also emphasises its significance for the Deduction as a whole. We are in complete agreement with her claim, p. 146, that “B160 and B160n show that, because space and time are the forms of human intuition, it will always be possible to subsume the varied contents of our intuitions — whatever they might be — under spatial and temporal judgements. The Principles are then to show that these judgements can be made only through utilising the categories.” We are however, in disagreement over the precise interpretation of this passage. She views formal intuition both as a kind of pre-conceptual unity, but distinguished from the form of intuition, and as a product of a conceptual synthesis. Upon our interpretation Kant is solely committed to the latter view. See also Günter Zöller, “Comments on Professor Kitcher’s ‘Connecting Intuitions and Conceptions at B 160n’,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986): 152–4.

<sup>73</sup> “die Form der Anschauung bloß Mannigfaltiges, die formale Anschauung aber Einheit der Vorstellung giebt.”

<sup>74</sup> “Zusammenfassung des mannigfaltigen ... in eine anschauliche Vorstellung”



if the manifold is to be anything other than an absolute unity, it is necessary for the relations between intuitions minimally to be temporal and this applies whether one takes the manifold of intuition to be conceptually synthesised or simply associated. Whatever else one would wish to stipulate as a condition for any synthesis giving rise to awareness of more than the absolute unity of the manifold, it is in every case necessary that the synthesis occur through time. Although Kant carries this conclusion over from the Aesthetic into the Deduction, his argument does not presuppose the transcendently ideal status of time as a form of intuition. All that is pertinent for the argument of the Deduction is that it is necessary for time to be unified, because the conceptual synthesis of intuitions is then in every case necessary. Yet the unity of time is equally the condition of the occurrence of any temporal association of intuitions. If there were, for example, different streams of time running in parallel, or if there were discrete blocks of time incommensurate with one another, then association of intuitions could not occur according to relations of, for example, succession or contiguity. This is because these intuitions could then be placed within different time frames. Indeed, it is only insofar as intuitions are in temporal relationship with one another that they are anything but absolute unities. The time from the one intuition to the next must itself be unified such that both intuitions are placed in a single time frame. In any case where such association could occur, the particularities of intuitions notwithstanding, it is also possible (given the appropriate conceptual capacities) for there to be a representation of the intuitions in time. This conclusion, however, is weaker than the one that Kant draws at the end of his discussion of the synthesis of apprehension:

All synthesis, therefore, even that which renders perception possible, is subject to the categories; and since experience is knowledge by means of connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are therefore valid *a priori* for all objects of experience.  
[B161]

[Folglich steht alle Synthesis, wodurch selbst Wahrnehmung möglich wird, unter den Kategorien, und, da Erfahrung Erkenntniß durch verknüpfte Wahrnehmungen ist, so sind die Kategorien Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung, und gelten also a priori auch von allen Gegenständen der Erfahrung.]

The claim advanced here does not concern the possibility of conceptualising the manifold of intuition, but rather the stronger claim that the synthesis of apprehension itself, and therefore even association, requires conceptual synthesis. The materials

required for a justification of this step are already before us.

The point upon which we have concentrated, and on which criticisms have focused, concerns the legitimisation of the application of concepts to experience. All of the critics involved in the Transcendental Argument debate make this point. The alternative account that we have been considering is that the association of the manifold of intuition according to relations of contiguity, succession, etc., could provide a sufficient basis for the unity of experience, to which a subsequent conceptual determination is applied such that a self-conscious awareness of the experience is possible. If this were the case, then we would be necessarily and systematically mistaken about the nature of our experience. However, even if we were mistaken in this way, our experience would be made up of an awareness of the temporal or spatio-temporal relations between intuitions. Assuming that intuitions do not themselves possess any particular temporal or spatio-temporal quality as an intrinsic determination, in our experience of the contiguous or successive relations of intuitions we must, therefore, have an awareness of time and space within which the intuitions are associated according to these relations. This awareness of times within time — or spaces within space — does, however, itself presupposes the objective unity of consciousness, and this is because it is only under the condition that it is possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany the representation that there can be any consciousness of the unity of representations. Otherwise stated, a succession of conscious states is not a consciousness of the succession. It is, therefore, necessary for there to be an objective unity of consciousness if the association of intuitions according to temporal and spatio-temporal properties is to occur.

It is no longer merely the case that intuitions are contingently limited by the particular faculties that we possess, i.e. that our faculties allow no intuitions which are neither spatial nor temporal. Kant has indeed established the conclusion that he wants: that it not possible for there to be an intuition which does not conform to the categories.<sup>75</sup> This is to say, experience is not a particular interpretation placed upon

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<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that this does not match the productive capacity that Fichte attributes to the imagination. Intuition is determined with regard to its form, and hence the imagination is productive in the sense that the form of objectivity is *a priori* introduced to manifold of intuition, but the intuitions themselves are not produced: the imagination “merely combines and arranges the material of knowledge, that is, the intuition, which must be given to it by the object.”[B145]

the intuitions that we receive. If this were the case, then there would be a gap, wherein scepticism's problematic resides, between how experience is conceived and how that experience actually is. However, no such sceptical leverage is possible because, according to Kant's argument in the B-Deduction, the very forms of intuition are themselves categorised. We can here see why this second half of the Deduction was in fact necessary: that the manifold of intuition must be brought under categories for any representation of that manifold to occur was already established, but that it should be *a priori* categorised was not.

### 3.4.2 Step Four: Summary

The Deduction will be completed when it is demonstrated that the representation of the manifold of intuition is not conditional upon the contingent fact that intuitions happen to arise in a sufficiently orderly fashion for concepts to be applicable to them. In addition to the synthesis of the manifold of intuition, the representation of this manifold necessitates that the temporal or spatio-temporal properties of the intuitions are brought into synthetic relationship. Space and time are, therefore, represented through concepts insofar as we have any representation of intuitions which calls for their temporal or spatio-temporal characteristics to be synthesised, as would be the case for the representation of causality. If, however, all intuitions have spatial or temporal form, and space and time are represented through concepts, then all intuitions must be able to be synthesised simply inasmuch as they have this form. There is, therefore, no need to consider the representation of intuitions to be conditional because we know *a priori* that they are conceptually synthesisable.

### 3.5 The Transcendental Deduction in Summary

As we saw at the start of this chapter, Cassam divides the Deduction's argument into a "Conceptual" and a "Satisfaction Component" in order to illustrate that it is a prejudice on Kant's part to assert that an unconditional necessity be attributed to unity of the manifold of intuition.<sup>76</sup> This 'prejudice' Cassam ascribes to Kant's commitment to transcendental idealism. However, if we review the

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[nur den Stoff zum Erkenntniß, die Anschauung, die ihm durchs Object gegeben werden muß, verbindet und ordnet.]

<sup>76</sup> For the original description of Cassam's account see pp. 65–68 of this chapter.

account of the Deduction that has been advanced above, then we shall see that not only is Cassam's presentation of the Deduction misleading, but also that Kant has a direct response to Cassam's suggestion that an empirical unity of consciousness meets the conditions of the Satisfaction Component.<sup>77</sup>

The initial premise of the Deduction as we have presented it consists in a statement regarding the manifold of intuition. This set out the general claim that the manifold of intuition must be subject to a temporal synthesis if there is to be any awareness of the manifold as anything other than an absolute unity. Correlative to this first point is Kant's argument regarding the need for there to be a unitary subject of any representation of this synthesis. If this is what Cassam is indicating in his description of the Conceptual Component as involving the claim that "individual experiences must belong to a unified consciousness",<sup>78</sup> then we are at this point in agreement. The situation with regard to the Satisfaction Component is, however, more complicated. Whereas we can agree with Cassam that Kant does indeed intend to reach the conclusion that "only experience of objects could provide

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<sup>77</sup> A similar argument to that of Cassam is advanced by Ralph C. S. Walker, "Synthesis and Transcendental Idealism," in *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments*, vol 2, ed. Ruth F. Chadwick (London: Routledge, 1992). Walker draws a distinction between the argument in the A and B editions of the Deduction. He claims that the notion of an affinity of the manifold found in the A edition means that Kant has surreptitiously realist commitments because, according to Walker, p. 234, "there is nothing we can do to construct the world of appearances in such a way that every agent has a cause, if the data given in intuition do not manifest the appropriate regularity." Transcendental synthesis is therefore dependent upon intuitions manifesting the appropriate empirical qualities. As reformulated in the B edition, however, the notion of affinity is entirely absent and, Walker says, p. 236, "the mind can classify data together in whatever manner it determines." This alleviates the problem that Walker finds in the A-Deduction of it being possible to read properties of things-in-themselves from the natural affinities contained in the manifold, but it remains the case that the classification of intuitions rests upon regularities contained in the manifold. The situation has only altered to the extent that the rules of ordering are not delimited in scope by natural affinities.

However, once it is recognised that in both the A and B editions Kant argues that there must be a synthesis of space and time, the claim that Kant requires the manifold to display regularities no longer has any pertinence. If there is a particular set of concepts required for the synthesis of space and time, then all experience is subject to the transcendental guarantee that it can be classified in terms of these concepts, e.g., in terms of cause and effect. Whether in addition to this objective unity of consciousness there will be any subjective unity, whether experience will display sufficient regularity that associations can be generated which lead to classifications in terms of causal laws, is altogether a different matter because it is not a condition of the possibility of experience and, thereby, falls outside of the range of transcendental philosophy.

<sup>78</sup> Cassam, "Transcendental Arguments," 361.

a basis for the unity of consciousness”,<sup>79</sup> we are in disagreement as to what the import of this statement is. According to Cassam, Kant maintains this conclusion because if there were not sufficient regularity in the manifold such that intuitions could become synthesised with one another, then there would be no opportunity for the unity of consciousness to arise. Cassam then points out that the ground of the unity of consciousness cannot, for Kant, be accounted for in a realist fashion. In other words, Kant’s denial of all knowledge of things as they are in themselves means that he cannot explain the regularity of experience by appealing to the regular nature of the world. One of Cassam’s conclusions is, therefore, that it is as a consequence of Kant’s anti-realist position that Kant maintains that the manifold must be subject to a transcendental synthesis which renders the unity of consciousness possible. This means that rather than the Conceptual Component indicating that experiences must belong to a unified consciousness if they are to have any representational status, it states that individual experiences must belong to a unified consciousness because such experiences are not experiences of things-in-themselves. Whereas in the former case the unity of consciousness is conditional upon the order of experience, in the latter case the unity of consciousness has priority, i.e. there would be no individual experiences unless there were a unity of consciousness.

The reason that we have called Cassam’s account misleading is that Kant reaches the conclusion stated in the Satisfaction Component on two separate occasions. The relationship between the unity of consciousness and the experience of objects is first established in Kant’s discussion of the difference between the objective and the subjective unity of consciousness. If this point constituted the sole argument upon which the Satisfaction Component rested, then Cassam’s criticism would be pertinent. For Kant, the subjective unity of consciousness is without relation to objects because the manifold is not united in a concept. However, if, like Cassam, one were to maintain that experience is ordered in such a way that the subjective unity of consciousness is possible because it has a direct relationship to objects (things-in-themselves) which have unity and are regularly ordered, then it does appear to be the case that Kant rules out the relationship between subjective

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

unity and objects. And this is because Kant denies that objects are things-in-themselves. One can therefore say that, without idealistic restrictions, the subjective unity of consciousness meets the Satisfaction Component, which, for Cassam, means that Kant does not answer Hume's problem.

What we have seen is that Kant's argument proceeds to another stage which demonstrates why concept-application is necessary for experience. This does, therefore, legitimise the claim that it is an objective unity of consciousness which alone meets the requirement of the Satisfaction Component. It is only within a conceptually mediated experience that the synthesis of the manifold of intuition can represent objects in the sense that the unity of consciousness is a consciousness of a unity. If, however, we can have experience on the basis of the subjective unity of consciousness alone, then the objection arises as to whether the concepts employed within the objective unity are, in fact, legitimate or not. There could, for instance, be multiple different conceptual frameworks capable of being applied to one and the same experience. The argument of the Deduction does not go so far as to demonstrate why this is not the case. It does, however, provide a justification for why concept application is necessary for all experience.

As a consequence, the argument of the Deduction levels the ground for the further claim that some particular set of concepts is always necessary. Kant achieves this end by allowing the associationist premise that a subjective unity of consciousness is possible, such that it is possible for there to be a consciousness of association.<sup>80</sup> We can be aware of the associations that exist within the manifold of

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<sup>80</sup> Michael J. Young, "Kant's Notion of Objectivity," *Kant-Studien* 70 (1979): passim, also focuses on the distinction between the subjective and the objective and on how this aspect of the Deduction provides a key to understanding Kant's answer to Hume. The distinction between the subjective and the objective is, however, drawn by Young, p. 132, in terms of a contrast between appearance and reality where reality corresponds to the representation of "objects of scientific knowledge". Young maintains the distinction in this manner because of what he perceives to be a failing in what he terms, p. 132, the traditional account within which Kant is taken to hold the view that "the employment of the categories is what makes possible the representation of public objects or things." This traditional view is taken to be a misinterpretation of Kant because both the passages within the *Prolegomena* on judgements of experience and perception and the discussion of subjective unity in the Deduction allow for the possibility that we can, at the very least, be aware of intuitions without subsuming them under categories. The consistency of Kant's position can, however, be upheld if Kant is taken to be arguing that insofar as objects are to be understood in a scientific manner as obeying universal and necessary laws, then it must be the case that categories are applied to the intuitions of them: we conceive, according to Young, p. 138, of objects in such a way that "we can understand their

intuition without it being necessary for this awareness to involve the conceptual determination of the manifold in the awareness of an object manifested in the objective unity of consciousness. Such awareness, however, involves locating the manifold within determinate spatial or temporal co-ordinates. According to Kant, it is this awareness of the manifold as being associated according to spatial location (as in relations of contiguity) or temporal location (as in relations of causality) that cannot be granted to the associationist, because it is already necessary for there to have been a conceptual determination of space and time themselves. Space and time must be represented as unities such that there is one space across which — or one time through which — the manifold is associated.

Hypothetically speaking, what the subjective unity of consciousness could provide is an awareness of different locations or instants: but what the subjective unity could not provide is the relationship that these locations or instants have to one another in space or time, such that one could be aware of the contiguity of the instants as contiguous in space or simultaneous in time.<sup>81</sup> It has already been argued

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behaviour and properties as consequences issuing from the operation of universal law.”

Although this interpretation takes the valuable step of identifying the distinction between the subjective and the objective as crucial for the overall argument of the Deduction, it does nonetheless face insurmountable difficulties. The first of these is that there is little evidence within the B-Deduction to suggest that the distinction between the subjective and objective can be aligned with a distinction between an awareness of objects in a non-scientific and a scientific manner. Kant is clear that it insofar as there is any awareness of intuitions as united in the concept of an object, then there is an objective unity of consciousness. It is only because Kant's position as stated in the *Prolegomena* is used by Young to interpret the Deduction that his interpretation seems plausible. Yet, we have shown that the Deduction employs the distinction made in the *Prolegomena* without falling into the difficulties that are generally thought to accompany it. Furthermore, by interpreting the Deduction in this manner we can account for the entirety of its structure, which would appear to present a difficulty for Young because Kant reaches his conclusions regarding objective unity half-way through it. Finally, as an answer to Hume, the Deduction appears, on Young's view, to constitute a description of what we must take the world to be if we are to engage with it in a scientific manner, but it leaves unanswered the question as to whether we are entitled to do so.

<sup>81</sup> It should be noted that this conclusion is flush with the distinction Kant draws between the consciousness of humans and that of animals. On a number of occasions Kant attributes a consciousness of representations while denying that they can have any self-consciousness. In the letter to Marcus Herz of the 26th May, 1789, the distinction is between representations connected according to empirical laws of association within which there might be a consciousness of each individual representations, and the consciousness of the unity of the representations in relation to the their object which requires the synthetic unity of apperception.[XI 52] Similarly in the *Logic* Kant's claim is that animals are aware [*kennen*] of objects, have a consciousness of them, but that they do not know [*erkennen*] them.[IX 65] On our interpretation of the Deduction, it is clear that

by Kant that the unity of the manifold in the representation of an object requires the objective unity of consciousness, and this argument is mobilised once again in relation to this representation of the unity of space and time. The intuitions of space and time are united in the concepts space and time, providing a ground for the associations which have hitherto been understood to operate without conceptual mediation. Given that it has been accepted that experience requires synthesis and that the alternative accounts of this synthesis are either based on concepts or based on an invocation of associations built upon the spatio-temporal properties of intuitions, we can draw the significant conclusion that all experience requires conceptualisation.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, if one accepts that all experience is spatio-

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Kant attributes to animals a subjective unity of consciousness in which intuitions (given the appropriate empirical conditions) are associated, but for animals the consciousness of the intuition is not a consciousness of it as a manifold. This, furthermore, implies that, for Kant, although animals are conscious they do not have a temporal consciousness, in that to be conscious of the temporal relations between intuitions requires that the manifold is run through and held together, and this is only possible through the synthetic unity of apperception. For a discussion of the status attributed to animals by Kant see Steve Naragon, "Kant on Descartes and the Brutes," *Kant-Studien* 81 (1990).

<sup>82</sup> This is to reverse the order of relations between part and whole that is proposed by Hoke Robinson in his "The Transcendental Deduction from A to B: Combination in the Threefold Synthesis and the Representation of a Whole," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986): 52–7. It is Robinson's claim, p. 56, that that the unity of consciousness can be established "by showing that experience requires, as an ideal, that all objects be components of the world-object, in which all representations considered to be real are combined through the representation of the whole." Rather than it being the case that the unity of consciousness requires that all objects be synthesised or otherwise summed together in the production of an ideal unity, the status of which seems to be rather unclear, this unity, on our interpretation, is produced through the necessary synthesis of the manifold of space and time. We do not arrive at a world-object as a consequence of the synthesis of the representations which are considered to be real within a whole greater than any of those objects. Rather, the synthesis of representations allowing for the representations of objects is possible only on the condition that there is a spatio-temporal world.

It should also be noted that the distinction which Robinson draws between the first and second editions of the Deduction is also affected by this reversal. Robinson's claim, pp. 50–1, is that in the A-Deduction knowledge of objects is achieved in two steps: the first is the synthesis of intuitions and the second is the positing of the transcendental object to serve as the referent for the representations. In the B-Deduction, on the other hand, there is no distinction to be made between the formation of an intentional object and the conceptual synthesis of the manifold. However, on our interpretation consistency can be maintained between editions because we could view the transcendental object as the conceptual synthesis as it applies to the forms of intuition. This object is transcendental in the sense of being a necessary condition of all empirical representation of objects, as such, Kant describes it as = X and as nothing to us. Yet this object is distinct from the thing-in-itself, because we can have no awareness of the pure empty forms of space and time as such, we are always aware of objects in space and time. This would also make coherent Kant's reference, which Robinson fails to mention, to the 'I' or soul as the transcendental



temporal, then because space and time must be synthesised it might well be the case that there is some immutable set of concepts which are necessary for this synthesis to occur; such concepts would be the categories.

Thus, in schematic form, Kant's Deduction can be summarised — according to the four steps outlined above in sections 3.1 to 3.4 — as follows:

- 3.1) Premise Experience of temporal diversity requires a synthesis of the manifold.
- 3.2) Stage 1 The representation of synthesis requires the analytic unity of consciousness.
- 3.3) The analytic unity of consciousness requires conceptualisation.
- 3.4) Stage 2 All experience of temporal relations involves the representation of synthesis.

The first stage of Kant's argument unproblematically outlines the assumptions to which accounts of experience based on association must employ and comes to no conclusions regarding the validity of the concepts required for the objective unity of consciousness. It does demonstrate, however, that some synthesis of the manifold is necessary and that, if there is to be an objective unity of consciousness, this synthesis must employ concepts. This corresponds to the first two steps in the argument as it was outlined in the previous chapter.<sup>83</sup> What the second stage contributes is an argument that the objective unity of consciousness is a necessary condition of the subjective unity of consciousness, where this involves a consciousness of the synthesis of representations. Although Kant invokes the conclusions of the Transcendental Aesthetic regarding space and time as the forms of intuition and, therefore, draws upon the transcendental idealistic claim that we can have no knowledge of things-in-themselves, his argument requires this backdrop only to the extent that it allows him to claim that it is necessary for all experience to have a spatio-temporal form. That experience is ordered within space and time is, however, a commitment shared by associationism. The associationist must, therefore, accept the conclusion that experience is subject to a conceptual determination. Kant's conclusion, therefore, establishes the final point he required to answer Hume, that concepts are necessary for experience.

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object of inner sense [A 361]. See also Karl Ameriks, "Remarks on Robinson and the Representation of a Whole," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986): 63–6.

<sup>83</sup> See above p. 36.

#### 4. Guyer on the Deduction

Within the body of this chapter we have distinguished our reading of Kant's Transcendental Deduction primarily from that provided by Cassam, as well as offering critical comments on the interpretations of Allison, Kitcher, Robinson, Walker and Young. However, within recent secondary literature on the Deduction the account given by Guyer provides the most outstanding challenge to the above interpretation.<sup>84</sup> Guyer finds four different arguments for the transcendental necessity of the categories spread throughout the Analytic of the first *Critique* and Kant's *Nachlaß*. These arguments are distinguished according to their presuppositions; namely whether they assume either (I) some knowledge of objects or (II) knowledge of ourselves as the subject of unified representations, and whether this knowledge is either (A) pure or (B) empirical. Upon this basis Guyer proceeds to argue that within the Deduction itself Kant employs a combination of strategies (IA, IIA and IB) but that each of these arguments fails, and that the only successful strategy (IIB) is to be found in the Analogies of Experience and the Refutation of Idealism. The Deduction itself is considered to be an aberration, thought to be in conflict with Kant's original intentions, and also to be the only coherent argument for the categories. The interpretation that we have given of the B-Deduction will be used to bring out the inadequacy of the approach employed by Guyer. We shall take issue with his dissection of the argument of the Deduction into its constituent parts. As we shall see, Guyer judges each part to be a failure without considering how the various divisions of the argument form a coherent whole.

The first argument that Guyer finds in the B-Deduction is of the IA variety, in which there is an assumption of synthetic *a priori* knowledge and in which the possibility of knowledge of objects is also taken as a given. In other words, according to Guyer, Kant proceeds from the dual assumptions that we can have knowledge of objects and a definition of what an object is, to the conclusion that there are *a priori* concepts because without them, by definition, we simply could not have knowledge of objects. This argument corresponds to the first half of the

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge* and "Psychology and the Transcendental Deduction," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. E. Förster. The material upon which we shall be drawing for Guyer's account of the B-Deduction is contained in *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* but is also to be found in an almost unmodified form in "The Failure of the B-Deduction," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 Supplement (1986).

