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Riccardo Pozzo, Marco Sgarbi (Eds.)*

KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Kant's Philosophy of the Unconscious

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Edited by

Piero Giordanetti · Riccardo Pozzo · Marco Sgarbi

De Gruyter



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ISBN 978-3-11-020403-2
e-ISBN 978-3-11-026540-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2012 Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin/Boston

Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

∞ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

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Introduction

Marco Sgarbi

In a recent publication on the history of the unconscious in the nineteenth-century German culture, Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher state that “Immanuel Kant arguably determined the way in which unconscious phenomena were understood in nineteenth-century German thought more than any other philosopher of the eighteenth century”.¹

The present volume aims to assess Kant’s account of the unconscious in its manifold aspects, and to discuss it from various perspectives: psychological, epistemological, anthropological, and moral. We aim to show Kant’s relevance for future discussions on the topic. Kant’s philosophy of the unconscious has for a long time been a neglected topic in Kant scholarship, especially in English language publications. In his *Transzendentaler Idealismus, romantische Naturphilosophie, Psychoanalyse*, Odo Marquard outlined some seminal ideas on the philosophy of the unconscious in the German intellectual *milieu*, but he limited his discussion mainly to the Romantic intellectual background and to their reception of Kant’s philosophy.² In *Vor Freud: Philosophiegeschichtliche Voraussetzungen der Psychoanalyse*, Wilhelm W. Hemecker dealt very briefly with Kant’s notion of the unconscious relating it with the Leibnizian standpoint on *petites perceptions*.³ The impact of the Leibnizian and Wolffian perspective on the philosophy of Enlightenment has been the subject of Hans Adler’s investigation on Johann Gottfried Herder’s philosophy,⁴ but no parallel researches have been devoted so meticulously to Kant’s philosophy. In *Kant and the Mind*, Andrew Brook, who is a worldwide expert on Kant and Freud, gives some insightful remarks on Kant’s theory of the unconscious beginning from the Kantian conception of con-

1 Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher, *Thinking the Unconscious: Nineteenth-Century German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

2 Odo Marquard, *Transzendentaler Idealismus, romantische Naturphilosophie, Psychoanalyse* (Köln: Dinter, 1987).

3 Wilhelm W. Hemecker, *Vor Freud: Philosophiegeschichtliche Voraussetzungen der Psychoanalyse* (Wien: Philosophia 1991).

4 Hans Adler, *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen. Gnoseologie–Ästhetik–Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990).

sciousness and self-awareness.⁵ In 2005, two important works on the unconscious came out. Micheal B. Buchholz and Günter Götde edited three volumes on the pre-history of the notion of the “unconscious” from the early modern philosophy, which first and foremost addressed medical and psychoanalytical issues only.⁶ Elke Völmicke, in *Das Unbewußte im deutschen Idealismus*, suggested the relevance of Kant’s problematic conception of the unconscious for the post-Kantian scholars such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, but without a careful examination the Kantian position.⁷ Recently, the most important investigation on the unconscious in a broad sense has been carried out by Robert Hanna focusing on the “non-conceptual”.⁸ The notion of the “unconscious” still remains a stumbling block of the Kantian scholarship, probably because Kant himself leaves undetermined and unthematized his very idea of it.

If we look at the dictionaries on the Kantian philosophy,⁹ just two of them present an entry on the unconscious, which in addition both narrow

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- 5 Andrew Brook, *Kant and the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 46–68.
 - 6 Micheal B. Buchholz and Günter Götde (eds.), *Das Unbewusste*. 3. Vol. (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2005–2006).
 - 7 Elke Völmicke, *Das Unbewußte in deutschen Idealismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).
 - 8 Robert Hanna, “Kant and Nonconceptual Content,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2005): 247–290; Robert Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism,” *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008): 41–64; Robert Hanna and Monima Chanda, “Non-Conceptualism and the Problem of Perceptual Self Knowledge,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 17 (2010); Robert Hanna, “Kant’s Non-Conceptualism, Rogue Objects, and the Gap in the B Deduction,” in Robson Ramos dos Reis and Andréa Faggion (eds.), *Um Filósofo e a Multiplicidade de Dizeres* (Campinas: CLE, 2010), 335–354.
 - 9 These dictionaries have not an entry on the “unconscious”: Carl C. E. Schmid, *Wörterbuch zum leichtern Gebrauch der Kantischen Schriften* (Jena: Erdkerischen, 1788); Samuel Heinicke, *Wörterbuch zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft und zu den philosophischen Schriften von Herrn Kant* (Perersburg: Malher, 1788); Karl H. Heydenreich, *Propaedeutick der Moralphilosophie nach Grundsätzen der reinen Vernunft* (Leipzig: Weygandschen, 1794); Georg S. A. Mellin, *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der kritischen Philosophie* (Leipzig: Frommann, 1797–1804); Georg Wegner, *Kantlexikon: Ein Handbuch für Freunde der Kant’schen philosophie* (Berlin: Wiegandt, 1893); Thorsten Roelcke, *Die Terminologie der Erkenntnisvermögen. Wörterbuch und lexikosemantische Untersuchung zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989); Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Helmut Holzhey and Vilem

the question to the topic of the obscure representations.¹⁰ But is Kant's philosophy of the unconscious restricted only to the problem of obscure representation? Did Kant address the "unconscious" not also in other ways? Does it or does it not have a prominent position in Kant's philosophical system?

The purpose of the present volume is to fill a substantial gap in Kant research while offering a comprehensive survey of the topic in different areas of investigation, such as history of philosophy, philosophy of mind, aesthetics, moral philosophy, and anthropology. The essays collected in the volume show that the unconscious raises relevant problems for instance in the theory of knowledge, as non-conceptual contents and obscure representations (Kitcher, Heidemann). In the philosophy of mind, it bears on the topic of the unity of the consciousness and the notion of the transcendental self (Crone, Schulting). It is a key-topic of logic with respect to the distinction between determinate-indeterminate judgments (Lee), and to mental activity (Duque, Rockmore). In aesthetics, the problem of the unconscious appears in connection with the problems of reflective judgments and of the genius (Otabe, Giordanetti). Finally, it is a relevant issue also in anthropology and moral philosophy in defining the irrational aspects of the human being (Pollock, Sánchez Madrid, Tuppini).

Murdoch, *Historical Dictionary of Kant and Kantianism* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2005).

10 Heiner Ratke, *Systematisches Handlexikon zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1929), 258; Rudolf Eisler, *Kant Lexicon, Nachschalgewerk zu Kants sämtlichen Schriften Briefen und handschriftlichem Nachlaß* (Berlin: Mittler, 1930), 549–550.

Kant's Unconscious "Given"

Patricia Kitcher

The main doctrines of Kant's epistemological theory are well-known: Cognition requires both intuitions and concepts; it requires both *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements; it is empirically real, yet transcendently ideal. Oddly, however, none of these well-known claims can be fully appreciated without also understanding his view that cognition requires unconscious representations. In the next three sections, I try to clarify the role of unconscious representations in Kant's theory by contrasting his reasons for assuming such representations with those of his predecessors, in particular, with Leibniz's arguments for *petites perceptions*, and by filling in the sparse account of unconscious representations in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by drawing on some of his unpublished notes and lectures. This material will show the direct link between his hypothesis of unconscious representations and his doctrines that cognition requires intuitions and *a posteriori* elements, and is empirically real.

In *Mind and World*, John McDowell argues that Kant's transcendental epistemology makes unacceptable use of the "Given",¹ because it has an isolable contribution from sensibility, namely the susceptibility of receptivity "to the impact of a supersensible reality, a reality that is supposed to be independent of our conceptual activity." (1994, 41)

McDowell's criticism rests on the widespread assumption that, for Kant, cognition must begin with noumenal "affection." In section 5, I argue that, despite solid textual evidence for this attribution, Kant's ultimate defense of the necessity of introducing *noumena* is not that empirical cognition must be grounded in noumenal objects affecting a noumenal self. The considerations raised in sections 2 and 3 lay out the distinctively Kantian reasons for maintaining that human cognition can only begin with the receipt of unconscious representations. In section 6, I show

1 McDowell (2008) revises this estimation. There he suggests, in essence, that Kantian intuitions provide a model for a non-objectionable given. As I argue in section 5, however, intuitions can play their role in Kant's empirical realist epistemology only because they depend on materials given in unconscious sensations.

that his theory of an unconscious given opens up a sound middle way between the myth of the Given and the myth that there is no isolable sensory contribution to cognition—but a way that is available only to those who are willing to follow other doctrines of transcendental idealism.

Why Assume Unconscious Representations?

In prefatory remarks to the *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Leibniz presented a classic, if not entirely satisfactory, argument for the existence of unconscious perceptions. When a person is aware of the roar of the ocean, he is not conscious of (cannot distinguish) the sounds of the individual waves. Yet he must be aware of the sounds of the individual waves in some sense or he would not hear the combination of these sounds as a roar (Leibniz 1765/1982, 54). Hence

[e]very moment there is in us an infinity of perceptions, unaccompanied by awareness or reflection ... of which we are unaware because these impressions are either too minute and too numerous, or else too unvarying, so that they are not sufficiently distinctive on their own. But when they are combined with others they do nevertheless have their effect and make themselves felt, at least confusedly, within the whole. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 53)

Perhaps, however, each ocean wave does not make a sound, but contributes to a large sound-wave, which is then propagated to the hearer.² Leaving this problem aside, it is natural to read Leibniz's preface as setting the stage for one of main controversies in the ensuing "dialogue," Philalethes's and Theophilus's debate over the existence of innate principles.

In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke had taken up the Cartesian challenge of providing an empirical basis for ideas claimed to be innate. With the ancient debate about nativism rejoined, Leibniz offered a critique of Locke's rejection of innate ideas and principles in the *New Essays*. Leibniz (in the persona of Theophilus) argued that since the principles of logic and mathematics were necessarily true, they could not be established by experience (Leibniz 1765/1982, 50, 86, 80). He countered Locke's preemptive rebuttal (delivered by Philalethes), that principles such as "everything that is, is" could not be innate, because they were unknown to children (Leibniz 1765/1982, 76), with the hypothesis that the minds of cognizers have many principles of which they were not immediately conscious (Leibniz 1765/1982, 76). Thus, they know the principles,

2 I owe this objection to Philip Kitcher.

but not explicitly; they cannot articulate them. Again, Locke had considered this move and dismissed it as incoherent:

It seeming to me near a contradiction to say, that there are truths imprinted on the soul, which it perceives or understands not: imprinting, if it signify anything, being nothing else but the making of certain truths to be perceived. For to imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. (ECHU 1:1:5)

Leibniz/Theophilus replies that there is another possibility:

Why couldn't the soul ... contain things without one's being aware of them? ... Must a self-knowing subject have, straight away, actual knowledge of everything that belongs to its nature? ... [and] [o]n any view of the matter, it is always manifest in every state of the soul that necessary truths are innate, and that they are proved by what lies within, and cannot be established by experience as truths of fact are. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 78–79)

At this point, Leibniz has Philalethes make the obvious reply on behalf of Locke. Knowledge of any truth must be subsequent to possession of the ideas from which it arises, and all ideas come from experience. Theophilus then notes that the ideas that are contained in necessary truths are intelligible (meaning presumably, that their elements are clear and distinct), whereas any idea that comes in from the senses is confused (Leibniz 1765/1982, 81).

The reply seems somewhat off the mark. The possibility of principles of which the possessor is unaware raises the specter of unconscious ideas, though it does not require it. Explaining that thinkers have clear and distinct intellectual ideas—of which they are conscious—exacerbates, rather than lessens, the problem of innate, but unknown principles. If cognizers have a clear conscious grasp of the ideas “from which they [the principles] arise” (Leibniz 1765/1982, 81), then why are they not also cognizant of the principles?

Philalethes returns to the issue, observing that the ideas in which innate principles are couched are so general and abstract as to be alien to ordinary minds (Leibniz 1765/1982, 83). Leibniz/Theophilus replies that general principles are nevertheless in all thinking,

General principles enter into our thoughts, serving as their inner core and as their mortar. Even if we give no thought to them, they are necessary for thought, as the muscles and tendons are necessary for walking. The mind relies on these principles constantly; but it does not find it so easy to sort them out and to command a distinct view of each of them separately, for that requires a great attention to what it is doing, and the unreflective majority are highly capable of that. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 83–84)

This reply also seems somewhat askew. Philalethes complains that general ideas are “alien” to the ordinary person, that is, the ordinary person is unfamiliar with them, unaware of them. Theophilus replies that the innate principles are necessary for thinking.

Although Theophilus allows that innate principles are not known by children, he is less concessive about uneducated adults. He thinks that principles such as non-contradiction are known implicitly by laypeople. People constantly use the principle, when, for example, determining that someone is lying. And when presented with the principle, they immediately assent (Leibniz 1765/1982, 76). Leibniz’s hypothesis is that just as reasoners use enthymematic premises in spoken and internal argumentation, laypeople make tacit use of the principle of non-contradiction in reaching their judgments (Leibniz 1765/1982, 76). To support the claim that people make constant use of implicit principles, he invokes the standard test of acceptance upon first hearing.

In a sense, Leibniz’s argument for innate and so unconscious principles runs parallel to his argument for unconscious perceptions of the sound of each wave: It is possible to make sense of conscious mental states—hearing the roar or judging someone to be a liar—only on the assumption of that these depend on perceptions or principles that are unconscious. As we have seen, however, the hypothesis that innate principles and their constitutive concepts are unconscious does not fit very well with his view of the relevant concepts. He regards those concepts not as confused, but as intelligible—indeed as far clearer than sensory perceptions. They would not be at all like his parade case of unconscious perceptions: the minute, numerous, and easily confused sounds of individual waves. Hence I think that Leibniz’s prefatory example is not intended to pave the way for an acceptance of innate principles. He does not and need not rely on the existence of unconscious perceptions in this case, because he has two knockdown arguments for such principles—the principles are in constant use and, as necessary and universal, they could not be acquired from experience. Further, since they are recognized on first hearing, it is not much of a stretch to see them as known implicitly.

If not the argument about innate principles, then what is the famous discussion of the roar of the ocean intended to presage? Since Leibniz appeals to minute, indistinguishable perceptions in his discussion of the metaphysics of personal identity, that seems a likely candidate. Leibniz/Theophilus introduces Locke’s familiar view that personal identity is secured by continuity of consciousness or memory and immediately endorses it:

I am also of the opinion that consciousness or perception of the ego proves a moral or personal identity. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 236)

Leibniz's support for the memory criterion is unsurprising, since he had advocated it himself in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, published four years before Locke's *Essay* (*Discourse* §34, Loemker, 1969, 325).

But the agreement on the importance of memory to moral identity masks a deep metaphysical disagreement between Locke and Leibniz. For Leibniz, the moral identity must rest on real substantial identity:

[he] should have thought that, according to the order of things, an identity which is apparent to the person concerned—one who senses himself to be the same—presupposes a real identity obtaining through each immediate [temporal] transition accompanied by reflection, or by the sense of *I*. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 236)

The transitions in question are from one conscious perception to another. Leibniz holds our consciousness of such transitions to be indubitable. Such consciousness cannot, in the natural order of things (i. e. without Divine intervention), be mistaken (Leibniz 1765/1982, 236). In a slightly later, discussion, however, he suggests that the real bond across the states of an individual rests on unconscious perceptions. In considering whether a spirit could lose all perceptions of past existence, Theophilus demurs:

[A] spirit retains impressions of everything which has previously happened to it ... but these states of mind are mostly too minute to be distinguishable and for one to be aware of them ... It is this continuity and interconnection of perceptions which make someone really the same individual. (Leibniz 1765/1982, 239)

That is, self-identity is carried by the train of "petites perceptions."

This doctrine is clear in the *Monadology* as well as in the *New Essays*. After explaining, in effect, how Monads could be substances—because they perdure through change understood as changes in their perceptions—he preemptively rebuts the obvious criticism that rocks, and so forth, do not have perceptions:

Monadology § 20. For we experience in ourselves a condition in which we remember nothing and have no distinguishable perception; as when we fall into a swoon or when we are overcome with a profound dreamless sleep. In this state the soul does not perceptibly differ from a bare Monad; but as this state is not lasting, and the soul comes out of it, the soul is something more than a bare Monad.

Monadology § 21. And it does not follow that in this state the simple substance is without any perception. That, indeed, cannot be, for the reasons already given; for it cannot perish, and it cannot continue to exist without

being affected in some way, and this affection is nothing but its perception ...

Monadology §22. And as every present state of a simple substance is naturally a consequence of its preceding state, in such a way that its present is big with its future.

Monadology §23. And as, on waking from stupor, we are conscious of our perceptions, we must have had perceptions immediately before we awoke, although we were not at all conscious of them; for one perception can in a natural way come only from another perception, as a motion can in a natural way come only from a motion. (Loemker, 1969, 645)

What is interesting about the reasoning of the *Monadology* is that it is exclusively metaphysical. Leibniz does not press the necessity of assuming *petites perceptions* in order to explain conscious cognitions, but in order to avoid gappy substances. If all perceptions had to be conscious, then his Monads would be liable to the same objection as Descartes' souls whose fundamental attribute was (conscious) thought: They would be annihilated by bouts of unconsciousness, including dreamless sleep. Leibniz turns this objection on its head and claims that waking from a stupor establishes the existence of unconscious perceptions in souls—on the further metaphysical assumption that perceptions can arise only from other perceptions. But if unconscious perceptions must be assumed in this case, they must be possible and so could also exist in soulless Monads.

Kant then was aware of Leibniz's claims in the *Monadology*, since he criticized one of them³ in one of his earliest writings, the *Nova Dilucidatio* of 1755. That Leibniz's theory of self-identity rested on the assumption of *petites perceptions* also seems to have been generally accepted at the time. Johan Nicolaus Tetens catalogued and synthesized many then contemporary psychological and philosophical theories in his *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur and ihre Entwicklung* of 1777. Tetens attributes this view to Leibniz without explanation or argument: "The foundation and basis of the soul consists, as Leibniz said, in unperceived representations." (1777/1979, vol. I: 265)

Since Kant's reading of Tetens's *Versuche*⁴ has been well-documented, it is clear that he would have been aware of the metaphysical charac-

3 The thesis he criticizes is that a Monad can change from having one perception to having another through the work of an inner principle (1.411).

4 The oft-recounted story from Hamann is that Tetens's book lay open on Kant's desk as he wrote the *Critique*. See Bona-Meyer (1870, 56). Kant also reports his reading of Tetens in a letter to Marcus Herz of April 1778 (10.232).

ter of Leibniz's support for *petites perceptions* both first-hand and as a matter of common knowledge.

Although Leibniz's striking hypothesis of a teeming unconscious was bound up with Monad metaphysics, other contributors to the debate offered epistemological arguments. For example, in "An Essay On the Origin of Knowledge," the French Sensationist, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1746/1987, 445) considered several phenomena that illustrated the problem of insensible or unreportable perceptions. In reading, the subject is aware of the sense, but not of the shapes of the letters. Condillac maintained that subjects must have been conscious of these shapes, because their conduct, reading, proved that they were. On his view, consciousness could sometimes be so superficial that it left no memory trace. Some of Kant's remarks indicate that he was aware of a position very like Condillac's. In "Negative Magnitudes" (1763), he exclaimed:

But also what admirable bustle is concealed in the depths of our minds, which we fail to notice as it is exercised ... and that because the actions are very many and because each is represented only very obscurely. The good proofs of this are known to all; among these one only needs to consider the actions which take place unnoticed within us when we read.⁵ (2. 191)⁶

Condillac's countryman, the naturalist Charles Bonnet, argued for a different view in the *Essai de Psychologie* (1755/1978). Bonnet starts with scientific assumption that the mind or brain is barraged by sensory information. It is an assumption also made by Hume when he noted that all we need to do is turn our heads to be confronted with an "inconceivably rapid" succession of perceptions (1739/1978, 252–53). Since the brain can only be in one state at a time, Bonnet thought it more reasonable

5 Kant's view seems to be somewhat different from Condillac's, since he focuses on the unconscious acts of perceiving the letters, rather than on the unconscious perceptions of the letters.

6 References to Kant's works, other than the *Critique of Pure Reason*, will be to Kant 1900—and will be cited in the text by giving volume and page numbers from that edition. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be in the text, with the usual 'A' and 'B' indications of editions. In providing English translations, I usually rely on Pluhar (Kant 1996), but I also use Kemp Smith (Kant 1968), and Guyer and Wood (Kant 1998) at points. I do not, however, follow Pluhar rendering 'Vorstellung' as 'presentation,' but use the more standard 'representation.' When I alter a translation beyond rendering 'Vorstellung' as 'representation,' I indicate that the translation is amended. In all citations I follow the suggestion of Guyer and Wood and indicate Kant's emphasis with bold-face type. When citing Kant's literary remains, I follow standard practice and cite the R (for *Reflexion*) number assigned by the editors of the Academy edition.

to assume that, when many stimuli come at once, the result is an impression that is a composite in which the different stimuli are weighted according to their intensity. That is, it is not that each perception is conscious for a flash, but then unrecalable. Rather, under these circumstances, the brain cannot represent the perceptions as distinct from one another (1755/1978, 113).

Christian Wolff, who is often taken to be a follower or even a systematizer of Leibniz's philosophy, tacitly invoked unconscious perceptions in a somewhat different epistemological debate. He began *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, Der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen Überhaupt* (1751/1983), the so-called 'German Metaphysics', with an apparent endorsement of Descartes' claim for the epistemological priority of the *cogito*:

No one can doubt that he is conscious of himself and other things; For, how can he deny to me or bring into doubt if he is not conscious of himself or other things? ... Whoever is conscious of the one, which he denies or brings into doubt, is the same as that one (1751/1983, 1).

In fact, he is criticizing Descartes' priority claim, as a later passage makes clear:

This difference [between ourselves and other things] appears directly as we are conscious of other things. For should we be conscious of that which we cognize through the senses, we must recognize the difference between that thing and others ... This differentiation is an effect of the soul, and we cognize therefore through it the difference between the soul and the things that are represented (1751/1983, 455–56).

That is, cognitive subjects can be conscious of themselves as such only through differentiating objects of consciousness. On Leibniz's view, not all perceptions were conscious or apperceived. Apperceiving takes some effort, perhaps like the effort of attending. In that case, however, self-consciousness could not precede consciousness of some object of consciousness, because the self as differentiator, must itself be differentiated from the things it differentiates.

Besides this indirect argument for unconscious perceptions, perceptions that must be present to be differentiated, thus allowing object and self consciousness, Wolff also provides a telling example in support of assuming them. A person might see something white in a far-off field without knowing what he is seeing, because he cannot separate one part from another [even though he must see the parts to see the white patch].

Under these circumstances the thought is said to be "obscure" [*dunkel*] (1751/1983, §199, 111).

Kant offers a very similar example when introducing unconscious representations in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Standpoint*:

If I am conscious of seeing a man in a far away meadow, though I am not likewise conscious of seeing his eyes, nose, mouth, etc., then actually I only conclude that this thing is a man; for if I wanted to say that, because I am not conscious of seeing these parts of the head (and also the other parts of the man), I do not at all have representations of these parts in my intuition, then I would also not be able to say that I see a man; for the whole representations is composed from these part representations. (7.135)

Although the passage is somewhat difficult to follow, the point seems to be that even though the observer cannot distinguish the parts of the head, he must still be intuiting those parts; otherwise he would not be seeing the man, but merely inferring his presence. On the other hand, the knowledge that he is intuiting these parts is not immediate, but inferential.

Taking stock, as Kant came to write the *Critique*, the reasons for assuming unconscious representations were many and varied. The scientific evidence pointed to a constantly changing stream of representations on the retina. Particular examples demonstrated the need to assume unconscious representations as the foundation of conscious cognitions acknowledged by all. Metaphysical considerations led Leibniz to hypothesize a myriad of unconscious perceptions as the basis of the continuity of Monads. Given the scientific, epistemological, and metaphysical support for unconscious ideas at this time, it is astonishing—or worse—that Freud claimed to have discovered them nearly two hundred years later.

Kant's Appeal to Unconscious Representations

Although Kant's anthropology lectures always assumed the existence of unconscious representations, his attitude towards them changed dramatically. In his early lectures (perhaps from 1772)⁷, he is reported as suggest-

7 Beyond *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Standpoint*, Kant's views on anthropology are available in the form of student lecture notes from his Anthropology courses, now available in Vol. 25 of the Academy edition (Kant 1900-), and in his own notes published in Vol. 15 of that edition. Although the student notes cannot be presumed to be accurate representations of Kant's changing views (especially since they are not actual lecture notes, but later transcriptions that are

ing that the teeming world of the unconscious presented a large field of obscure perceptions that it was up to the philosopher to clarify (25.22). The published *Anthropology* of 1798 still holds that we must conclude that there are a vast number of unconscious representations. He characterizes the immeasurable field of obscure sensory intuitions and sensations as a huge map in which just a few places are illuminated by consciousness (7.135). Nonetheless, he now maintains that the study of unconscious perceptions does not belong even to pragmatic anthropology (let alone to philosophy). Since the obscure representations are sensory, the topic belongs to physiological anthropology (7. 136).

Since the notes from the early lecture course are cryptic, it is not clear why Kant thought that unconscious representations would be such a fertile field for philosophy to study. Perhaps he had hoped that examining them might reveal how the mind dealt with sensory information. He took the study of logic to be important, because it made explicit the implicit principles by which people thought (see 16.18,19,31–32, 24.791). So he may have believed that studying unconscious perceptions would enable philosophers to determine the principles by which the mind organized conscious percepts. In the *Critique*, however, he clearly realized that it was not possible to study the mind's way of taking unconscious sensations and turning them into conscious perceptions. Both the data and operation of synthesizing them were closed from view (A78/B103). To determine the mind's contributions to sensory representations, a different method was required—what he called the method of “isolation”: first separate everything from a representation that is conceptual and then separate everything that belongs to sensation (i. e. everything that can be understood as being received through the sensory apparatus we have). The well-known results of applying the method were that representations of space and time did not enter cognition through the senses, but were “forms of intuition” (A23/B38, A30/B46).

At this point, we can see a clear and distinctively Kantian reason for accepting unconscious representations. No one doubted that it seems to humans that they are aware of a succession of mental states. In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, Kant had objected to Leibniz's view that the representation of succession is abstracted from experience:

often hard to date), I appeal to them when they are consistent with, but amplify, views expressed in his published work. For fuller discussion of this issue, see my 2011, chapter 2 and accompanying endnotes.

They [one sort of realist about time] conceive of it as something real that has been abstracted from the succession of internal states—the view maintained by Leibniz and his followers. Now the falsity of [this] ... opinion clearly betrays itself by the vicious circle in the commonly accepted definition of time (2.400–401).

Two pages earlier, he had laid out the definitional problem:

it is only through the idea of time that it is possible for the things which come before the senses to be represented as simultaneous or successive. Nor does succession generate the concept of time; it makes appeal to it. And thus the concept of time, regarded as if it had been acquired through experience, is very badly defined, if it is defined in terms of the series of actual things which exist one after the other. For I only understand the meaning of the little word after by means of the antecedent concept of time (2.399).

Although the criticism is directed at Leibniz, it applies equally well to Locke's account of the acquisition of the idea of succession:

'Tis evident to any one who will but observe what passes in his own mind, that there is a train of *Ideas*, which constantly succeed one another in his Understanding ... *Reflection* on these appearances of several *Ideas* one after another in our Minds, is that which furnishes us with the *Idea* of *Succession*. (ECHU 2.14.3, 182, my emphasis).

I will not try to evaluate the justice of this objection to Leibniz (or to Locke). My interest is in what the resulting view implies about the role of unconscious representations in Kant's epistemology.

Similarly, no one doubted that humans perceived objects to be represented in space. That was the common assumption of the Newton-Leibniz debate. But, again, Kant will argue that the intuitive representations of objects in space do not supply but presuppose the "form" of space. When these doctrines are considered in relation to his claims about intuitions, the implications for unconscious representations are evident:

In whatever way and by whatever means a cognition may refer to an object, still **intuition** is that by which a cognition refers to objects directly, and at which all thought aims as a means. Intuition, however, takes place only insofar as the object is given to us; but that, in turn, is possible only—for us human beings at any rate—by the mind's being affected in a certain manner. The capacity (a receptivity) to acquire representation as a result of the way we are affected by objects is called **sensibility** (A19/B33).

This observation is interesting, in part, for its seamless blending of normative and psychological considerations. Cognition *must* refer to an object [and that is *possible* only insofar as there is a necessary relation between

the cognition and the object (A92/B124)]. Given the psychological limitations of the human mind, this *necessary* relation can be secured only when the mind is affected by the object. But since space and time cannot be received by human sensibility, the representations it receives cannot be conscious representations, since human intuitions are either of “outer” objects in space or “inner” mental states in time (A22/B37). More simply, true cognition requires sensory inputs; the senses cannot take in the spatial and temporal information required to form conscious perceptions; therefore the representations received from sensory stimulation by objects (A1/B1) that are necessary for cognition must be unconscious. Hence Kant’s well-known *Stufenleiter* of representations has a clear place for unconscious representations (A320/B376).

Given that his theory clearly implies that unconscious representations are necessary for cognition, it might seem strange that Kant did not highlight them. There are two complementary explanations for this apparent neglect. The first, which we have already seen in part, is that the Leibnizian tradition already accepted them. Both Leibniz and Wolff offered robust defenses of them, and Kant’s discussion in the *Anthropology* suggests that the issue was already settled (7.135). On the Lockean side, Tetens also assumed the existence of unconscious perceptions. What Tetens thought had to be explained was how a unified and seemingly simple perception emerged from unconscious representations:

This impression [*Empfindung*] may consist in a multitude, and a multitude of uncountable small feelings that follow each other. And each may contain many simpler simultaneous ones in it, it is, for me, a unitary feeling, and one and the same act of consciousness through which I join these small feelings in a total feeling, distinguishes it as one impression. I observe no multiplicity in this act, and no series [*Folge*] and no parts ... (1777/1979, 1.389)

With then contemporary Lockeans on board with unconscious perceptions, there would be no pressing need to defend them. Indeed, as DeVleeschauwer first observed, Kant appears to draw on Tetens’s discussion of perception in offering his account of the first synthesis (of apprehension) in the A edition (1962, pp. 85–90).

The second, and complementary, explanation is that, as we have just seen, Kant does allude to unconscious representations in the *Critique*. Given the wide acceptance of such representations, he does so, however, with little fanfare. To a knowledgeable reader, his discussion of the synthesis of apprehension would carry a clear implication of unconscious representations:

In order for this manifold to become unity of intuition (as, e.g., in the representation of space), it must first be gone through and gathered together. This act I call the synthesis of apprehension. (A99)

What can the pre-synthesized, non-spatial representations be but unconscious? Perhaps because he had moved away from Tetens's views, Kant was more explicit about the role of unconscious representations in the B edition transcendental deduction:

First of all, let me point out that by synthesis of apprehension I mean that combination of the manifold in an empirical intuition whereby perception, i. e., empirical consciousness of the intuition (as appearance) becomes possible. (B160)

Again, if conscious perception requires a synthesis, then the representations that are available to be synthesized can only be unconscious.

As we see in the next section, it is not easy to figure out exactly how Kant thinks unconscious representations can provide a basis for synthesizing conscious representations. My point here is that his belief that they must is an integral and unwavering part of his empirical realist epistemology. When first introducing his hypothesis of the forms of intuitions in the *Inaugural Dissertation*, he explains that

just as the sensation which constitutes the matter of sensory representation is evidence for the presence of something sensible ... so to the form of the same representation is undoubtedly evidence of a certain respect of relation in what is sensed. (2.393)

Thus, Kant's theory of forms does not commit him to the implausible view that the sensations a cognizer receives are irrelevant to whether he perceives something to be square or triangular; spatial representations reflect something in the sensory data.

In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, Kant distinguished a world of sense from a world of intellect, so that, whatever it was about sensations that was supposed to be reflected in the spatial or temporal properties of representations, it could not be something tied to conceptual representation. This doctrine is changed completely in the *Critique*. As noted, one of its central themes is that cognition requires both intuitions and concepts. Further, he had come to believe that the synthesis that was necessary to form conscious perceptions (the *synthesis speciosa* in the B edition) was carried out by the imagination under the guidance of the understand-

ing (B151, B160).⁸ In that case, if he still held that the spatial or temporal properties of a perception reflect something in the sensations, then that something would be reflected in the perception through originally being reflected in the way the sensations were conceptualized.

Were there no reflection of sensory elements—if categories and forms were applied irrespective of the given sensory materials—then Kant’s epistemological theory would be liable to the charge he raises against Rationalist metaphysics. This field is rife with errors precisely because its proponents forego the touchstone of experience. So, for example, rather than seeing the idea of a simple soul as a regulative idea of reason (the Psychological Ideal), they take the idea to amount to knowledge:

[It is] indeed very easy for reason, but it also entirely ruins and destroys all natural use of reason according to the guidance of experiences. [It leads the ‘dogmatic spiritualist’ to bypass] ... for the sake of his convenience, but with the forfeiture of all insight—the sources of cognition that are immanent in experience (A 690/B 718).

And, for reasons we have seen, the “guidance” provided by experience can only be the guidance provided by unconscious representations. Since this guidance is a pervasive and systematically necessary feature of Kant’s view, it is reasonable to believe that he had some notion of how it might be possible.

Searching for Substances and Causes

At the dénouement of the transcendental deduction in the A edition, Kant lays out the central claim of transcendental idealism:

Hence the order and regularity in the appearances that we call nature are brought into them by ourselves; nor indeed could such order and regularity be found in appearances, had not we, or the nature of our mind put them into appearances originally. (A125)

Since that order and regularity cannot be independent of sensory evidence—or the guidance of experience would be forfeited—his account

8 In notes that are often regarded as an early draft of the transcendental deduction, the so-called *Duisburg Nachlaß*, Kant had suggested that the syntheses of the understanding depend on those of apprehension: “Everything that is given is thought under the universal condition of apprehension. Hence the subjective universal of apprehension is the condition of the objective universal of intellection” (R4675, 17.653.).

of how the understanding puts order into experience would be a promising place to look for his understanding of the relation between unconscious sensory or *a posteriori* elements and the *a priori* forms of cognition.

I quote his subsequent discussion of the issue at some length:

The understanding is always busy scrutinizing [*durchzuspähen*] appearances with the aim of uncovering some rule in them. Rules, insofar as they are objective (and hence attach to cognition of an object necessarily) are called laws. Many laws are indeed learned by us through experience. Yet these laws are only particular determinations of still higher laws. And the highest among these (those under which all others fall) issue *a priori* from the understanding itself. These laws are not taken from experience; rather, they must provide appearances with the latter's law-governedness, and precisely thereby must make experience possible. Hence understanding is not merely a power of making rules for oneself by comparing appearances; understanding is itself legislative for nature. I.e., without understanding there would not be any nature at all, i.e. any synthetic unity in the manifold of appearances according to rules; for appearances, as such, cannot occur outside us, but exist only in our sensibility. (A126–27)

This passage may seem merely to repeat the claim that the regularities found in nature are put there by the understanding rather than to explain it. One thesis is clear: Particular empirical laws that are discovered through comparing observations can be found in the appearances of the senses only because they are species of higher level laws that were put there perhaps by the understanding.

Much later in the text, in the discussion of the Regulative Use of the Ideas of Reason (in the Appendix to the Dialectic), Kant suggests that the understanding succeeds in forming concepts and finding laws, because reason has prepared the realm in which the understanding is to operate:

Hence reason prepares the understanding's realm by these means: (1) by a principle of the homogeneity of the manifold under high genera; (2) by a principle of the variety of the homogeneous under lower species—and in order to compete the systematic unity, reason adds (3) also a law of the affinity of all concepts... (A657/B685).

My concern is not with the details of Kant's claims about the regulative ideas of reason, but with the general picture he presents.

According to the A deduction passage, the understanding operates by scrutinizing appearances to find a rule in them. An obvious way to illustrate this process is through a search for causal laws. The understanding would run through the representations provided to it by the senses to see if any can be understood as instances of causation, as an instance of an object altering from being in state A to being in state B in the presence

of some other object C.⁹ However many instances of A-type properties being succeeded by B-type properties in the presence of objects of type C, it is impossible to conclude that the succession from A to B in the presence of C is necessary. The law that Cs cause objects to alter from state A to state B could never be extracted from sensory data. Yet some sensory data can be interpreted as instances of it.¹⁰ The understanding looks for possible instances of causal rules and when it finds candidates, when A-type properties are always followed by B-type properties in the presence of C, it pronounces the relation to be one of cause and effect.

But how is the understanding guaranteed to succeed? Why must there be rules to be found? It is not enough that the understanding is urged by reason to look for the homogeneous, although this might be a necessary condition for discovering laws. In a way, success cannot be guaranteed. If there is nothing homogeneous to be found in the data of sense, then the search for laws is hopeless. Even assuming some homogeneity, however, the search for laws of nature will still be doomed unless the understanding not only seeks the homogeneous, but excludes or ignores, the totally irregular. The only way that the understanding's scrutiny in search of empirical causal laws could be guaranteed to succeed is if the appearances had gone through an earlier scrutiny that culled all and only representations that exhibited the regularity necessary to make them possible instances of causal laws. In effect, this earlier scrutiny would be governed by the principle that all alterations that count as such are caused. Under these circumstances, the search for natural laws can succeed and the laws discovered empirically will be species of the higher level law that the only appearances of alterations or events that count as real are those that fall under causal laws—because that law has been put into appearances.

Kant does not present what I have described as an “earlier” scrutiny in the *Critique*, except perhaps obliquely in the claim that the understanding is constantly scrutinizing. He does so, however, in a Reflection from around 1772–73 that Wolfgang Carl (1989) regards as the first draft of the transcendental deduction. The main point of the Reflection is to draw a contrast between (merely) logical actions or functions and “real” functions:

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- 9 Here I follow Arthur Melnick (1973) and, subsequently Guyer (1987) in interpreting Kant as taking causation to be a three place relation among powers or events, and earlier and later properties of substances.
- 10 My discussion here is dependent on Hannah Ginsborg's clear and useful analysis of the argument of the Appendix to the transcendental ideal (1992 draft)

The real function consists in the way in which we posit a representation in and for itself; thus it is an action (*a priori*) which corresponds to every *dato* (*a posteriori*) and by means of which the latter becomes a concept ... From these arise all cognition: namely how we can grasp *data* and form something for ourselves that is called cognition. In nature no *data* can come before us unless, when one perceives the laws therein, they correspond to the universal kinds according to which we posit something, because otherwise no laws would be observed, or any object whatsoever, but only confused internal alterations. Therefore, since we can represent objects only by means of our alterations, insofar as they have in themselves something in conformity with our rules for positing and negating, the real functions are the ground of the possibility of the representation of things, and the logical functions are the ground of the possibility of judgments, and consequently of cognitions (R4631, 17.615, see also R1608, 16.34—35).

Kant's view is that *a posteriori* or sensory materials may arrive in the mind, but they can come before the mind as sensory data (perceptual appearances) for human cognizers only if there is something in them that accords with the principles associated with universal kinds (i.e. categories). Only in this way is cognition possible, because the realm in which understanding is to produce cognition is prepared for it.