Deduction and proceeds, according to Guyer, in 5 stages.<sup>85</sup>

The first stage is comprised of the assumption (discussed above in Section 3.1) that synthesis is not given through objects themselves, but rather must be introduced via the activity of the subject. Guyer sees Kant's entire argument as encapsulated within this statement because, on his interpretation, Kant takes this to be simply equivalent to the claim that such synthesis requires the addition of a concept of an object to the manifold. This, "the opaque inference of §15", Guyer claims, "represents Kant's most basic level of thought".<sup>86</sup> Kant is seen to beg the question raised by any empiricist opponent because he argues as if there were no alternative account of how the manifold could be synthesised without *a priori* rules.<sup>87</sup> The subsequent sections of the first half of the Deduction are presented by Guyer as providing merely a simulacrum of an argument which justifies this initial assumption. That is, these sections divert attention from this assumption by making an appeal to the conditions of apperception, and in these sections Kant also claims that apperception is a condition of combination. The conditions of apperception can then be used to justify the initial assumption that rules of combination are necessary.

The second stage (§16) in Kant's argument involves the claim that the elements of the manifold must belong to a single self-consciousness if they are to be synthesised. While one would expect this to be followed by an investigation into the conditions of self-consciousness, all that one finds (§17 and §18), according to Guyer, is that Kant "just uses first the concept of an object and then the concept of an objective judgement to provide the necessary conditions of apperception itself".<sup>88</sup> What Guyer means by this is that, rather than deriving the conditions under which synthesis can occur from apperception, Kant simply uses the concept of an object to stipulate what the conditions of apperception are. From this point on Kant can proceed swiftly onto stages 4 and 5 (§19 and §20): firstly, the identification of

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<sup>85</sup> Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge*, 109–121.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>87</sup> "Kant often employed the inference directly from an act of combination to *a priori* rules as to the whole of a transcendental deduction, whether of the categories or even of the forms of intuition. That is, apart from any special implications of the concept either of self-knowledge or of knowledge of objects, Kant clearly believed that the basic fact that all concepts of synthesis require an *a priori* framework for their organisation is sufficient to undermine the empiricist assumption that all concepts are abstracted from experience". *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

judgement as the means by which synthesis achieves objectivity and, secondly, the categories can now be introduced by means of their relationship to the logical functions of judgement. In short, according to Guyer, Kant simply assumes that any empirical knowledge of the manifold implies the combination of that manifold.<sup>89</sup>

Kant's most favoured version of the deduction ... rests upon a conception of the nature of empirical knowledge that no empiricist, let alone skeptic, is likely to countenance.<sup>90</sup>

However, if we refer back to the analysis of the Deduction that we have provided, we can see just how seriously Guyer errs in his judgement upon the Deduction. With regard the first assumption found by Guyer we find ourselves in agreement with him with regard to the status of Kant's conception of empirical knowledge. It is indeed a definitional point for Kant that if we are to have knowledge of objects then the manifold of intuition must have been subject to combination. However, this assumption does not function as a premise upon which the subsequent argument is built, begging the question against the empiricist or sceptic. On the contrary, it is the definition of knowledge which must be adopted if the alternative conceptions are to be challenged. That is, the empiricist derivation of both knowledge of objects and the acquisition of concepts from a synthesis of intuitions has led to a historical situation in which the empiricist has become a sceptic; we have no knowledge of objects because we know no necessary connection and hence, in Hume's view, "what had hitherto been regarded as reason was but an all-prevalent illusion infecting our faculty of knowledge." [B128]<sup>91</sup> It is not merely the problematic nature of Kant's definition of knowledge that Guyer takes issue with (given the alternative empiricist accounts), but he also finds that Kant employs it to provide support to the supposedly independent argument from apperception. Guyer takes it that Kant's argument for the reciprocal relationship between synthesis and apperception is derived from the definition of knowledge (see above p. 83). On the basis of the interpretation that we have provided this is, at best, a partial understanding of the argument. It is certainly true that the condition of the synthesis

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<sup>89</sup> Guyer also identifies the further assumption that synthesis is an intrinsically conceptual activity. This potential problem has already been identified and rejected above in Section 3.3.

<sup>90</sup> Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge*, 120–121.

<sup>91</sup> "eine so allgemeine für Vernunft gehaltene Täuschung unseres Erkenntnißvermögens".

of the manifold is apperception, and that apperception is only possible under the condition of there being a synthesis of the manifold, but this argument is not the one through which either synthesis or apperception are established. As has been shown, this argument is only to be found within the second half of the Deduction. It is, thus, one of the principle failings of Guyer's account that he can condemn the Deduction as failure whilst only dealing with one half of the text.<sup>92</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Rather than it being the case that the Deduction proceeds on the basis of the assumption that we have knowledge of objects to the end-point of the categories as the conditions of possibility of this experience, Kant's argument requires merely, as a first premise, that we accept that intuitions are not intrinsically representational and, as a second premise, that we can attribute spatio-temporal determinations to intuitions. On the basis of the first premise Kant argues that the representational status of intuitions is derived from the form of synthesis to which they are subject, and that his account of synthesis as being a conceptual determination of intuitions provides a coherent explanation of how intuitions can come to represent, whereas the explanation based on association fails. The second premise allows Kant to claim that space and time as forms of intuition must themselves be synthesised before even the perception of spatio-temporal qualities can take place. In both cases the materials employed within scepticism to challenge any claims to knowledge are used by Kant to construct an answer to this very challenge. With regard to the first half of the Deduction the distinction between the judgements applied to experience and nature of that experience itself is maintained; it establishes only that a synthesis according to concepts is necessary for representation, but does nothing to show that intuitions themselves are given according to these conceptual determinations. However, the second half of the Deduction delimits the space in which the sceptic can form denials; it is only under the condition that the spatio-temporal determinations of experience be denied that the sceptic can assert that Kant's

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<sup>92</sup> It is true that provides some account of the second half of the Deduction in other sections of *Claims of Knowledge*, 371–83, but because he has deduced a schema of argumentative strategies which he takes Kant to be employing in every instance he cannot deal with the case of the B-Deduction where two arguments are employed to arrive at a single conclusion. Within Guyer's schema this simply amounts to two separate inadequate arguments.

argument rests upon unacceptable premises. It is, moreover, not at all clear what such a denial could amount to, since it is of no matter whether spatio-temporal determinations be correctly or mistakenly applied, but merely their occurrence that Kant requires.

Within this chapter it has been contended that Kant successfully argues that the application of concepts to experience is not reducible to a claim about how experience must be regarded. To this extent Kant manages to show that it is possible that some concepts are not merely subjectively necessary, but also have objective validity. Although the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition comes about by subjective acts, the concepts employed within this activity have an objective validity insofar as they are the conditions of possibility for experience. However, a central tenet of this argument has been that the 'I think' must be able to accompany my representations, or that experience requires that it be possible for the subject to have a consciousness of itself as possessing the intuitions experienced. The ground of this claim was that in order for the 'I think' to accompany representations, it is necessary for there to have been a synthesis of the manifold of intuition. It has, furthermore, been assumed that the proposition that the 'I think' can accompany representations would be assented to. However, what has not been demonstrated is that the only condition required for the 'I think' to accompany representations is the synthesis of the manifold. It is at this point that the problems (which we have associated with Schulze) outlined in the previous chapter re-emerge. The questions to be explored in the next chapter concern the relationship between awareness of the synthesis of the manifold and the awareness that the subject has of itself. Most simply put, for Kant, self-consciousness, or the 'I think' accompanying representations, involves the awareness of the synthesis of the manifold and this synthesis is an activity performed by the subject. However, in such a case is my awareness of myself, in the 'I think,' an awareness of myself as performing the activity of synthesis? If so, does this not mean that I have an awareness of myself as I am in myself?

**Chapter Four**  
**Apperception and the 'I Think'**

## 1. Introduction

Within this chapter we shall be examining the criticism levelled by G. E. Schulze, in the 1792 publication *Aenesidemus*, against Kant in the light of our discussion of the Transcendental Deduction in the previous chapter. A brief résumé of the difficulties raised by Schulze with regard to the argument as we have presented it is outlined in Section 2. The subsequent focus is upon the seemingly paradoxical situation of the subject within the Deduction. The Kantian subject, in explicit contradistinction to the Cartesian subject, has no direct and immediate knowledge of itself. However, as is argued in Section 3, despite the fact that there is no manifold of intuition associated with the subject such that it can become an object of knowledge, Kant maintains that we can be aware of the existence of the subject. It is contended that the concurrence of Kant's claims that the I exists and that the I is something intellectual can be accounted for in terms of the reciprocal relation established in the previous chapter (and expanded upon here).

What is at issue is the relationship between the synthesis of the manifold of intuition and the ability for the 'I think' to accompany thoughts. Kant can legitimately claim that the existence of the subject is felt because, although no specific act of synthesis is required for its production, the I is nonetheless the product of synthesis in general. In Section 4 of this chapter it is shown that it is on the basis of a misunderstanding of the relationship between the subject as an empty representation and the processes of synthesis that the problems identified in *Aenesidemus* arise. Furthermore, Fichte's introduction of a notion of intellectual intuition does nothing to alleviate this misunderstanding. Instead, it constitutes an un-Kantian solution to a problem that does not exist. Some contemporary interpretations of the Kantian subject, presented in Section 5, provide further arguments in favour of some kind of non-sensible awareness of this subject. It is shown that interpretations such as these underwrite Fichte's interpretation by raising the problem of how representations can be identified as *my* representations without some prior awareness of myself. The maintenance of a distinction between the analytic and synthetic unities of consciousness, which is discussed in Section 6, resolves this potential difficulty, as well as those previously discussed. This is because such a move allows us to disambiguate the I of which we have an



awareness, the I as a transcendental condition of experience, and the I that is said to carry out acts of synthesis. It is suggested that the confusion of the various senses of the I is responsible for the attribution to Kant of an intellectual intuition of the subject.

## **2. Schulze, the Subject and the Transcendental Deduction**

At the end of Chapter Two, pp. 58–61, the difficulty involved in maintaining the objective validity of the categories was summarised in terms of a set of alleged tensions that arise for Kant in relation to scepticism. It was suggested there that the only way in which Kant could provide an answer to Hume’s Problem was to adopt at least one question-begging assumption. As argued by Schulze, this assumption was concerned with the nature of the mind. Stroud, by contrast, saw the assumption as regarding the synthetic *a priori* nature of a particular linguistic framework. On the other hand, Gram saw the assumption as one concerned with the nature of experience. As we have seen in the previous chapter, pp. 65–68, the latter two interpretations stress the difficulty that Kant faces in moving from, in Cassam’s terms, the “Conceptual Component” of the argument to the claim made within the “Satisfaction Component”. For both Stroud and Gram, Kant can provide no justification for the claim that the conditions outlined in the Satisfaction Component are met merely on the basis of an analysis of the Conceptual Component. On their accounts, it is either necessary for Kant to be able to verify that it is not merely a contingent fact that the conditions of the Conceptual Component are satisfied, or he must simply assume that they are. On the basis of the reconstruction of the Transcendental Deduction provided in the previous chapter, we reached the conclusion that Kant’s notion of transcendental synthesis provides a coherent response to these criticisms. What has been established is that the synthesis of the manifold of intuition is both *a priori* and conceptual. From this we have drawn the conclusion that Kant can rightfully maintain that it is not merely a contingent fact that the conditions under which experience is possible happen to be manifested in the world, but rather that the transcendental form of experience itself provides the characteristic unity which renders experience possible.

The preceding analysis, however, left uninterrogated the problems identified by Schulze. It will be recalled that Schulze questions the status of the knowledge of

the subject that Kant supposedly relies upon within the Transcendental Deduction.<sup>1</sup> In particular, it was Schulze's claim that if the objective validity of the categories is to be established, then we must have some knowledge of subject of experience in the performance of the acts of spontaneity which determine the manifold of intuition. Furthermore, Schulze also insisted that such knowledge, though necessary for Kant's argument, was incompatible with Kant's overarching stricture that there can be no knowledge of things-in-themselves. On Schulze's account, the conflict arises because the argument for the objective validity of the categories requires more than it being necessary for the subject of experience to be *regarded* as spontaneous. That is to say, Kant's argument cannot simply demonstrate the hypothetical conjunction that if the categories are objectively valid, then the subject must be spontaneous. What is required in addition to this is the knowledge that the subject is *in fact* spontaneous. This, however, cannot be knowledge of the empirical subject. It cannot be such, because all knowledge of the empirical governed is by the very transcendental conditions that are in the process of being accounted for. More specifically, if this were Kant's argument, the relation of determinant to determined which pertains between the subject and experience would be that of cause to effect, and Kant would, therefore, be illegitimately assuming the validity of one of those concepts that he is in the process of attempting to justify. Apparently, therefore, the conclusion which must be drawn is that Kant is committed to the view that we have knowledge subject as it is in itself — at least insofar as its spontaneous nature is concerned.

The terms in which the criticisms of Schulze are framed are heavily indebted to the interpretations of Kant current amongst his contemporaries. In particular, the attempt to formulate a Cartesian point of certainty — the 'Proposition of Consciousness' advocated by Reinhold — is a clear target of Schulze's criticism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter 2, pp. 44–50.

<sup>2</sup> This was discussed in note 19 on p. 45. The Proposition of Consciousness, as stated in *Fundament*, 81 — "Representation is that which is distinguished in consciousness by the subject from object and subject, and is referred to both." — is not Cartesian in that a systematic methodology is employed to derive the proposition, rather it is simply proclaimed as self-evident. Indeed, the argumentative structure employed by Reinhold necessitates that there is no argument from which his first principle could be drawn. Indeed, were this not the case, then Reinhold's principle would be neither first nor absolute. However, Reinhold is also not employing a transcendental argument — he is not claiming that the principle of consciousness is either a necessary presupposition of

However, the account of the Deduction presented in the preceding chapter, suggests that Kant himself is in no way committed to this form of Cartesianism. On the contrary, it has been our contention that Kant draws only upon the claim that in order for the ‘I think’ to be able to accompany representations, those representations must be something to me and, furthermore, we have contended that this claim is analytic. In which case, there is no need for Kant to claim any substantial knowledge, be it empirical or transcendent, of the subject.

Although our interpretation of the Deduction may appear to render the Schulze’s problems of merely historical interest, both textual evidence and current interpretations demonstrate that the situation is considerably more complicated and ambiguous than has so far been acknowledged. The textual ambiguities will be investigated in detail in Section 3; within the remainder of this Section we shall consider some of the current major disputes within the secondary literature.

## 2.1 Current Debates on the Kantian Subject

Within the secondary literature on Kant there has been no definitive response or rebuttal to the debate concerning the status of Transcendental Arguments that we previously reviewed. The focus of scholarly attention has instead turned to providing detailed reconstructions of the Deduction, and the rather schematic formula employed within the Transcendental Argument debate have come to be seen as inaccurate representations of Kant’s argument. Throughout the last two decades, however, the secondary literature on the first *Critique* has been influenced by the type criticisms raised by Stroud and Gram, to the extent that there has been an extended and continuing discussion of the role that the subject plays within the Deduction.<sup>3</sup> There is a direct relationship between this question and the

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experience in general or of the critical philosophy in particular — that is, Reinhold is not employing an argument that is justified by dint of our acceptance of its consequent. Rather the Proposition of Consciousness is intended to be an immediate expression of the fact of consciousness; insofar as it is granted that we are conscious Reinhold thinks that we cannot but assent to the proposition.

<sup>3</sup> For an instructive discussion of this and other recent trends within the secondary literature see Günter Zöller, “Main Developments in Recent Scholarship on the *Critique of Pure Reason*,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53 (1993): passim. The shift of emphasis from schematic accounts of transcendental arguments to the more text based accounts current today is detailed on pp. 450–4. The increasing focus upon the subjective aspects of the Deduction is evidenced in the contrast between this review of the literature and one undertaken 11 years earlier within which the subject is not mentioned at all; see,

Transcendental Argument debate because what is denied in much of the recent literature is Kant's claim that the subjective conditions of thought have objective validity. If, however, one can give an account of the spontaneous nature of the subject which places it in a determining relationship to experience — i.e. if one could adopt what might be regarded as a strongly idealistic stance — then what disappears is the supposedly questionable gap between experience as reflected upon and experience as such. Such an argument would bring to light the capacities used by the subject in determining experience, and would show how the nature of that experience could unambiguously be known to have an *a priori*, conceptual form. Even if a realist interpretation of the kind proposed by Cassam or Guyer were adopted, one would still need to find resources within the first *Critique* itself for relegating the function of the subject to a subsidiary role.

At present there is little consensus within the secondary literature regarding these questions, but there are, broadly speaking, two problems around which the debate is centred.<sup>4</sup> The first of these is the epistemological question regarding the knowledge of the subject presupposed by the Deduction, and the second concerns the ontological status of the subject to which spontaneity is attributed.

The epistemological problem arises in the context of Kant's claim [B132] that it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations, if those representations are not to be nothing to me. In addition to the interpretation of this claim as analytic, whose major proponent within the secondary literature is Allison and to which we have adhered, there are also interpretations which attribute a substantive status to this claim. For Kitcher this claim amounts to something like an empirical hypothesis regarding the unity of consciousness, and for Henrich it is a synthetic *a priori* assertion about the identity of the subject. Opinions regarding the ontological status of the subject to which the assertion applies are equally widely distributed: Kitcher attributes spontaneity to the empirical subject and Allison attributes it to a transcendental subject. In yet other instances — seminally in

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Karl Ameriks, "Recent Work on Kant's Theoretical Philosophy," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1982): passim.

<sup>4</sup> A survey of the various 'camps' into which current critics fall is presented by Ameriks in the complementary pair of articles: "Understanding Apperception Today," in *Kant and Contemporary Epistemology*, ed. Paolo Parrini (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), and "Kant and the Self: A Retrospective," in *Figuring the Self*, ed. David E. Klemm and Günter Zöllner (Albany: SUNY, 1997).

Strawson's *Bound's of Sense* — spontaneity is attributed to the noumenal subject.

Although there is some conflicting textual evidence regarding the analytic status that Kant attributes to the synthetic unity of consciousness, the interpretations offered by both Henrich and Kitcher are underwritten by philosophical disputes.<sup>5</sup> The problematic within which Henrich places Kant is that of, what he terms, the “reflective theory of self-consciousness.” The model of self-consciousness which Henrich attributes to Kant is one in which the subject comes to know itself on the basis of an act of reflection through which the subject comes to recognise itself: in summary, “the essence of the Self is reflection.”<sup>6</sup> By a process of elimination and at some considerable distance from Kant's text, Henrich arrives at the conclusion that, if the Transcendental Deduction is to have any chance of success, what must be recognised in this act of reflection is the numerical identity of the subject.<sup>7</sup> Any evaluation of this claim is made problematic by the interpretative strategy employed by Henrich which consists in the reconstruction of an argument by establishing criteria which the argument must meet and then eliminating argumentative strategies by means of these criteria.<sup>8</sup> However, not only is it difficult to find textual evidence

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<sup>5</sup> The main textual ambiguity stems from Kant's apparent commitment, in the A-Deduction, to the synthetic nature of the proposition which attributes a unity to consciousness:

“The synthetic proposition, that all the variety of *empirical consciousness* must be combined in one single self-consciousness, is the absolutely first and synthetic principle of our thought in general.”[A117]

[Der synthetische Satz: daß alles verschiedene empirische Bewußtsein in einem einigen Selbstbewußtsein verbunden sein müsse, ist der schlechthin erste und synthetische Grundsatz unseres Denkens überhaupt.]

It should, however, be noted that the synthetic nature of this proposition does not contradict the exposition of Kant's B132 claim contained in Section 3.2 of the previous chapter. Kant's point here is the more general, in that all empirical consciousness must be brought under the transcendental unity of apperception — this is indeed the synthetic proposition which, as has been argued, forms the *conclusion* of the B-Deduction.

<sup>6</sup> Dieter Henrich, “Fichte's Original Insight,” translated by David R. Lachterman, in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, vol 1, ed. Darrel E. Christensen, Manfred Riedel, Robert Spaemann, Reiner Wihl and Wolfgang Wieland (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1982), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Henrich's most detailed account is his position is presented in “Identity and Objectivity: An Inquiry into Kant's Transcendental Deduction,” translated by Jeffrey Edwards, in *The Unity of Reason*, ed. R. Velkley (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994), 160–208. A more concise account is given in his “The Identity of the Subject in the Transcendental Deduction,” in *Reading Kant*, ed. Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, 266–79.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the ambiguities which arise in relation to Henrich's method are highlighted in Guyer, review of *Identität und Objektivität: Eine Untersuchung über Kants transzendente Deduktion*, by Dieter Henrich, *Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979): 151–2.

for the interpretation offered by Henrich, the attribution of a reflective theory of consciousness to Kant is, as we shall see, also highly problematic.<sup>9</sup>

The basis for Kitcher's attribution of a synthetic status to Kant's B132 claim derives from her reading of Kant as providing a direct response to Hume's scepticism regarding the subject.<sup>10</sup> Within this context the unity of the subject cannot merely be founded on the basis of an analytic proposition, rather it must be demonstrated that this unity constitutes one of the conditions which must be met if representations are to be able to represent objects. This leads Kitcher to interpret the Deduction as an argument which establishes that, what she terms, an "existential dependence"<sup>11</sup> between cognitive states is produced by synthesis and it is these dependency relations which constitute the unity of consciousness. The problems which have been raised with regard to the coherence of this argument notwithstanding,<sup>12</sup> once the relationship between the transcendental unity of apperception (Kitcher's "unity of consciousness") and the analytic proposition regarding the 'I think' is fully articulated, as is undertaken below in Section 6, we shall see that the conflict between the synthetic and analytic status of the unity Kant attributes to the I operates only on a superficial level.

Our agreement with Kitcher also extends to her position regarding the status of the subject in relation to the spontaneous activity of transcendental synthesis. In drawing a parallel between Dennett's notion that consciousness arises from "subpersonal" processes and Kant's account of synthesis, Kitcher advances the

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<sup>9</sup> The reading of Kant adopted by Henrich has not gathered widespread support. For examples of some criticisms see Karl Ameriks, "Kant and the Self: A Retrospective," 60–3 and Dieter Sturma, "Self-Consciousness and the Philosophy of Mind," in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, vol 1, ed. H. Robinson (Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 1995): 663–8. Henrich's notion that Kant subscribed to the reflective theory of consciousness has, nonetheless, exerted a strong influence on subsequent interpretations. The form which this influence has taken is that the radical break with the reflective theory, which Henrich associates with Fichte, has been co-opted as Kant's rather than Fichte's innovation.

<sup>10</sup> Kitcher's defence of her interpretation of the Deduction, and, in particular, Kant's account of the transcendental unity of apperception, is to be found in a number of places, for example, "Kant on Self-Identity," *Philosophical Review* 91 (1982): 58–9, "Kant's Real Self," in *Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy*, ed. Allen W. Wood (London: Cornell UP, 1984), 114–21, and also in *Transcendental Psychology*, 91–116.