It is tempting to object that I am misreading a straightforward normative claim as an endorsement of a suspect psychological process. Perhaps Kant's point in the dénouement of the A deduction, the ensuing discussion, and even the Reflection is just that humans use the essential cognitive norm that putative alterations and events that cannot be given causal explanations must be rejected as phantasms. He would certainly endorse this claim. What he is trying to argue in the transcendental deduction and principles chapter, however, is that the categories of the understanding apply not only to all judgments about objects, but also to everything that is presented in intuition:

The categories of understanding ... do not at all represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition. Therefore, objects can indeed appear to us without having to refer necessarily to functions of understanding, and hence without the understanding's containing *a priori* the conditions of these objects. Thus we find a difficulty that we did not encounter in the realm of sensibility: viz: how **subjective conditions of thought** could have **objective validity**, i.e., how they could yield conditions for the possibility of all cognition of objects. (A89-/B122)

That is, the aim of the transcendental deduction is to show that whatever is represented in (conscious) perceptions must fall under the categorial

concepts.¹¹ He makes the same point in summarizing the B deduction in section 26:

We must now explain how it is possible, through **categories**, to cognize *a priori* whatever objects our senses may encounter—to so cognize them as regards not the form of their intuition, but the laws of their combination—and hence as it were, to prescribe laws to nature, and even to make nature possible. (B159–60)

Given this more ambitious goal, his claim cannot be just that falling under a causal law is a normative principle governing what is to count as an event. It must be that the higher faculties somehow use this principle in working up “the raw material of sense impressions into a cognition of objects that is called experience.” (B1)

Otherwise, there would be no guarantee that everything the senses may encounter must fall under the categories. This processing of sensory impressions is not further discussed in the *Critique*, except perhaps in the “scrutiny” passage, but it seems to be the topic of the Reflection cited above.

Unfortunately, none of this material sheds any light on how the processing of raw materials could operate so that it both depends on the character of the sensations and regiments them under categories. The problem becomes more difficult when we realize that what I have called the “earlier” scrutiny cannot work in the way that I have presented the understanding as scrutinizing for particular laws of nature. The understanding could not fasten on cases of regular succession in the sensory data, because the senses do not register succession. It is this aspect of Kant’s view that stands behind the frequent complaint that his account of the necessity of using the causal concept in the Second Analogy is circular (e.g. Cheng, 1997, 368). He argues that humans can determine the succession of their mental states only by tying them to objective succession or events, and so to causation (A193/B238), but he knows that the standard view is that causal laws can be discovered only by observing the constant succession of different states of affairs (A195/B240).

Although Kant does not say what it is about sensations that the scrutiny of the understanding can latch onto, we have a description of the feature: It must be something that is a reliable indicator of the presence of succession and/or causal relations. Further, he would have been aware of

11 The view that the transcendental deduction is supposed to establish the applicability of the categories to anything that can be sensed is a central theme of Wolfgang Carl’s (1989, 1992, 1998). See also Ginsborg 2006.

the obvious candidate.¹² Motion, or real motion, was widely understood as a sign of causation; further, common motion was widely understood as an indicator of a single object. What is different now is that we have some understanding of how the brain detects motions.¹³ The nervous system is set up so that some higher level visual cells fire only if the lower level cells to which they are connected fire in a particular order, e.g., n_1, n_2, n_3 , whereas others fire only when the lower level cells fire in the opposite order. In effect, these assemblies allow the nervous system to register a point of light, say, moving from left to right or from right to left in the visual field; hence they also allow it to derive right position *after* left position or vice versa. Although the nervous system makes use of temporal relations—it is set up to take advantage of the time lag in which it receives different information—it does not detect time, but motion.

A motion detector singles out sensory data that could be involved in three interconnected types of claims: a light *moves* from A to B, the light was at B *after* it was at A, the *succession* of the state of being at A to the state of being at B is *necessary* or rule-governed. It is thus an ideal candidate for the means by which the understanding scrutinizes sensations in order to find materials that are likely to stand in lawful relations. Those alterations that were unrelated to motion (or to the surrogates of other categorial principles) would fail to be posited as representations of objects or events. Still, the mechanism, as I have described it, does not do justice to Kant's claims that the understanding scrutinizes for rules or that it is guided by reason to look for homogeneity. So the process needs to be more complex. To be presented to the mind as sensory *data*, materials must not only be singled out by a motion detector, but those singled out must be surveyed to see if they contain successions of similar representations and only those which do will be retained as representations of real events. This additional processing would presumably require some

12 Kant links the concept of succession to mental motion: "What first produces the concept of succession is motion, taken as act of the subject (rather than as a determination of an object) and consequently as the synthesis of the manifold in space" (B154–55).

His point here is not that motion indicates succession or causation, but that the representation of succession presupposes a spatial representation, which in turn presupposes the mental act of constructing a spatial representation. In making the point, however, he tacitly acknowledges that object motion is a standard way of explaining the representation of succession.

13 Here I follow Harper's (1984) helpful presentation of the relevant science.

further mechanisms which register when sensations are qualitatively similar. With this more complex preceding scrutiny, the understanding can succeed in scrutinizing appearances for the (particular) laws in them.

My claim is not that Kant had a fully worked out theory of how the mind scrutinizes unconscious impressions in order to introduce order into its conscious perceptions. As we have seen, and as he seemed to understand, any such theory would need to invoke physiological mechanisms that he was in no position to discover. Further, I have considered only one category, causation, and I have given no reason to think that Kant was right that similarity was essential to working up sensory impressions into suitable materials for causal cognition. Perhaps humans do not fasten on causal relationships by looking for constant conjunctions, but by seeking a causal mechanism (Ahn and Bailenson, 1996). My concern has only been to show that the scrutiny process that he sketched (in *Reflections* and briefly in the *Critique*) could be developed in a way that it honored his goals: the order and regularity in the appearances that humans call nature is made possible through the activities of the “higher” faculties, yet it is still guided by—because dependent on—the receipt of sensations and their particular qualities. It is still grounded in unconscious representations.

The Unconscious and the Noumenal

As I understand it, the beginning of the cognitive process that Kant describes in the familiar opening statements of the Introduction involves unconscious representations:

There can be no doubt that all our cognition begins with experience. For what else might rouse our cognitive power to its operation if objects stirring our senses did not do so? *In part these objects by themselves bring about representations.* In part they set in motion our understanding’s activity, by which it compares these representations, connects or separates them, and thus processes the raw material of sense impressions into a cognition of objects that is called experience (B1, my emphasis).

For reasons we have seen, the representations brought about by objects can only be unconscious. A venerable critical tradition takes a very different view of Kant’s account of how cognition must originate. It does not begin with unconscious representations caused by (phenomenal) objects, but with real or noumenal objects affecting a noumenal self and thereby

making possible the creation by that self of a phenomenal world of appearances.

McDowell's rejection of Kant's "transcendental story" of epistemology (1994, 41) is rooted in the long-standing view that he must—but cannot legitimately—appeal to *noumena* to explain cognition of appearances. And since *noumena* are, by definition, outside the realm of human concepts, the dependence of Kantian epistemology on *noumena* means that it relies on the myth of the Given. Many careful scholars have agreed that Kant's theory commits him to an incoherent notion of noumenal affection,¹⁴ so the interpretation must rest on fairly substantial evidence. We don't have to look far to find the evidence, since Kant provides it himself in justifying the introduction of the concept of *noumenon* in the A edition¹⁵:

But as for the cause why one, being not yet satisfied by the substratum of sensibility has added to the phenomena also *noumena* that only the understanding can think, it rests exclusively [*lediglich*] on the following. Sensibility—and its realm, *viz.*, that of appearances—is itself limited by the understanding so that it deals not with things in themselves but only with the way in which, by virtue of our subjective character, things appear to us. This was the result of the entire Transcendental Aesthetic; and from the concept of appearance as such, too, it follows naturally that to appearance there must correspond something that is not in itself appearance. For appearance cannot be anything by itself and apart from our way of representing; *hence if we are not to go in a constant circle, then the word appearance already indicates a reference to something the direct representation of which is indeed sensible, but which in itself—even without this character of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is based)—must be something, i. e., an object independent of sensibility.*

Now from this consideration arises the concept of a *noumenon*. But this concept is not a determinate cognition of some thing, but signifies only the thinking of something as such—something in which I abstract from all form of sensible intuition. (A251–52, my emphasis)

That is, it is necessary to find some correlate of sensory appearance—the thing whose representation is sensible. Kant believes that it follows from transcendental idealism that the thing in question cannot be characterized

14 Among others, F. H. Jacobi (1787/1983) was the first to offer this objection between the editions of the *Critique*; P.F. Strawson (1966) provided its canonical 20th century version in terms of the notion of 'noumenal affection;' Robert Adams (1997) offers a recent version.

15 Other passages also suggest noumenal affection, but the passage I discuss provides the strongest support. Further, as I show in my 2011, they can be handled in the same way in which this key passage is handled.

in terms of the forms of intuition, because those elements of cognition are not received from objects, but added through the processing of what is received. Since the object must then be understood in abstraction from such forms, it can only be thought in this abstract manner and not sensed, and thus should be understood as a creature of the mind or as a *noumenon*. Notice, however, that this claim seems inconsistent with the claim on which it rests—namely that the direct representation of this thing is sensible.

There is also a serious, but understandable, flaw in Kant's reasoning. By his theory, a green thing, such as a tree, does not produce a spatial representation in a subject when it strikes her senses; it conveys only greenness and other sensory qualities. Now assume the standard account that objects produce sensations of green in humans because some feature of their surface structures reflects green light that is received by the cone cells of the retina. Even if he is right that the immediate effect of objects on the senses conveys no spatial information, it hardly follows that spatial predicates cannot be used to describe what it is in objects that enables them to produce sensations of green. Alternatively, whatever information is conveyed to cognitive subjects through objects stirring their senses, cognitive theorists are not restricted to that information in describing how objects stir the senses.

Kant's error is understandable, because the empirical psychology of his day was limited to introspection. In a passage in the *Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection*, he returns to the difficulty of determining the causes of sensations and pins the problem on the inadequacies of inner sense:

[W]e have not been given [the ability] to observe even our own mind for it in lies the secret origin [*Ursprung*] of our sensibility—by means of an intuition other than that of our inner sense. Sensibility's reference to an object, and what may be the transcendental basis of this objective unity, this doubtless lies too deeply hidden so that we, who are acquainted even with our own selves only through inner sense and hence as appearance, might with so unfitting an instrument of our investigation discover anything other than what are always in turn appearances—whereas it was the nonsensible cause [*Ursache*] of those appearances that we hoped to explore (A278/B334, my emphasis).

The immediately preceding discussion highlights the problem of description, noting that humans could not understand an account of the cause of appearances even if it were offered, because they cannot understand anything that does not supply an intuition to give the words meaning (A287/

B334). As noted, this problem can be overcome by contemporary science. In the text just cited, the problem is one of access. The states to which inner sense has access are inner appearances or conscious perceptions. With no access to what is immediately received by the senses, there is no opportunity to investigate the reception of information by the senses in order to determine how appearances are constructed on that basis. This limitation is consistent with his crucial appeal to the method of isolation: The method works by determining properties that cannot be received by the senses; it cannot reveal how the senses receive the information they do or how that information is used by the mind's active faculties to form appearances.

The passage from the chapter on phenomena and noumena was omitted from the second edition. Still, it was present in the first edition for all to see, and it seems to give Kant's *imprimatur* to the interpretive thesis that transcendental idealism is committed to noumenal affection. Fortunately he also returns to the issue of the reception of sensory data in section 6 of the Antinomy of Pure Reason. The focus of the passage is another key concept, that of a "transcendental object":

Our power of sensible intuition is, in fact, only a receptivity, i. e., a capacity to be affected in a certain way with representations. The relation of these representations to one another is a pure intuition of space and time (which are nothing but forms of our sensibility); and insofar as these representations are connected and determinable in this relation according to laws of the unity of experience, they are called objects. With the nonsensible cause [*Ursache*] of these representations we are entirely unacquainted, and hence we cannot intuit it as object. (1) For such an object would have to be represented neither in space nor in time (which are merely conditions of sensible representation), and without these conditions we cannot think of any intuition at all. We may, however, call the merely intelligible cause of appearances as such the transcendental object, just so that we have something that corresponds to sensibility, which is a receptivity. (2) To this transcendental object we may attribute the whole range and coherence of our possible perceptions, and about it we may say that it is given in itself prior to all experience. But appearances are given, in conformity with the transcendental object, not in themselves but only in this experience. For they are mere representations, which signify an actual object only as perceptions; they do so, *viz.*, if such a perception coheres with all others according to the rules of the unity of experience (A494–95/B522–23, my numbering).

The point of the passage I label (1) is to explain the difficulty in characterizing the correlate of sensory appearances, or that which corresponds to sensible representations. Kant maintains that given the theory of transcendental idealism, it cannot be described in terms of time or space. The

issue here is thus exactly the same as that in the passage from the A edition “Phenomenal/Noumenal” chapter: There must be correlate of a sensible appearance, yet that correlate could not be represented sensibly [even though it is directly sensed].

So how is that which gives what the senses receive to be characterized? Kant solves the problem in this passage by introducing an abstract description, “transcendental object.” Since he describes the transcendental object as “nonsensible” in segment (1), it is somewhat shocking that he then claims in the segment I indicate as (2) that humans attribute to it the whole range and coherence of their possible perceptions. This abrupt change has led Henry Allison to claim that the passage presents two very different roles for “transcendental object” in Kant’s theory (1983, 251–52).¹⁶ One difficulty with Allison’s hypothesis is that Kant’s discussion flows seamlessly from the occurrence of this expression in (1) to its occurrence in (2). The second usage is explicitly tied back to the first by the anaphoric description, “to this transcendental object.” I offer a simpler hypothesis.

What Kant means by “transcendental object” in the Antinomy passage is basically what he meant by the “transcendental object=X” at A105, namely, a formal description of an object of empirical cognition. Since, roughly,¹⁷ any object of empirical cognition must (a) cause sensory representations in subjects and (b) have properties that could all belong to one object both characteristics are part of the description. With the notion of a “transcendental object,” he is able to solve what he takes to be the difficulty of characterizing the correlate of sensation without using forms of intuition—and without sacrificing his empirical realist principles. Even if humans cannot have an intuition of the correlate of sensation, they can still think abstractly about aspects of empirical objects as the causes of sensations. As indicated in condition (b) above, at the end of the cognitive process, subjects attribute a range of sensory and other properties to empirical objects. The ordinary person has no qualms about characterizing the causes of sensations as objects with various prop-

16 The two roles are that of the ‘correlate’ of sensibility and the cause or ground of the “matter” of human knowledge in general. (Allison 1983, 251–52)

17 I say ‘roughly,’ because I am leaving out objects that cannot be sensed, such as the other side of the moon, or objects that can no longer be sensed, because they existed in the past. Kant takes these sorts of objects to be knowable by a chain of inference from objects that can be sensed (A225/B272–A226/B273) and A493/B521). The discussion of how to understand receptivity is introduced in terms of the problem of knowledge of the past.

erties. By contrast, the scientifically informed epistemologist who knows the limits of the senses believes (falsely, it turns out) that he must be circumspect in characterizing the correlate of sensibility, and so falls back on an abstract description, "transcendental object." In introducing the concept of the "transcendental object", he thus saves the phenomena as causes of sensations. What he does not do in the passage is appeal to noumenal causes.¹⁸

As we have seen, however, in the first edition, Kant employed the concept of a "noumenon" to characterize that "which corresponds to appearance." Since a "noumenon" is a creature of the mind—i. e. something thought of as independent of sensibility, there is something very odd about this terminology. He acknowledges as much, with the admission that the representation of this correlate, is "indeed sensible" (A252, cited above). The discussion takes an even stranger turn after the introduction of the concept "noumenon." He points out that it is entirely negative—meaning that it with it we think of something as such—"something in which [we] abstract from all form of sensible intuition". (A252, also cited above)

He goes on to discuss the notion of a "transcendental object":

[this is] the wholly indeterminate concept of something as such. *This object cannot be called the noumenon.* For I do not know concerning it what it is in itself, and have no concept of it except merely the concept of the object of a sensible intuition as such—an object which, therefore, is the same for all appearances. *I cannot think it through any categories; for a category holds only for empirical intuition in order to bring it under the concept of an object as such.* (A253, my emphasis).

Given the Antinomy passage, which is common to both editions, and the Amphiboly passage, which also labels that which is the basis of appearances a "transcendental object"¹⁹ and which is also common to both editions, he is being inconsistent. Both the "noumenon" and the "transcendental object" correspond to appearances, but they are not to be identified.

The difference between the concept of "noumenon" and that of "transcendental object" is that the former is a label for an object thought

18 On this basic point, I am in agreement with Allison's analysis (1983, 251–54).

19 This is the text: "The transcendental object, however, which may be the basis of this appearance that we call matter, is a mere something, about which we would not understand what it is even if someone were able to tell us. For we cannot understand anything except what carries with it, in intuition, something corresponding to our words." (A278/B334)

of as independent from any form of sensible intuition at all, whereas the latter is a label for an object thought of as independent from any particular form of sensible intuition—as an object of sensible intuition in general. This difference suggests that the way to resolve the inconsistency is to drop the already implausible idea that the noumenon is that which is directly represented sensibly. And that appears to be what happens in the second edition, where the two passages assigning the correlate of sensation to the “transcendental object” are retained and the passage assigning it to the “noumenon” is dropped. The argument for the necessity of using the concept of a *noumenon* in the second edition is reduced to the consideration raised at the end of the first edition (and repeated in the second):

The concept of a **noumenon**, i. e. of a thing that is not to be thought at all as an object of the senses but is to be thought (solely through a pure understanding) as a thing in itself, is not at all contradictory; for we cannot, after all, assert of sensibility that it is the only possible kind of intuition ... (A254/ B310).

That is, what transcendental idealism implies is that since some properties of objects reflect the forms of human sensibility, it is possible to think of objects that are independent of those (or any other) forms of sensibility. On this point, I agree with the main conclusion of Gerold Prauss’s exhaustive study of Kant’s uses of “thing in itself,” “transcendental object,” and “noumenon.” This “restriction” argument is the central consideration in favor of the necessity of using a concept of “noumenon” (1974/1989 90 ff.).

By contrast, Kant’s “considered” (i. e. second edition) view is that the origins of human cognition are beyond its purview, not because they are noumenal, but because they are inaccessible by either human sense or intellect. They are inaccessible by sense, because outer sense cannot divulge the workings of the mind (as Kant believes) and inner sense can display only conscious perceptions already cloaked in the form of time. And since temporal determinations do not enter through the senses, what does enter is not an inner appearance/conscious perception. Neither can this process be understood intellectually, since the mind’s intellectual resources—the categories—can be employed to produce knowledge only when they can be applied to intuitions (A253, cited above, second underscored segment). Still, despite the human incapacity to know how cognition works in any detail, some general features are known (and admitted by all in debates about cognition): knowledge of particular states of affairs and of

particular concepts can be acquired only by causal interaction with objects. Hence the confident assertion at B1 that there can be no doubt that cognition begins with objects stirring the senses. Kant believes that humans can also come to understand through reading the *Critique* (or through their own efforts²⁰) that their cognition must (or seems to) employ certain universal principles as norms for empirical reality. Thus they may have an explicit—but certainly have an implicit—abstract notion of a sensible object as such, an object that corresponds to the sensations it causes and whose properties meet certain standards of coherence. So, although he emphasizes the opacity of cognitive processes for humans, he thinks that they are far from clueless about the bases of their knowledge.²¹ To capture what humans do know implicitly (and possibly explicitly) about objects of cognition, while acknowledging what they don't know, he introduces the concept of a "transcendental object." This concept, which is importantly different from that of a "noumenon," fits very well with his account of the blind synthesizing of obscure representations in the transcendental deduction.

How Can an Unconscious Given "Guide" Cognition?

McDowell believes that Kant would have avoided the myth of the Given if he had not offered a transcendental story of noumenal affection (1994, 41, 46). Since noumenal affection is not Kant's considered view, it may seem that all is fine. In fact, the situation is more complicated. In a recent essay, McDowell endorses the Kantian position that while cognition depends on both intuitions and concepts, there is no reliance on an aconceptual Given, because the unity of intuitions is also a result of the activities of the understanding that produce the unity of concepts (2008, 8). Because of this fact "an intuition's content is all conceptual, in this sense: it is in the intuition in a form in which one *could* make it, that very content, figure in discursive activity" (2008, 8).

This position is part of Kant's view. It captures his claim that cognition is possible only because reason "prepares" the field for the under-

20 For further discussion, see Chapter 13, section 4 of my 2011.

21 This point is crucial for Kant, since he thinks that what is distinctive about human cognition (as opposed to 'lower' types of cognition common to animals) is that humans know the reasons for their judgments. I offer evidence for this claim in Chapter 9, section 3 of my 2011.

standing in such a way that all perceptions can be brought under the categories (and so under concepts). It does not, however, do justice to his insistence that intuitive and conceptual representations must be anchored in sensations—in the effects that objects produce in cognizers.

McDowell takes Kant, as well as Sellars, to reject the idea that “sensibility by itself could make things available for the sort of cognition that draws on the subject’s rational powers” (2008, 2).

This claim admits of two interpretations. On one it is incontestable: No cognizer could justify a perceptual claim by appealing to a sensation—especially one of which he is unconscious. On the other, however, it denies exactly what Kant asserts: The understanding is able to direct the imagination to construct conscious perceptions only because sensibility has made available a pattern of sensations that can serve as an input to the mechanisms that carry out the construction.

McDowell may be struck by the fact that when Kant characterizes the *synthesis speciosa*, he lays great emphasis on the spontaneity of the understanding in directing the synthesis and contrasts that with the receptivity of sense: “The synthesis of imagination is an exercise of spontaneity, which is determinative, rather than merely determinable, as is sense” (B151–152).

But three cautions are in order. Although the synthesis of apprehension is spontaneous, it does not produce concepts, but intuitions. Further, the production of the intuition is not a rational, but a causal process, since both the materials and the processing of them are unconscious. Finally, although the understanding and its imaginative synthesis are determining rather than determinable, they cannot float free of the character of the sensations or Kantian epistemology would lose the guidance of experience. The understanding may dispose, but only when the senses propose—only when they make available a pattern of sensations that can be determined in one of the ways in which the understanding is able to determine.

In a recent paper, Hannah Ginsborg has objected to the approach to the given just sketched on the grounds that it concedes too much to Empiricism and so ends up begging the question against the position. It concedes too much because Kant’s

empiricist opponent might well simply insist ... that, insofar as the unconceptualized manifold determines whether an object is to be represented as a substance endowed with the quality of being green, or as a substance endowed with the quality of being blue, then it is, eo ipso representing what is given to us as green or as blue. (2006, 72)

I think the term "determine" is not quite right. As I understand Kant's view of the relation between a sensation and a perception, it is analogous to the relation between a planar projection and a solid object.²² A planar projection does not determine the object of which it is a projection, since differently sized and oriented objects can produce identical projections. The object information is not given in the projection. Nonetheless, the projection provides guidance for its three-dimensional interpretation; the interpretation does not float free of the projection. By analogy, the patterns and characters of sensations do not determine the conscious perceptions to which they give rise, because they don't determine the types and patterns of sensations that can be made into conscious perceptions.²³ The understanding does that. In actual cases, however, the determination can be carried out only when a suitable determinable has been made available by the senses. Hence the question is not begged against the Empiricist, since the materials made available through the senses are guiding but not determining in producing the conscious perception that is able to provide a reason for a judgment. On Kant's picture, the unconscious given and the conceptual capacities of the understanding provide constraints on each other in the production of an intuition that can be the basis of a rational belief.

As I present it, the Kantian solution to the problem of the myth of the Given has a very odd feature. Although the understanding is supposed to be spontaneous and the basis rational thought, its "direction" of the synthesis of apprehension by the imagination is a "blind," "brute causal" process. Both McDowell and Ginsborg recognize that the understanding can be involved in both the production of intuitions and the production and use of concepts only if it operates in somewhat different ways in the two cases (Ginsborg, 2006, 91²⁴). Still, it is reasonable to object that my Kant has the understanding functioning in perception in a most un-understanding fashion. It seems to operate here just like the mechanical

22 This analogy would have been familiar to Kant, because Leibniz used it in the *new Essays* to characterized the relation between primary and secondary qualities (1765/1982, 131). On the other hand, I've used the analogy before (1999) in a discussion with which Ginsborg is familiar, so she may not find it persuasive (though the context was somewhat different).

23 Ginsborg (2006, 73) rejects this sort of account on the grounds that it undermines the distinction between empirical and a priori concepts. As a general point, this is correct, but on Kant's view, empirical concepts are merely specifications of categorial concepts.

24 See also Longuenesse (1998, 63).

processes of the animal mind that Kant, Leibniz, and other moderns used as the contrast case for the human mind.

In a sense, this is correct. The only “rationality” involved in the understanding’s direction of the synthesis of apprehension is that of Mother Nature; it is her “norms” that lead to the “positing of a representation as such” (R4631, 17.615) or to the construction of a conscious perception (A120n.). There is, nonetheless, a crucial difference between the cases, one that provides a warrant for Kant’s claim that the understanding is at work in constructing perceptions. In the human case, Nature’s norms have an additional purpose, because they are useful to humans in a special way. Unconscious processes work up the raw materials of sensation in such a way that they are apt for the understanding’s capacity to look for rules in the appearances of conscious perception. In this way, the understanding can discover or make explicit the rules operating in the phenomenal world and so come to use such rules normatively, by testing and rejecting them, by appealing to them to explain why the world is as it is. Kant could assign the task of processing sensations into understanding-friendly conscious perceptions to a different higher faculty. As noted, he sometimes assigns it to “reason.” Since the fit is so close—representations are posited as representations of objects insofar as they conform to the principles associated with the categories of the understanding—it seems extravagant to hypothesize two faculties that operate in accord with the same basic principles. So he opts instead for one faculty with two modes of operation, one blind and one where the cognizer can be aware of his representations as instantiating rules and so of the rational relations among them.

Although I have defended Kant’s use of unconscious representations in avoiding the Myth while preserving the essential role of the sensory given in ways that his successors, as well as his predecessors, have not always managed, his solution comes at a high cost. It is only because he insists that human cognition is possible only if it conforms to the categorial principles that the first scrutiny works. Without this (in essence simplifying) assumption, he could account for the inevitable suitability of conscious perceptions for the application of concepts only by the implausible proposal that rules associated with all concepts conjointly act as norms for positing representations of objects as such. Similar hypotheses are currently on offer, but most philosophers reject them as extravagant. Since most philosophers are equally incredulous about Kant’s categories, it’s far from obvious that looking to his philosophy for a dissolution of the myth is going to be fruitful. This is not surprising, because he wasn’t try-

ing to solve the problem of the *a posteriori*, the given, but that of the *a priori*, the constructed. That's why the solution his theory implies for the given depends on a commitment to *a priori* categories.

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The ‘I Think’ Must Be Able To Accompany All My Representations

Unconscious Representations and Self-consciousness in Kant

Dietmar H. Heidemann

Introduction

The proposition “The I think must be able to accompany all my representations” (*CPR* B 131) is one of the linchpins of Kant’s critical philosophy. It is pivotal for several reasons: First, and foremost, it stands for the core idea of the critical theory of apperception. Second, it plays a crucial role in the argument of the transcendental deduction of the categories, and, third, it mirrors Kant’s critical stance towards metaphysical conceptions of the thinking I. Commentators from different philosophical backgrounds have attacked the “I think”-proposition, not least because of its odd wording. The formulation “must be able”, they argue, illegitimately conflates ‘necessity’ and ‘possibility’, and thereby renders the whole sentence contradictory. In this respect one of the most striking criticisms is Schopenhauer’s interpretation according to which the proposition does not make sense since it is “a problematic-apodictic enunciation, or, in plain English, a proposition taking away with one hand what it gives with the other.”¹ In substance, Schopenhauer’s unease about the “I think”-proposition is unjustified for the oddity of its formulation is due to the ambitious epistemological goal Kant is aiming at. This goal is two-fold. It not only consists in an epistemological explanation of the possibility of consciousness of representations as elements of cognition. As a by-product the “I think”-proposition likewise explains by means of a theory

1 Cf. Schopenhauer (1977, 554) (“[...] eine problematisch-apodiktische Enuntiation; zu Deutsch, ein Satz, der mit der einen Hand nimmt, was er mit der anderen giebt.” Cf. Schopenhauer (1977, 54). For a similar criticism see Strawson (1966, 93).

of self-consciousness the possibility of unconscious representations, i. e., representations we have without being conscious of them.

The explanation of the possibility of unconscious representations on the basis of a theory of self-consciousness shouldn't be taken for granted since the connection between (self-)consciousness and unconscious representations seems to be paradoxical. As Kant himself puts it: "A contradiction appears to lie in the claim to have representations and still not be conscious of them; for how could we know that we have them if we are not conscious of them?"² According to Kant's own theory, we can in fact have representations and still not be conscious of them. For we have *obscure*, i. e., unconscious, as opposed to *clear* representations. Commentators usually agree that in Kant's theory unconscious representations are restricted to the field of *obscure* representations. As I argue, in the transcendental theory also the *clear* but *indistinct* representations must be considered as unconscious representations. Moreover, they are not unconscious as such but either indistinct conceptual or indistinct intuitional representations. It follows that for Kant there is a certain kind of conceptual or intuitional representations that are unconscious, or, to put it another way, there is mental content that is not accompanied by the "I think". From this it follows that although the "I think"-consciousness, or self-consciousness, is discursive since it forms an "analytical unity" (cf. *CPR* B 133), not all conceptual mental content is accompanied by the "I think". This is quite remarkable since this means that there would be unconscious conceptual or intuitional representations bearing phenomenality and intentionality. I argue that it is the "I think"-proposition that provides the explanatory ground for that very possibility.

The paper is divided into three sections: The first section presents an outline of the distinction between obscure and clear representations in Kant's philosophy on the backdrop of the Leibnizian-Wolffian theory. Section two moves on to a more detailed analysis of the relation Kant establishes between clear representations and transcendental apperception. Here it becomes evident how the transcendental apperception must be conceived of as regulating principle of conscious as well as of unconscious representations. The concluding section points to some important consequences unconscious representations have for the possibility of non-conceptual content. It develops the argument according to which there is

2 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 246), AA 7:135. If not otherwise mentioned all citations from Kant's works refer to the Akademie Ausgabe (AA) of Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften* (1900ff).

non-conceptual content and that on the basis of the "I think"-proposition non-conceptual content must count as unconscious mental content. Thus the theory of unconscious representations explains the possibility of non-conceptual content.

1. Obscure and Clear Representations

In his own account of the unconscious Kant critically reinterprets the rationalist conception of the distinction between obscure and clear representations. Although Kant's discussion of that conception provides the ground for the transcendental distinction between sensibility and understanding, his account of the unconscious itself is independent of the distinction between the two sources of knowledge in transcendental philosophy. That is to say, his arguments against the rationalist distinction between obscure and clear representations do not at the same time justify the transcendental distinction between sensibility and understanding, or intuition and concept respectively. Whereas his criticism of the rationalists' distinction between obscure and clear representations points to an immanent misconception of their analysis of clear representations as confused and distinct ideas, his objections to the rationalist explanation of the difference between sensibility and understanding identify inconsistencies in their account of intuition and concept as kinds of representations. As we will see this turns out to be a crucial point.

1.1. Leibniz on Unconscious Ideas

Though his transcendental theory of consciousness is in many ways unique, Kant, in his explanation of the possibility of unconscious representations, to a certain extent relies on the rationalist antecedents. This goes especially for the terminology he makes use of.³ For that reason, in Kant's critical conception of representation, rationalist philosophers like Wolff, Baumgarten, and Meier loom large. These authors more or less directly rely on Leibniz who by and large shapes the modern discussion of the distinction between conscious and unconscious representations.

3 Since this fact has been widely acknowledged in the literature I will only point to those aspects of Kant's reception of rationalist accounts of the unconscious that are indispensable for my argument. For a somewhat broader discussion cf. La Rocca (2008b, 48–58), and especially La Rocca (2007, 65–76, 76–87).

Leibniz' theory is particularly helpful to grasp the main differences between the rationalist and the Kantian account of the unconscious. In this respect the essay *Meditationes de Cognitione, veritate et Ideis* (1684) is most revealing. There, as a critique of Descartes, Leibniz sets out to determine the difference between true and false ideas. He writes:

Est ergo cognitio vel obscura vel *clara*, et clara rursus vel confusa vel *distincta*, et distincta vel inadaequata vel adaequata, item vel symbolica vel *intuitiva*: et quidem si simul adaequata et intuitiva sit, perfectissima est.⁴

At the top level Leibniz distinguishes between obscure and clear cognition. The latter can either be confused or distinct, and distinct cognition can be inadequate, adequate, symbolic or intuitive. If cognition is both, adequate and intuitive, it is most complete. With respect to the problem of the unconscious the distinction 'obscure-clear' cognition on the one hand, and 'confused-distinct' cognition on the other, is the most significant one. Leibniz doesn't speak of 'obscure cognition' but of 'obscure notion' ("notio") as a kind of representation, obviously because in his eyes cognition as such cannot be obscure.⁵ Accordingly, obscure, i. e., unconscious notions are those ideas that are not sufficient for recognizing something actually represented. If I am, for example, remembering a flower that I have seen before, without being able to recognize it, i. e., to distinguish it from similar things, then the notion I have of that flower is obscure. Whereas in this case Leibniz refers to perception and memory images, the same goes for concepts. Hence, those concepts that I cannot adequately define are obscure concepts.⁶ The opposite of what Leibniz calls 'obscure notion' is 'clear cognition' which in turn he describes according to the possibility of recognition of that cognition. Thus the criterion of distinguishing between obscure and clear cognition is recognition.

Leibniz differentiates two kinds of clear cognition. Clear cognition is confused if I cannot list enough features or marks pertaining to a thing that nevertheless really has them. For instance, in sensation we are able to sufficiently distinguish between colors, tastes, smells etc. However, we are unable to sufficiently discriminate sensations by means of concep-

4 Leibniz (1684, 422).

5 In the *Nouveaux Essays* (cf. Leibniz (1704, 236 ff.; I. xxix, §§ 2 ff.)) Leibniz basically makes the same distinction like in the *Meditationes*. The term he uses there is "idée". This indicates that "notio" in the *Meditationes* should be translated as 'idea' or 'representation', not as 'notion' or 'concept' in the narrow sense of the word.

6 Cf. Leibniz (1684, 422).

tual descriptions. Clear but distinct notions, on the other hand, are those that enable us to distinguish one thing from another similar thing with the help of a sufficiently great and precise number of marks, e. g., if someone clearly distinguishes between different kinds of metal. The adequate list of such marks is what makes up the nominal definition of distinct concepts like 'number', 'size' or 'shape'. Although non-composite concepts cannot be defined, Leibniz is not willing to give up the possibility of distinct cognition of *simple* concepts.

The *Nouveaux Essais* (1704) are more explicit about the last point. Contrary to what his interlocutor, Philalethes, the representative of Locke, claims with respect to simple ideas, which he just takes to be clear ("Nos Idées simples et claires [...]"), Theophilus, the representative of Leibniz, maintains that what already has been exposed in the *Meditationes* is equally true of clear ideas no matter whether they are simple or composite ("[...] j'ay donné une définition des *Idées claires*, commune aux simples et aux composées [...]").⁷ With respect to the distinction between obscure and clear ideas the *Nouveaux Essais* basically proceed like the *Meditationes*. Leibniz yet points out that Philalethes's characterization of distinct ideas in terms of the possibility to clearly distinguish ideas from one another with the help of differentiating marks is unsatisfactory since in this case clear ideas couldn't be distinguished from distinct ideas. However, they must since confused ideas form the second subspecies of clear ideas. Leibniz' insistence on confused and distinct ideas as the two subspecies of clear ideas is of utmost importance for his conception of unconscious representations since for Leibniz not only obscure but also confused ideas count as unconscious ideas. According to the *Nouveaux Essais*, obscure ideas are those ideas we have that are insufficient for distinguishing one thing from another. Leibniz believes that ideas we receive from sensible objects ("choses sensibles") are obscure, since even if sensible objects appear to be identical they nevertheless can reveal differences that we were not aware of, that is to say differences that in fact existed but that we were unconscious of in our perception of the object. Clear ideas, on the other hand, enable us to unambiguously discriminate things.⁸ Now confused ideas are those clear ideas that cannot be defined, and that we can only know from examples ("par des exemples") like a particular taste or smell.⁹ Like distinct ideas they enable us to distinguish

7 Leibniz (1704, 236; I. xxix, § 2).

8 Leibniz (1704, 236 f.; I. xxix, § 2).

9 Leibniz (1704, 237; I. xxix, § 4).

between things, nevertheless only the distinct ones enable us to discriminate things and give definitions of their ideas. Confused ideas don't, for they are deficient simply in that they lack conceptual clearness.

Now in order to further elucidate his conception of unconscious ideas, in the *Nouveaux Essays* Leibniz illustrates their significance and function with the help of several examples. The idea of a heap of stones, for instance, is confused as long as one doesn't recognize the number of the stones and other properties that can be ascribed to the heap. Suppose the heap is composed of thirty six stones. If someone perceives the heap without recognizing the exact number of stones, that person wouldn't be aware of the fact that the stones could form a square of a certain size (6^2). The same goes for a thousand-sided figure. Unless we know the exact number of sides we only have a confused idea of that figure. In fact, Philalethes considers the case where someone might think of a thousand-sided figure thereby having an obscure idea of the figure and a distinct idea of the number of the sides. For one cannot have, he maintains, an exact idea of a thousand-sided figure such that one would be able to distinguish it from a figure that only has 999 sides. Leibniz objects to this that it is perfectly possible to have both, a distinct idea of the figure as well as of the number one thousand for Philalethes just mixes up the idea of a thousand-sided figure with its image: "je n'ay qu'une idée confuse et de la figure et de son nombre, jusqu'à ce que je distingue le nombre en comptant. Mais l'ayant trouvé, je connois très bien la nature et les propriétés de polygone proposé [...]"¹⁰ Hence, someone who is able to determine the exact number of sides a figure has just by sight, or someone who is able to determine the exact weight of a body just by carrying it, does not have a clear but only a confused idea of that figure, or weight respectively since this idea does not convey any information about the figure's or weight's nature.¹¹

So Leibniz basically distinguishes between two kinds of unconscious ideas. First, unconscious ideas are obscure ideas. They are a kind of perception, as he says in the *Monadologie* (1714), "[...] dont on ne s'aperçoit pas" though they are different from sense-perception and consciousness.¹² Unconscious ideas of this kind are "petites perceptions, où il y a rien de distingué". In cases where our mental state is predominated by

10 Cf. Leibniz (1704, 242 f; I.xxix, § 13).

11 Cf. Leibniz (1704, 242 f; I.xxix, § 13).

12 Cf. Leibniz, *Monadologie*, (1714, 608 f; § 14).

them, we literally lose consciousness or fall unconscious.¹³ Secondly, unconscious ideas are confused ideas, i.e., clear ideas that allow for differentiation, however, not in a distinct way which requires knowledge of the nature of something. Consequently, obscure and confused ideas are distinguished in that obscure ideas do not provide any basis for the differentiation between things whereas confused ideas do, however, without telling us more than a particular thing being different from another thing.