<sup>11</sup> Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 103 and *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> For some detailed criticisms of Kitcher's position see both Henry Allison, "On Naturalising Kant's Transcendental Psychology," *Dialectica* 49 (1995): *passim*, and Karl Ameriks, "Understanding Apperception Today," 338–44.

interpretation that, rather than there being a single source of the act of spontaneity, there is nothing within the first *Critique* which commits Kant to the view that it is the subject which *performs* the acts of synthesis.<sup>13</sup> However, Kitcher also goes on to advance the claim that, because of our lack of knowledge of the noumenal, “the I with which we identify” or the “I that thinks” is “phenomenal and causally determined.”<sup>14</sup> This position has come in for considerable criticism from both Allison and Robert Pippin.<sup>15</sup> These criticisms arise not only because of the immediate and familiar difficulty that Kitcher appears to be invoking — namely, that involved in employing a causal relationship within an investigation which purports to provide a justification of the principle of causality — but also because of Kant’s clear commitment to the spontaneity of the apperceiving subject. Both Allison and Pippin associate this spontaneity with the ability that Kant attributes to the subject to have an awareness of itself as that which carries out acts of synthesis.<sup>16</sup> On their account, this awareness is to be distinguished from the knowledge that we have of ourselves through introspection, and also from any knowledge of a noumenal subject. In both of these cases there is some object of awareness, whereas the awareness that we have of ourselves in acting has no object, it is intransitive. It will be shown that while Allison and Pippin legitimately stress the significance of self-awareness as being both spontaneous and an awareness of the identity of the subject in the act of synthesis, they are mistaken when they draw the inference that this leads to the rejection of the first of Kitcher’s points and also err in their view that there is distinctive kind of consciousness which is a consciousness of the act of synthesis. It will be maintained that the transcendental subject is purely formal and that it is illegitimate to attribute the activity of synthesis

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Dennett, *Content and Consciousness* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969), 93–6. The same notion is also to be found, although stated in different terms, in his *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin, 1991), 228. The analogy between Kant and Dennett with regard to this point is also drawn by Andrew Brook, *Kant and the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 30 and *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 139.

<sup>15</sup> Specific criticisms of this point are given by Allison in “On Naturalising Kant’s Transcendental Psychology,” 346–9, and “Kant’s Refutation of Materialism,” *Monist* 72 (1989): 196–203. The most sustained attack is to be found in Robert B. Pippin, “Kant on the Spontaneity of Mind,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 17 (1987): 465–73.

<sup>16</sup> For instances of this, see, for example, Allison, “On Naturalising Kant’s Transcendental Psychology,” 341, 345. The key passages in Kant upon which this interpretation draws are A108 and B133.

to it.

Before we move on to justify the claims that have made here, however, we shall identify the very real textual difficulties and apparent contradictions that plague Kant's account of the subject.

### **3. Kant's Invitation to Intellectual Intuition: Intelligence and Feeling**

The I at the beginning of the B-Deduction functions as a moment of epistemological certitude from which the validity of the categories follows (i.e. given that it is known that the 'I think' must be able to accompany any representation, it follows that the conditions under which it is possible for this to happen must also be conditions for representation *per se*). In the case of Descartes's argument in the *Meditations*, the certitude in the representation of the cogito's existence provides a point from which the validity of other representations is also assured (via an argument for the existence of a beneficent God). Despite some superficial similarity, there is a startling contrast between Descartes's starting point and that of Kant. Descartes is not merely assured of his own existence, but also of his existence as a thinking thing; what it is for him to exist as a thinking thing is discovered, in the first *Meditation*, through the subtraction of all those elements inessential to the mind. The very process of this analysis reveals to Descartes that he can "achieve an easier and more evident perception of [his] own mind than of anything else."<sup>17</sup> It is, indeed, only on the basis that his own nature is completely open to his inspection that Descartes can deduce that he lacks the requisite capacity to produce the idea of God which he finds within himself. It is a consequence of this inadequacy that there must exist a being with sufficient objective reality to pass this idea on to him and the existence of God is thereby established.

Self-evidence of the I plays a systemic role within Descartes' method of doubt because it is only upon the presupposition that a bedrock has been reached that the search for knowledge can proceed. If in knowing ourselves it were to be the case that we knew nothing about ourselves, then we would know nothing at all. At

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<sup>17</sup> Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol 2, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugland Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 23. Page references are to the standard *Oeuvres de Descartes*, vol. 7, edited by Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (revised edition, Paris: Vrin/C.N.R.S, 1964–76).



its most straightforward, Kant's response to Descartes comprises an investigation of this very point; from self-consciousness nothing can be concluded about the nature of the substance which underlies such consciousness. Indeed it is not even possible to conclude that there is any such substance, any 'thing' which thinks. Whereas for Descartes we can know the world only through our capacity for self-knowledge, for Kant our capacity to experience the world necessitates that we have no capacity for self-knowledge. That is to say, as we saw in the previous chapter, the possibility of representations being accompanied by the 'I think' is a condition of the possibility of those representations representing objects. Concurrently, the 'I think' is placed in the paradoxical position of not being numbered amongst the representations which represent. This is not to contradict the patent representations which we do have of ourselves as being conscious, but that which is represented in such cases — the I as an object of consciousness — cannot be that which is the condition for such objects being represented. The point of Descartes's enlightenment becomes in Kant a point to which we are blind:

Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as given *a priori*, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes *a priori* all *my* determinate thought.[B134]

[Synthetische Einheit des Mannigfaltigen der Anschauungen, als a priori gegeben, ist also der Grund der Identität der Apperception selbst, die a priori allem me i n e m bestimmten Denken vorhergeht.]

We see here the structural necessity of the blindness of the I to itself. Kant works with the premise that the manifold is given as diverse, which is to say that there is nothing intrinsic to the manifold of intuition which makes it a representation of something. In the synthesis of the manifold, the manifold is grasped conceptually by means of the *a priori* activity of the understanding: the manifold is unified and a coherent experience is produced. Crucially this process functions not only as the condition of possibility of coherent experience, but is also the condition of the possibility of any experience being attributable to an I. It has been argued that this is not merely for the straightforward reason that there be no experience without the activity of synthesis, but also because without this process there would be no I: the manifold, as given, is not given to a subject (or at least it is only retrospectively interpreted as being so given). Indeed, it is only through the unification of that manifold that the distinction between a subject and object is created: without the

possibility of the 'I think' there can be no synthetic unity of the manifold, no representation of objects; but without the synthetic unity of the manifold there can be no 'I think'. This argument that Kant puts forward with respect to the subject can, therefore, be seen to parallel his argument regarding the object. On the one hand, the conditions of possibility of the experience of the objects are the conditions of possibility of the objects of experience and, on the other hand, the conditions of possibility of the experience of the object are also the conditions of possibility of the subject of experience. That is to say, there would be no subject which the 'experience' of the unsynthesised manifold (which is no experience at all) could be said to belong to. There is no subject which could be said to have this 'experience' because it is only through the activity of synthesis that identity is introduced into the subject. As a consequence of this, the transcendental subject appears to stand in a peculiar position: it can be neither sensible nor intelligible.<sup>18</sup>

As a condition of the possibility of the empirical, the transcendental subject cannot constitute a part of that sensible world without raising the question of its own conditioning, yet it cannot be the object of an intellectual intuition. The subject is not on a par with objects of empirical intuition in that it contains no manifold to be synthesised into an object of knowledge. The option available to Kant on other occasions of making a distinction between the schematised and the unschematised categories cannot be invoked here. In other contexts Kant can argue that, although it is not an object of empirical intuition, the subject has a practical legitimacy within the realm of the unschematised categories. However, this argument cannot apply in the case of the transcendental subject, because Kant wants to claim that the subject has a constitutive rather than a merely regulative role. As we shall see, Kant appears to oscillate between two contradictory theses regarding the nature of the subject, attributing it exclusively either to thought or to intuition, maintaining all the while that it, the I, exists.

### **3.1 The Problematic Subject**

The range of the understanding being greater than that of possible

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<sup>18</sup> The term 'transcendental subject' is to be understood, as explained in Chapter 2, as referring in a generic manner to the subject as a condition of the possibility of experience; it is not intended to bear any strict correlation to Kant's own (very limited) use of that term.

experience, it is possible to think ‘something’ with the categories of experience that is not a possible object of experience. While the confusion of these two domains leads one into critical errors, and this confusion is frequently identified by Kant when diagnosing the failures of other philosophers, the distinction between the schematised and the unschematised categories allows a space to emerge into which the non-experiential aspects of the critical system can be placed. Kant makes this quite clear in the second *Critique*:

This explains the foremost riddle of critique: how we are able to *deny* objective *reality* to the supersensible *use of the categories* in speculation and yet *grant* them this *reality* with regard to objects of pure practical reason. [V 5]

[Hier erklärt sich auch allererst das Räthsel der Kritik, wie man dem übersinnlichen Gebrauche der Kategorien in der Speculation objective Realität absprechen und ihnen doch in Ansehung der Objecte der reinen praktischen Vernunft diese Realität zugestehen könne].

The point that Kant is making here is already familiar, in that the apparent contradiction between the thoughts of, for instance, necessity and freedom can be reconciled by placing restrictions on the applicability of these terms; there can be an empirical causal determinacy alongside a noumenal freedom.<sup>19</sup> Although Kant does not make this point explicitly with regard to the subject, it appears on occasion as if the subject were occupying the intellectual, or noumenal, realm which lies entirely outside the field of the sensible. Thus, Kant says that the representation of the subject to itself is “a *thought*, not an *intuition*.”[B157]<sup>20</sup> Since knowledge requires not merely thought but also an intuition, i. e. “a determinate mode of intuition, whereby this manifold is given”[B157]<sup>21</sup>, the transcendental subject is placed firmly on the side of the noumenal: it can be thought, but because there is no intuition which can possibility correspond to this object of thought there can be no knowledge of the subject.

I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination; but in respect of the manifold which it has to combine I am subjected to a limiting condition (entitled inner sense), namely, that this combination can be made intuitable only according to relations of

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<sup>19</sup> This is an issue of considerable complexity and we shall not be pursuing the details of Kant’s account here. For a general overview of the issue see Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> “ein Denken, nicht ein Anschauen.”

<sup>21</sup> “noch eine bestimmte Art der Anschauung, dadurch dieses Mannigfaltige gegeben wird”.

time, which lie entirely outside the concepts of understanding, strictly regarded.[B158–9]

[ich existire als Intelligenz, die sich lediglich ihres Verbindungsvermögens bewußt ist, in Ansehung des Mannigfaltigen aber, das sie verbinden soll, einer einschränkenden Bedingung, die sie den inneren Sinn nennt, unterworfen, jene Verbindung nur nach Zeitverhältnissen, welche ganz außerhalb den eigentlichen Verstandesbegriffen liegen, anschaulich zu machen].

The problem in reading statements such as this one, lies in how we are to understand the existence which is being attributed to the I. This existence appears to be something more than the problematic ‘Pickwickian’ existence of the noumenon, because, although there is the limit of inner sense disallowing any determinate intuition of the I as power of combination, there remains nonetheless a residual *feeling* of the existence of this subject. This subject is described, in the *Prolegomena*, as

nothing more than the feeling of an existence without the slightest concept and is only the representation of that to which all thinking stands in relation (*relatione accidentis*).[IV 334]

[nichts mehr als Gefühl eines Daseins ohne den mindesten Begriff und nur Vorstellung desjenigen, worauf alles Denken in Beziehung (*relatione accidentis*) steht.]

Here the situation of the subject seems to have undergone a complete reversal: intelligence has become a matter of feeling, and is associated with the sensible in explicit contradistinction to the conceptual domain of the understanding. This position also carries the consequence that there can be no knowledge of the transcendental subject, but the inference comes from, as it were, the other direction. Rather than being due to the absence of an intuitive element that is rendering the concept of the transcendental subject empty, it is the absence of a concept through which the ‘feeling’ that we have of this transcendental subject can be grasped.

The situation of this subject is, then, in a non-technical sense, decidedly problematic. The fundamental equation that Kant makes regarding knowledge — that it is only possible through the union of concept and intuition — implies, as Kant makes clear throughout the first *Critique*, that in any particular instance we can be mistaken in one of two ways: either we can regard the conceptual or we can regard the intuitive to be alone (and individually) sufficient for knowledge. If it were possible for something to be both sensible and intellectual (without thereby being a possible object of knowledge) then, clearly, Kant’s system would be in danger of

collapse.

### 3.2 The Existence of the I: “something real that is given”

Kant wants to be able to make the claim that in the process of producing the empirical world the transcendental subject is itself revealed to be “something real”[B423]<sup>22</sup>. That is, although Kant cleaves Descartes’s thought of his own existence from the thought of his existence as a thinking thing, Kant nonetheless wishes to maintain the coextensive nature of thought and being established in Descartes’s first moment, “that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me.”<sup>23</sup> For Kant, the abstract contentless nature of this I does not, in fact, necessitate the conclusion that absolutely nothing can be said with regard to it:

I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only *that* I am.[B157]

[ich bin mir ... bewußt, nicht wie ich mir erscheine, noch wie ich an mir selbst bin, sondern nur daß ich bin.]

Although the I cannot be characterised, it remains true that it, in some sense or other, *is*. At this point in the first *Critique* (§25 of the Deduction), Kant is limiting himself to making the negative remark that any determination of manner in which the I is taken to be, can only take place through the form of inner sense. That is to say, any such determination requires that the manifold of intuition be given and, therefore, any knowledge of the I built upon these conditions will be knowledge of the empirical subject. It, nonetheless, remains true that ‘existence’ is a given:

The ‘I think’ expresses the act of determining my existence. Existence is already given thereby, but the mode in which I am to determine this existence, that is, the manifold belonging to it, is not thereby given.[B157]

[Das, Ich denke, drückt den Actus aus, mein Dasein zu bestimmen. Das Dasein ist dadurch also schon gegeben, aber die Art, wie ich es bestimmen, d. i. das mannigfaltige zu demselben Gehörige in mir setzen solle, ist dadurch noch nicht gegeben.]

We have seen that Kant goes on to say that, due to the spontaneous nature of this act, it is possible to entitle the I an intelligence. It may well seem that Kant is here committing the very Paralogism that he attributes to the rational psychologists; that of hypostatizing the I as a thinking thing — they “hypostatise what exists

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<sup>22</sup> “etwas Reales.”

<sup>23</sup> Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, 17.

merely in thought, and take it as a real object existing, in the same character, outside the thinking subject.”[A384]<sup>24</sup> However, it is important to recognise that the I is termed spontaneous, and therefore something intellectual, only by default. The lack of any determinate representation of the I renders it of necessity something non-sensible; we do not receive a representation of the I just as another part of the manifold of experience and it is, therefore, not given to us as the manifold is given. Here Kant is stressing the distinction between the I as an object of our experience — an object which is given to us — and the I as the subject of experience: a mere something in general which is not localised or experiential. The I might then be designated as an intelligence. However, as something which is thought as *something*, the I is hypostatized into the noumenal subject, something which cannot be an object of experience: it is neither intellectually nor sensibly grasped, yet it is felt. As Kant puts it, the ‘I think’ expresses [drückt]

something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (noumenon), but as something which in fact exists [B423].

[etwas Reales, das gegeben worden und zwar nur zum Denken überhaupt, also nicht als Erscheinung, auch nicht als Sache an sich selbst (Noumenon), sondern als Etwas, was in der That existirt].

The “pure intellectual faculty”[B423]<sup>25</sup> is given as existing, but not as existing in itself; that is to say, the transcendental subject is not given independently of perception, and it is only in relation to the sensible that it is possible to attribute reality to this capacity. The I is clearly not being attributed the capacity of auto-generation or self-subsistence, since as a capacity it is limited to the performative function of synthesising and has no reality outside of this activity:

Without some empirical representation to supply the material for thought, the act, ‘I think’, would not, indeed, take place [B423].

[Allein ohne irgend eine empirische Vorstellung, die den Stoff zum Denken abgiebt, würde der Actus: Ich denke, doch nicht stattfinden].

Although Kant reiterates the reciprocal point, that even though the I exists through the empirical representation it does not exist *as* an empirical representation of an object, he is also highlighting the strictly limited nature of this capacity. The logical, indeed analytic, relation between thinking and existing remains, but it is not

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<sup>24</sup> “was blos in Gedanken existirt, hypostasirt und in eben derselben Qualität als einen wirklichen Gegenstand außerhalb dem denkenden Subjecte annimmt”.

<sup>25</sup> “reinen intellectuellen Vermögens.”

unconditional: to claim that ‘I am thinking but no synthesis is occurring and, therefore, I am not presented with any given representations’ would be a contradictory statement for any human.<sup>26</sup> This claim rests once again on the reciprocal relation between the synthesis of the manifold of intuition and the ‘I think’.

### 3.3 Kant’s Position Reconstructed

We have seen that there is no object which corresponds to the representation that ‘I think’, in that the ‘I think’ does not designate any particular item within empirical consciousness. It is on this basis that Kant, following his rigid demarcation of sensibility and understanding, can attribute the ‘I think’ to the domain of the understanding. This is because sensibility, as the receptive faculty, has the task of ‘delivering’ the manifold of intuition to the understanding, and in the case of the representation of the ‘I think’ there is no manifold of intuition. The I on the other hand is not merely a thought of the understanding without any intuitive content — indeed, if this were the case then Kant would not have the right to attribute any existence to the subject. As was indicated in the previous chapter, the emptiness of this representation follows from the relationship between it and the synthesis of the manifold of intuition. Indeed, the synthesis of the manifold requires not merely the thought of the manifold, but the thought of the manifold *as* a manifold. The constitutive intuitive elements themselves do not constitute a representation of anything; it is only upon their combination in a single consciousness that they can be said to form a representation of an object. However, the single consciousness in which intuitions are combined does not constitute some

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<sup>26</sup> This is also emphasised in Sturma, “‘Das doppelte Ich im Bewußtsein meiner selbst’. Zur Struktur von Kants Begriff des Selbstbewußtseins,” in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Kant Congress*, vol. 2/1, ed. G. Funke and T. Seebohm (Washington: Centre for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and UP of America, 1989): passim. Sturma draws on Kant’s essay *On the Progress in Metaphysics* [XX 268] to advance the claim that there is an intimate tie between the logical sense of the I as subject and the embedded nature of a psychological subject within a spatio-temporal framework.

It is also noteworthy (if speculative) that those who find in Kant the notion of a self-consciousness which is not phenomenal in nature have not attributed to him the corresponding view that there is also a non-phenomenal consciousness of matter — yet, there appear (in the Refutation of Idealism) to be clear parallels, including the notion of “unmittelbare Bewußtsein,” [B276] between the consciousness that we have of ourselves and the consciousness of something outside of ourselves.

external perceiver, as if intuitions needed to be presented to some homunculus pulling levers to engage acts of synthesis upon a field of raw data. Rather the single consciousness is constituted by the manifold of intuition being synthesised in the particular manner prescribed in the Deduction. That is to say, the single consciousness is not a condition of synthesis in the sense that oxygen is a condition of combustion; it is not a precondition of synthesis but rather a predetermination of it. This predetermination states that if the synthesis is not to be in vain (that is, if it is to result in the representation of objects), then the intuition must be synthesised according to concepts: that synthesis takes this form necessitates that a further (entirely spontaneous) representation can accompany any of the synthesised representations.

Once again we can legitimately describe the ‘I think’ as spontaneous because it contains no manifold: there is no particular intuitive ‘trigger’ which gives rise to the representation, but it is not without relation to the manifold of intuition. The formation of a synthetic unity out of the manifold of intuition is not merely the condition under which intuitions can represent, but also allows for the possibility of the representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold. As was stated in the Chapter 3, the ‘I think’ is just this representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold, it ascribes to representations the common property which all representations necessarily share of conforming to the conditions of transcendental synthesis.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, although there is no determinate intuition legitimating the claim to existence, there is nonetheless an indeterminate intuition.<sup>28</sup> We take this to mean that the capacity of representations to represent — to which no feature of the manifold of intuition itself corresponds, because nothing in this manifold intrinsically represents anything — is itself designated by the attachment of the ‘I think’ to those representations. This is our interpretation of Kant’s statement:

It is obvious that in attaching ‘I’ to our thoughts we designate the subject of inherence only transcendently, without noting in it any quality whatsoever — in fact, without knowing anything of it either by direct acquaintance or otherwise. It means a something in general (transcendental subject). [A355]

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<sup>27</sup> The original discussion is on pp. 84–86.

<sup>28</sup> Kant employs the vocabulary of “indeterminate perception” [unbestimmte Wahrnehmung] and “indeterminate empirical intuition” [unbestimmte empirische Anschauung] in his discussion of the properties of the ‘I think’ in the B-Paralogisms on B422–3.



[Es ist aber offenbar: daß das Subject der Inhärenz durch das dem Gedanken angehängte Ich nur transscendental bezeichnet werde, ohne die mindeste Eigenschaft desselben zu bemerken, oder überhaupt etwas von ihm zu kennen oder zu wissen. Es bedeutet ein Etwas überhaupt (transscendentales Subject)].

To claim that the transcendental subject exists, and that this subject cannot be the object of any sensible intuition and is also spontaneous, implicates Kant in neither a contradiction nor any confusion regarding the nature of the subject. Each of these claims forms a part of a longer argument regarding the conditions under which the representation of objects is possible. Furthermore, at no point in this argument does Kant surreptitiously rely on there being an intellectual intuition of the subject. On the contrary, the awareness that we have of ourselves as expressed in the representation 'I think' constitutes nothing but the sensible and limited nature of our intuitive capacities, and it is precisely because we have no unmediated intellectual awareness of objects that it is possible for the transcendental conditions of both the experience of object and the representation of the I to arise.

This initial attempt to remove some of the apparent contradictions within Kant's account of the subject is not without its own difficulties. It was Schulze's claim that Kant required some knowledge of the subject, at least with regard to its spontaneity. What we have seen is that Kant does indeed make some attempt to provide an account of the subject's knowledge of itself, although it has been stressed that the claims that Kant makes with regard to this are distinguished both from the knowledge that we have of empirical objects and from the notion that there is an intellectual intuition of the subject as it is in itself. However, the gloss which we have put on the notion of an "indeterminate intuition" is itself ambiguous. We have related this notion to the somewhat vague notion that it is an awareness of representing or of the capacity that representations have to represent. This is of sufficient generality to cover, at least, two completely distinct positions: the first of which lays claim to an awareness of the activity of synthesis as such, and the second takes the awareness to be of the product of the act, of the unity of representations. The current major proponents of these interpretations are Allison and Kitcher respectively. These positions can be seen to represent two different responses to the problem raised by Schulze. The first accepts that the spontaneous subject can have some awareness of itself, but that this does not involve the a claim to knowledge of

the mind or the subject is in itself. In the second both Kant's commitment to this form of self-awareness and the need for it for it within the Deduction are denied.

Within this chapter an interpretation which will be supported is, broadly speaking, in agreement with Kitcher. Allison's position, however, has both widespread support and is firmly entrenched within the historical reception of Kant's philosophy. In order to demonstrate the failings of Allison's line we shall approach it via the first attempt to formulate a response to the problems raised by Schulze, which is also the origin of the claim that there is an immediate awareness of the activity of synthesis. This is to be found in Fichte.