The Leibnizian account of unconscious ideas, to be more precise, of the distinction between obscure and clear, or confused and distinct cognition is highly ambiguous. One problem among others is that in his descriptions he obviously does not determine the nature or essence of obscure and clear, or confused and distinct cognition respectively, i.e., he does not define what these kinds of ideas are. Leibniz rather lays out criteria by means of which we can identify ideas of that sort. Another problem is that within the field of obscure ideas there seem to be different degrees of obscurity which range from completely unconscious, unnoticed ideas to less unconscious ideas like ideas of unnoticed parts of consciously perceived objects. One would expect Leibniz to explain when and how an unconscious idea passes the threshold of consciousness, and in turn when and how a confused idea passes the threshold to the unconscious. Since he believes that all ideas we receive from external objects are obscure or at least confused, one might ask oneself why there couldn't be cases in which sense-perception is clear and distinct.

1.2. Kant's Critique of the Leibnizian Account of Unconscious Ideas

It was not before Kant that Leibniz' theory of ideas was fundamentally questioned although in his own account of the unconscious Kant in some respects still relies on Leibniz. Yet there are two fundamental differences between Leibniz' and Kant's account of unconscious ideas which make both conceptions incompatible. First, for reasons to be explained, for Kant the opposition 'distinct-confused' is mistaken. Clear ideas are rather distinct or indistinct; confused ideas form a subset of indistinct ideas. Second, unlike unconscious ideas conscious ideas are rule governed due to the spontaneous activity of the "I think" which must be able to accompany all my representations. The logical function of the "I think" explains why, unlike in Leibniz, also ideas derived from sense-perception can be clear and distinct. In the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point*

13 Cf. Leibniz, *Monadologie*, (1714, 610 f; § 21).

of view Kant agrees with Leibniz and his followers that there are obscure as opposed to clear ideas or representations (“Vorstellungen”). Obscure representations are representations that we have without knowing that we have them, i.e., without being directly conscious of them. Clear representations are those representations we are directly conscious of, and, as Kant specifies, “[...] when their clarity also extends to the partial representations that make up a whole together with their connection, they are then called distinct representations, whether of thought or intuition.”¹⁴ The specification according to which distinct representations can be equally of thought or intuition, already indicates the major difference between Kant’s and Leibniz’ theory of representation. Whereas for Leibniz sensible ideas cannot be distinct, for Kant they can. On the other hand, Kant concurs with Leibniz that in sense-perception there can be obscure representations, for instance, “[w]hen I am conscious of seeing a human being far from me in a meadow, even though I am not conscious of seeing his eyes, nose, mouth, etc. [...]”¹⁵ From my conscious perception of the human being I can conclude that I have obscure representations of what I cannot actually see or discriminate from the distance.¹⁶ In this sense we indirectly know that we have unconscious representations. Like Leibniz Kant maintains that the elucidation of sense-perception with the help of technical means like the “telescope” or “microscope” proves that in the aftermath sense-perception contains much more than we normally are aware of in ordinary perception. This holds true for all of our senses, and this is why “[...] the field of obscure representations is the largest in the human being.”¹⁷

Only until this point Kant, to a greater or lesser extent, agrees with Leibniz; however, concerning the differentiation of ‘clear representations’ their theories fundamentally diverge. Accordingly, “clarity” is “[c]onsciousness of one’s representations that suffices for the distinction of one object from another”. “But that consciousness by means of which the composition of representations also becomes clear is called distinctness.” ‘Distinctness’ is what makes representations knowledge. It includes

14 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 246), AA 7:135.

15 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 246), AA 7:135.

16 Similarly in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant says that in the perception of the pyramids in Egypt from too far away “the parts that are apprehended (the stones piled on top of one another) are represented only obscurely”. Cf. Kant (2000, 136), AA 5:252.

17 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 247), AA 7:136.

“order”, “unity of consciousness” and a “rule for the combination”.¹⁸ As we know from the first *Critique* the “I think” or transcendental apperception is the source of all synthetic, rule-governed cognitive structure. Now the point Kant makes is that, unlike Leibniz does, one cannot contrast distinct representation with confused representation since the opposite of “distinct” is “indistinct”. The argument is an indirect one. Every confused idea must be composite since confusion means lack of order and order implies composition of elements. By definition simple ideas are non-composite. Hence, they cannot exhibit (order or) confusion. Although Kant doesn’t give an example he nonetheless maintains that simple ideas can be (distinct or) indistinct such that we are (conscious or) unconscious of them. Here he seems to directly refer to Leibniz who argues that distinct ideas are composite since we can define them in nominal definitions. On the other hand, he is well aware of the difficulty that in this case simple ideas, since they are not composite and hence undefinable, couldn’t be distinct. However, this seems to be implausible for why shouldn’t simple ideas be distinct by the same token. For the sake of the generic distinction ‘confused-distinct’ Leibniz nevertheless holds onto the view that simple ideas, though not composite and undefinable, can be distinct which is inconsistent with his overall theory.¹⁹

For Kant this inconsistency results from the mistaken analysis of clear ideas. In order to explain the possibility of conscious or unconscious simple ideas, clear ideas must be analyzed in terms of their distinctness or indistinctness, not as Leibniz does in terms of distinctness and confusion. This is in line with the standard example of a simple representation Kant gives in other contexts, i.e., “the simple representation of the I” (*CPR* B 68).²⁰ In self-consciousness I can explicitly refer to myself as “I”, i.e., as the subject of thought. However, I can equally direct the focus of my consciousness on an activity I am performing, e.g., playing chess, and thereby not being constantly aware of the thought that it’s me who is performing though I am so to speak in the background of my mental activity. In the first case, I have a distinct idea or representation of myself. In the second, the representation I have of myself is indistinct but not confused since “I” is a simple representation. Order and con-

18 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 248 f), AA 7:137 f).

19 Cf. Leibniz (1684, 422 f).

20 Cf. *CPR* B 135: “For through the I, as a simple representation, nothing manifold is given; [...]”. Translations from the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*CPR*, first edition A, second edition B) are taken from Kant (1998).

fusion, as Kant argues, are factors that only seem suitable to explain how in *some* representations distinctness and indistinctness comes about. “Confusion is”, he says, “the cause of indistinctness, not the definition of it” whereas order is the cause of distinctness.²¹ Therefore each “confused cognition” is indistinct, however, not every indistinct cognition is confused.²² As mentioned earlier, according to Kant non-composite, simple cognition neither exhibits order nor confusion. Consequently, simple representations that never become distinct are unconscious (indistinct) not because they are confused but because they are non-composite. Correspondingly, the indistinctness of composite representations, i.e., representations that do contain a manifold of marks, does not arise from confusion but from consciousness itself. For I can be conscious of the order of the manifold of a representation while the degree of consciousness diminishes.²³ So distinctness and indistinctness of representations cannot in each case be traced back to order and confusion, no matter whether they are simple or composite. Hence, those distinct representations that are caused by order of their elements only constitute a subset of distinct representations. In parallel, those indistinct representations that originate in the confusion of their elements only constitute a subset of indistinct representations.

This account of distinct and indistinct representations has far-reaching consequences for the distinction between sensibility and understanding, or intuition and concept respectively. Although Kant concedes to the rationalists that sensibility can contain unconscious representations, he disagrees with them that sensibility must be conceived in terms of indistinct (confused) representations. For the distinction ‘distinct-indistinct’ is “formal” rather than “real”. However, the difference between sensibility and understanding is not merely a formal or logical one; it also concerns “the content of thought”: It

was a great error of the Leibniz-Wolffian school [...] to posit sensibility in a lack (of clarity in our partial ideas), and consequently in indistinctness, and to posit the character of ideas of understanding in distinctness.²⁴

21 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 249), AA 7:138, and *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche), Kant (1992, 545), AA IX:34.

22 Cf. *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche), Kant (1992, 545), AA IX:34.

23 Cf. *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche), Kant (1992, 546), AA IX:35. What Kant says here is similar to what he explicates in the “Anticipation of Perception” of the first *Critique* (A 165/B 207ff) with respect to objects of sensation.

24 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 251), AA 7:140n.

Intuitive (sensibility) and conceptual (understanding) representations rather are distinct in that cognition is a composite of two independent elements that are epistemic factors on their own. They are not just two sides of the same coin, i.e. the distinct and indistinct sides of representations. Kant lays the foundation of this new, i.e., critical account of sensibility and understanding in his semi-critical period, in his short essay *Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Distinction of the Directions in Space* (1768). There he argues against Leibniz that the directions of space cannot fully be grasped merely by conceptual descriptions since spatial directions are represented through intuition, and intuitional representation cannot be reduced to conceptual representation:

Our considerations make it plain that the determinations of space are not consequences of the positions of the parts of matter relative to each other. On the contrary, the latter are the consequences of the former.²⁵

It follows that intuition and concept are independent elements of cognition. Two years later in his Inaugural Dissertation *On the form and principles of the sensible and the intelligible world* Kant formulates this insight in the following way:

[...] one can see that the sensitive is poorly defined as that which is more confusedly cognised, and that which belongs to the understanding as that of which there is a distinct cognition. For these are only logical distinctions which do not touch at all the things given, which underlie every logical comparison. Thus, sensitive representations can be very distinct and representations which belong to the understanding can be extremely confused.²⁶

The *Critique of Pure Reason* still presents the same line of argument. In the Transcendental Aesthetics Kant declares once again that it is a “falsification of the concept of sensibility” to maintain that “our entire sensibility is nothing but the confused representation of things, which contains solely that which pertains to them in themselves but only under a heap of marks and partial representations that we can never consciously separate from one another”. This explanation is mistaken since the opposition ‘indistinct-distinct’ is “merely logical, and does not concern the content.”

25 *Concerning the Ultimate Foundation*, Kant (2003, 371), AA 2:383.

26 Cf. *On the form and principles*, Kant (2003, 387), AA 2:394. See also *Prolegomena*, Kant (2002, 85), AA 4:290; *What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff*, Kant (2002, 368 f; 372–375), AA 20:278, 281–285; *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Kant (1997, 47, 248 f) AA 28:227; 29:879).

(*CPR* A 43/B 60 f) Kant shows why with the help of the following example:

Without doubt the concept of right that is used by the healthy understanding contains the very same things that the most subtle speculation can evolve out of it, only in common and practical use one is not conscious of these manifold representations in these thoughts. Thus one cannot say that the common concept is sensible and contains a mere appearance, for right cannot appear at all; rather its concept lies in the understanding and represents a constitution (the moral constitution) of actions that pertains to them in themselves. [...] The Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy has therefore directed all investigations of the nature and origin of our cognitions to an entirely unjust point of view in considering the distinction between sensibility and the intellectual as merely logical [...]. (*CPR* A 43 f/B 61).²⁷

The *Logic* has even a more differentiated take on this crucial point. Accordingly, it is perfectly possible to have both, indistinct intuitional and conceptual representations as well as distinct intuitional and conceptual representations: (1) As we know already, Kant like Leibniz allows for indistinct representations in sensibility since in our perception of, e.g., a country house from the distance we may not see, i.e., be conscious of all parts of the house like windows, doors, etc. These unconscious intuitional representations are indistinct. The same goes for concepts. We may have a clear concept of beauty although we might not be in a position to list all the marks pertaining to that concept like being sensuous, pleasing universally etc. In this case the concept we have is indistinct. (2) Likewise intuitions and concepts can be distinct. In ordinary perception we see the Milky Way as an unstructured manifold of heavenly appearances. By means of a telescope it is, however, possible to make our perception distinct in that now the perception of individual stars and structures becomes possible. Again, the same goes for concepts. Concepts can be distinct in that we can analyze them, i.e., become conscious of the marks they contain. The concept of virtue, for instance, can be analyzed such that we become conscious of its marks like freedom, duty, overcoming of inclinations etc. There is thus no doubt that sensible intuitions can be not only indistinct but also distinct as concepts can be not only distinct but also indistinct.²⁸

The conclusion to be drawn from Kant's critique of the Leibnizian-Wolffian distinction between (indistinct) sensibility and (distinct) understanding is that sensibility is capable of distinct representations as well

27 Cf. *CPR* A 269 ff/325 ff.

28 Cf. *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche), Kant (1992, 546), AA 9:35.

as the understanding is capable of indistinct representations. Consequently the Leibnizian-Wolffian distinction does not hold. Recalling Kant's objection to the Leibnizian-Wolffian distinction between distinct and confused ideas according to which the accurate distinction is between distinct and indistinct ideas, the whole argument appears rather embarrassing. For Kant objects to the Leibnizian-Wolffian distinction between sensibility and understanding in terms of the distinction 'distinct-indistinct' that this distinction is inaccurate since it is purely logical. To be sure, this is not a contradiction since in the first case the critique exclusively refers to the question of how to correctly analyze clear as conscious and unconscious representations. Although there is a systematic relation to the problem of the difference between sensibility and understanding, the response Kant gives to this question only applies to the problem of the unconscious. With respect to the second case it does not provide an explanation since the difference between sensibility and understanding as such does not affect the problem of the unconscious.²⁹ This is why Kant can claim that clear representations are either distinct or indistinct, although the distinction between sensibility and understanding cannot be explained in terms of distinctness-indistinctness. However, for the purpose of my argument both cases must be considered.³⁰ It turns out that there are two main classes of unconscious representations, namely obscure and indistinct representations whereby indistinct representations can be intuitional as well as conceptual. This is an important detail of his theory of the unconscious since for Kant there obviously are two different kinds of unconscious representations. Now the difficulty arises of how in particular we must conceive of clear as unconscious or indistinct representations. For clear representations are accompanied by the "I think" which, according to the "I think"-proposition, ensures their being objects of clear consciousness. If this is so, how then can clear but indistinct ideas be unconscious?

29 Cf. La Rocca (2008b, 56).

30 What I am not going to consider in this paper is the question of whether or not Kant's criticism does justice to Leibniz' theory. Such an examination would involve a much too broad discussion and comparison of both theories. It is, however, obvious that in his metaphysics, i. e., in his monadology, Leibniz starts from premises that are very different from the Kantian fundamentals, especially since he conceives of representing monads as the ontological basis of reality. Kant's theory of representation is independent of ontological assumptions of this kind. I think La Rocca (2008b, 50) is right in pointing this out.

2. Unconscious Representations and Transcendental Apperception

As we have seen above, on the top-level Kant distinguishes between obscure and clear representations. Unfortunately, in his work he frequently uses ‘obscure’ in the broadest sense of ‘unconscious’. Thus he even refers to clear but indistinct representations as obscure representations. In order to avoid confusion, in what follows, let me call all top-level obscure representations ‘unconscious *simpliciter*’. For Kant conceives of them as representations that we have without being conscious of them. By contrast, clear but indistinct representations are unconscious but not unconscious *simpliciter*. Let me call them ‘unconscious by degrees’. Analogously, clear and distinct representations are conscious *simpliciter* whereas clear but indistinct representations are conscious by degrees. Hence indistinct representations are neither unconscious *simpliciter* nor conscious *simpliciter*, they are both unconscious by degrees and conscious by degrees.

It is somewhat striking that Kant is not particularly interested in representations that are unconscious *simpliciter*. The *Anthropology* only informs us that obscure representations are contained in sense-perception (“and thus also in animals”) such as in sight or in the “sensations of hearing, when a musician plays a fantasy on the organ with ten fingers and both feet and also speaks with someone standing next to him.”³¹ Here Kant envisages complex practical or intellectual activities that involve multitasking of a certain kind which only allows for consciously focusing on one activity while, like the musician, having other representations unconsciously in the mind. Another example Kant gives of obscure, i. e., representations that are unconscious *simpliciter* is “sexual love”.³² In fact obscure representations not only appear as the mere feeling or content of sensation but also as higher cognitive ideas like the “feeling” of “supersensible determination”³³, reason of law³⁴, or as the idea of metaphysics.³⁵ Even the understanding itself can operate obscurely, or unconsciously *simpliciter*.³⁶

31 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 247), AA 7:136.

32 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 247), AA 7:136.

33 Cf. *CJ*, Kant (2000, 172), AA 5:292 (translation modified).

34 Cf. *Metaphysics of Morals*, AA 6:345.

35 Cf. *Metaphysics of Morals*, AA 6:216, 376.

36 For details see La Rocca (2008a). Cf. *CJ*, Kant (2000, 122), AA 5:238.

Although it might be difficult to draw the exact line between obscure and indistinct representations the general idea is that representations that are unconscious *simpliciter* do not exhibit logical order or unity whereas representations that are unconscious by degrees do to a certain extent. They do since we do have cognitive access to them. In Kant's theory of representation having cognitive access means to be able to accompany representations with the "I think"; this implies bringing about logical structure among representations, i. e., logical unity in judgment. Hence obscure representations, although they might have an impact on our psychological life, are cognitively inaccessible to us for they are unconscious *simpliciter* such that we do not even know that we have them. On the other hand, representations that are unconscious by degrees are cognitively accessible according to the epistemological function Kant attributes to the "I think"-proposition. This function is to be understood in terms of the central argument of § 16 (*CPR* B 131–136) that has the "I think"-proposition as its first premise:

The I think must be able to accompany all my representations [...].
That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called intuition.
Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the 'I think' [...] (*CPR* B 131 f).³⁷

Though the conclusion tells us that the "manifold of intuition" has "a necessary relation to the 'I think'", the argument is not that the "I think" necessarily accompanies intuition. Kant rather claims that since intuition is representation it is necessarily related to the "I think" according to its possibility. From this it obviously follows that, given premise one, there can be representations that are not per se thought by the "I think" although as such they must be able to be accompanied by the "I think". Hence, representations actually accompanied by the "I think" are conscious representations, i. e., representations I am *explicitly* aware of. Kant illustrates this by considering what it would mean if the "I think" wouldn't be able to accompany representations. In this case "something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all". There are two possibilities of unthinkable representations: representations that would be (i) "impossible", or (ii) "nothing for me" (*CPR* B 131 f). In either case the "I think" is unable to accompany representations, however, for different reasons. In the first case it is unable to accompany representations contentswise. Here representations are "impossible" if they

³⁷ See also Cramer (1987, 167).

are contradictory or illogical like the idea of a ‘round circle’, the mathematical equation ‘ $5+7=13$ ’, or the thought that the reader of this article does not exist. I might be able to somehow mentally generate such contradictory ideas yet I am not able to make them intelligible, i.e., to accompany them with the “I think” since they are logically “impossible” ideas. In the second case the “I think” is unable to accompany representations for cognitive reasons. Here Kant alludes to unconscious representations, to be more precise, representations that are unconscious *simpliciter*. For representations that are unconscious *simpliciter* are “nothing for me” not because of what they represent or for logical reasons but because I do not know that I have them.

It not only seems natural to classify representations that are “nothing for me” as obscure representations but also to call those representations that are able to be accompanied by the “I think” clear representations. Representations that are *actually* accompanied by the “I think” would then be conscious *simpliciter*, i.e., clear and distinct. But what about representations that are unconscious as well as conscious by degrees, i.e., clear and indistinct? According to the argument of § 16, all representations that can be accompanied by the “I think”, henceforth also representations that are unconscious as well as conscious by degrees, are governed by the principle of transcendental self-consciousness. For transcendental self-consciousness is “original apperception” and “produces the representation I think” (*CPR* B 132). The “transcendental unity of self-consciousness” thus explains why representations are “my representations”. They are mine because they belong to my self-consciousness as the unity of my thinking such that I am able to refer to them as content of my consciousness. Kant’s crucial point is that representations that are my representations nonetheless do not need to be representations I am conscious of, i.e., do not need to be conscious *simpliciter*. Kant emphasizes that “even if I am not conscious of them as such” (*CPR* B 132) representations can be my representations as long as they stand under the “transcendental unity of self-consciousness”, that is to say as long as the “I think” is able to accompany them. Thus representations that I am not conscious of as such, although they are not unconscious *simpliciter* but unconscious by degrees, must be classified as clear and indistinct. The fact that I can cognitively access them explains why they are unconscious as well as conscious by degrees. According to the “I think”-proposition cognitive access to them is possible since the “I think” is able to actualize its accompanying function. In the *Logic* (AA 9:33 f) Kant explains this by means of the following example: A “savage” who perceives a house from the distance

without being familiar with its function, i. e., that it is a habitation for humans etc., sees the same physical object as someone who is familiar with its function. Whereas this person has clear cognition of the house according to its intuition and concept, the “savage” only has an intuition of an object of some sort. In this case the representation is obscure. The argument obviously is that the representation of the *house* is unconscious *simpliciter* because the “savage” does not know that the object she is representing is a house; and representations we have without knowing that we have them are by definition unconscious *simpliciter*.³⁸ Kant now varies the case, arguing that if we perceive a house from far away while being aware that the perceived object in fact is a house, we would necessarily co-represent its windows, doors and other parts it has, although we cannot actually identify them as such in perception. In this case the representation of the house is indistinct since we are not conscious of the manifold of its parts. The fundamental difference between the two cases is that in the first case the representation is unconscious *simpliciter* because the representing person, the savage, does not have available conceptual knowledge of what a house is. In the second case such knowledge is available; however, there are cognitive reasons (perception from the distance) why the representation is nevertheless indistinct. It is indistinct because the house is perceived from the distance so that the parts of the house cannot be clearly distinguished.

The reason why indistinct representations are not unconscious *simpliciter* but by degrees is thus that they fall within the scope of the “I think”. However, the “I think” is not in any case responsible for the fact that there are indistinct representations for there might be external circumstances like lack of information, or conditions of perception that account for their being unconscious. Transcendental self-consciousness is to be conceived as the principle that governs the cognitive access to representations we have. If, Kant argues, our consciousness not only “suffices for the distinction of one object from another” but also makes “the composition of our representations [...] clear”, it is distinct. Hence distinctness is what makes up “knowledge”, “in which order is thought in this manifold, because every conscious combination presupposes unity of consciousness,

38 The question is not whether or not the “savage” has a clear and distinct representation of a physical object. Of course she has since she knows that there is a physical object in her visual field. However, her representation of the same object as house is unconscious *simpliciter*.

and consequently a rule for the combination.”³⁹ As is well-known from the transcendental deduction “unity”, “order”, and “rule” originate in the transcendental apperception or the “I think” for “we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves” (*CPR* B 130). This is why Kant says that logical rules which govern cognition can only be applied to clear representations.⁴⁰ For the rule-governed combination of a manifold of representations through which an idea becomes clear and distinct is a necessary condition of cognition. It is only in the case where the manifold of a clear idea is not conscious that the representation is indistinct. Combination of representations according to logical rules takes place in judgments like in the proposition “All bodies are extended” (*CPR* B 11). This judgment is clear and distinct in so far as it contains the logical combination of a manifold of representations, i. e., the synthesis of subject term and predicate term such that the predicate term elucidates the subject term. It is by means of “the analysis of the concept in regard to the manifold” (Kant (1992, 546); “Zergliederung des Begriffs in Ansehung des Mannigfaltigen”, AA 9:35) that we know through which predicates an indistinct concept becomes distinct. By contrast, the judgment ‘All bachelors are unmarried.’ would count as indistinct since here the logical combination of the manifold of representations is incomplete since the proposition does not consider the predicates ‘young’ and ‘male’ that necessarily belong to the clear and distinct representation of ‘bachelor’. Again the analysis of the concept demonstrates through which predicates the concept becomes distinct.⁴¹ The analysis of concepts is analogous to the clarification of intuition which makes an indistinct perception distinct, for instance by approaching a perceived object in order to see its parts in more detail which then allows for adequate perceptual judgments. Like

39 Cf. *Anthropology*, Kant (2007, 248 f), AA 7:139 f.

40 Cf. *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche), Kant (1992, 545), AA 9:34.

41 It should be noted, however, that Kant conceives the definition of concepts in terms of the completeness of the predicates they contain as impossible: “For I can never be certain that the distinct representation of a (still confused [i.e. indistinct, D.H.]) given concept has been exhaustively developed unless I know that it is adequate to the object. But since the concept of the latter, as it is given, can contain many obscure [i.e. unconscious, D.H.] representations, which we pass by in our analysis though we always use them in application, the exhaustiveness of the analysis of my concept is always doubtful, and by many appropriate examples can only be made probably but never apodictically certain.” (*CPR* A 728 f/B 756 f).

in the case of intuition the analysis and combination of concepts is carried out by the "I think". More specifically it is the "analytical unity of apperception" which, on the basis of the "synthetic unity of apperception", makes possible that indistinct representations become distinct since cognition as clear and distinct representation involves conceptual capacities as they are active in judging. Kant therefore writes:

The analytical unity of consciousness pertains to all common concepts as such, e. g., if I think of red in general, I thereby represent to myself a feature that (as mark) can be encountered in anything, or that can be combined with other representations; [...] A representation that is to be thought of as common to several must be regarded as belonging to those that in addition to it also have something different in themselves (*CPR* B 133 f, fn.).

In this way the "analytical unity of consciousness" makes a manifold of representations into a concept (*conceptus communis*), which is itself an analytical unity of predicates. The concept is indistinct as long as we are not aware of the manifold of predicates it contains. Once we have found out about that manifold with the help of conceptual analysis the concept is clear and distinct. The making distinct of an indistinct concept takes place in judgment and presupposes the synthetic activity of transcendental apperception like in the judgment "All bodies are extended." This is particularly clear with respect to the analytic judgment which Kant explicitly defines on the basis of the distinction 'indistinct'/'confused'-'distinct': "Judgments are analytic [...] if their predicate merely presents clearly (explicite) what was thought, albeit obscurely (implicite), in the concept of the subject".⁴² To give another example: "Analytic judgments say nothing in the predicate except what was actually thought already in the concept of the subject, though not so clearly nor with the same consciousness."⁴³ By "not so clearly" Kant means "confusedly" (*CPR* B 11) or "obscurely" (B 17). Again, what is thought "confusedly" or "obscurely", that is to say indistinctly, in a concept can be brought to consciousness by way of logical order in judgment. Since "a judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception" (*CPR* B 141), the "I think" finally proves to be the regulating principle not only of distinct representations that make up cognition as such but also of indistinct representations, i. e., representations that are unconscious and conscious by degrees.

42 *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany?*, Kant (2002, 404), AA 20:322.

43 Cf. *Prolegomena*, Kant (2002, 61, 64), AA 4:266; see also 4:269.

Thus the “I think”-proposition seems to be fundamental for conscious as well as unconscious representations which for Kant play a major role in our cognitive household. This is quite remarkable since at first sight unconscious representations do not seem to contribute a great deal to cognition. What should be clear by now is that indistinct representations, i. e., representations that are unconscious by degrees, in fact do fulfill a crucial epistemological function. On the basis of the “I think”-proposition they explain how a certain class of unconscious representations enters our cognitive processes and contributes to knowledge formation. It should be noted that Kant’s conception of the unconscious is not restricted to indistinct concepts that become distinct in analytic judgments. The theory likewise explains how indistinct representations are contained in ordinary sense-perception and can be made distinct in perceptual judgments. This seems to be rather controversial. In the concluding section I will therefore point to some consequences the Kantian account of unconscious representations has for the possibility of non-conceptual content.

3. Conclusion: Unconscious Representations and Non-conceptual Content

If my argument is correct then there are, according to Kant, unconscious representations. Unconscious representations are not just there without us knowing that we have them. They rather bear cognitive relevance to the human mind since the “I think”-proposition certifies that it is possible to access them, for instance by way of analysis of the subject term in an analytic judgment such that the predicates, pertaining to the subject, become clear. This conceptual clarification is made possible through the “I think” since judgments are governed by transcendental apperception. As demonstrated, indistinct representations must count as cognitively accessible in this sense since they are unconscious by degrees. Obscure representations are not for they are unconscious *simpliciter*.⁴⁴

This finding seems to be of some explanatory value with respect to the question of whether or not there is non-conceptual mental content and how this would be possible. In contemporary epistemology and phi-

44 Although we do not know that we have them, there even might be obscure representations that can come to mind, e. g., in psychological therapy or with the help of memory. However, in actual cognition they do not count as relevant epistemological elements.

losophy of mind the problem of non-conceptual mental content is one of the most controversial issues. The central claim non-conceptualism raises is that there are cognitive capacities that are not determined by conceptual capacities such that there can be, for instance in sense-perception, non-conceptual mental content, content that is not determined by concepts.⁴⁵ The issue is important especially since the existence of non-conceptual mental content proves that there are aspects of human cognition that cannot be grasped in a purely rational or conceptual way such that its justificatory function is fundamentally different from that of concepts. Kant's account of the unconscious seems to provide good evidence in favor of non-conceptualism since indistinct representations, to be more precise, indistinct intuitional representations, must count as representations that are non-conceptual. As Kant's aforementioned example of the house illustrates a person can perceive a house from far away without seeing its windows, door, chimney etc. There can be no doubt that the parts of the house are contained within the person's perception of the house, however, according to the Kantian account of clear representations, not in a distinct way. Hence, the person's perception of the parts is indistinct, i.e., the perception of the parts is unconscious by degrees. But on the basis of the "I think"-proposition the person is able to bring these parts to mind, e.g., by focusing on them while approaching the house and thereby accompanying the relevant representations with the "I think". Another example is phenomenal consciousness. A person perceiving a rainbow might not be distinctly aware of a certain color; but by means of the "I think" she can bring to her mind or become self-conscious that she herself sees this particular color shade although she might not be able to conceptualize what it is like to see it. The phenomenal consciousness of that color shade was in her phenomenal consciousness before the person brought it to her mind, however, that consciousness was indistinct such that she was 'unconsciously conscious' of it. To be unconsciously conscious is by no means contradictory if we take it to mean 'unconscious by degrees'. By contrast, the Kantian taxonomy of clear as distinct and indistinct representations allows for a strong explanation of how it is possible to have representations and still not be conscious of them. Consequently, if there were no place for indistinct representations in our cogni-

45 For a broader discussion of non-conceptualism cf. Grüne (2009) and Hanna (2008). For the counter position, conceptualism, cf. Ginsborg (2008). See also *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19/3 (2011): Special Issue "Kant and Nonconceptual Content".

tive household there likewise were no place for non-conceptual content. Since the existence of non-conceptual content seems undeniable, the idea of indistinct representations provides a straightforward justification of its possibility. This is why the Kantian conception of the unconscious is nothing circumstantial but plays a systematic role in theory of knowledge.⁴⁶

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46 Thanks to Bob Hanna for helpful advice.

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Illusion and Strategy of Reason¹

Félix Duque

The entire Kantian philosophy seems guided by a deep mistrust of the condition of man in the world—to the point that it was easy for Hegel to suspect that “that very fear to err is the error itself” (*PhG* (Görland), Einl. 56). In fact, we know that Kant finds that among the characteristic traits of our species, “foolishness rather than malice” is the determining one (*Anthr*, VII 334). As far as the faculty of cognition is concerned, Kant defines understanding as that which dissipates the darkness of ignorance, force of judgement as that whose task is “preventing the errors proceeding from the crepuscular light in which the objects appear” and reason as the “blind source of prejudgements” (*Anthr*, VII 228). More perturbing is to observe that—to a high degree—the darkness, the crepuscular light and the source of prejudices are within ourselves, because while the senses do not deceive us, the understanding does (*Anthr* §11). To be more precise, the illusion lies in the relation of the object to our knowledge, *i. e.* in the judgement, the place of truth as well as the place of illusion (B350/A293).

“One can put all illusions down to that the subjective condition of thinking is taken as knowledge of the object” (A396). I am not going to deal here with either illusions that can be corrected by the right use of the understanding—such as those produced by sensible appearances, natural or artificial (*Anthr* §§11/13)—, nor with the illusion that we could denominate “social illusion”—the illusion that allows the indirect growing of the morality through the masks of human relationships

1 This work is part of the research project FFI2009–10097 of the General Department for Research Projects of the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation. The paper has been translated by Francisco J Gutierrez. All citations and references to Kant’s works are located by volume and page number as in Kant’s *gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (later German, then Berlin-Brandenburg) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900-). Roman numerals indicate the volume and Arabic numerals the page number of this edition. The one exception to this rule is the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where passages are located by numbers from ‘A,’ the first edition of 1781, and/or ‘B,’ the second edition of 1787. Translations are mine.

(*Anthr* §14)—, nor with the logical illusion which is due to the mere imitation of the form of reason (B353/A296). There are, though, more illusions: the illusions that are naturally uncorrectable because they are found either in the depths of the human soul (the dreams) or in its heights (the ideas of reason, *Anthr* §86). Now we must see how reason uses these illusions in its *own* interest (strategy) and, more importantly, how reason (by believing and fostering them) configures itself as an illusion—the illusion *of* reason is the illusion that *is* reason itself: the subject that becomes object and in this basic fallacy inaugurates life as knowledge and action.

I begin with the illusions of reason. Kant is quite histrionic in dealing with them. They do not exist because of men's sophisms—he says—, but because of reason itself (B397/A339). The illusions of reason do not cease, not even after such sophisms have been resolved by the self-critique of reason. They are unavoidable and natural illusions that are not due to the transcendental use of the understanding (always restrainable), but to “effective principles that expect that we knock down all those boundary posts [of the possible experience] and claim a completely new ground that does not acknowledge any demarcation at all” (B352/A296): the transcendental principles. Reason is, by its own nature, dialectic in itself (B354 f/A298 and B877/A849). If this is so, it is quite puzzling that Kant affirms that “the ideas of pure reason can never be dialectic in themselves [...] for they are entrusted to us by the nature of our reason and it is impossible that this highest court of all rights and demands of our speculation should contain original deceptions and phantasmagoria” (B697/A669). Despite the fact that this supposed contradiction could be attributed (with good grounds maybe) to an ambiguity in the Kantian use of ‘reason,’ I believe that there is more to the problem than that.

The apparent contradiction can be solved by establishing a careful gradation of the faculties in which the ideas of reason are employed and the interest that guides reason in each case. We need to pay attention, firstly, to the ideas as far as the faculty of cognition is concerned. Generally speaking, the transcendental concept of reason is “none other than that [concept that proceeds] from the totality of the conditions to a conditioned given” (B379/A322). Now, in the faculty of cognition “pure reason leaves to the understanding everything” which is concerned with the synthesis of objects of intuition (B382/A325). Here, therefore, the ideas have no other function than reaching the “universality of the cognition by concepts” (B378/A321): *i.e.* they grant the maximum unity and the greatest possible extension to the concepts of understanding (only legislator in the sphere of speculation). Moreover, it is precisely the under-

standing, *driven by interests that exceed it*, what applies fallaciously to the “transcendental object which is at the base of the phenomena” an idea whose strict object is just a problematic *Verstandesbegriff* (B397/A339). The understanding makes a transcendental use of something that only admits a logical use. Thus the three hypostases of the speculative reason come into being: soul (transformation of the absolute unity of the thinking subject), world (transformation of the absolute unity of the series of the conditions of the phenomenon) and God (transformation of the absolute unity of the conditions of all the objects of thought in general, B391/A334). It is precisely the speculative use of the ideas what makes them become dialectic, for in that use the ideas act as concepts of the understanding—an understanding (allegedly) released from the limitations of possible experience, because reason does not legislate in the faculty of cognition and, properly speaking, it does not produce any concept at all (B436/A409). Actually, the concepts of reason have their origin in the faculty of desire and burst into the faculty of cognition precisely to set a limit to the transcendental claims of knowledge (BXXX). By doing so, they generate a (never accomplished) disposition of the understanding to go beyond its own sphere. On the one hand, this tendency renders possible the establishment of rules for scientific research (regulative principles without objective validity: mere heuristic fictions, B779/A771) and, on the other hand, it renders possible a completely new sphere: that of the supersensible. If the critique of speculative reason strived for taking “the objects of experience as such—and among them, even our own subject—only as phenomena,” that was because of its highest practical interest: not to consider “all supersensible as fiction and its concept as devoid of content” (*KpV Vor*, V 6).

Thus the ideas of reason are not dialectic in themselves (i. e. as general principles of morals); they only become dialectic because of the transcendental use that the understanding makes of them. In view of the fallacies that the understanding falls necessarily into, the ideas force the understanding to retreat and they reveal themselves as what they really are, the final object of metaphysical research: God, freedom and immortality of the soul (B395). Reason uses the science of nature as mere means to show man his true and *only* interest (B694/A666): the practical interest—the sphere in which man recognises himself as man. “It is morality, and not the understanding, what firstly makes man a man” (*Streit*, VII 72).

Now, before we abandon the sphere of knowledge, it is necessary to take note of the fact that *proprie dictae* the practical ideas of reason

God, freedom and immortality do not coincide entirely with the theoretical Ideas of reason *God, immortality of the soul and world*. This last concept cannot be assumed by the practical reason, since in cosmological matters—and only in cosmological matters—reason answers satisfactorily its (apparent) self-contradiction: in effect, the object of this transcendental idea is empirically given “and the question concerns only the adequacy thereof to an idea” (B506/A478). As it is known, the third and fourth antinomies leave open the possibility of conceiving God and the effects of freedom in the world and thus Kant can affirm that such antinomy constitutes “in fact the most beneficial error that the human [speculative] reason could have fallen into” (*KpV*, V 107). Guided by the critical solution to his error, we enter the sphere of life, for “life is the capacity of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire” (*KpV*, V 9). Thus the faculty of desire is defined as a being’s capacity “of being the cause—by means of its own representations—of the empirical reality of the objects of those representations” (*KpV*, V 9). In its highest function (when this faculty is determined by the representation of a pure form) reason does not reason but legislate. By this legislation we are aware of ourselves as free beings: the freedom is the only case where a supersensible object of the category of causality acquires objective reality, through the *Faktum* of the moral law in me (*KpV*, V 6—Cf *KU* §91, V 468). This is so because freedom is the only idea that—through its real activity—shows itself in the experience, which in return—and it is important to note it—is the only *territorium* of human knowledge (*KU* II, V 174).

Now, the faculty of desire has its own antinomy of reason. In fact, the immediate determination of the will by the reason produces an *analogon* of the feeling of pleasure: a state of satisfaction—that through a necessary illusion in the *self-consciousness* leads to confuse what one *does* and what one *feels* (*KpV*, V 116). The pure negative satisfaction is taken for the feeling of a passion, mistaking so a sensible impulse for a moral motor (which cannot be but the law itself). The solution of the antinomy of the accomplishment of the highest good in the world (conciliation in *in-finitum* of the happiness and morality) takes place—as it is known—through the *hope* in the immortality of the soul and the *belief* in the existence of God: the two postulates of the practical reason (*KpV* II, III, IV and V).

In any case, this highest interest of reason depends for its accomplishment on two agreements. The first agreement consists in the free play among imagination, understanding and reason—so that reason can determine the understanding to think analogically the supersensible in the in-

tuition, bringing closer the idea of the freedom of the imagination to a feeling (*Gefühl*, GMS II, IV 436). The other agreement necessary for the realisation of reason's highest interest is the contingent agreement (teleologically thought) of the sensible nature itself, so that it does not oppose the effect of freedom: "the final end (or its phenomenon in the sensible world) must exist, for which it is presupposed the condition of possibility in nature" (*KU*, V 196). Only thus can be bridged the "big gap that separates the supersensible from the phenomena" (*KU*, V 195).