#### 4. The Origin of Fichte's Misunderstanding (and Defence) of Kant

In Chapter 2 we saw that one of the criticisms *Aenesidemus* states against Reinhold's proposition of consciousness is that it leads to an infinite regress. The awareness of the subject of a representation, if it itself is considered to be a further representation, demands that there be a further subject to be aware of the subject-representation, and in that second representation there needs to be a further subject, and so on.<sup>29</sup> This problem certainly captures an aspect of the Kantian subject as it has been described above; namely that the transcendental subject always escapes its own gaze. This is, however, not to say that Schulze and Henrich have identified an *aporia* buried deep within the fundamental structure of Kant's argument. This ought to be clear from the fact that Kant is aware of the existence of such a regress:

The subject of the categories cannot by thinking the categories acquire a concept of itself as an object of the categories. For in order to think them, its pure self-consciousness, which is what was to be explained, must itself be presupposed. [B422]

[Das Subject der Kategorien kann also dadurch, daß es diese denkt, nicht von sich selbst als einem Objecte der Kategorien einen Begriff bekommen; denn um diese zu denken, muß es sein reines Selbstbewußtsein, welches doch hat erklärt werden sollen, zum Grunde legen.]<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In attributing the original formulation of this potential problem to Fichte, Henrich is clearly doing Schulze an injustice. Fichte clearly attempts to provide a response to this regress which Schulze finds within the first *Critique*, but it is not Fichte's original insight. Henrich's account of the relationship of this problematic to Fichte's philosophy is to be found in "Fichte's Original Insight," 19–21. A more general account of the relationship between Fichte and Schulze is given in Breazeale, "Fichte's *Aenesidemus* Review and the Transformation of German Idealism," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1981): passim.

<sup>30</sup> The footnote which was used to investigate the nature of existence attributed to the subject follows this passage.

The solution that Kant would offer in response to the challenge of Schulze and Henrich is clearly visible in this passage. Although the subject is a representation, this representation is empty. What Kant is concerned with is that the subject cannot become the object of a representation, i.e. there can be no intuition of the subject, but this does not force us into a regress any more than would questions concerning the location of space or the duration of time. The subject is more like a form of experience than an object of experience, and so to ask a question regarding the properties of the subject is to treat it like an object, and any supposedly problematic conclusions arrived at through such questioning illustrate only a highly questionable interpretation of Kant's position.<sup>31</sup> Fichte, however, through his denial of the identity of the mode in which we are aware of the subject as subject and subject as object, understands the problem somewhat differently. While Fichte's response takes the subject out of Schulze's regress by denying that we come to be aware of the subject in the same way that we are aware of objects, he does so via an across the board denial of the representational status of the subject. Fichte's claim is not that the subject is a representation which does not refer to any determinate object (but that nonetheless has the status of a representation), but rather that the subject is something other than a representation.

It is not difficult to see how Fichte could be drawn to such a conclusion; it appears that the most economical solution to the problem raised in *Aenesidemus*

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<sup>31</sup> Kant highlights the formal nature of the synthetic unity of apperception in his summaries of both editions of the Deduction, A129 and B169.

Space and time are the forms of receptivity and all intuitions contain some temporal or spatio-temporal determination which is not determined on the basis of concepts alone. The argument employed in the first half of the B-Deduction establishes that, in addition to these specifically human forms of intuition, the understanding itself imposes a form upon experience merely on the basis that knowledge of objects cannot be arrived at through concepts alone. We argued above that the ability of representations to be accompanied by the 'I think' was an expression of the conformity of the synthesis of the manifold of intuition to the conceptual form required by the understanding for the production of knowledge. The 'I think' is said to constitute a form of experience in the sense that experience must take the form such that it is possible for the 'I think' to accompany it. It has been said that the subject is more like a form because the same restrictions apply in this case as also apply to the forms of intuition, in that it is illegitimate to reify it by treating it as an object. However, more exactly stated, the conceptual form of experience is the synthetic unity of apperception, rather than the analytic unity of the subject found in the 'I think,' because the necessity associated with this analytic unity is merely that it must always be possible rather than actual. See Section 6, pp. 152–158, of this chapter, for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the synthetic and analytic unities.

would be to claim that the relationship between the knowing subject and the known object is not, in every case, mediated by the constitutive forms of representation, and to deny specifically that such a mediated relationship holds in the case of awareness of the subject. Such a proposition is, on the face of it, not unreasonable since it is precisely the difference between the awareness that we have of ourselves and our awareness of objects that allowed Descartes to escape the clutches of the *malin génie*. In contrast to the case of the subject's awareness of objects, the subject, in being aware of itself, does not stand as something over and against the subject of awareness. Instead, the object of awareness simply is the subject that is aware. Such awareness would require no mediation by representation, since there is nothing to mediate. If we turn with this in mind to the Proposition of Consciousness, as formulated by Reinhold, we can see how Fichte draws the further conclusion that self-consciousness is a necessary component of all consciousness. According to that proposition, the awareness of objects entails in every case an awareness of the subject, and this awareness of the subject as subject is only possible on the basis of the immediate self-conscious awareness; Fichte's conclusion follows quite straightforwardly. It could, indeed, be suggested that Fichte is forced into the position of characterising the awareness that there is of the subject in terms of an intellectual intuition simply because he remains true to the Kantian dichotomy between the sensible and the intellectual. Our awareness of objects requires that there be some intuitive component, and if sensibility is ruled out as a source of this intuition — because there is no sensible intuition corresponding to our awareness of ourselves — then there must be some kind of intellectual intuition.<sup>32</sup>

If there is no other way to prevent the regress than by invoking the notion of intellectual intuition (and Kant, as we have seen, recognises the possibility of such a regress), then it could be mere slight of hand on Kant's part that allowed him to escape Fichte's un-Kantian conclusion. This is Fichte's own argument and, given Kant's equivocation over the nature of our awareness of the subject of experience, it is not without force. The transcendental subject is characterised as being a concept that is without intuitive content and that is also, simultaneously, something whose

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<sup>32</sup> A sympathetic overview of Fichte's notion of 'intellectual intuition' or 'immediate consciousness' is given in Zöller, "An Eye for an I," in *Figuring the Self*, ed. David E. Klemm and Günter Zöller, 80–6.

existence and reality are felt through the sensible faculty. At the hidden core of the first *Critique*, there, thus, appears to Fichte to be an intellectual intuition filling the space left by the removal of the Cartesian subject.<sup>33</sup>

However, if we consider some of Fichte's arguments for the notion of intellectual intuition, we will come to see that his argument is fundamentally at odds with Kant. He says that self-consciousness "is not a representation", because it lacks

that through which the representation refers to an object and becomes a representation of *something*, which we [Kant, Schulze, and Fichte] agree in calling sensible intuition [F 474].

From what has already been argued it should be clear that Fichte is adopting a position that is, in fact, subtly different from Kant's. In general terms, Fichte is quite correct: the notion of a representation without intuitive content is incoherent, and nothing other than an empty thought. Fichte is also correct in claiming that self-consciousness is not a representation of something; if that were the case, self-consciousness would be consciousness of an object, and Kant is quite happy to agree that consciousness of objects presupposes (the possibility of) self-consciousness rather than denoting it. However, the difference between Kant and Fichte lies in the way in which they respond to these points.

Fichte moves from the denial that self-consciousness is not a representation of something to the claim that it is not a representation. By contrast, Kant's claim is that although self-consciousness is not a representation of something determinate, it is, nonetheless, representational, and what is involved is a representation of something in general. It is possible for Fichte to maintain that he is not diverging

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<sup>33</sup> Examples of extended and sympathetic accounts of Fichte's relationship to Kant with regard to this point are to be found in Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 64–116, John Taber, "Fichte's Emendation of Kant," *Kant-Studien* 75 (1984): passim, and Marek J. Siemek, "Fichtes *Wissenschaftslehre* und die Kantische Transzendentalphilosophie," in *Die transzendente Gedanke*, ed. Klaus Hammacher (Hamburg: Meiner, 1981): passim. In each case the view expressed is that Fichte's notion of intellectual intuition constitutes a restatement of something already implicit in Kant's claim that there is an awareness of the activity of synthesis and of the existence of the subject.

It should be noted that our rejection of Fichte's reading of Kant and our defence of Kant against apparent paradoxes in his account of the subject is as far as our concern with Fichte's theory of self-consciousness extends. The tenability of the model of self-consciousness proposed by Fichte (as interpreted by Henrich) is critically evaluated in Ernst Tugendhat, *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, translated by Paul Stern (London: MIT, 1986), Chapters 2 and 3.

from Kant because the claim made by Schulze is that a regress develops if self-awareness is understood to involve the awareness of an object, in that such awareness requires a subject distinct from the object of which it is aware. Indeed, self-awareness seems to require that a subject of awareness be invoked which is distinct from the object of this awareness, and the awareness of the subject of such self-awareness seems to require yet another subject, and so on. Neither Fichte nor (*contra* Schulze and Henrich) Kant attempt to give an account of self-awareness in terms of a reflective theory of consciousness, and Fichte can legitimately claim to be adopting a Kantian standpoint when denying that self-awareness conforms to the conditions under which we are aware of objects. This is because the argument provided by Kant in the first part of the B-Deduction proceeds without any reference to the forms of sensible intuition. However, as we have seen, the lack of sensible determination of the subject does not mean that self-awareness is not conditioned by sensibility. Rather, sensible intuition is required for self-awareness, but no particular intuition is required for such self-awareness. It is on this last point that Kant and Fichte diverge.

#### 4.1 From Unconditioned to Undetermined

Although it is far from clear exactly what Fichte takes the intellectual intuition to be an intuition of, and although this difficulty is necessitated by the fact that the subject of thought could not simply be described in the manner of some object or thing that is represented, it is clear that the subject of thought has some degree of specificity.<sup>34</sup> The subject, for example, is not the activity of thought as such, it is a ‘something’; and additionally, this subject is a something to be distinguished from the contents of thought. In other words, intuitions, objects, representations, and so forth, do not, somehow or other, cumulatively give the subject of thought. Fichte is explicit on this point: he quotes Kant’s remark to the effect that the ‘I think’ must be capable of accompanying all representations [B132],

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<sup>34</sup> There is some considerable degree of complexity surrounding Fichte’s use of the term ‘intellectual intuition.’ Not only are there difficulties in understanding what Fichte takes it to refer to on any particular occasion, but there are also variations in Fichte’s own use of the term. It appears to have evolved from (what some regard as) a Kantian awareness of the subject to something more contentful and closer to Schelling’s use of the term. This issue is discussed in Alexis Philonenko, “Die intellektuelle Anschauung bei Fichte,” in *Die transzendente Gedanke*, ed. Klaus Hammacher, *passim*.

and then asks,

Which “I” is in question here? Is it *perhaps* the I that the Kantians have confidently thrown together from the manifold of representations, an I that is not in any of these singly but is in them all them together? In which case, Kant’s quoted words would mean *this*: “I, who think D, am the same I who thought C and B and A; and through the thought of my manifold acts of thinking, I first become I to myself, namely the *identical* in the manifold.” [F 475]

This passage is important to us in a number of respects. It is, firstly, a statement of an interpretative position that Fichte clearly wants to avoid. In this respect, if this standpoint can be made clear then we have a firm, if negative, ground from which Fichte’s own interpretation of Kant can be developed. Secondly, the interpretation which Fichte is rejecting bears some similarity to the one that was advanced in this and the previous chapter. This raises the dual challenges to identify what Fichte thinks is wrong with this interpretation, and to consider how this interpretation differs, if at all, from the one we are advancing in this thesis.

Let us, then, first consider this interpretation that Fichte is rejecting. There are two significant points here: firstly, the I is something which is retrospectively discovered; and, secondly, what is discovered in the manifold is something which remains self-identical throughout, and this is named as the I. There is a degree of ambiguity in this second alternative, in that it is not clear whether the I that remains identical is something that is found within the manifold — which would be a view of the I as Hume’s ‘bundle’ plus the identical element which Hume claimed he could not find. The other alternative is that the identity of the I resides in the fact that the manifold is always thought by the I. If we reject the first interpretation on the basis of its *prima facie* implausibility, then the identity of the I resides not in the manifold, but rather in something about the way in which the manifold is taken up. It would seem that the manifold is assumed to be comprised of various elements (A, B, C and D) and that the thought of any one of these elements in isolation is not the thought of the ‘I think’. The logic of this proposition would appear to be straightforward: for every thought there needs to be thinker, but the thinker of the thought could not become conscious that he or she thinks D unless that person had also had other thoughts. It is only due to the variation in thought that the thinker divorces him or herself from what is thought: from ‘thinking D’ to ‘I think D.’ The argument may be simplistic but, nonetheless, has a commonsensical plausibility. Thus, for

example, if we only ever heard the one sound, could we become aware that we hear anything at all? Furthermore, as was discussed in the previous chapter, Kant's argument concerning the synthesis of apprehension in intuition proposes the need for there to be an intuitive manifold for a representation to be anything other than an absolute unity [A99]. However, as Fichte makes clear, as a comprehensive interpretation of the Kantian 'I think', this position is clearly inadequate:

because then, according to Kant, the possibility of all thinking would be conditioned by another thinking and by the thinking of this thinking, and I would like to know how we are ever meant to arrive at thinking!  
[F 476]<sup>35</sup>

The problem of a regression has arisen once again because the spontaneous nature of the subject has been left out of this account. The consciousness of the self is not something which arises after an accumulation of evidence, but neither is it to be found within experience. Rather, the 'I think' is intrinsically bound up with experience itself. For Fichte this consists in the spontaneity of the subject being the condition of experience and, therefore, of the I that is identified in experience. This spontaneous activity is identified as the unified and identical subject, the self-positing subject, an original self-consciousness. The difference between Kant and Fichte lies not so much in the elements on this list but, rather, in the fact that Fichte takes them to describe a single thing. The first evidence for this claim comes in Fichte's very next paragraph, where he quotes, with approval, Kant claim that

"pure apperception ... is that self-consciousness which, while generating the representation 'I think' (a representation which must be capable of accompanying all other representations, and which *in all consciousness is one and the same*), cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation." [F 476/B132; Fichte's emphasis]

[reine Apperception ... dasjenige Selbstbewußtsein ist, was, in dem es die Vorstellung: Ich denke, hervorbringt, die alle andere muß begleiten können und in allem Bewußtsein ein und dasselbe ist, von keiner weiter begleitet werden kann.]

There are two points in the quotation which do not square with the interpretation that Fichte is giving: firstly, that the 'I think' need only be capable of accompanying all representations; and secondly, that it itself is a representation. What allows Fichte to misread the capacity as an ever present reality, and to treat the features mentioned above as a unit, is evident in the gloss that he provides of the above quotation:

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<sup>35</sup> See also F 526–7.



the nature of pure self-consciousness is ... therefore undeterminable by any accidental feature of consciousness; the I in self-consciousness is determined solely by itself, and is absolutely determined. [F 476]

Even setting aside the leap to the absolute in the last clause it is clear that, from Kant's perspective, there is something peculiar about Fichte's argument here. Fichte takes it that the original self-consciousness is self-determining, gives itself to itself (and is, therefore, absolute). This is for the two-fold reason that the attempt to locate the nature of self-consciousness in some element of conscious experience presupposes the very consciousness that we are attempting to explain, and, furthermore, this will apply universally to any particular feature of consciousness, not just to the discovery of an identical and unified I through reflection.

What Fichte takes the argument to imply is that self-consciousness has a transcendental priority. That self-consciousness is not determined or conditioned by any of the contingent features of consciousness implies, for him, that self-consciousness is not conditioned or determined at *all*. This lack of determination not only places self-consciousness in a privileged position with respect to the contingent features of consciousness (in that it is logically independent of them), but furthermore it is transcendently privileged (in that it is taken to be the condition of certain general features of consciousness). In the account of self-consciousness that Fichte is rejecting, the unity of the I is discovered through conscious experience, yet the unity of this conscious experience is itself left unaccounted for. This unity itself requires (according to both Fichte and Kant) a transcendental conditioning. Thus, for Fichte, the locus of this transcendental unity simply is the unity of original self-consciousness. Fichte deduces this conclusion not only on the basis of the premise that lack of determination implies self-determination, but also because he assumes that lack of determination implies a lack of conditioning. As undetermined condition the I requires no further conditions, it is absolute:

Thus, according to Kant, the possibility of all consciousness would actually be conditioned by the possibility of the I or pure self-consciousness, just in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. [F 476–7]

However, as we have seen, Kant's position is clearly distinct from Fichte's here. The capacity of the 'I think' to accompany representations is precisely restricted to a capacity and need not always be actualised, because the 'I think' is neither the sole nor absolute condition upon which the possibility of consciousness

rests — indeed, strictly speaking, it is not a condition of consciousness at all.<sup>36</sup> It is not the case that the manifold is synthesised into a unity because of the unity of self-consciousness, as Fichte would have it, but rather that the unity of self-consciousness is only possible on the condition that the manifold is unified. That is to say, Fichte is engaged in a project which re-injects an absolute subject into a position of standing behind, and being other than, the representations with which it is presented. For Kant the representations have a dual aspect, in that it is only insofar as they are unified that they can be said to be representations of something, but it is also the case that the subject of the representations is also constituted through the unity of the representations. Fichte is, then, quite correct to highlight the relationship between the unity of representations and the unity of the subject, but he is quite wrong in attributing a directionality to this relationship where the one has priority over the other.

There is a sense in which Fichte's reading is of some considerable interest. The focus on intellectual intuition is not completely at odds with Kant's argument in that the identity which, for Fichte, pertains between the subject and the object in intellectual intuition does appear to be implied by Kant. For Kant, however, this does not pertain on the basis of some capacity which the subject possesses, rather it is due to the nature of relations which hold between representations — it has its origin in the synthesis of the manifold of intuition. Whereas for Fichte it is necessary to make experience immanent to the subject of that experience, it makes no sense whatsoever to say this with regard to Kant's philosophy in which there is, in this sense, no absolute; but only the reciprocal relationship between experience and the subject of experience.

## **5. Recent Reverberations of Fichte's Misunderstanding**

The invisibility of the subject to itself — or the mind's inaccessibility to itself through introspection — has provided a central motif in two highly divergent debates on Kant's contemporary significance. The first of these concerns the structuralist and post-structuralist problematic of the disappearance or 'death of the subject.' The focus of attention here is allegedly *aporetic* nature of the subject that it is simultaneously necessary and impossible. This argument has a number of

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<sup>36</sup> See above, note 81, p. 107.

structurally analogous forms,<sup>37</sup> but we shall quote just the one here:

it is precisely with Kant, who relates the Being of all beings to the Subject, that the Subject becomes the object of a radical dispute that denies it all possible Being.<sup>38</sup>

Since it is a condition of anything being something that it can be something to someone (i.e. since existence can only be attributed to objects which conform with the conditions of any possible experience, and all experience can be accompanied by the 'I think'), the subject of experience cannot itself derive its Being from constituting part of the contents of experience. If this were to be the case, then we would be placed in the position of either falling prey to the regress identified by *Aenesidemus*, or having to follow Fichte in the attribution of a self-positing nature to the subject. However, neither can the subject derive its Being through appearing to itself as other than a phenomenal object — at least not without violating the very principle at issue, namely, that Being is not extra-experiential.<sup>39</sup> The ground of the Kantian system is then said to be ungrounded, victim to the same self-destructive moment to be found within all philosophy reliant on self-presence. This argument, however, far from providing a diagnosis of Kant's argument which runs counter to that of Fichte, merely reinforces the framework within which Fichte interprets Kant.

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<sup>37</sup> For examples see John Sallis, *Spacings - of Reason and Imagination* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 16–9, or Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993), 12–8. Although emphasising Schelling's response to Fichte rather than Fichte's response to Kant, a general account of the relationship of Deconstruction to German Idealism is given by Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 1987), 19–34.

<sup>38</sup> Michel Henry, 'The Critique of the Subject,' in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (London: Routledge, 1991), 158.

<sup>39</sup> For a structurally analogous argument from within the analytic tradition of Kant interpretation see Susan Hurley, "Kant on Spontaneity and the Myth of the Giving," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 94 (1994). The conclusion which Hurley arrives at, pp. 162–3, is that transcendental idealism

"is ultimately incoherent, and the pivot of its incoherence is its conception of spontaneous agency. It supposes that we must really be spontaneous, and yet that our spontaneous activity, the source of unity, belongs neither to the realm of appearances nor to the realm of things in themselves. In fact there is no room for it anywhere. As the basis of the idealistic point of view, our spontaneous activity is somehow outside of the scope of that point of view."

The response to Hurley by Graham Bird, that Hurley conflates transcendental and empirical apperception in such a way that transcendental apperception becomes some kind of privileged act of consciousness, accords with the reply offered here to the difficulty raised by some within the continental tradition. See Bird, "Kantian Myths," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 96 (1996).

That is to say, it remains the case that the subject is reified as something to which representations are presented. However, this argument creates an inconsistency or an inevitable paradox where none exists, since it ignores the positive, and yet non-paralogistic, account of the transcendental subject that Kant presents.

The second Fichtean interpretation of Kant is to be found in Brook's recent argument for the relevance for cognitive science of Kant's notion of the subject.<sup>40</sup> Broadly speaking, Brook starts from the recognition that Kant's idealism can be interpreted as a form of functionalism. This point is widely discussed (for example, by Dennett, Kitcher, Meerbote and Thomas Powell)<sup>41</sup> and consists in the general observation that Kant is not committed to any particular account of what the mind is; rather Kant details a series of capacities that the mind must have if it is to engage in representational activity. Given a set of data, the mind performs a set of transformative operations upon that data and a certain output results, namely experience. Everything within the Kantian system, from the faculties themselves to concepts, intuitions and syntheses, is characterisable by the role that this content plays within a system of representations. Thus, on such a reading, it is only insofar as any mind/mental state is within such a system of representations that it itself can be a representation. The functionalist tenet that the representational system be neutral as to the medium in which it is implemented, also forms an integral part of Kant's argument. It follows from the denial of any knowledge of things-in-

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<sup>40</sup> See, in particular, the first chapter of Brook, *Kant and the Mind*. The following reconstruction of Brook's argument is intended to present a faithful and plausible account of the key themes of the book; it is nonetheless a somewhat abstract reconstruction of his argument.

<sup>41</sup> Dennett, "Artificial Intelligence as Philosophy and as Psychology," in *Brainstorms* (London: Penguin, 1981), 111; Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 111; and Thomas C. Powell, *Kant's Theory of Self-Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 200. Two articles in *The Historical Foundations of Cognitive Science*, ed. J. C. Smith (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), are dedicated to this topic: Kitcher, "Kant's Dedicated Cognitive System," and Meerbote, "Kant's Functionalism." This latter debate is indebted to Wilfred Sellars, "... This I or He or It (the Thing) which Thinks ...," in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974).

There are many articles on the more general question of the relationship between Kant's philosophy and both historical and current conceptions of psychology. The historical side is discussed in, for instance, Gary Hatfield, *The Natural and the Normative* (London: MIT, 1990). For an evaluation of Kant's influence within contemporary psychology — an evaluation which judges this influence to have been powerful but primarily negative — see Christina Erneling, "Cognitive Science and the Future of Psychology," in *The Future of the Cognitive Revolution*, ed. Christina Erneling and David M. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

themselves that the substratum — or indeed substrata — which supports the representational system remains unknown to us. What is maintained is that we cannot determine from the functions performed by the system whether that system is implemented in a medium which is material (such as the brain) or a medium of mind-stuff; neither can it be determined whether the system is a complex connectionist network or a simple soul.<sup>42</sup>

On the face of it any attempt to reconcile functionalism, even if it is as general as Kant's functionalism, with the idea that we have an intellectual intuition of ourselves as we are in ourselves, would appear to be a somewhat perverse undertaking. However, Brook, like Fichte, is careful to avoid making the claim that we have any knowledge of the noumenal subject, that is, of the subject as a substantive entity, by means of a path other than empirical intuition. However, that we have knowledge of ourselves only as empirical objects does not exhaust all the ways in which we could be aware of ourselves. This point has already been met in the discussion surrounding the feeling or awareness that we have of ourselves simply as the subject of experience. As we have seen, such an awareness is posited by Kant in the following quote:

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.  
[B157]

[bin ich mir meiner selbst ... in der synthetischen ursprünglichen Einheit der Apperception bewußt, nicht wie ich mir erscheine, noch wie ich an mir selbst bin, sondern nur daß ich bin.]

Our previous discussion established both that we ought to be cautious of straightforwardly accepting Kant's own characterisation of this as an awareness of the subject as an "intelligible object,"[A546/B574]<sup>43</sup> and that existence is attributable to the subject only on a conditional basis. These points mitigate against any interpretation of this passage which draws the inference that Kant is gesturing

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<sup>42</sup> This is only to accept that function does not dictate form in the negative sense that from function we cannot determine what the form is; it is not, however, as Brook claims (p. 13) to accept the mind could take on a variety of different forms. He assumes that if there were to be only one possible medium, the form of the mind would be inferable from function. He concludes that because we cannot make such an inference without violating the doctrine that things-in-themselves are unknowable, whatever the mind is it must be possible for it to take a number of different forms. No such thing follows. Just because we cannot determine the form of the mind from its functions, it does not mean that there is not just one form that the mind can take.

<sup>43</sup> "intelligibeler Gegenstand."

toward an intellectual intuition of the subject. Negatively stated, the argument for such an intellectual intuition is that if there is an awareness of the subject which is not an awareness of the subject as an appearance (as an object of sensible intuition), then, whether we can legitimately call what this awareness an intellectual intuition of the subject or not, Kant must accept some form of non-sensible awareness. This argument suffers from a clear inadequacy; namely, that it makes the inference from there being an awareness of the existence of the subject, to the claim that there is some object for this awareness. It is Brook's attempt to steer a path between the (recognised) inadequacy of this argument, and yet do justice to the peculiar nature of the subject's awareness of itself, that leads him to adopt a Fichtean standpoint.

For the sake of clarity Brook's argument can be broken down into three separate stages: the first consists of the claim that 'I' is a referring expression; the second identifies the I referred to as the subject of experiences via an awareness of the activity of this subject; the third stage, in distinguishing between knowledge and awareness of something as it is in itself, suggests that our awareness of ourselves as the subject of experience cannot merely be an awareness of how we appear to appear to ourselves, but is an awareness of the subject-in-itself.

Although conducted from an entirely different perspective, Allison's account of the Kantian subject reaches many of the same conclusions arrived at by Brook. Allison, as has already been indicated, is hostile to the notion that there could be any reconciliation between Kant and functionalism. However, the aspects of Brook's argument that we shall be focusing on do not bear upon his general thesis regarding the contemporary relevance of Kant's theory for cognitive science, but rather upon the more limited concern of his account of the Kantian subject. The issue which will be key for us — and over which Brook and Allison are in agreement — is whether there is for Kant, in Brook's terms, an "immediate awareness" or, Allison's preferred term, an "intellectual consciousness" of the subject.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Brook, *Kant and the Mind*, 247 and Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 276. Within this context, the position advocated by Pippin is identical to that of Allison; see Pippin, "Kant of the Spontaneity of Mind," 459–63. Although Ameriks adopts a distinctive position, and disagrees explicitly with Allison regarding the nature of the awareness to which Kant is committed, he is also of the view that there is a "primordial 'self-consciousness,'" see "From Kant to Frank," in *The Modern Subject*, ed. Karl Ameriks and Dieter Sturma (Albany: SUNY, 1995), 226. Ameriks' criticism of Allison is to be found in "Kant and the Self," 65.

Brook's argument for the referential character of the I is made by bringing into connection two points that we are already familiar with. These are, firstly, that there is an I that does not involve the ascription of any properties and, secondly, that when we do ascribe properties to ourselves, in empirical judgements, the I is always already presupposed. Evidence that Kant takes the I to involve a reference to the subject comes in those places where Kant discusses the fact that we have no intuition of any qualities of the subject. Although in the B-Deduction and the Paralogisms Kant articulates the view that the I is not an object of intuition, he retains the notion that we are, nonetheless, conscious of the subject as existing:

in attaching 'I' to our thoughts we denote the subject of inherence only transcendently, without noting in it any quality whatsoever — in fact, without knowing anything of it either by direct acquaintance or by reasoning. [A355]

[das Subject der Inhärenz durch das dem Gedanken angehängte Ich nur transscendental bezeichnet werde, ohne die mindeste Eigenschaft desselben zu bemerken, oder überhaupt etwas von ihm zu kennen oder zu wissen.]

Given the contentless nature of the denotation, it might be wondered by what right this is taken to be a reference to myself as myself; that is to say, it might be wondered how this awareness can not only be an awareness of myself, but also an awareness “that it is me of which I am aware.”<sup>45</sup> It will be recalled that in our discussion of the B-Deduction the capacity to attach the ‘I think’ to a representation follows not from any special features of our awareness of ourselves, but rather from the necessary conditions for the objective unity of representations. In this case, it is problematic to take the I to denote (if it is to denote anything at all) something other than the objective unity of the representations.<sup>46</sup> However, this account appears to lose a feature which accompanies the attachment of the I to representations, namely that those representations are *my* representations. Kant indicates this when he says that it is precisely because they are *my* representations that “they must conform to the condition under which alone they *can* stand together in one universal self-

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<sup>45</sup> Brook, *Kant and the Mind*, 72. Similar points are also discussed, in reference to the reflexive nature of consciousness or the personal quality of representations, in Allison, “On Naturalising Kant’s Transcendental Psychology,” 343–6, and also in Ameriks, “Understanding Apperception Today,” 332–4.

<sup>46</sup> We will return to this point in our criticisms of Brook’s position.

consciousness”[B132]<sup>47</sup>. That is, Brook takes Kant to be claiming that the awareness of the objective unity of representations does not constitute an awareness of the subject of these representations; if the I were not to denote there could be no awareness of representations as *mine*. There must, therefore, be an awareness of myself as the subject of representations.<sup>48</sup> This argument is further reinforced by Brook when he notes the “perpetual circle”[A346/B404]<sup>49</sup> which Kant says we revolve in when making any judgement concerning the I of the ‘I think’ because that which “was to be explained, must itself be presupposed.”[B422]<sup>50</sup> Brook takes this to mean that in order to apply any empirical judgement to myself, I must first be aware that it is to *me* that these judgements are being applied, secondly, that it is *me* that these judgements are taken to be true of and, thirdly, that this awareness of myself is not derivable from any knowledge of myself through properties ascribed on the basis of empirical judgements. According to Brook, the I of the ‘I think’ must therefore be a term which denotes me *as* me; it is the awareness of myself as myself.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “als meine Vorstellungen ... müssen sie doch der Bedingung notwendig gemäß sein, unter der sie allein in einem allgemeinen Selbstbewußtsein zusammenstehen können”.

<sup>48</sup> This argumentative structure is employed not only by Brook but also by Powell. For example, see Powell, *Self-Consciousness*, 234. The difference between the positions they adopt is as follows: Brook takes the awareness of ourselves which is referred to when we are aware of representations being ours, to be the same ‘I’ that can accompany representations when they form an objective unity; for Powell, by contrast, this second ‘I’ is merely formal and is not a referring expression (or refers merely to the objective unity of representations), and the awareness of representations being ours involves an awareness of ourselves as Strawsonian persons or embodied agents. Exactly what this second kind of awareness is an awareness of is somewhat difficult to determine from the information that Powell provides, but there would appear to be only two alternatives, neither of which would be readily reconcilable with an unmodified Kantian position: either it needs to be an empirical awareness, or what is required is some kind of intellectual intuition.

<sup>49</sup> “beständigen Cirkel.”

<sup>50</sup> “welches doch hat erklärt werden sollen, zum Grunde legen [muß].”

<sup>51</sup> “Awareness of myself as subject, as myself, has to be *something more than* awareness of properties of myself, no matter what the properties; I must be able to be aware of myself *simply* as myself — no properties, no manifold.” Brook, *Kant and the Mind*, 76. Although Brook, on p. 88, indicates that he regards his position on this point as clearly distinct from that of Allison, the situation is ambiguous. Allison alludes (in *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 290–3) to the “Wittgensteinian” view that, p. 282, the I “does not refer to anything at all,” what he means by this is that there is no *object* to which the I refers. His position, however, is merely less articulated than that of Brook, rather than being distinct from it, because he too is committed to the view that there is an immediate self-conscious awareness distinct from empirical self-consciousness, and that this self-consciousness is not an awareness of some property or attribute of an object. Allison’s



Brook's account of the manner in which this awareness of ourselves is come by forms the second stage in his argument. What is crucial here is Kant's insistence on the distinction between our awareness of the self as an object via a synthesis of the manifold of intuition (given when we, for instance, consider ourselves in the mirror), and the awareness that we have of the self as a subject which contains no manifold. This distinction, as we have seen, at the very least raises a question as to how we are aware of our own existence and opens up the possibility of a different form of awareness.

Despite the fact that being able to attach the 'I think' to representations acts as a keystone to the argument of the Deduction, Kant has very little to say about our awareness of ourselves. Furthermore, what he does say does little more than highlight that our awareness of ourselves is not an awareness of an object. It is both Allison's and Brook's suggestion that Kant's comments can be rendered coherent and consistent with the introduction of a distinction between an awareness of objects of representation and an awareness of the act of representing. This interpretation receives general textual support from the different capacities attributed to sensibility and the understanding. Kant frequently highlights that the synthesis of the manifold is an activity performed by the understanding, an act of spontaneity, and he says that this activity gives us a consciousness of ourselves: "I exist as an intelligence conscious solely of its power of combination"[B158]<sup>52</sup>.

This statement appears to give us two key elements in support of the Brook-Allison interpretation. Firstly, the combination of the manifold is an activity performed upon intuitions, but this activity itself adds no intuitive content. While this activity produces the unity of representations through which we can be aware of objects, it itself provides no additional elements to the manifold of which we can be aware as an object (or as some characteristic of an object). We are conscious, therefore, not of an object but of the activity itself. Secondly, Kant's remark provides a clear link between the consciousness of activity and our consciousness of ourselves as the subject of representations: we have an awareness of ourselves through the awareness of the activity, because it is the I that performs this activity.

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clearest discussion of these issues is "Kant's Refutation of Materialism," 192-4.

<sup>52</sup> "ich existire als Intelligenz, die sich lediglich ihres Verbindungsvermögens bewußt ist."

Although this point is left largely unelucidated by Kant, this link can be clarified if we recall Kant's argument to the effect that if representations are to be synthesised then those representations must all have a common subject. It seems that any awareness of the activity of synthesis is an awareness that there exists a subject common to the representations synthesised.

In asserting, and at this point departing from the interpretation offered by Allison, that the awareness we have of ourselves through the activity of synthesis is an awareness of the noumenal subject, Brook appears (for reasons outlined in our discussion of intellectual intuition) to be advancing a straightforwardly un-Kantian claim. However, this assertion is finessed by means of the distinction between awareness and knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Knowledge always involves some intuitive content, whether that be provided by means of sensibility or (as in some hypothetical case) by means of an intuitive understanding. The awareness that we have of ourselves as subjects has no intuitive content and as such involves no claims to knowledge of the subject as either phenomenon or noumenon: "I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only *that* I am." [B157]<sup>54</sup> However, if we accept the first and second stages of Brook's argument of what the I refers to, and we have an immediate awareness of ourselves as that something which performs the activity of synthesis upon the manifold of intuition, then we seem to be driven to the conclusion that we have an awareness of the noumenal subject.<sup>55</sup> That is to say, if the I refers to the subject such that the subject is that which performs acts of synthesis, and if I am further aware of myself as that which performs these acts,

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<sup>53</sup> Brook, *Kant and the Mind*, 252–4. The same distinction is also drawn by Allison in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 290. Allison's denial that the immediate self-consciousness which he attributes to Kant constitutes any kind of knowledge of the noumenal subject, arises from his unwillingness to collapse the distinction between the immediate self-consciousness of the subject and an intellectual intuition. The kind of capacities that Kant says are required for intellectual intuition are distinct from those involved in the immediate self-awareness and so, from Allison's perspective, for Brook to introduce the language of noumena at this point is, at the very least, misleading, because this language is being employed in a manner inconsistent with Kant's own understanding of the terms. For Allison, p. 293, this awareness is a new and unacknowledged form of consciousness, which falls outside of the "phenomenal-noumenal distinction."

<sup>54</sup> "bin ich mir meiner selbst ... bewußt, nicht wie ich mir erscheine, noch wie ich an mir selbst bin, sondern nur daß ich bin."

<sup>55</sup> For a similar attempt (from within the Brook–Allison framework) to articulate the relationship between the I of the 'I think' and the moral or supersensible subject see Lewis Baldacchino, "Kant's Theory of Self-Consciousness," *Kant-Studien* 71 (1980): passim.

then I am aware of myself as I am — and not as I appear to myself. Kant himself appears to make this very point (although he forgets the distinction between awareness and knowledge):

*I, as intelligence and thinking subject, know myself as an object that is thought, in so far as I am given to myself beyond that which is in intuition [B155].*

[Ich, als Intelligenz und denkend Subject, erkenne mich selbst als gedachtes Object, so fern ich mir noch über das in der Anschauung gegeben bin].

These three arguments advanced by Brook provide clear support for Fichte's interpretation of Kant. This is not to say that these two interpretations are by any means identical, but the interpretations offered by Brook and Allison retain some of the key features in common with Fichte's interpretation — whilst avoiding the inadequacies of the latter. Thus, both Brook and Allison account for the references we make to the subject in terms which do not reduce the I to a mere formality within the system of representations. They also account for our awareness of ourselves as an awareness of something that is both real (non-illusory) yet fundamentally different from our awareness of objects. These readings evade our previous criticisms of Fichte in that they rely on the notion that the transcendental subject is not absolute. The activity that Fichte attributes to the transcendental subject is not merely the activity of synthesis; for Fichte it is a confusion on Kant's part to introduce the notion that there is something given to us which is not a produce of the activity of the absolute subject. Hence, the activity of which we are aware, for Fichte, is not that which renders representations my representations on the basis of my having synthesised them, but rather the activity of producing the self-conscious subject through a free act of reflection. Although this does not legitimate Fichte's claim that his *Wissenschaftslehre* is nothing other than the Kantian system, nonetheless it does open the way for him to argue that the notion of a given relies on things-in-themselves, and that things-in-themselves are an internal contradiction within Kant's system. Fichte does, in other words, make a plausible case for claiming that the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the only coherent system of transcendental idealism. However, Fichte leaps to an attribution of directionality to the relationship between the subject of experience and the content of experience, in a way that Brook and Allison do not. The latter both maintain that there is a

reciprocal conditioning between the activity of synthesis and representations synthesised; it is not the case that we could have an awareness of our existence in the absence of there being anything given to the subject for it to synthesise. In this sense the subject loses the absolute status that Fichte attributes to it, because the subject is not in the position of being able to posit itself unconditionally.

## 6. The Transcendental Unity of Apperception and the 'I Think'

In the previous chapter and the preceding Sections, we have already gathered sufficient material for an evaluation of the residual Fichtean elements in both the Brook–Allison interpretation and the deconstructionist interpretation of the subject. The problem with these interpretations, including Fichte's own, resides in the conflation of the 'I think' with the transcendental unity of apperception: the first result of which is the reading of the 'I think' as transcendental, as a part of the necessary structure of experience. Before returning to how these interpretations stand up under examination, we shall begin by drawing together the materials assembled in both this chapter and the previous one for the interpretation that we are advancing. Only after this has been achieved will the Fichtean interpretations be scrutinised further.

### 6.1 The 'I Think'

We have already seen how, within the Deduction, Kant thoroughly intertwines the 'I think' with the conditions of possibility of experience. However, it was also emphasised that Kant's interest in the 'I think' follows from the connection between it being possible for the 'I think' to accompany representations and those representations that "*can stand together in one universal self-consciousness*"[B132].<sup>56</sup> That is, the conditions under which representations represent to me are of interest because they provide a starting point for the investigation into the conditions under which representations represent *per se*. Although it is necessary for the 'I think' to be able to accompany representations for those representations to be anything to me, the 'I think' is not numbered amongst these latter conditions. It remains possible for a representation to represent in the absence of the 'I think.'

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<sup>56</sup> "in einem allgemeinen Selbstbewußtsein zusammenstehen können".

The most explicit support for this contention comes in the B-Paralogisms where Kant claims that the ‘I think’ is “an empirical proposition”[B422]<sup>57</sup>. The ‘I think’ does not function as both necessary and *a priori* in the manner of a category of experience. Rather, it is a contingent matter as to whether any experience is, in fact, accompanied by the ‘I think’, and it is always necessary for there to be some given experience, *a posteriori*, before the ‘I think’ itself can be thought. Due to this latter factor, there is distinction between the legitimate and illegitimate employment of the categories and the legitimate and illegitimate inferences that can be made on the basis of the ‘I think’: each gives rise to a quite different set of problems. With regard to the former, difficulties arise not from any misunderstanding of the concepts themselves (i.e., the concepts are invariant across their legitimate and illegitimate uses), but rather from the employment of the concepts within domains where we can have no knowledge of their applicability. Thus, the legitimacy of the categories within the bounds of experience follows from their being constitutive of that experience. However, it also remains the case that any application of the categories to something which is not a possible object of experience is problematic.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the ‘I think’ can have no problematic application since “without some empirical representation to supply the material for thought, the act, I think, would not, indeed take place”[B423]<sup>59</sup>. The ‘I think’ is tied to the purse strings of experience not only for its legitimate employment, but for any employment whatsoever. In such a case, illegitimacy arises from a misunderstanding of what is implied by this tie. As Kant contends in the Paralogisms, it is a mistake to argue that because the ‘I think’ is always available to accompany experience, it is, therefore, substantial; or because it is always singular, it must be simple; or because it is always the same, it is, therefore, identical.

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<sup>57</sup> “ein empirischer Satz.”

<sup>58</sup> “we have an understanding which *problematically* extends further, but we have no intuition, indeed not even the concept of a possible intuition, through which objects outside the field of sensibility can be given, and through which the understanding can be employed *assertorically* beyond that field.”[A255/B310]

[wir haben einen Verstand, der sich *problematisch* weiter erstreckt als jene, aber keine Anschauung, ja auch nicht einmal den Begriff von einer möglichen Anschauung, wodurch uns außer dem Felde der Sinnlichkeit Gegenstände gegeben und der Verstand über dieselbe hinaus *assertorisch* gebraucht werden könne.]

<sup>59</sup> “Allein ohne irgend eine empirische Vorstellung, die den Stoff zum Denken abgiebt, würde der Actus: Ich denke, doch nicht stattfinden.”

This notion of the ‘I think’ as an empirical proposition is fully compatible with the argument found in the Deduction where, as we have seen, the capacity of the ‘I think’ to accompany representations was attributed to the transcendental condition of there being a synthesis of representations. It was there argued that all representation involves a synthesis, and that the capacity of the ‘I think’ to accompany any of the intuitive or representational components being taken up in a synthetic unity, is a function of that synthesis. That is, we took Kant’s claim that “the *analytic* unity of apperception is possible only under the presupposition of a certain *synthetic* unity”[B133]<sup>60</sup> to mean that it is merely a logical function of synthetic unity that the elements of the manifold be given to a single subject. It was argued that it is necessary for there to be a synthesis of the manifold before this manifold can be attributed the common property of belonging to the ‘I think.’ Furthermore, we have seen that it was precisely due to the contentless nature of the ‘I think,’ as a representation which contains no manifold, that it can be applied to any synthetic unity. Indeed, no further synthesis between the representation ‘I think’ and the representation which is thought is necessary, because the ‘I think’ is simply a re-presentation of the unity of the representation itself — without any additional content being introduced into that representation. This requirement from the Deduction for there already to be a synthetic unity is expressed in the Paralogisms in terms of the ‘I think’ being an empirical proposition — something must be given through intuition for synthesis to occur. Furthermore, the contentless nature of this representation is expressed in the Paralogisms by ‘I think’ preceding “the experience which is required to determine the object of perception through the category in respect of time.”[B423]<sup>61</sup> In other words, what has been claimed is that the ‘I think’ does not itself need to denote an object of perception (whichever item of inner sense one takes to represent the mind or soul), because the I has no manifold.

The coincidence of two seemingly contradictory properties — namely that the ‘I think’ is both an empirical representation and yet, at the same time, is an analytic unity — is entirely explained by the lack of manifold contained in this

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<sup>60</sup> “die *analytische* Einheit der Apperception ist nur unter der Voraussetzung irgend einer *synthetischen* möglich.”

<sup>61</sup> “geht aber vor der Erfahrung vorher, die das Object der Wahrnehmung durch die Kategorie in Ansehung der Zeit bestimmen soll”.

representation. It is, firstly, an analytic unity in that the ‘I think’ which accompanies any representation cannot be distinguished from the ‘I think’ accompanying any other representation, since it has no properties by means of which it could be differentiated.<sup>62</sup> It is, secondly, analytic that the ‘I think’ is “*singular*”, that it is one. Indeed, if there were two representations each accompanied by the ‘I think’ which could not yet be thought together as the common representation of a single ‘I think’, then those representations could not constitute a synthetic unity and, consequently, would not be part of one experience in general; quite simply they would be the experience of two different subjects.<sup>63</sup>

## 6.2 Transcendental Apperception

The ‘I think,’ as both empirical and analytic, needs to be sharply distinguished from transcendental apperception, the “necessary synthesis of representations”[B135]<sup>64</sup> which is presupposed by the analytic unity of empirical apperception. Where the ‘I think’ is an item of consciousness — albeit with properties, or rather a lack of them, which distinguish it from all other representations — transcendental apperception is a formal feature of all representations. Formal here does not carry the implication that transcendental apperception can be derived from the mere concept of a representation, but rather that it is the form of representation as such. The evidence for this claim has already been gathered in our discussion of the role of transcendental apperception within the B-Deduction.

We have seen, firstly, that transcendental apperception functions as the condition of possibility for an intuition (or, more generally, a representation)

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<sup>62</sup> “The proposition, that in all the manifold of which I am conscious I am identical with myself, is likewise implied in the concepts themselves, and is therefore an analytic proposition.”[B408]

[Der Satz der Identität meiner selbst bei allem Mannigfaltigen, dessen ich mir bewußt bin, ist ein eben so wohl in den Begriffen selbst liegender, mithin analytischer Satz].