So we are led to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, the deepest of the soul (*Gemüths*). Here as well we can find a higher form that—rather than receiving the feeling passively—is its subjective ground and condition. Great importance has here Kant's warning: without an undetermined concordance of our faculties, all communication—and therefore all knowledge—would be impossible. Moreover, without such agreement even all practical determinations would be unconceivable: reason legislates over a (relatively) docile human nature. Such agreement is the *sensus communis aestheticus* (*KU* §40): a twofold feeling. On the one hand, it is the disinterested feeling of the agreement between the free imagination and the understanding that subsumes the imagination under an undetermined and undeterminable concept: the supersensible substratum of humanity when judging about the beautiful. On the other hand, the *sensus communis* is the feeling of agreement or disagreement that makes the imagination recognise itself when faced with the idea of an absolute totality that goes beyond its limits (brought about by the sight of something in nature that is formless or deformed) and fall back on itself—establishing in this way its own limits: the feeling of the sublime. Here we witness the birth of ideas that, despite being brought about by subjective principles of reason, burst in the sphere of the imagination: the aesthetic ideas, correlative of the ideas of reason, are representations of the imagination that give something to think about, despite the fact that no thought can correspond to them. In this way, secretly moved by reason (which frees the imagination from the unavoidable claim for a *Darstellung* by the understanding), the imagination becomes creative and sets reason itself in movement: the faculty of intellectual ideas. This way the force of judgement of taste is the capacity for rendering moral ideas sensible (*symbolic hypotyposis*). But here as well we find an antinomy produced by the illusion of mistaking the aesthetic pleasure individually and subjectively felt for the ground of such a feeling, which despite its being subjective is universally valid for all mankind. The antinomy is resolved—as we pointed out before—when we discover the possibility of an *exhibitio originaria*

of the imagination under an intellectually undetermined concept in function of the practical interest of reason, which thus finds the ground for the establishment of an intersubjective community: the mankind in the world.

Now, the free action of mankind in the world presupposes that the world is pre-shaped to receive the effects of mankind. We need to find, then, an agreement (even if it is merely subjective) between acting by freedom and natural causality. Such agreement is proposed in analogy with the productive human art as the technique of nature. We act in the world *as if* it constituted teleological system. The occasion to do so is given to us by the spectacle of living beings in which we *feel* a unity that cannot be expound in a concept. This unity, though, can be conceived by the determining force of judgement through an analogy with the human activity. This agreement—merely contingent—allows us to discover man as *Endzweck* of the sensible nature: final end—and at the same time, subject to the moral law under divine commandments. Also in the teleological sphere there are antinomic illusions that can be solved by the critique. These illusions point towards something beyond the sphere of the empirical. The antinomy of the reflecting power of judgement presents in the thesis a maxim taken from one particular experience: the observation of living beings leads us to state that at least some natural products are in agreement (purposive) with final ends. The illusion here can be easily solved: we have applied the reflecting power of judgement as if it was the determining power of judgment. The proposition stated in the thesis does not forbid that—apart from (and in conjunction with) the mechanical laws—some natural products are in agreement with the finality. That is in effect the case, proven by the *Faktum* of the moral law, of the practical doing of man and the case (analogically understood) of living beings and the system of the universe as a whole. However, given the fact that the human action postulates the existence of God, this produces the *sane illusion* of rendering valid the physical-teleological argument that, starting from the final beauty and order of the world, intends to prove the existence of its Creator. Even though this argument persuades at a popular level, it prepares us to accept an ethical theology. Despite being miles away from a physical theology (the same gap that separates the speculative from the practical interest of reason, nature from freedom), this ethical theology persuades that “reason cannot prescribe to pursue an end that is not known but as a mere fantasy of the mind” (*KU* §91, V 472).

This way we close the sphere of the natural and unavoidable illusions of reason. In all of them we have observed the same inclination to expand

beyond the limits the *territorium* of experience with a view to guaranteeing *in indefinitum* the moral actions of man in the world under the postulates of the immortality of the soul and of the existence of God.

We still must discuss two other illusions that despite being natural cannot be controlled by neither reason nor will: the dreams and the games. Without dreams we could not live, since life itself originates in the faculty of desire and, precisely for that our organism must be excited constantly (and freely) by the imagination: the *Lebenskraft* itself feeds on dreams (*Anthr* §31). Kant's deep theory of playing is equally important: playing is brought about by an inner delirium that in practice has for objective what is subjective in the principle of the action. Without this delirium we would lose the feeling of life in the satisfaction of our desires (pleasure). Thus nature directs us wisely and invisibly so that we would follow our tendencies to obtain honour, power and money. Even in the case of deeply innocent games, such as those of children or simple hazard games, nature incites us to risk our forces in a rivalry of a combat in order to maintain excited our vital energy—so that that, when we competitively fight each other we believe we play, when in reality nature is playing with us (*Anthr* §86). This guarantees the realisation of two basic human instincts: the love for life and the sexual love. As a matter of fact, the latter turns out to be entertaining because of the woman's constant longing for domination over the man—and because of the game the man plays in order to establish, through the pretence of surrendering to such domination (gallantry), the solid basis for the human community: the family (*Anthr* §87). In this way, dreams and games reveal themselves as manifestations of the instincts (*Antriebe*) that guarantee the highest physical good: the subsistence *in indefinitum* of the life of mankind in the world.

Now, in the same way that the illusions of imagination prepare the asymptotic advent of the highest physical good, the illusions of reason (as we have seen) guarantee the advent of the highest moral good. Certainly, they cannot be mistaken for each other, since their geneses are radically different: the deepest and the highest of the human soul. But they can, and must, be connected synthetically, in such a way that opposing each other (*zusammenstossenden*) they determine our total end (*den ganzen Zweck*) under the indisputable practical interest: enjoying a happiness subject to moral laws (*Genuss einer gesitteten Glückseligkeit*). The way of thinking (*Denkungsart*) of the synthetic unity of the wellbeing (*Wohlleben*) and virtue (*Tugend*) makes mankind (*Menschengeschlecht*) humanity (*Humanität*). (*Anthr* §88, VII 277).

The strategy of practical reason consists in using the *plexus* of human illusions (the rational and the aesthetic ideas and the illusions of imagination) in order to realise “the kingdom of God on Earth, which is the ultimate destination of man” (*Refl Anthr*, XV 608). “In the case of all the other animals—abandoned to their fate—each individual reaches its own destination, but in the case of man only the species does” (*Anthr* II E, VII 324). Only the species will realise (at least that is what all men hope) the destination (*Bestimmung*): to bring about through its own activity (*Tätigkeit*) the development of good starting from the original discord (separating passions)—and all this according the ideal that reason itself presents (*vorstellt*) man with (*Anthr*, VII 328): the providence (*Vorsehung*) is the destination (*Bestimmung*, *Anthr*, VII 328).

At this stage, it seems that the conclusion we have reached contradicts our starting position: mistrust becomes hope, pessimism becomes optimism. We can and we must trust a universal history in a cosmopolitan standpoint. But there is no contradiction: optimism is rooted in a radical hollowness, namely the foundation (*Grund*) is built on an abyss (*Abgrund*) and the strategy of reason as truth (*alétheia*) is built upon the oblivion (*lethe*) that is reason itself. To prove this thesis I will focus mainly on the so-called “last Kant”: the Kant of the *Anthropology* (1798) and the *Opus postumum* (1796–1802).

We need to de-construct the steps taken paying attention to the cracks that the system aims to hide. Let us first turn our attention to reason in its speculative use. The criterion of all truth lies on the possibility of the joint application (*Anwendung*) of the two supreme principles of human cognition: the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of synthetic judgements. It is a question of exhibiting (*darstellen*) in one and the same representation (*Darstellung*) the agreement between the logical and the transcendental possibility on the one hand and the fact of being given empirically on the other. Now, according to the *first Critique* such thing never takes place, for it would require closing the system beforehand by presupposing the identity of the logical principle of determinability and the transcendental principle of through-going determination. But such presupposition was unmasked by the *Critique* as the greatest of all fallacies: the hypostasis of the *Ideal of reason* (God). The concordance between the two principles is possible only in general, never *in concreto*. The *empirical truth* is then impossible, since it is based on the *transcendental truth*: the anticipation of the possible experience as a whole (B185/A146). Kant states explicitly that such anticipation is just an idea: “the systematic unity (as a mere idea) is only just a projected

unity which cannot be considered as given, but as a problem" (B675/647). In any case, the systematic unity, the *Proberstein* of the truth, could only be applicable *in concreto* if it coincided with the highest principle of unity of the phenomena, principle that is "a regulative principle in itself" (*regulativer Prinzip an sich*) because it is "empirically unconditioned" (*empirisch unbedingt*, Cf B876/A618). This statement seems disconcerting, firstly, when put in connection with the acceptance of an idea of mechanism (B675/A647) which is *toto caelo* alien to reason, since reason is by nature *architectonic* (B502/A474), and secondly, when we are forced to acknowledge that the concept of matter is taken from the experience (B876/A848). This inner contradiction of reason is unavoidable and it splits the cognitive subject in two. This explains why Kant should resort, when talking about the *Ich bin*, to expressions as strange as "this I, or he, or it (the thing), which thinks" (B404/A346), "the being (*Wesen*) that thinks in us" (A401).

The contradiction will be overcome in the *Opus postumum*, but at risk of bringing down the very system. In fact, Kant will need to anticipate, problematically and in favour of the experience (*zum Behuf der Erfahrung*), the concept of matter. "To establish and classify conveniently [the empirical] the sensible objects must first be thought as [given] in the phenomenon in accordance with the subjective of the form of their representations (*phaenomena*) in order to be coordinated in space and time" (*OP*, XXII 364). "The phenomenon precedes a priori, hence the subjective goes before the objective" (*OP*, XXII 364). This is "disconcerting" (*befremdlich*) and even "contradictory" (*widersinnig*), as Kant himself admits on several occasions. How is it possible a phenomenon a priori? Only if "the subject affects itself and makes itself object in the phenomenon, in the composition of the motor forces of the matter for the foundation of experience [conceived] as the determination of an object as a completely determined (existing) thing" (*OP*, XXII 364). Now, the self-affection projected a priori for the experience, not being taken *therefrom*, can neither be founded on the principle of non-contradiction nor on the principle of synthetic judgements. If it was founded on the principle of non-contradiction, then how could be the pure spontaneity deduced from the pure receptivity? It cannot be founded on the principle of synthetic judgements either, because the coincidence of the general conditions of experience with the conditions of the objects of experience presupposes that the subject is the (transcendental) object and that in such composition (*Zusammensetzung*) the I itself produces the time. "I produce the time itself in the apprehension of the intuition" (B182/A143). It is neces-

sary to find then a highest principle whereby the other two can originate: this is no other than the principle of identity, the true vault of the last Kant. Thanks to this principle “the experience [...] as far as the sensible object is concerned—in accordance with the principle of identity—can only be one” (*OP*, XXII 365). Kant does not define explicitly the principle in the *Opus postumum*—he had already done so in the *Critique*—but only now we can understand its true importance. In fact, in the observation to the antithesis of the second antinomy we can read: “The subject that thinks is at the same time its own object [...] since all object is, with respect to itself, an absolute unity” (B471/A443). The second statement depends on the first one. It is because, and only because, the thinking subject is its own object (*Objekt*) that the object (*Gegenstand*) is seen as an absolute unity when it is the same with itself. The principle does not affirm the mere tautology $A=A$, but the meaningful words of Plato: “now each of them is different from the other two, but it itself is itself for itself” (*Soph* 254d).

In the sphere of the *fundamentum inconcussum veritatis* in which the Kantian philosophy operates, the principle says: ‘the consciousness of myself in the formula “I am” is identical [to the that] of the proposition “to myself I am an object of inner intuition (*dabile*) and [an object] of the thought of determination of something that I attribute to myself (*cogitable*)’” (*OP*, XXII 449). But this self-position (*Selbstsetzung*) has two implications. Firstly, that the thing in itself “is an *ens rationis*, that =X of the position of *seiner Selbst* in accordance with the very principle of identity—in which the subject is thought as affecting itself” (*OP*, XXII 27). The other implication is that “such phenomenon *qua talis* is the product of the self-position, a *phenomenon of the phenomenon*: “that whereby the subjective becomes objective because it is represented a priori” (*OP*, XXII 363). “What is considered metaphysically is taken as a phenomenon, in its physical respect it is a thing in itself (phenomenon of the phenomenon) and can be cognised as the merely formal of the connection a priori” (*OP*, XXII 363). Thanks to the phenomenon of the phenomenon every thing “is physically considered as a substance that remains always identical” (*OP*, XXII 328). Thus it is possible to reconcile what in the *first Critique* remained split in two: the *I am* on the one hand and the *omnimoda determinatio* (God) on the other. The I does not become God thanks to the principle of identity; now that hypostasis is revealed as what it was already, even at the time of the *Critiques*: the *analogon* to the scheme of a thing in general, *i. e.* the *Inbegriff aller empirischen Realität* (B610/A582). Kant is extremely careful about it: what we had taken,

illusorily, for *omnitude realitatis* is now realised (*realisiert*) but only problematically and as *necessitas phaenomenon*, not as *necessitas noumenon*. Thus the paralogism and transcendental ideal of pure reason are revealed as the double position of the subject—as *I* and as *thing* in general—on the ground of the principle of identity. Now, at what cost? This subject that posits itself and, at the same time, proposes the whole of the reality (that appears before him empirically and successively) cannot be simultaneously considered as part *qua talis* of such reality. It must be regarded as a mere idea: “difference between an *ens per se* and *ens a se*: the former is an object in the phenomenon that is affected by other [while] the latter [is] an object that posits itself and is a principle of its own determination (in space and time). [...] The subject is not a particular thing, but an idea” (*OP*, XXII 33).

As such the subject is an *ens rationis ratiocinantis* in which—and through which—reason generates itself: “the theoretical-practical reason—in accordance with its own nature—creates objects for itself, *i. e.* self-subsistent ideas: the system of an omni-comprehensive reason that constitutes itself in its own object. The transcendental philosophy does not deal with something supposedly existent, only with the human spirit, which is man’s own thinking subject” (*OP*, XXI, 78).

Thus the entire faculty of cognition depends on the *identical* proposition: “I am (object).” On the other hand, the faculty of cognition was orientated, as we know, towards the practical interest of reason. The antinomy of the highest good takes place in this domain: happiness *versus* morality. Such antinomy is irresolvable within the positions of the *first Critique* despite the uninterrupted Kantian efforts. The (supposed) solution consisted in admitting as postulates the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. Both postulates are contradictory within the Kantian framework. The immortality of the soul has been postulated in order to achieve the conciliation *in indefinitum* (since the whole is not given) of happiness and morality. But happiness is not but the satisfaction of all our inclinations (B834/A806). Now: “inclination (*inclinatio*) is the sensible desire that is used by the subject as a rule” (*Anthr* §80, VII 265). In turn, it is precisely the faculty of desire, as we know, what defines the living being. Then it is absolutely unconceivable (not even in the practical sphere) a life detached from the sensibility, since the higher function of this faculty is absolutely orientated towards the action in the world. Therefore it does not make sense to talk about immortality outside the world—neither it does, as far as the *individual* is concerned, to deal with immortality within the world. This is why Kant affirms in the *Anthro-*

pology that the destiny of man is only realised by mankind. Moreover, already in the third *Critique* it has been stated that “because the life without the feeling of the corporeal organ is merely consciousness of its existence, but not a feeling of well- or ill-being, *i. e.* the excitation or inhibition of the forces of life—because for itself the soul is complete life (the principle of life itself) [...]—, then [the feeling of well- or ill-being]” must be sought in the combination with its body” (*KU*, V 277 f).

Consequently, the concept of highest good disappears in the *Opus postumum*. By that time, Kant had defined the supreme good as a collision (*Zusammenstoß*) in which the destiny of mankind in the world is at stake. Coherently, he states that “all living beings perish, only the species [...] lasts eternally. We must admit this also as far as man is concerned” (*OP*, XXI 346). It is accepted that “there is a life with consciousness for man after death,” but only as a “good and hardly avoidable hypothesis in order to explain this phenomenon of the *improvement*” of mankind (*OP*, XXI 346). That is, man must act in the world as if he could live outside the world. Man must (strive to) reach happiness by being worthy thereof. Astuteness of reason to avoid the horrible feeling that men are ultimately to be swallowed by a wide grave (regardless whether they had been honest or dishonest) and they, “who could have believed to be the final end of creation, will be thrown again altogether into the aimless chaos of matter whence they had been taken” (*KU* §87, V452).

As far as the postulate of the existence of God is concerned, things do not look any better. God was postulated because otherwise men, led by their passions, would not obey the moral law as a *command*: “For that reason, in them the moral law is an imperative that commands categorically, because the law is unconditioned” (*KpV*, V 32). But passions are more powerful than all the other sensible inclinations and they blind reason before a possible choice (*Anthr* §80, VII 265).

Therefore, if God is seen as *ens extramundanum*, there is *eo ipso* no practical necessity thereof. On the other hand, if it is seen as *ens intramundanum* it would not be God, but either the *anima mundi* (*OP*, XXI 18 f) or a despot (*OP*, XXII 61 and 34). What is God then? “God is not a substance, but the embodiment of the idea of right and benevolence that limit each other in order to set limits to a principle of wisdom by means of the other” (*OP*, XXII 105).

In the *Opus postumum* Kant rejects the existence of God understood as anything different from a mere idea of reason—and idea in which reason creates itself. And in the same way that the *omnimoda determinatio* in

the speculative sphere was the product of the self-position of the subject as object—allowing so the experience to take place—, in the practical sphere God is the “amalgam (*complexus*) of all the duties of man as divine commands in accordance with the principle of identity” (*OP*, XXII 53).

So we encounter again the principle of identity, now as the fundament of the human community in accordance with juridical laws. Again this projected identity is not but the correlate of the cognitive *Ich denke*. In this way, our actions are subordinate to the being that *thinks* in us: “In him (the man that thinks morally in accordance with the commands of the duty in ourselves) we live (*sentimus*), we act (*agimus*) and we are (*existimus*, *OP*, XXII 55). The transformation of Paul’s quote (*Acta Apostolorum*. 17, 28) cannot be more significative. However, it is important to notice—against all accusations of *moral anthropocentrism*—that in Kant the problem is more severe. It is not a question of destroying God to put the human being in its place, because this inner human being is just a mere idea: *ens rationis* in function of which the practical reason creates itself. I am not the inner human being, rather I *am* in him, since I create my own life by acting in accordance with that invented (*gedichtete*) idea. And in the same way that already in the *first Critique* the subject had appeared as idea from the principle of identity, also in that idea was already the inner man: “we have no other criterion to measure our actions that the behaviour of that divine man in us, so comparing ourselves to him, we value ourselves in accordance with him and in this way we improve ourselves, even though we can never achieve such behaviour” (B597/A569).

The free I, self-generated by reason as person (subject of rights and duties *as* divine commands), is not *identical* to cognitive “I am”. The gap between nature and freedom still remains open in the “last Kant”. It is one and the same that which acts *in* the world under divine commands, but this unity is synthetic because it develops *in* time: “God and the world, each containing absolute unity—though through different principles: practical-technical (as world) and practical-ethical (as Lord of the world)” (*OP*, XXII 63). So “man considers himself as a sensible object in the world, but also considers his own autonomy as independent” (*OP*, XXI 61).

This is the highest standpoint (*Standpunkt*) of Kantian philosophy: two ideas (I and freedom) connected synthetically in the idea of man, which in turn connects and gives meaning to the ideas of God and world. But we must always remember that here we are dealing with “merely subjective beings of reason [...]—*prototypa*” (*OP*, XXI 61).