<sup>63</sup> “That the I of apperception, and consequently in every thought, is *singular*, and cannot be resolved into a plurality of subjects, and consequently signifies a logically simple subject, is something already contained in the very concept of thought, and is therefore an analytic proposition.”[B407]

[Daß das Ich der Apperception folglich in jedem Denken ein Singular sei, der nicht in eine Vielheit der Subjecte aufgelöset werden kann, mithin ein logisch einfaches Subject bezeichne, liegt schon im Begriffe des Denkens, ist folglich ein analytischer Satz].

<sup>64</sup> “einer notwendigen Synthesis derselben.”

representing; secondly, that the condition of representations representing is that they are synthesised; and thirdly, that such synthesis must involve the use of concepts because it is only through concepts that representations are related to objects. The forms of intuition give the conditions under which intuition takes place, and transcendental apperception gives the conditions under which representation is possible.<sup>65</sup> Just as we can have no intuition except that mode of intuition which conforms to the forms of space and time, we can have no intuition except that type of intuition which conforms to the form of transcendental apperception; that is, intuition is always the intuition of an object. Kant draws the analogy between transcendental apperception and the forms of intuition in both editions of the Deduction (A107/B136). Furthermore, in both cases Kant indicates that it is the synthetic unity of the manifold which constitutes the transcendental unity of apperception. The original synthetic unity of apperception is that condition,

under which all representations that are given to me must stand, but under which they have also first to be brought by means of a synthesis.  
[B135–6]

[unter der alle mir gegebene Vorstellungen stehen, aber unter die sie auch durch eine Synthesis gebracht werden müssen.]

To say that the representations must stand under the condition of the synthetic unity of apperception is not to mark this unity out as something other than a relation of representations, but is, instead, merely to state that the synthetic relationship between representations, which makes it possible for those representations to constitute representations of objects, needs to be distinguished from the other ways in which the relations can be constituted. In particular, this relationship (of representations under the synthetic unity of apperception) is to be distinguished from relations based on association, resemblance, contiguity, and so on. Kant's vocabulary of representations standing under the synthetic unity of

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<sup>65</sup> “The supreme principle of the possibility of all intuition in its relation to sensibility is, according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, that all the manifold of intuition should be subject to the formal conditions of space and time. The supreme principle of the same possibility, in its relation to understanding, is that all the manifold of intuition should be subject to conditions of the original synthetic unity of apperception.” [B136] [Der oberste Grundsatz der Möglichkeit aller Anschauung in Beziehung auf die Sinnlichkeit war laut der transscendentalen Ästhetik: daß alles Mannigfaltige derselben unter den formalen Bedingung des Raums und der Zeit stehe. Der oberste Grundsatz eben derselben in Beziehung auf den Verstand ist: daß alles Mannigfaltige der Anschauung unter Bedingungen der ursprünglich-synthetischen Einheit der Apperception stehe.]



apperception notwithstanding, we are not here dealing with a concept according to which the manifold of intuition is synthesised; rather the synthesis of the manifold of intuition itself constitutes the synthetic unity of apperception. It is not therefore to be distinguished from the synthesis of the manifold as something standing outside of or apart from this synthesis.

Transcendental apperception is synthetic both in the sense that it is not derivable from the concept of an object in general, and in the sense that it itself is a synthesis. It is, furthermore, transcendental in that it both takes place *a priori* and is a condition of possibility for experience in general. We have already seen that the *a priori* nature of this synthesis derives from it applying to the pure forms of intuition. This means that whatever empirical intuition is given, it is not given merely in accordance with the forms of intuition themselves, but it is, rather, given as *a priori* synthesised through formal intuition. Empirical intuition fills this formal intuition simply as experience. Such experience is, however, not necessarily a subject's experience of an object; that is, it need not be the case that experience be consciously registered. Rather, it is only because of the synthetic unity of apperception that we can be self-conscious:

The thought that the representations given in intuition one and all belong to *me*, is therefore equivalent to the thought that I unite them in one self-consciousness, or can at least so unite them; and although this thought is not itself the consciousness of the *synthesis* of representations, it presupposes the possibility of that synthesis. [B134]

[Der Gedanke: diese in der Anschauung gegebene Vorstellungen gehören mir insgesamt zu, heißt demnach so viel, als ich vereinige sie in einem Selbstbewußtsein, oder kann sie wenigstens darin vereinigen; und ob er gleich selbst noch nicht das Bewußtsein der Synthesis der Vorstellungen ist, so setzt er doch die Möglichkeit der letzteren voraus].

This is a clear statement both of the non-identity of the 'I think' and transcendental apperception, and of the relationship between them. Kant is here claiming, firstly, that unless it is possible the 'I think' to accompany a representation, that representation does not belong to me; secondly, that attaching the 'I think' (or, equivalently, uniting representations in one self-consciousness) is distinct from but requires a synthesis of representations. It is this synthesis that we have identified as transcendental apperception. The synthetic unity of apperception itself guarantees that representations will one and all be subject to a synthesis such

that they can be brought into relation with each other, and it as a consequence of this that they can belong to one self-consciousness. In other words, the synthetic unity of apperception is the ‘ground of the identity of apperception’[B134]<sup>66</sup> but it itself is not apperception, not the ‘I think’.

### 6.3 Confusions Regarding the Kantian Subject

The first form of confusion, and that which deconstructionist readings of the subject in Kant fall prey to, is the identification of the subject of experience (as in the subject to whom experience belongs) and the subject which does the experiencing (as in that through which representations are representations of something). It is only on the basis of the manifold of intuition undergoing the synthesis which is constitutive of the subject in this second sense that they are attributed “Being”. The subject of experience is no different in this regard. Although the ‘I think’ is not itself the product of such synthesis, in that it is to be distinguished from the empirical subject because it contains no manifold and is not given through experience, it is nonetheless only on the basis of there being such synthesis that the ‘I think’ is itself possible. We have seen that the analytic nature of the unity of the ‘I think’ does not alter this. This is because it is only when a synthetic unity is already established that the general concept of the ‘I think’ can itself be extracted, since the ‘I think’ designates what the synthesised representations share — namely that they are subject to such synthesis — without referring to any of the intuited properties of the representations.<sup>67</sup> There is, therefore, no paradox here. The subject, in the first sense, does derive its being from experience; ‘I think’ is an empirical proposition. The subject, in the second sense (which can only properly be called a subject in the loosest of senses), also has no being in the absence of any manifold of empirical intuition being given for synthesis, since as a transcendental unity it is the mere form of experience in general. It is a form in that it designates the manner in which intuitions must be ordered if they are to constitute an experience of something, and, as such a form, the subject has no existence independent of its instantiation.

There is, furthermore, no regress of kind identified in *Aenesidemus*; there is

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<sup>66</sup> “der Grund der Identität der Apperception.”

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 84–86.

no need to posit a further subject to whom the 'I think' itself appears. There is no need for an absolute subject to whom all representations must belong. This is because, firstly, it is not a condition of representations representing that such a subject be posited and, secondly, because the 'I think' as a representation poses no special difficulties due to its duality of role as both a representation and the owner of representations. This second difficulty evaporates as soon as it is recognised that, for Kant, it is a logical feature of the synthesis of representations that it is possible for a further representation of the subject to arise; there is no regress to ever deepening conditions of representations, but merely the one and the same representation, the 'I think,' which itself indicates no further condition of representation other than that there is a synthesis. Schulze and Henrich, in other words, posit the need for the subject to whom experience belongs to be such that it both receives experience and stands outside experience. This appears to be somewhat analogous to the adoption of a Newtonian view where space and time are absolute and the 'container' of objects that are found within them. The Kantian answer is the same in both cases; space, time and the subject (as the transcendental unity of apperception) are forms of experience, and, therefore, questions concerning the space (within which absolute space exists) or the subject (to whom the subject is given) are uncritical.<sup>68</sup> Such questions cannot be raised without stepping outside the frame of the critical sense, and to do this is, in effect, to close the logical gap between Descartes and Kant (as explicitly occurs on Henrich's interpretation).<sup>69</sup>

The argument presented by Brook and Allison involves a similar confusion of the synthetic unity of consciousness and analytic unity of consciousness. It will be remembered that this first stage consisted in the claim that the 'I think' was a referring term, a term that refers to the subject as the beholder of representations. It was argued that in the absence of such reference there would be no way in which representations could be attributable to an experiencing subject. The demand made by this argument is that it be shown how the notion that representations are *mine* can

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<sup>68</sup> For a very different defence of Kant, from within the phenomenological or Heideggerian tradition, see Ameriks, "From Kant to Frank," *passim*. For Manfred Frank's own account see, for example, "Is Self-Consciousness a Case of *présence à soi*? Towards a Meta-Critique of the Recent French Critique of Metaphysics," in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Henrich, "Fichte's Original Insight," 16–7.

arise in the absence of any reference to an I. However, we have already seen that Kant provides just such an argument. It is a condition of representations representing at all that they be subject to a synthesis, but it is a merely logical feature of synthesis that the representations synthesised are all capable of being accompanied by a further representation, namely the ‘I think.’ The latter point is an analytic proposition because it refers to the property of being subject to a synthesis. This is sufficient to explain the properties that are attributed to the I, that it is simple, identical, unified, and it is not clear what more needs to be explained. The question of why representations are ascribed to *me*, rather than us or to some other person or persons, is answered quite straightforwardly by reference to the necessity of synthesis and the analytic consequence of this. It is no more than an illusion that there is some soul in the driver’s seat.<sup>70</sup>

A similar confusion is also in play regarding the second stage of the Brook—Allison argument: that the awareness of the I is an awareness of the activity performed by this I. In a broad sense we can agree with the claim that the ‘I think’ expresses a synthesis — given that the ‘I think’ is dependent upon such synthesis — but to say that the I itself plays a productive role within the synthetic activity is to reverse the dependency relation. However, we have already seen that Brook provided textual support for his interpretation at this point: “I exist as an intelligence

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<sup>70</sup> Kant expresses this in his remarkably crisp conclusion to the B-Paralogisms:

“I think myself on behalf of a possible experience, at the same time abstracting from all actual experience; and I conclude therefrom that I can be conscious of my existence even apart from experience and its empirical conditions. In so doing I am confusing the possible *abstraction* from my empirically determined existence with the supposed consciousness of a possible *separate* existence of my thinking self, and I thus come to believe that I have knowledge that what is substantial in me is the transcendental subject. But all that I really have in thought is simply the unity of consciousness, on which, as the mere form of knowledge, all determination is based.”[B 426–7]

[Ich denke mich selbst zum Behuf einer möglichen Erfahrung, indem ich noch von aller wirklichen Erfahrung abstrahire, und schließe daraus, daß ich mich meiner Existenz auch außer der Erfahrung und den empirischen Bedingungen derselben bewußt werden könne. Folglich verwechsele ich die mögliche Abstraction von meiner empirisch bestimmten Existenz mit dem vermeinten Bewußtsein einer absondert möglichen Existenz meines denkenden Selbst und glaube das Substantiale in mir als das transscendentale Subject zu erkennen, indem ich bloß die Einheit des Bewußtseins, welche allem Bestimmen als der bloßen Form der Erkenntniß zum Grunde liegt, in Gedanken habe.]

conscious solely of its power of combination”[B158]<sup>71</sup>. Passages such as this one are used by both Brook and Allison as the basis for their notion of a distinctive non-phenomenal consciousness of the activity of synthesis performed by the subject. However, there is no need to read these passages as positing either some immediate consciousness of activity or a consciousness of myself as performing an activity. Rather the notion of a consciousness of synthesis can be explained in terms of Kant’s account of the conditions which intuitions can come to represent. There is no extra or added intuitive content which distinguishes between the association of A and B and the synthesis of A and B. In the latter case, however, the intuitions are united under some concept and there is a transcendental, as opposed to an empirical, unity of consciousness. What the ‘I think’ (which can accompany the unified representation) is a consciousness of, is that ‘A is the cause of B’, and this consciousness does constitute a consciousness of the synthesis of A and B, but it does not imply a consciousness of something other than A and B or of the synthesising of them. That is to say, there is a consciousness of synthesis only in the limited sense that the representations which we can be conscious of are synthesised. There is no consciousness of the process of synthesis *per se*. In abstraction from intuition, it can be said that the I exists as a consciousness of synthetic unity or of synthesis, but this is not to isolate a special kind of consciousness. It is instead merely to describe, in accordance with the general procedure of the Deduction, the form of consciousness.<sup>72</sup> The point, therefore, that we take Kant to be making in his reference to the consciousness of synthesis is an abstract one regarding the form which the empirical ‘I think’ proposition takes, rather than a claim regarding what the content of the consciousness is.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> “ich existire als Intelligenz, die sich lediglich ihres Verbindungsvermögens bewußt ist.”

Other statements which make similar claims to a consciousness of the act of synthesis are to found on B133 and most explicitly on A103–4 and A108. The clearest case of a counter example occurs on B134. See also Kitcher, *Transcendental Psychology*, 105–8.

<sup>72</sup> Kant employs the notion of abstracting from the manifold frequently throughout the Deduction, see, for examples, B155 and B162. See also the B426–7 passage previously quoted in note 70 above and B 429.

<sup>73</sup> For Kitcher’s discussion of this issue see *Transcendental Psychology*, 126–8. Kitcher’s dismisses these passages, p. 83, on the basis of what she perceives to be a confusion on Kant’s part between “the perspective of the individual who is engaging in various mental activities and that of the theorist who is describing those activities.” On our reading, however, there is neither the need to appeal to “synthesis watching,” p. 127 (Kitcher’s

The I that Kant associates with the act of synthesis itself remains completely unknown to us; we know only that acts of synthesis take place and take place independently of intuition. The only justification for associating this activity with an I resides in the spontaneous nature of the act: if the act is not given through objects, then it is attributable to us. However, this attribution carries with it no association with the I of the 'I think', because it is merely a condition of our being able to represent ourselves as simple, unified and identical that such activity take place. This activity itself need be none of these things, and it remains completely unknown to us how the activity comes about. That is, the manner in which the activity of synthesis is itself represented is via the phenomenal determination of this activity in the representation 'I think,' but the qualities analytically associated with this representation have no bearing on the conditions under which this activity itself takes place — even whether there are multiple loci of activity or just the one. All that can be said as to the nature of the activity is that it is spontaneous.

The attribution of activity to the I invites the confusion between the empirical awareness of ourselves as subjects and our awareness of the spontaneity of synthesis. The results of this confusion are clearly visible in Brook's argument. Representations are thought to be attributable to *me* because I have an awareness of myself as the subject of representations; this awareness is not an awareness of myself as a phenomenal object, but rather of myself as the synthesiser of representations. Although this awareness has no intuitive content, and therefore cannot be classed as knowledge, it is an awareness of how I must be in myself, not merely how I appear to myself: it is an awareness of how I must be in order to be able to appear to myself. The first problem here is the confusion of the 'I think' and the I as synthesiser; although the awareness of both contains no manifold and is not the awareness of an object, they cannot legitimately be identified. On the one hand, there is an awareness of a empirical representation which can arise as an analytic consequence of the synthetic activity required for any experience. On the other hand, there is the ground of the synthetic activity itself, the nature of which is

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description of Allison's view), or to a muddle on Kant's part. Kant's statements are rather an account of what the form of consciousness is. If one takes Kant's statements either to be a case of synthesis watching or of a confusion of levels, then one is taking the form of consciousness to be a kind of consciousness, confusing the transcendental with the empirical.

completely unknown to us. In the latter case the awareness of ourselves no more constitutes an awareness of the I-in-itself than intuition is an awareness of the object-in-itself. It is not, as is the case with the 'I think', an awareness of a representation, but merely the recognition on theoretical grounds that intuition is given as manifold and is not capable of constituting a representation of anything simply as a manifold. In other words, the synthesis of the manifold of intuition necessary for representation has an origin distinct from intuition, but this origin nonetheless remains unknown to us. Being aware of this need for synthesis does not constitute awareness of this origin, just as being aware that there must be some origin of the manifold of intuition itself does not constitute an awareness of things-in-themselves. That Kant is committed to the existence of things-in-themselves is clear throughout the first *Critique* and he makes frequent reference to things-in-themselves as the ground of appearances (e.g., B164, A191/B235, A494/B522), although he is quite aware of the problematic nature of this relationship:

If appearances are not taken for more than they actually are; if they are viewed not as things-in-themselves, but merely as representations, connected according to empirical laws, they must themselves have grounds which are not appearances. The effects of such an intelligible cause appear, and accordingly can be determined through other appearances, but its causality is not so determined. [A536–7/B564–5]

[Wenn ... Erscheinungen für nichts mehr gelten, als sie in der That sind, nämlich nicht für Dinge an sich, sondern bloße Vorstellungen, die nach empirischen Gesetzen zusammenhängen, so müssen sie selbst noch Gründe haben, die nicht Erscheinungen sind. Eine solche intelligibele Ursache aber wird in Ansehung ihrer Causalität nicht durch Erscheinungen bestimmt, obzwar ihre Wirkungen erscheinen und sie durch andere Erscheinungen bestimmt werden können.]

In other words, even if we understand appearances according to the tenets of transcendental idealism, we can still be aware that these appearances must themselves have some ground which is not a possible object of experience, and when we speak of 'cause' in this regard we are not referring to the category of causality, but only reinforcing the point that the objects of which we are conscious are merely the appearance of something of which we can have no knowledge. To introduce causality is, strictly speaking, illegitimate, but we have no other way of indicating that there must exist a ground for appearances except in terms that apply only to appearances themselves. Kant makes this same point with regard to the subject-in-itself: if we consider the spontaneity of the synthesis without regard to the way in

which the manifold is presented through the forms of intuition, then references to myself as subject of thought or as the ground of the spontaneity “do not signify the categories of substance or cause.”[B429]<sup>74</sup> Throughout this I am conscious of myself merely as thinking, and

how my own self may be given in intuition is set to one side and there it could be to me mere appearance of which I think but not mere appearance insofar as I think; in the consciousness of myself through mere thinking I am the *being itself*, admittedly nothing of this is thereby given to me for thought. [B429\*]

[wie mein eigenes Selbst in der Anschauung gegeben sei, das setze ich bei Seite, und da könnte es mir, der ich denke, aber nicht so fern ich denke, bloß Erscheinung sein; im Bewußtsein meiner Selbst beim bloßen Denken bin ich das Wesen selbst, von dem mir aber freilich dadurch noch nichts zum Denken gegeben ist.]

How I appear to myself, i.e. how the I which performs the spontaneous activity of thought appears in intuition, is nothing but an appearance. However, insofar as thinking is taking place, I am conscious not merely of the appearance of myself, but also of myself as an appearance. This is an appearance which (with regard to that aspect of this appearance not derived from intuition) is a product of a spontaneous activity, the ground of which is completely unknown. Insofar as thought is required, however, I am conscious that there is something which is the ground of this thought, even though nothing of this ground is itself thought.

Kant clearly has some difficulty in expressing this point because there is no opportunity for a shift in vocabulary between the ‘I as it appears’ and the ‘I as it is in itself’. When discussing objects Kant can make use of a distinction that is already part of the philosophical tradition between objects as we are aware of them, and things as they are in themselves. Even in the case of the latter distinction, Kant has some difficulty in maintaining a consistent set of distinctions, as is witnessed by his occasional shifts from, for example, speaking of a being which is the ‘cause of appearances’ and acts as a ‘thing-in-itself’ to speaking of a ‘transcendental object’ whose ‘*effect* is met with in appearance.’[A538–9/B566–7]<sup>75</sup> Kant, furthermore, is committed to view that the ground of thought can be attributed a moral

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<sup>74</sup> “Wenn ich mich hier als Subject der Gedanken oder auch als Grund des Denkens vorstelle, so bedeuten diese Vorstellungsarten nicht die Kategorien der Substanz oder der Ursache”.

<sup>75</sup> “die Ursache von Erscheinungen”; “nach ihrer Handlung als eines Dinges an sich selbst”; “transscendentaler Gegenstand”; “ihre Wirkung dennoch in der Erscheinung angetroffen wird.”



responsibility. This leads him to speak as if the I as it appears and this ground of thought can be identified with one another, at least insofar as this ground is always referred to by a singular term.<sup>76</sup> However, within the confines of the first *Critique*, there can be no such commitment to either the nature of the I-in-itself or what the relationship is between the I-in-itself and the I as it appears. Brook's point regarding the awareness that we have of a noumenal subject via the activity of synthesis has, therefore, some validity, but it is not the awareness that he takes it to be. On the one hand, there is an awareness that the ground of synthesis itself remains unknown to us because it lies outside of all possible experience; this is an awareness of our own limited capacities. On the other hand, there is an awareness of ourselves as a representation which contains no manifold, this is the awareness of ourselves as the subject of experience, the 'I think.' Brook's error is to confuse the two, associating an awareness of the subject as it is in itself with an awareness of ourselves as the subject of experience.

## 7. Conclusion

Kant neither requires nor has any implicit commitment to there being any intellectual intuition of the subject; both the apparent paradoxes thrown up by the 'I think' being a representation without an intuitive manifold and the reinterpretations which suggest some solution to these imaginary problems rest upon the conflation of divergent senses of the term subject, I or apperception. The threefold nature of the subject which we have identified corresponds to three possible misinterpretations. Conflating any two terms in this trichotomy results in some variant of the positions that we have criticised above. We can confuse:

- 1) The synthetic unity of apperception with the 'I think'.
- 2) The 'I think' with the I-in-itself.
- 3) The synthetic unity of apperception with the I-in-itself.

The first form of confusion induces the problems posed by both

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<sup>76</sup> In addition to the considerations of his moral philosophy, Kant also (even during the writing of the first *Critique*) had thought of the unity of consciousness as the unity of a thinking thing. Although the Paralogisms rule out this inference, it may have found its way into the final version of the *Critique*. An informative account of the development of Kant's thought in this regard is given in Wolfgang Carl, "Kant's First Drafts of the Deduction of the Categories," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckart Förster, 11–20. See also Kitcher, "Kant's Real Self," 122–3.

*Aenesidemus* and those here associated with a deconstructionist approach. It appears to be the case that there is some internal contraction in the position attributed to the subject; it is on the one hand a representation and on the other that unity of consciousness necessary for the production of representations. As *Aenesidemus* understands it, it is constitutive of representations that they represent to someone; the subject of representations is identified as the I think and yet Kant maintains that this is itself a representation. This position generates the need for a subject for the representation of the subject. Although operating at a more abstract level, the same problematic informs the deconstructionist approach; it is claimed that representations only come to represent on the ground that they are given to a unity of consciousness, yet this unity of consciousness itself is nothing other than a representation: one could say, the subject is a representation.

Fichte provides a pre-eminent example of the second confusion. The I which is the subject of the representations of objects and has merely a logical relationship to these representations is identified with the subject which has a productive relationship with representations. The subject to whom representations are given in this second sense is absolute because it is the condition of synthesis rather than being conditioned by it.

The interpretation offered by Brook confuses the theoretical awareness of the form which any synthesis of representations must have, the synthetic unity of apperception, with the awareness of the ground of the synthesis itself. Where Fichte interprets a logical relationship in terms of production Brook associates a transcendental relationship with a productive one. The form which experience must take is identified with that which induces experience to take on this form.

It follows from the reading that we are adopting here that the claims advanced in the Deduction and reinforced in the Paralogisms regarding both the existential and intellectual status of the I, do not form either an internal contradiction or a hidden prop to Kant's argument.

In the first case, the claim 'I exist' arises as a consequence of the distinction between the analytic and synthetic unity of apperception. We have seen the analytic unity of apperception follows as a logical consequence of the form which experience must take if representations are to represent objects, that is, they must be subject to

the form of the synthetic unity of apperception. The representation of a representation merely identifies the analytic feature of representations (that they are subject to synthesis) and, hence, requires no additional manifold of intuition for its production. However, the lack of any determinate manifold of intuition does not render the 'I think' a mere empty concept, because it is necessary that the indeterminate manifold of intuition be subject to a conceptual synthesis. Furthermore, Kant can legitimately claim that the I exists without appealing to some intuition of the I that exists. There is no special object corresponding to this representation, but, rather, the I merely serves to mark the occurrence of representation itself.

In the second case the intellectual status attributed to the subject does not involve the identification of the 'I think' with the noumenal subject. As we have seen, the spontaneity of the 'I think' can be maintained precisely because of the lack of an intuitive component of any sort; it is only due to the synthetic ordering of the manifold of intuition (the productive source of both the manifold and the introduced ordering remaining outside the field of knowledge), that the representation of ourselves as the subject of experience can arise. We have shown that, despite puzzles arising both from Kant's own ambiguities and from the Fichtean interpretation, Kant's account of the subject remains perfectly in harmony with the Deduction.

At the end of the second chapter, we seemed to be faced with a trade-off between, on the one hand, maintaining the objective validity of the categories and, on the other, denying that we can have any knowledge or awareness of the subject as it is in itself. This choice is now seen to be specious. However, one *is* faced with this choice when one either accepts that Kant holds to the reflective theory of consciousness or takes Kant to have adopted a proto-Fichtean view of the subject. In the first instance, we are meant to be able to identify ourselves as that which carries out the acts of synthesis. However, since our consciousness of ourselves arises as a result of such activity a regress ensues. In the Fichtean case, our consciousness of ourselves in the activity of synthesis is taken to be immediate, and yet this leads to the view that we have, at least, some awareness of the subject as it is in itself. However, as has been explored here, and is to be investigated further in the next chapter, Kant's claims for objective validity, in fact, do not lead him to

adopt the view that there is any awareness of the subject in the activity of synthesis,  
nor do the claims require him to adopt such a view.

**Chapter Five**  
**An Answer to Hume?**

## 1. Introduction

Within this chapter the objections which have been raised against the possibility in principle of the Transcendental Deduction succeeding are reconsidered. In the second section the progression from providing an answer to the objections raised by Stroud, Gram, and Cassam into the apparent paradoxes of the Kantian subject is highlighted. The discussion of the subject in the previous chapter is then employed to halt the slide from the first set of difficulties into the second. Subsequently, in Section 3, the more general question regarding the success of the Deduction as an answer Hume is raised. It is suggested that despite the fact that within the Deduction itself there appear to be no resources available which allow Kant to establish that particular concepts are categories, the success of the Deduction should not be judged in these terms. What the Deduction establishes is a domain within which distinctively transcendental justification for the application of categories to experience can be offered.

## 2. Scepticism and the Subject

In Chapter three the argument of the Transcendental Deduction was construed as an attempt to defend the notion of an *a priori* conceptual synthesis of the manifold of intuition.<sup>1</sup> The primary aim of our discussion was to demonstrate that the two stages of Kant's argument (or the 'Conceptual' and the 'Satisfaction Components') are reconciled without a direct appeal to transcendental idealism. The problem to which this chapter responded was that there appeared to be no way in which the conditions outlined in the first stage of the Deduction's argument (concerning the analytic unity of consciousness and the need for a conceptual synthesis of the manifold) could be maintained to be universally applicable. Thus, the claim made by Kant's critics was that there is some limited domain within which it is true that the manifold of intuition must be subject to a conceptual synthesis if there is to be any experience of it. This, however, does not constitute a demonstration that the domain within which this limitation holds and the domain of all experience are themselves coextensive. Yet, it is necessary for Kant to establish precisely this point if the Deduction is to succeed.

We have seen that the criticisms levelled by Stroud, Gram and Cassam are,

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 65–68.

each in their own way, centred on this problem. In each case the subjective necessity for there to be some synthesis of the manifold under concepts is accepted, but difficulties are said to arise as soon as the further claim is introduced regarding the objective validity of the concepts. The criteria for objective validity consist in the concepts not merely being universally applicable to experience, but also that they must play some kind of constructive or constitutive role within experience. The problems raised target both aspects of this claim in such a way that Kant appears to be placed in an unresolvable double bind. The claim to universal applicability raises the question as to whether Kant is simply stipulating what is to count as experience such that the argument merely becomes tautologous. If this is the case, then it has not been demonstrated that there cannot be intuitions which are something to us without thereby being subject to a conceptual synthesis, but rather Kant would merely have defined 'something to us' in such a way that it requires a synthesis under categories. A narrow definition of experience such as this clearly does nothing but beg the question of whether our experience is, in fact, experience as Kant defines it. If, on the other hand, appeal is made to the constitutive role that the categories play by virtue of the supposed fact that our experience is not of things-in-themselves, but rather of appearances, and if one rules out on this basis the possibility of experience being constituted by anything other than representations synthesised according to concepts, then Kant's position is equally untenable. This once again appears to be merely a stipulation which serves to ground the universal applicability of the categories by means of a claim regarding the nature of experience. Yet, it is the nature of experience that is at issue in the question of whether the categories do or do not have objective validity.

The details of the problem that Kant faces in establishing that the categories are objectively valid have already been considered at some length and shall not be pursued any further here. It has also been contended that the argument of the Deduction does present a convincing case for dismissing this problem. The principle point with which we have dealt is the relationship between the Deduction and transcendental idealism. The transition from the Conceptual to the Satisfaction Components of the Deduction need not proceed by means of an appeal to some limitation regarding the nature of intuitions which is derived from transcendental

idealism. The stricture which both Cassam and Guyer take to be necessary, and to be derivative of transcendental idealism, is that intuitions always possess that degree of order or coherence which makes it possible for us to have experience of them. Unless it is held that all intuitions must be subject to a conceptual synthesis, it remains possible for these intuitions to be something to me, without it thereby being possible for the 'I think' to accompany them. It, therefore, appears that Kant must be making presuppositions as to the kind of intuitions that there can be. However, on the previous reconstruction of the second stage of the Deduction, the notion that there is some intrinsic order to intuitions, which allows for the application of categories, plays no role within the Deduction as either an explicit presupposition or an implicit assumption. It is the representation of intuitions in spatial and temporal relations, rather than the representation of intuitions as such, that is at issue. In other words, it has been argued that the concepts are applicable to a 'chaotic' or disordered manifold, that is a manifold within which there is, for instance, no possibility of association. It is merely insofar as intuitions are represented as being in spatial and temporal relationships with one another that the categories achieve objective validity. It is because we have taken the distinction between the forms of intuition and formal intuition to be a central element within the Deduction and, in particular, taken this distinction to provide a ground for the notion of transcendental synthesis, that the Deduction is said to draw on the tenets of transcendental idealism only to a minimal extent. In order for it to be possible in every case for there to be a conceptual synthesis of intuitions, Kant requires merely two assumptions. These are drawn by Kant from transcendental idealism, but are by no means exclusively associated with this doctrine. These premises are, firstly, that the spatial and temporal form which intuitions have is exhaustive and, secondly, that there is no intrinsic spatial or temporal determination to intuitions of which we can be aware.

The deficiencies in the criticisms levelled by both Stroud and Gram are clear when considered in light of this interpretation of the second Stage of the Deduction. Stroud's claim is that Kant is committed to a form of subjectivism such that there is a distinction between how we regard experience (i.e. through concepts), and what experience actually involves. It is certainly true that it neither is nor can be a consequence of Kant's argument that we can know that the categories have an



application to whatever things give rise to our intuitions. This, however, is merely a restatement of the claim that we can have no knowledge of things-in-themselves. The potentially damaging aspect of Stroud's criticism resides in the notion that there is a misconstrual of the nature of experience. However, we have seen that the Deduction constitutes an argument as to why there is no disparity here. Stroud's argument seems to proceed along broadly Humean lines. He starts by suggesting that we regard experience in terms of concepts, such as causality, in ways that constitute a, perhaps necessary, misinterpretation of the real nature of our experience which is comprised merely of associations between intuitions or impressions. According to Stroud, then, Kant can maintain, on the basis of the Deduction, that there is nothing to which the notion of a real nature of experience corresponds. Even when experience is taken to be comprised of merely the awareness of spatial and temporal relations between intuitions or an awareness of the associations between intuitions, then this experience has already been subject to a transcendental synthesis. Furthermore, if appeal is made to the associations themselves, rather than to any awareness of them as constituting experience, then there is no way in which this can be the real nature of our experience — because there can no subject which could be said to have this experience.

Similar considerations apply to the circularity objection raised by Gram with his distinction between a strong and a weak sense of 'experience'. Kant certainly begins by positing a definition of experience, in that it must be possible for experience to be accompanied by the 'I think'. However, this does not in itself imply that experience must be conceptual, but rather merely invokes the notion that experiences need to be the experiences of someone. The conceptual nature of experience arises as a consequence of the claim that the kind of experience that we have is one which minimally involves an awareness of merely the spatial and temporal relationships between intuitions. This awareness is said to involve a unity of consciousness, and this unity of consciousness is said to require a conceptual synthesis of the manifold. The notion of experience to which one would have to appeal in order to avoid this conclusion is one within which there is merely an awareness of individual intuitions without any awareness of the relationships between them.

It was on the basis of these arguments that the conclusion was reached in the Chapter three that the Deduction successfully establishes the need for some *a priori* conceptual synthesis of the manifold of intuition and does so only by invoking the claims made within the Aesthetic only to a very limited extent. This is achieved without begging any questions regarding either the domain over which concepts have application, or what the nature of experience is. Concepts can have objective validity with regard to all experience insofar as that experience is experience of the spatial and temporal relations of intuitions.

Although the form of argument that we have found within the Deduction does not draw upon a strong notion of experience, on other occasions Kant does explicitly invoke a notion of experience which contains within it universal and necessary features. Most strikingly, the distinction made between judgements of perception and judgements of experience made within the *Prolegomena* assumes the legitimacy of judgements which attribute necessary relations to the order of appearances. The division that Kant draws here is between an experience of objects which remains invariant — no matter who has this experience or what the state of the subject is at the time of the experience — and the fortuitous or contingent connection of perceptions in a subject [IV 299]. In the former case, the synthesis of perceptions requires the application of categories, because the necessity of the relationship between the perceptions goes beyond what is given in perception itself — the sun causing the stone to be warm being an objective relationship, rather than the subjective connection between the perception of the sun and the perception of the warmth of the stone [IV 301]. As is perfectly fitting to the analytic method of the *Prolegomena*, this argument clearly presupposes the legitimacy of the judgements of experience for which the categories are said to account. Kant's argument here is that pure natural science exists, but its existence cannot be accounted for on the basis of judgements which relate intuitions to one another merely as states of a subject — and this is because such judgements generate neither the universality, nor the necessity, associated with natural science. As Guyer rightly points out, this argument does not support the claim that experience entails the universality and necessity that Kant attributes to it, rather the argument, from the point of view of an empiricist sceptic, has a hypothetical form: *if* experience is such that judgements

regarding necessary and universal connections of intuitions can be asserted, then those intuitions must be subsumed under a pure concept of the understanding.<sup>2</sup>

However, we have maintained that the form of argument employed within the B-Deduction does not draw on a distinction between a strong and a weak sense of experience, but rather opposes intuitions which can be numbered amongst a subject's experience and those which cannot. In summary, Kant's argument began by defining experience in terms of that which the 'I think' can accompany, and it is then shown that *if* this is to happen, then intuitions must be conceptualised. Kant's argument then moves on to conclude that since there are no intuitions which cannot be conceptualised, the 'I think' can accompany all intuitions and the categories have objective validity. This argument, however, is liable to the misgiving that it contains an obfuscation concerning the nature of the subject. The essence of the objection raised against Kant is that the subject is said to play to incompatible roles, in that it functions as both the source and outcome of the activity of synthesis. Both this criticism and what we have termed the Fichtean response to it have a long lineage which stretches from Fichte's response to Schulze, up to current debates arising from Henrich's imputation of a reflective theory of consciousness, and to Strawson's well known interpretation of the 'I think' as "the tangential point of contact between the field of noumena and the world of appearances."<sup>3</sup>

As has been discussed, according to the interpretation proposed by Schulze, the subject "is supposed to constitute the source of the necessary in our knowledge"[*Aen* 154], and the question he raises concerns what the nature of this subject can be, such that the subject can act as a source of necessity. His argument, in short, is that it is necessary for this source to be real — "a real and objectively actual thing"[*Aen* 155] — and known as such, in that it cannot be a mere

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<sup>2</sup> Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge*, 99–102, and "Failure of the B-Deduction," 70–2. According to Guyer's schema — as detailed in Section 4, pp. 110–113, of Chapter 3 above — this argument is of type 1A. Even with the *Prolegomena*, however, the status of Kant's examples is not as straightforward as Guyer assumes. It has been suggested that when read as an attempt by Kant to find empirical analogies for the distinction between the manifold of intuition and categorised experience, then what is assumed to be a defect in the argument can be seen to arise merely because of an inevitable looseness in the fit between a transcendental distinction and an empirical one. See Rhoda H. Kotzin, East Lansing and Jörg Baumgärtner, "Sensations and Judgements of Perception: Diagnosis and Rehabilitation of some of Kant's Misleading Examples," *Kant-Studien* 81 (1990): 407–12.

<sup>3</sup> Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 175. See also 170–4, 247–9.

supposition arising from our own limited faculties that experience has this source of necessity. If real, however, the subject cannot merely be phenomenal. Its reality is intended to be the very ground of the phenomenal and the subject must, therefore, be a thing-in-itself. The ambiguities in Kant's discussion of the subject merely serve to deepen the suspicion that the subject plays an illicit role within the critical system. On the one hand, the subject, in the representation 'I think,' falls under phenomenal consciousness. On the other hand, the ability of the representation 'I think' to accompany intuitions is conditioned by acts of the subject of which, it is said, we also have an awareness. These acts, however, cannot be acts of the I in the 'I think', because it is only as a consequence of this activity that there can be that very phenomenal consciousness within which the 'I think' takes place. It does indeed appear as if we must have some awareness of the subject as it is in itself. At this point it could, therefore, be suggested that although Kant is not begging the question as to whether we have experience of necessity or not (in that he does not define 'something to me' in such a way as to presuppose the need for the categories), the appeal to the need for a synthesis of the manifold in order for there to be a subject of experience is in itself incoherent. If Kant's claim is that experience is something to me insofar as I have synthesised it in such a way that the 'I think' can accompany it, then he needs to explain how I can both engage in an activity and be a product of this activity. Furthermore, if an I is performing acts of synthesis, then could it not be the case that intuitions are something to this subject independently of whether as a consequence of this activity an 'I think' can accompany them? If this were the case then, Kant's argument could only succeed by firstly splitting the subject into a synthesiser and a representation, and then re-conflating it such that all the experiences which the subject has are defined in terms of the 'I think' being able to accompany them.

The persistence of problematic role that Kant attributes to the subject is evidenced, as we have seen, by the many debates surrounding this issue within current secondary material. Taking two exemplars of this from the period of Stroud's original essay on transcendental arguments (1968), Henrich's "Fichte's Original Insight" and Strawson's *Bounds of Sense*, both first published in 1966, foreground the duality of the roles of the Kantian subject to such an extent that it

remains an issue today. One consequence of this has been that the historical and analytic schools of Kant interpretation of recent years are both rooted in the same problem — a problem which, as we have seen, also emerges in ‘continental’ discussions of the first *Critique*.

Although stripped of its ontological aspect, it is Schulze’s problem that re-emerges in Henrich’s discussion of the reflective theory of consciousness. The difficulty identified by Henrich derives not from the question of what kind of knowledge the subject has of itself, but rather from the logic of how the subject can come by such knowledge of itself that it is possible for it to identify itself in self-consciousness. The premise of both accounts is nonetheless the same: the subject is both synthesiser and synthesised, or knower or known. Whereas, for Schulze, the source of the necessity in experience derives from the nature of the subject as synthesiser, on Henrich’s interpretation Kant intends it to arise from the act of self-consciousness in which “the one who thinks and the object of his thought” are identical.<sup>4</sup> The most explicit statement which Henrich finds of this notion in Kant is in the claim that is necessary for the mind to have “before its eyes the identity of its act” if it is to be able to “think its identity in the manifoldness of its representations”[A108]<sup>5</sup>. However, if transcendental apperception is understood to be an act of consciousness reflected back upon itself, then two problems immediately become apparent. Both of these reveal the same paradoxical circularity inherent in this conception of self-consciousness. The first difficulty is that, as an account of self-consciousness, the theory of reflection presupposes — rather than explains — the origin of self-consciousness. The acts of consciousness which themselves are the object of awareness in transcendental apperception are taken to provide the foundation for transcendental apperception, rather than they themselves being instances of it. This foundation is simply taken for granted within Henrich’s reflective theory, because the self or ‘I’ is characterised in terms of an act within which the knower and the known are identical. The self is the act of reflection.

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<sup>4</sup> Henrich, “Fichte’s Original Insight,” 19. Henrich’s evaluation of the reflective theory of consciousness, upon which we are drawing, is contained in pp.19–21.

<sup>5</sup> “das Gemüth könnte sich unmöglich die Identität seiner selbst in der Mannigfaltigkeit seiner Vorstellung und zwar a priori denken, wenn es nicht die Identität seiner Handlung vor Augen hätte, welche alle Synthesis der Apprehension (die empirisch ist) einer transscendentalen Einheit unterwirft”.

However, this engenders a paradoxical situation in which it is only in the act of reflection that the self is said to constitute itself, yet the self simultaneously recognises the identity of itself as subject and object in this very act. The very thing which the act of reflection is supposed to account for needs to be presupposed as something which is recognised in this act. The second consideration which also highlights the circularity of the reflection theory derives from the need for the subject to have knowledge of itself before it can recognise the acts of consciousness as its own. If the act of transcendental apperception is taken to consist in there being an awareness of the acts of consciousness, and if this constitutes an awareness of the subject, then it needs to be explained how the acts of consciousness are recognised as one's *own* acts when knowledge of the subject was meant to arise as a consequence of the reflective act. The subject is said to know itself by becoming its own object; acts of consciousness become the object of consciousness. But this cannot account for the origin of knowledge of the subject, because it is only on the presumption that the subject already has knowledge of itself that it can recognise itself in the acts of consciousness.

It is Henrich's contention that the only way in which the problems identified with the reflective theory can be overcome is by adopting the model of self-consciousness which Fichte had provided. What Henrich finds in Fichte is the view that self-consciousness is fundamentally different from the consciousness of objects, in that rather than there being an object which is recognised as the subject, as there is on the reflection theory, there is a direct and immediate awareness of oneself which is primordial. Furthermore, the notion that there are acts of consciousness undertaken prior to the act of reflection is eliminated and the self-consciousness of the subject is inscribed as the fundamental act in which the subject posits itself as the self-positing subject.

The differences between the readings of Henrich and Strawson notwithstanding, the duality of the subject is also repeatedly highlighted and problematised by Strawson. He distinguishes "'original' self-consciousness and empirical self-consciousness," and immediately associates original self-consciousness with a consciousness of the existence of the "real or supersensible subject". He then questions both how Kant can establish the identity of these

subjects and what role the supersensible subject can perform. The problem identified by Strawson is that if it is taken to be the case that the awareness of myself occurs in time, then this cannot be a representation of the supersensible subject to itself because such a subject would be non-temporal. Or if the awareness is construed in such a manner that it is non-temporal, then Kant appears committed to the view that the supersensible subject has a non-temporal awareness of itself as participating in or enjoying “a series of temporally ordered states.”<sup>6</sup> Either Kant’s account of the subject is contradictory or simply unintelligible.

In the previous chapter, however, it has been contended that it is neither necessary to accept the problems posed by Henrich and Strawson, nor to adopt any of the strategies that have been advanced as purported solutions to these problems. It is neither necessary to attribute to Kant the notion that we have an immediate awareness of the activity of synthesis, nor need we simply reject portions of the first *Critique* as incoherent. What we have found is that, by interpreting the Deduction in a subject-orientated manner, the problematic questions of both the epistemological claims regarding knowledge of the subject and the ontological status of this subject can be obviated. This way out from Henrich’s and Strawson’s difficulties was secured by maintaining Kant’s distinctions between the transcendental unity of apperception, the ‘I think’, and the synthesis of the manifold of intuition. It is only when there is some conflation of the different subjects in Kant that the problems which have their origin in Schulze’s criticism arise. As the analysis provided in the previous chapter demonstrated, it is a mistake to suppose that in the Deduction Kant is placed in the double-bind with respect to the nature of the synthesis involved. It is not the case that Kant, like Hume, has demonstrated no more than the fact that the manifold must contain some organisation, without positing a subject that performs this synthesis. But neither does Kant make the Schulzean move of claiming that it is necessary for there to be knowledge of the subject as the performer of the activity of synthesis. Upon answering the question of how the categories can have objective validity in the Deduction, Kant, therefore, is not forced into claiming any knowledge of the subject-in-itself.

If the subject is taken to be a thing-in-itself, then the answer to the question

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<sup>6</sup> Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 248–9

of what kind or degree of knowledge of the subject is required for Kant to support the claim that the 'I think' can accompany any representation which is something to me, is none. Neither does Kant's claim require that the subject must have some means by which it can identify itself in acts of consciousness or have any awareness of itself in the performance of the activity of synthesis. There need be no knowledge of the synthesiser of the manifold, and that is because the only condition that needs to be met for the 'I think' to be able to accompany representations is that the manifold be conceptually synthesised. The representation of the unity of the manifold, rather than an awareness of that which synthesises or of the activity of synthesis itself, occurs in the proposition 'I think'. There is no further need to posit a subject which has this representation, standing 'behind' or 'outside' it, such that this subject identifies itself, has knowledge of itself, or is aware of its own acts. It is, therefore, possible for Kant to dismiss the apparently exhaustive alternatives arising from the debate on transcendental arguments. He does not need to beg the question against the sceptic, nor is Kant adopting a naturalistic/realistic stance which is either incoherent or Fichtean with respect to the subject.

A summary presentation of the trichotomy of Kantian subjects, according to the reconstruction given here and in the previous chapter, would, therefore run as follows: By whatever means synthesis occurs, and however consciousness arises, the 'subject' of these acts remains unknown to us and its existence is expressed in the 'I think', in that this representation requires that such acts of synthesis take place. The 'I think' is not so much a self-consciousness as that representation through which it is possible for there to be a consciousness of the unity of representations — not a consciousness of myself but a consciousness which takes the form of a self. The transcendental unity of apperception is that form which the synthesis of the manifold must take if it is possible for the 'I think' to occur. The notion that there are intuitions which are not synthesised, but which are nonetheless experienced, relies on a conflation of the synthesising subject and the experiencing subject. This conflation, far from being required for Kant's argument, is made only by Kant's critics. Furthermore, in making the distinction between the 'subject' of the activity of synthesis and the 'I think', Kant does not open the way for the objection that intuitions can be something to me but cannot be accompanied by the 'I think'. This



objection is misplaced — not only because it involves the reification of an activity, but also because the sense in which intuitions would be something to this ‘subject’ cannot involve an awareness of any, even spatial and temporal, relationships between the intuitions.

### **3. The Categories and Objective Validity**

The issue of whether concepts can have objective validity was previously raised in the context of the relationship between Kant and Hume; the subjective necessity attributed by Hume to concepts, particularly that of causality, was set against what Kant claimed to be the answer to Hume contained in the Deduction. However, our discussion of the Deduction has taken place in abstraction from the claims made regarding the objective validity of any specific category. It thus remains to be seen whether it is possible for there to be any transition from the general claim that an *a priori* conceptual synthesis is necessary for experience, to any specific concept being required. It is only when this latter question is answered that the success of the Deduction can be evaluated: if no specific concept need be employed, that is, if there is a range of alternative concepts which can be used in the *a priori* synthesis of the manifold, then the claim that those concepts have objective validity is undermined.

The difficulty that Kant faces here is once again clearly brought out by contrasting the subjective necessity which Hume attributes to concepts like causality and the claim that Kant makes for their objective validity. At the most general level, the subjective nature of causality derives for Hume from the manner in which this concept serves to supplement experience without actually being constitutive of it. The experience which we have is said to give rise to the fictitious idea that there is an experience of causal relations within this experience. The idea of causality, for Hume, corresponds to nothing in experience, nor is it even necessary for experience: it results merely from a feeling induced by the associative nature of the mind. With or without this idea, association still takes place and, therefore, in the absence of this idea experience still occurs on Hume’s model. While Kant’s Deduction demonstrates that it is fallacious to maintain that experience is possible without concepts and, consequently, that concepts cannot be considered subjective in the sense that they are added to an already constituted experience, it appears to do so

only at the cost of re-instituting the same problem at a new level. Concepts remain subjective in the sense that although they are not added to an already pre-constituted experience, experience is nonetheless possible under the condition that some alternative concept be employed. In other words, the contrast is not between experience and concepts but rather between experience being conceptualised in different ways. Unless some concepts can be shown to be universally necessary, the concepts can only be subjective.

With regard to the Transcendental Deduction, the problem which arises is that there appears to be no way to delimit the set of concepts which must be employed for experience to be possible. If such a delimitation were to be undertaken, then the conclusions reached at the end of both stages of the Deduction would appear to provide the most obvious resources upon which one could draw, because it is at these locations that the need for there to be some conceptual synthesis is established. It would need to be shown either that some concept must always be used in the representation of the spatial and temporal relations of intuitions (that is, in the construction of formal intuition), or that some particular concepts are necessary in order for there to be an objective unity of consciousness. However, neither of the arguments presented in our reconstruction of the Deduction provide any material upon which any attempt to specify the categories could build.

The arguments advanced by Kant which most explicitly draw on the spatial and temporal nature of intuitions to justify the categories, are to be found in the Analogies of Experience. Kant here argues for the need of the concepts of substance, causality and interaction for any experience which is understood in terms of 'events' or in terms of relationships between coexistent objects. Setting aside the question of whether these arguments are successful on their own right, it is not necessary to consider the details of these arguments to see that they cannot be performing the task of establishing that these categories have objective validity in the sense under consideration. What the argument for objective validity requires is not that some concepts are required for a particular kind of experience, but rather that this experience is itself the only one possible. That is to say, the problem identified by Stroud reasserts itself — the Analogies establish the hypothetical conjunction of a certain kind of experience and the concepts which need to be

employed for that experience to be possible. Even if it is conceded that the kind of experience for which the conditions are found is indeed the kind of experience that we have, then it still remains to be demonstrated that this experience itself is necessary. To advance beyond this hypothetical relationship it would need to be shown that — given the limitation imposed by the spatial and temporal nature of intuitions, and given the need for concepts — the only kind of experience that is possible is one in which objects are subject to alteration (or endure through the course of events) rather than, for instance, reversing the priority and maintaining that objects are derivative of singular events.

The kind of argument formulated in the Analogies needs to make presuppositions regarding kind of experience for which the categories are said to be necessary — and our comments on this limitation should not be taken to imply that Kant mistakenly considered himself to be establishing more than he has. Because it appears possible that different conceptualisations of experience can be maintained within the limitations imposed by the need for experience to be spatial and temporal, the limitation established by the first stage of the Deduction's argument is that the concepts employed must be such that it is possible through their use for there to be an objective unity of consciousness. Here, once again, the material presented is not sufficient for the task in hand of introducing restrictions as to which concepts are categories.

The argument which established the need for there to be a conceptual synthesis of the manifold of intuition in order for there to be any experience, proceeded in an entirely general manner without reference to particular concepts. Concepts were said by Kant to be necessary, because experience, insofar as it is a representation of association and distinguished from the association of representations, requires both that representations are unified and that there should be a representation of this unity. This task was ascribed to concepts according to Kant's account in the third step of the Deduction: they provide representations under which intuitions can be unified and represented. Here concepts serve as a correlate for the objective unity of consciousness; the individual moments of consciousness have no necessary relationship to one another, and it is only insofar as the intuitions — of which there is a consciousness — are themselves united that there can be any

unity in the consciousness of them. However, the very structure of the argument employed at this stage of the Deduction mitigates against the attempt to isolate a set of categories. Concepts in general are said to be necessary because of their unity, and it is upon this feature alone that the objective unity of consciousness draws. Therefore, there is no scope here to draw out some specific concepts as necessary to any experience whatsoever.

The conclusion that must, therefore, be drawn from our analysis of the Deduction is that there is no scope within the Deduction itself for there to be any demarcation of a specific set of concepts which have objective validity. Furthermore, the Deduction is not a preparatory argument which allows the categories to be arrived at via the consideration of the conditions under which space and time must be synthesised. As an answer to 'Hume's Problem' the Deduction can consequently only be considered a limited success. Insofar as it is demonstrated that concepts are necessary for experience, Kant undermines the Humean notion of a pre-conceptual experience to which concepts are mistakenly applied. Whereas for Hume the need for concepts arises from the contingent structures of human psychology within which the feeling of necessity accompanies association (and for which this feeling is the *idea* of causality), for Kant the experience is *a priori* conceptual and necessarily so. However, it could also be maintained that given the general similarities between what both Hume and Kant take experience to be — it is such that it supports the belief that are objects which have a continuity of existence and that these objects have causal relations to each other — then as an answer specifically to Hume, the Deduction does, nevertheless, achieve all of its aims. The *Analytic of Principles* presents the case for why this notion of experience requires the concepts which Hume rejects as fictitious. In conjunction with the Deduction, these arguments could then be said to demonstrate to Hume why the categories have objective validity: but they, nonetheless, do not demonstrate the objective validity of the categories *per se*. Outside of the context of the presumption about experience that Hume and Kant share, the Deduction cannot establish that there are categories which have objective validity — and that is because Kant's account in the *Transcendental Deduction* possesses no internal mechanism by means of which some particular set of concepts can be shown to be required to make experience possible.

To evaluate the success of the Deduction in terms of how completely it provides a solution to Hume's problem is, however, to do Kant an injustice. The task of demonstrating that some particular concept is a category is not carried out within the Deduction, but is rather given over to the Metaphysical Deduction (which provides a clue to the discovery of the set of categories) and to the Analytic of Principles (which has the task of demonstrating the categorical nature of concepts found in the Metaphysical Deduction). The role which the Transcendental Deduction plays within this argumentative schema is that of establishing the very possibility of transcendental philosophy itself — it must show that it is possible for there to be concepts which have categorical status. On the reconstruction of the Deduction that has been provided here, Kant is successful in this regard. What has been rejected is the notion that, in the absence of transcendental synthesis, there remains an experience to which a sceptical appeal can be made in order to invalidate the objectivity of conceptual relations. In other words, in terms of the way in which Kant's answer to Hume has been seen to be in dispute throughout the course of the previous chapters. What has been upheld is the possibility of a distinctively transcendental answer to the question of whether concepts have objectivity validity.

Within the debate that has been our primary focus, dispute has centred upon the distinction between subjective necessity and objective validity. Kant's attempt to maintain the legitimacy of this distinction — in the face of Hume's naturalistic account of the origin of the concept of causality — places him in the position of facing an apparent trade-off. This trade-off is said to reside in the competing demands of adopting a position that is both non-naturalistic and not question-begging with regard to the empiricist sceptic. Naturalism is inimitable to Kant's position to the extent that the justificatory procedure employed, at most, refers to a necessity, or need, derived from something of a *given* constitution. In the particular case at hand, the use of the concept or idea of causality is regarded by Hume as arising because the human mind is so constituted that, upon the regular presentation of sequential data, it generates an expectation that upon receipt of the first item in the series the second will follow. For Hume, the concept or idea of causality is illegitimately used when taken to designate an objective relationship, but rather merely arises from a subjective response to a series with regular but not causal

order. If Kant is to be able to maintain the contrary view, then it appears that he will have to make some strong assumptions regarding what the nature of experience is. Kant wants to claim that the representation of the data of intuitions requires the employment of concepts not because of the subjective conditions according to which the mind operates, but rather because this constitutes a condition which must be met if there is to be any representation of the intuitions. In essence, the argument takes on the hypothetical form which Guyer finds in the *Prolegomena* where it is assumed that judgements of experience have validity and then a demonstration follows of what concepts must be employed in such judgements.

Within the first *Critique*, the Transcendental Analytic as a whole could be viewed as engaging in both of these strategies: the Metaphysical Deduction makes an appeal to subjective necessity and the Analytic of Principles relies on assumptions regarding the nature of experience. In the case of the Metaphysical Deduction the isolation of a particular set of concepts is effected by means of the relationship that these concepts are said to have to judgements.<sup>7</sup> Kant's argument, firstly, introduces a set of judgements which, with regards to their form, are claimed to be exhaustive. The nature of the understanding is such that it can only judge in conformity with these forms; but this raises, for Kant, the possibility of similarly restricting a class of *a priori* concepts. Such a restriction is effected by translating the function expressed in a judgement into a concept. The various complexities of Kant's argument for this point notwithstanding, the most that the Metaphysical Deduction can establish is that it is necessary for us — those of us who possess an understanding restricted to forms of judgement contained in Kant's table — to employ some *a priori* concepts. The relationship between these concepts and possible experience (or whether these concepts are categories) is, however, undetermined. It remains possible for it to be the case it is subjectively necessary to use these concepts without this use being in any way constitutive of experience. Correspondingly (and at the same level of generality), the Analytic of Principles makes appeal to features of experience and attempts to show that it is only on the

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<sup>7</sup> Kant's own analogy at the beginning of the Metaphysical Deduction [A68/B93] between the restrictions imposed by the forms of intuition and the forms of judgement is potentially misleading in this regard. The need for thinking to conform to the Table of Judgements does not imply that the categories derived from this table are conditions of the possibility of experience.

condition that concepts are applied to experience that experience is possible. Thus, in the first Analogy, Kant appeals to our capacity to determine appearances as objects, in the Second Analogy it is the distinction between subjective and objective succession that is at issue, and the properties of extensive and intensive magnitude are drawn on in the Axioms of Intuition and the Anticipations of Perception respectively. It is this argumentative strategy that provides the paradigmatic cases of transcendental arguments, because it provides a mechanism of engaging with scepticism at a local level. When effective such arguments posit some feature of experience upon which the sceptic himself draws — as explicitly occurs in the Refutation of Idealism — and then proceeds to demonstrate that it is only by virtue of the very aspect of experience which is subject to sceptical doubt — outer experience — that it is possible for experience to have that aspect — inner experience — that the sceptic affirms. The force of this argumentative form, however, is not in itself sufficient to establish the possibility of a distinctively transcendental philosophy. It might on occasion provide a means of refuting some particular sceptical position, but it remains intrinsically hypothetical in form. Additionally, and more seriously, the synthetic *a priori* status of the concepts remains in dispute in the sense that it is possible to question, through the distinction between, what Cassam terms, a Conceptual and a Satisfaction Component, whether experience is possible because of the application of these concepts — or whether within any possible experience these concepts must be applied.

Placed between the Metaphysical Deduction and the Analytic of Principles, the Transcendental Deduction bridges the gap between subjective pathology and the nature of experience. In these terms the Transcendental Deduction is a success. The need for concepts within experience cannot be reduced to a subjective necessity arising from human nature. Furthermore, the applicability of concepts to experience cannot be reduced to a realist condition regarding the coherence which intuitions must have if we are to experience them. Kant's answer to Hume is that transcendental philosophy is possible.

## **Conclusion**



I asked myself this: on what grounds does the relationship between that which is in us, termed 'representation,' and the object rest? ... Our understanding, through its representations, is not the cause of objects ... yet objects are not the cause of the understandings representations (*in sensu reali*). The pure concepts of the understanding, therefore, cannot have been abstracted from sense perceptions, nor can they express the receptivity of representations through the senses: their source lies in the nature of the soul, but without either requiring to be effected by the object or producing the object itself. [X 130]

[Ich frug mich nemlich selbst: auf welchem Grunde beruhet die Beziehung desjenigen, was man in uns Vorstellung nennt, auf den Gegenstand? ... Allein unser Verstand ist durch seine Vorstellungen weder die Ursache des Gegenstandes ... noch der Gegenstand die Ursache der Verstandsvorstellungen (*in sensu reali*). Die reine Verstandesbegriffe müssen also nicht von den Empfindungen der Sinne abstrahirt sein, noch die Empfänglichkeit der Vorstellungen durch Sinne ausdrücken, sondern in der Natur der Seele zwar ihre Quellen haben, aber doch weder in so ferne sie vom Object gewirkt werden, noch das Object selbst hervorbringen.]

In 1772 Kant already knows what critical philosophy needs to demonstrate. It must show how we can legitimately claim a knowledge of objects in those cases where this knowledge is derived from neither an empirical nor a transcendent source. We certainly claim to have knowledge of this sort: natural science requires that all effects are caused, that matter can neither come into existence nor pass out of existence, and so on. Such claims, however, are not susceptible to a natural scientific explanation since they demand a knowledge of necessity, but yet go beyond anything that could be derived on the basis of logic alone. Hence, the question is refined, and in the first *Critique* Kant asks: how are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?

Kant's answer has met with opposition, but the line of criticism that has been followed here poses the particular challenge of suggesting that it is impossible for Kant to answer this question. The critics' argument against Kant first makes the distinction between the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible and the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgement *seem* to be possible. It is then suggested that Kant answers the latter question in one of two ways: through an investigation into the nature of either the object of experience or the subject of experience. In the first instance, Kant is said to posit a conception of experience from which the validity of synthetic *a priori* judgements can be deduced, but the critics have argued that Kant also does nothing to justify his original assumptions

regarding experience. If, on the other hand, an attempt at justification occurs, then this takes place via an argument which claims that it is necessary for the subject to regard experience as conforming to this conception. Neither option is satisfactory. One is left either with a hypothetical argument (*if* experience is so conceived, then ...), or with a subjective necessity (one must *regard* experience in the following ways ...). Furthermore, the hypothetical argument is merely question begging, and the argument for subjective necessity employs the reflective theory of consciousness.

Kant's difficulties do not end here. If Kant wishes to advance the claim that pure concepts have objective validity, then it is necessary for him to invoke the activity of a transcendental synthesis performed by the transcendental subject. As has been discussed, this is said to lead to Kant breaking through to a deeper level of incoherence in that he must make an unjustifiable assumptions regarding the matter of experience (that it, *a priori*, is such that it can always be synthesised) and the subject of experience (we have an immediate knowledge of ourselves as performing the activity of synthesis). In short, in answering the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible, transcendental philosophy demonstrates its own impossibility; to answer the questions that transcendental philosophy raises, it is necessary to make assumptions and claim knowledge deemed illegitimate within transcendental philosophy itself.

As we have seen, one finds aspects of this line of criticism across a range of philosophical traditions: from the time of the publication of the first *Critique* up to the present day. Most often it is presented in a piecemeal fashion without implicating Kant, as we have done, in the double-binds of equally unsatisfactory alternatives. It is, after all, enough to demonstrate that Kant fails, without also having to pursue the question of just how often he does so. In each case, though, the result is the same: Kant can at best suggest that categories are subjectively necessary, but cannot demonstrate their objective validity. In terms of this thesis and, it has been argued, in Kant's own terms, any such line of questioning would mean that he fails to answer Hume.

In our defence of Kant we have not pointed to one single interpretative error or confusion on which this criticism is founded. There is certainly enough textual complexity, and at times ambiguity, within the first *Critique* to make it impossible

to dismiss a two-centuries' old problematic as straightforwardly false. There is, nonetheless, a recurring theme within the critics, summed up in the question as to the content of the transcendental. What is the content of transcendental synthesis? What is the content of our self-knowledge? To specify any content is taken to produce incoherence — and yet to deny content appears simply to be question begging: if transcendental synthesis does not impose order, then order must be being assumed; if we have no self-knowledge, then the synthetic activity of the subject must be being assumed. Therefore, Kant is either incoherent or question begging. The proposition that has been defended within this thesis is that Kant can simultaneously deny content to the transcendental without invoking premises which are question begging with regard to Humean scepticism.

The thesis proceeded on two fronts. Firstly, it has been maintained that Kant's notion of transcendental synthesis is viable without requiring presumptions to be made regarding the content of experience. Secondly, it was held that transcendental synthesis, and the objective validity of synthetic *a priori* judgements which follow from it, does not implicate Kant in any claims regarding awareness of the activity of synthesis or knowledge of the subject-in-itself.

The first argument centred on an interpretation of the Deduction and, in particular, on the distinction between the first stage (demonstrating the subjective necessity for a conceptual synthesis) and the second stage (showing that such synthesis independent is of the content of experience). It was shown that if concentration is focused on the first stage of the Deduction, then it is perfectly correct to hold that Kant's argument shows only that intuitions must display some regularity or coherence (to the extent that they can be synthesised to produce a unity of consciousness). This allows for the translation of the argument of the Deduction into a naturalistic, realist, or Humean mode, whereby the fact that intuitions are ordered does not follow from any transcendental conditioning of experience, but it still allows one to maintain that concepts are subjectively necessary. The crux of the argument is this: just because it might be necessary for empirical intuitions to be sufficiently orderly as to allow a conceptual synthesis to take place, this does not imply that intuitions are so ordered *because* of that conceptual synthesis. In this context the notion of a transcendental synthesis appears like an unnecessary (and

hollow) addendum springing from Kant's desire to stifle the contingent under the thrall of the necessary. However, as we have seen, this is not the context in which the notion of transcendental synthesis arises. It is not with regard to the content of intuition, but rather to their form that transcendental synthesis operates. In other words, transcendental synthesis is not that special synthesis which prepares the manifold of intuition for an empirical one, such that there is a transcendental guarantee that it will in every case be possible for the manifold to display the unity necessary for experience. On the contrary, the synthesis is designated transcendental because it functions merely with regard to those aspects of intuition which are necessary and universal, namely their *form*. Although certain limitations regarding this argument were acknowledged, we established that there was no incoherence involved in Kant's claim that intuitions are subject to a synthesis with regard to their formal (temporal and spatial) properties. Already having demonstrated the need for concepts in the first stage of the Deduction, we concluded that synthetic *a priori* judgements are indeed possible — although a further argument (outwith the scope of this thesis, but, for Kant, contained in the Metaphysical Deduction and the Analytic of Principles) would be required to demonstrate that such judgements are actual.

The need for a further defence of Kant with regard to the nature of the subject presupposed within the Deduction arose from matters both intrinsic and extrinsic to Kant's argument. Here, more than anywhere else, Kant makes highly suggestive remarks regarding the status of our knowledge of the subject, and the numerous textual ambiguities and apparent contradictions serve to deepen the suspicion that the subject's awareness of itself is problematic in relation to the rest of the Deduction. The problem here is multifaceted, but can be seen to derive from the question of whether it is subjectively necessary to regard experience as constituted through a transcendental synthesis, or whether we can have knowledge of the occurrence of this synthesis. Responding to this, as has been argued here, by maintaining that the subject is itself constituted through such synthesis and further maintaining that we can therefore claim synthetic *a priori* knowledge simply by virtue of the fact that the 'I think' can accompany representations, is not without its own difficulties. Problems emerge because the subject is apparently situated in the position of being both that which carries out the activity of synthesis and also

constituted as a result of this activity (introducing a reflective theory of consciousness). Furthermore, if Kant is taken to imply that our self-awareness arises not as a result of reflection but rather is an awareness of the activity of synthesis itself, then this once again is suggestive of an awareness of the subject as it is in itself. However, the thesis has argued that our response, given an appropriately nuanced interpretation of the Kantian subject, does not give rise to the reflective theory or awareness of the subject-in-itself. The self-consciousness of the subject manifested in the representation 'I think' requires no identification on the part of the subject with that which carries out the activity of synthesis; the subject does not need to identify itself because the identity of the I follows from the nature of this representation, it is analytic. Furthermore, the synthesis of representations is a necessary condition of the representation of the subject, of the 'I think,' but it is not the acts of synthesis of which one is aware but rather the outcome — synthetic unity of the manifold. The problems identified by Kant's critics arise once again from injecting content into the formality of the transcendental. In one case this content is the subject's awareness of its identity of itself through reflection, and in the other there is specific kind of transcendental consciousness which consists in an awareness of an activity. The result in both instances is problematic because, in essence, transcendental philosophy cannot account for the content of the transcendental: that content must either be empirically given (in a way that Kant would rule out as impossible) or have a source which would exceed the boundaries of legitimate knowledge as delimited through the Kantian framework. However, the transcendental subject is not a special kind of subject and transcendental consciousness is not a special kind of consciousness: the term 'transcendental' merely delineates the form of the empirical. We concluded, therefore, that, despite the textual ambiguities (which are, in any case, more apparent than real), Kant's thought here is perfectly in harmony with the general strictures imposed by transcendental idealism. Thus, Kant's account of the subject is internally self-consistent and coherent.

To argue that Kant's answer to Hume is the answer that Kant says he gives to Hume, as has happened throughout the course of this thesis, is hardly to advance an original claim. Nonetheless, some have denied it. However, we have seen that

Kant is right in situating himself in relationship to Hume through the contrast of subjective necessity and objective validity. Hume is not more Kantian, nor is Kant more Humean, than Kant supposes. More significantly, the possibility of Kant providing an answer to Hume with regard to exactly this point has been strenuously and all too frequently denied by Kant's critics. The thesis traced some of the historical contours of this denial, systematised it, and demonstrated the nature of the double-binds into which Kant has been placed. A defence of Kant has been offered through a careful analysis of the structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction, making its presuppositions and argumentative flow evident; and by disambiguating the role, nature, and relations between, the subjects within the Deduction, a defence of Kant has been offered. No grander claim can be offered in conclusion — regarding the pressing need to take Kant seriously, put him into service, or recognise his impact on the *Zeitgeist* — than to say that it is possible that synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible. Transcendental philosophy is not impossible.

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