Beings of reason are nothing: “an empty concept without an object” (B348/A292), *noumena* that are mere possibilities. In other words, the possibility whence obtains meaning everything that exists. This idea proposes: I am (what I must become). Have we already reached the highest point? Certainly, but all heights stand from dark grounds. Can we still ask about for the foundations of that nothing that is the idea of man? Of course; check hyphenation it would not be conceivable that Kant would have refused to bridge the gap between nature and freedom, between I am (object) and I am (persona). The *Grund* of the possibility opens from the *Abgrund* of the impossibility: the correlate of the *ens rationis* is the *nihil negativuum*, the naked contradiction: an empty object without concept. *I am not* opposes itself to *I am*—and it finds it. The idea of one’s own death, according the fundamental text of the *Anthropology*: “the natural fear of all men (that of even the most unfortunate and also that of the wisest) of death is not a terror of the fact of dying, but [...] a terror of the thought of *dying* (i.e. of being dead)—thought that even the one that is going to die expects to have after having died, thinking about the corpse, that that it is not him anymore, as still being himself in the dark grave or anywhere else. We must not suppress the illusion here, since it lies in the very nature of thinking (understood as talking to and from oneself). The thought ‘I am not’ cannot exist at all, since if I am not I cannot be aware of not being [...] *speaking* in first person denying the subject itself—so that the subject annuls itself—is a *contradiction*“ (*Anthr* §27, VII 167). It is not a mere contradiction, it is the impossible, what erases all possibilities. Nevertheless, “we must not suppress this illusion;” *i. e.* it is not just a natural and unavoidable illusion. Kant *orders* us not to rid ourselves of the illusion—because we live in that illusion. Thinking is talking about oneself to oneself (principle of identity). But the dissonance between the speaking subject and the subject spoken to is called “life-in-the-world.” From the (illusory) rejection of the *no* we create the (feeling of the) world. The world is saved from death because we have it inside—the secret motor of our existence. The animal is “free from death. We alone see that.” Thanks to death always there is world, and never the nowhere without the not Death takes place because we live, and for that we can live as if there was no death, “Since near to death one no longer sees death, and stares ahead, perhaps with the large gaze of the creature.” (Rilke, *Eighth Duino elegy*).

Is Kant possibly the first thinker of the nihilism? It is Kant’s firm conviction that reason does not order to pursue ends that are not but a *Hin-gespinst* (*KU* §91, V 472). But what is reason itself but the self-creation

(*Selbstgeschöpf*) in, and of, beings of reason (nothing) to draw a veil over its origins in the reasonlessness of all beings (nothing)? What was of the great hope? It is possible to answer the question what can I expect by saying calmly: nothing? No. The illusion of reason in its speculative use enables the truth—the illusion of reason in its practical use enables life. What can we do if we unveil the veil of Isis (the mother nature sung by Kant in the third *Critique* (§49, V 316)? There is one thing to do: to *laugh*. For “laughter is an affection produced by the sudden transformation of a tense wait into nothing” (*KU* §54, V 332). Are we ready for this laughter or should we first go beyond the man and, as superior men, learn to laugh?

The Unconscious as Root of Kant's A Priori Sentimentalism

Piero Giordanetti

In this paper I shall argue that the concept of the unconscious plays an important role in Kant's ethical thought and constitutes the basis to which he appeals on many occasions when he tries to justify the structure of moral consciousness, although he does not devote a special section or chapter to this subject. I will first try to legitimate the idea that since the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant's moral theory has been based on the very important role of feelings and that it cannot be considered as absurd or as contrasting either with the intentions or with the results achieved by the philosopher to interpret his ethical position as a particular kind of sentimentalism. Second, I will focus my attention on the relation between Kant's "sentimentalism" and the relevant functions that unconscious processes fulfill within moral consciousness. The aim of this paper is to shed new light on elements that could make possible a wider and more thorough reevaluation of dimensions in Kant's philosophy that have been either in part or wholly neglected: ethical sentimentalism and its relation to the unconscious.

1. Kant's Rationalistic Ethics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

The ultimate lines of the "Introduction" to the first edition of the *Critique of pure reason* give evidence for the conception that moral philosophy cannot be regarded as a part of transcendental philosophy.

The chief target in the division of such a science is that absolutely no concept must enter into it that contains anything empirical, or that the a priori cognition be entirely pure. Hence, although the supreme principles of morality and the fundamental concepts of it are a priori cognitions, they still do not belong in transcendental philosophy, for, while they do not, to be sure, take the concepts of pleasure and displeasure, of desires and inclinations, etc., which are all of empirical origin, as the ground of their precepts, they still must necessarily include them in the composition of the system of pure morality in the concept of duty, as the hindrance that must be over-

come or the attraction that ought not to be made into a motive. Hence transcendental philosophy is a philosophy of pure, merely speculative reason. For everything practical, insofar as it contains incentives, is related to feelings, which belong among empirical sources of cognition.¹

The reason for the strict distinction between moral and transcendental philosophy is here reduced to the function of the sentiments in moral philosophy; they are “motives” of moral action. The comprehension of the foundation of Kant’s thesis will, thus, strictly depend on the meaning that the philosopher intended to assign to the two concepts we are dealing with. Hence, it will be necessary to ask what “motive” means for Kant in 1781 and what shape his conception of sentiment assumes. I will then investigate the reason why he connects them and sees them as a central link in the inner articulation of his system.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* there is only a trace of a negative conception of feeling. Feeling always has to be considered as being of an empirical and subjective nature and cannot have any positive function for knowledge. In the chapter “On the Canon of Pure Reason” in the “Transcendental Doctrine of Method” section of the first *Critique*, Kant writes:

All practical concepts pertain to objects of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, i. e. of pleasure or displeasure, and thus, at least indirectly, to objects of our feeling. But since this is not a power for the representation of things, but lies outside the cognitive power altogether, the elements of our judgments, insofar as they are related to pleasure or displeasure, thus belong to practical philosophy, and not to the sum total of transcendental philosophy, which has to do solely with pure a priori cognitions (CPR A 801 note, p.675).

In this passage Kant reiterates that the constitutive elements of judgments formulated in the practical field are represented indirectly in the sentiments because they concern objects of pleasure and displeasure, of joy and pain: however, the feeling does not belong to the representative faculty, it cannot be included in the domain of cognition because there is no possibility of establishing a connection between a feeling and a cognitive power. So, moral philosophy, which concerns the faculty of desire and the will, cannot leave aside the link to feeling, and exactly for this reason it cannot be included in a transcendental philosophy, whose object is represented from pure a priori cognitions.

1 Cfr. CPR A 14/15. Translations from the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (CPR, first edition A, second edition B) are taken from Kant (1998). If not otherwise mentioned all citations from Kant’s works refer to the Akademie Ausgabe (AA) of Kant’s *Gesammelte Schriften* (1900ff).

We now move on to the concept of "motive". Once we have established that practical philosophy cannot be assumed as a constitutive part of moral philosophy, it is necessary to clarify how it would be possible to answer the fundamental question of morals, the question: "what ought I to do?" What ought to be the "motive" of moral action? Kant gives two different answers. We can refer, first of all, to individual happiness. It is the fulfillment of the totality of our inclinations and concerns, their multiplicity, their degree and their duration; it is a practical, pragmatic, and empirical law as a rule of prudence. It suggests "what we shall do if we want to enjoy happiness" and it can be grounded only on experience because only through a posteriori experience can we achieve the knowledge of the nature of our sensible inclinations. In the passage of the "Introduction," the term "motive" indicates the mere empirical nature of inclinations connected with happiness.

If we would like to provide a foundation for moral philosophy, we cannot ground it on the motive of happiness but it is necessary to single out a second type of motive. If it is true that practical philosophy, having to do not with the faculty of knowledge but with the faculty of desire, is constrained to presuppose feeling, it is also true that there is the possibility of indicating a realm in which the motive of morality can be set in direct relation to the idea of morality and is hence a priori. The concept of the worthiness of happiness is a true ethical law because it does not need inclinations and their satisfaction and regards freedom of a rational, non-sensible being, in general, not individually and it analyzes the necessary conditions through which freedom can agree with happiness. This is an a priori dimension that is grounded upon ideas of pure reason. Kant calls this an a priori *corpus mysticum*, a term that he derives from Leibniz: inclinations and individual sentiments are banned from this world in which impediments to morality which derive from the weakness and impurity of human nature can be removed. The *corpus mysticum* is merely a practical idea which exercises an influence on the sensible world and allows to reduce it to that idea. It is thus that Kant expresses his distinction between an empirical and a pure motive of the will: "The practical law from the motive of happiness I call pragmatic (rule of prudence); but that which is such that it has no other motive than the worthiness to be happy I call moral (moral law)" (CPR A 806/B834 677). "I assume that there are really pure moral laws, which determine completely a priori (without regard to empirical motives) i.e. happiness) the action and omission, i.e., the use of the freedom of a rational being in general" (CPR A 807/B835 678).

The problem that the discussion on the theme of the *Bewegungsgrund* has to face is uniquely that of the objective reality of morals and freedom of a rational being in general: the treatment of the *Bewegungsgrund* and the introduction of the concept of the worthiness of happiness is the analysis of the necessary conditions solely by virtue of which freedom can harmonize with happiness (CPR A 806/B834). “What ought I to do?,” this is the question raised by moral philosophy. The answer sounds: “do that by which you would be deserving of being happy.” The objective reality of freedom is hence proved through the concept of the pure principles of morality and is realized in an intelligible world. Sentiment does not play any role in this process of demonstration, which appeals exclusively to the concept of reason and of rational beings and moves away from anything that has a relation to the sensible.

The theme of the *Bewegungsgrund*, thus, constitutes the true object of the second question and is abandoned as soon as Kant passes to the third. Now he asks “what can I hope” and so he transcends the limits of moral philosophy by facing a problem which is both moral and speculative. Although happiness has been excluded from the a priori theory of the motive of morality, it cannot be denied that the interest of reason is in any case connected with the idea of happiness. The task of the research will be to define in what happiness may consist if we want to avoid that it is interpreted empirically. Up to this point we have dealt only with the “motive” (*Bewegungsgrund*) of morality but we have not yet treated the theme of the incentive (*Triebfeder*). Now Kant affirms that “without a God and a world that is now not visible to us but is hoped for, the majestic ideas of morality are, to be sure, objects of approbation and admiration but not incentives for resolve and realization, because they would not fulfill the whole end that is natural for every rational being and determined a priori and necessarily through the very same pure reason” (CPR A 813/B 841 681). The argumentation leads us from the *Bewegungsgrund* to the *Triebfeder*. Even in this context Kant avoids any reference to sentiments that are always regarded as empirical. The reality of the moral law and the reality of happiness concern man as a rational being, whereas the link between morality and his sensible nature cannot be resolved.

If we now turn to the initial citation and to the reason of the exclusion of moral philosophy from the transcendental system, we can grasp why feeling has been connected with the concept of the *Bewegungsgrund*: feeling is empirical and concerns empirical happiness which Kant contrasts with the worthiness of happiness and only the theme of the motive is an object of moral philosophy whereas the incentive pertains to both

moral and speculative philosophy. Feeling is an individual sensation or impression that differentiates one human being from another and cannot serve as the basis of a universal and necessary judgment. In part 2 we will see that this rationalistic conception of morality which tends to exclude all sentiments from the a priori dimension of the moral system has been radically altered by Kant in the second *Critique* and that this significant modification has been caused by the introduction of the idea that it is possible to derive a priori sentiments from the idea of moral. In these pages, I will not discuss the reasons why and the different documents in which this modification is documented but will rather concentrate my attention on the new theory².

2. Kant's Pure Ethical Sentimentalism in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The Discovery of A Priori Feelings

I shall try to show, first, that Kant's demonstration of the objective reality of morality is not fulfilled by the introduction of the fact of reason, but that for this sake Kant needs to appeal to other four theories. In order to prove that the moral law exists, Kant establishes a strict relation between rational consciousness of morality and feelings. He introduces in the first place the feeling of respect. Further he develops the idea that respect leads to a feeling of satisfaction. Thirdly, he appeals to the feeling of the exigency of reason in the section, the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason," and, finally, he theorizes the union of all these feelings in the concept of the heart of the individual which is treated in the "Doctrine of Method" section. This constitutes what might be called Kant's a priori ethical sentimentalism in the second *Critique*.³

What does it mean for Kant that the concept of moral consciousness is an innate feature of human beings? He determines moral consciousness by denying that the consciousness of morality can be considered an intellectual intuition, because this would mean to admit that human beings are able to achieve a knowledge that pertains only to God. He denies further that our awareness of the moral law could be defined as an a priori sen-

2 On this problem, see Klemme (2010, 11–30).

3 It should be added that the new conception of morality presented in the second *Critique* is anticipated in the "Preface" to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1787 in which Kant proposes to regard his new theory as a Newtonian revolution. See Giordanetti (2003).

sible intuition because moral consciousness has nothing to do with space or time. The last possibility of identifying morality and intuition could be to regard moral consciousness as an empirical intuition, but in this case, too, Kant is explicit and does not accept that moral consciousness could be set on the same level as psychological intuition.

I purpose that when he addresses the theme of our consciousness of the moral law he has the intention of underlining that this consciousness is the result of the relation between a priori reason and a priori feelings. By this way of reading the text, the third part of the “Analytic” does not include a moral psychology nor the application of the moral law to human beings as is often maintained, but rather is part of the justification of the reality of moral reason. Since human beings are endowed both with sensibility and reason, their consciousness of the universal law of the morality can be represented to them only through cooperation between the superior and the inferior faculty of desire. In different passages of his work he refers to the consciousness of morality not only as a rational objective knowledge but also as a particular sensation, as an a priori feeling. In order to maintain these theses, it is useful to refer to a passage of the “Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason,” in which Kant states that he could carry out “very well and with sufficient certainty,” “the justification of moral principles as principles of pure reason by a mere appeal to the judgment of common human understanding” because there is “a special kind of feeling,” which is able to make known the difference between empirical and rational determining grounds, between good and evil. This feeling is not to be confused with the feeling of gratification or pain that arouses desire, because it is a special kind and doesn’t have an empirical origin in our bodily experience. The special kind of feeling is the feeling of respect that does not precede the lawgiving of practical reason because it is not produced by the senses nor by objects acting on them, but is produced only by reason. This is the reason why “no one, not even the most common human understanding, can fail to see at once, in an example presented to him, that he can indeed be advised by empirical grounds of volition to follow their charms but that he can never be expected to be anything but the pure practical law of reason alone.”⁴ These passages show that it is not misleading to interpret Kant’s moral consciousness as grounded not only on reason but also on the feeling of respect and that the latter has not merely to be regarded

4 Cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant (1997, 78), AA 5:92.

as the subjective part of morality, but also plays a very important role in the justification of the reality of the moral law for human beings.

The analysis of the a priori genesis of the feeling of respect is not the terminal point of the argumentation of the second *Critique*; this work pays also attention to another particular feeling when it gives its first answer to the problem of the "Antinomy of the Pure Practical Reason." In that context, Kant elaborates on the idea that there is a way to demonstrate the possibility that happiness necessarily corresponds to virtue. Although it is not possible to show the existence of a necessary connection between virtue and happiness in the mechanical course of natural events, the particular nature of the feeling of respect can lead us to another particular feeling, which Kant calls "contentment with oneself." This word does not denote enjoyment as the word happiness does, but indicates rather a satisfaction with one's existence, an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany the consciousness of virtue.

The genesis of this feeling is analogous to the genesis of the feeling of respect. If we ask what the moral law in its majesty produces in us, we can answer this difficult question by referring to an initial feeling of empirical pain, which is soon followed by a feeling of a priori pain. The feeling of empirical pain arises from the fact that the majesty of the moral law acts on us producing the humiliation of our inclinations. This discloses to us the realm of freedom, because we are now free to feel an attraction for the law of God. In an analogous way, the feeling of respect produces a feeling of satisfaction, which makes sensible incentives worthless. This feeling is neither beatitude nor empirical happiness, but is merely a negative pleasure that consists in having consciousness that we do not need things that are present in nature, but only our freedom. As the feeling of respect the contentment derives from the humiliation of the sensible inclinations that is made possible by the feeling of respect.

This is not the last feeling whom we meet in the second *Critique*; even when Kant deals with the problem of the postulates, through which he achieves a real demonstration of the reality of God and immortality of the soul, he introduces another type of feeling; the need of reason to which is dedicated chapter VIII of the "Dialectic" section: "On Assent from a Need of Reason." Kant states that postulates can be admitted only if we assume that a need of pure practical reason leads to them. "But in the present case it is a need of reason arising from an objective determining ground of the will, namely the moral law, which necessarily binds every rational being and therefore a priori justifies him in presup-

posing in nature the conditions befitting it and makes the latter inseparable from the complete practical use of reason.”⁵

It is interesting to note that even in the “Doctrine of Method” feelings represent the center of the theory although the horizon has changed. Whereas in the first part of the work we never meet the concept of the heart, in the “Doctrine of the Method of Pure Practical Reason” the analysis relies especially on this concept. In the heart of the individual all feelings that we have encountered until now are acting. The feeling of respect, the feeling of satisfaction and the need of reason build a unity and guarantee the possibility of grounding the reality of the moral law in the human individual. Only on account of this unity does it make sense to speak of a method of education toward the moral law.

After having proved that virtue really exists in the human heart and that pure virtue has much more strength and power on human heart than inclinations based on pleasure and pain, Kant exposes his method of moral education. It should be stressed that this method is not empirical and that Kant is not developing here a mere a posteriori pedagogy, but rather that merely by tracing the outlines of this procedure he is thinking in terms of a two-stage process whose basis lies in the a priori sentiments of the morally beautiful and of the morally sublime. The starting point of Kant’s method is constituted by conversations about morality. Every human being is endowed with sentiment of the propensity (*Hang*) of reason; this leads him to act in accords with pleasure in even the subtlest examination of practical problems; it is worthwhile to note that this proves the existence of a certain interest in the beauty of moral action. The presence of a Socratic component in the attribution of a maieutic function to the conversations between the moral philosopher and the scholar is undeniable. It also seems to me to be evident that as in the *Foundations* and the other parts of the second *Critique* these considerations presuppose the use of the obscure representations of Leibnizian provenance.⁶

5 Cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant (1997, 119), AA 5:143 note.

6 In order to prove the real existence of the moral law within the heart of the individual, Kant appeals to the distinction between the right and the left hand, that he has already illustrated in the essay of 1786, “What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking.” In this essay, Kant lays bare the a priori dimension of the feeling of geographical, mathematical and logical orientation. In all of these cases, Kant maintains that we cannot leave aside subjective feeling, which alone makes the triple orientation possible. Even in this case, subjective sentiment is a priori and orientation in space is not guaranteed from a pure intuition but rather from a pure feeling. This seems to me to be the new element

There are two theses that Kant intends to demonstrate. The first concerns the subject of the action, the second, the observer of it. As to the subject, the idea is that “an honest man” is truthful, without wavering or even doubting.”⁷ Whoever would be calumnious because he was offered “gains, great gifts or high rank” or because he was threatened with loss of friendship, freedom and life, could not regard himself as moral, because he would act against the innocence of the honest man against whom he is calumnious. In the case in which he would find himself in an analogous situation, what would be moral is to renounce the calumny. One might however formulate an objection: would it not be against the moral law if a person were disposed toward personal sacrifice or to the sacrifice of his family? It is essential to note at this point that Kant distinguishes between *Wert* and *Zustand*, between “value” and “condition”; only the first can be considered as moral, the second is merely empirical. What could be compromised by honesty is not the value of the honest and truthful person, neither the personal value of his family but only its empirical condition. The sacrifice of the empirical condition is not to be conceived as opposite to the moral law, but is a condition which makes possible an elevation of the value of the subject. Kant is here a scholar of the Stoics and of the Christian idea of humility. This example demonstrates that he who does not submit himself to calumny grounds his action on the feeling of respect for the law and, hence, on the feeling of respect for other human beings. This is the reason why pain can elevate and raise the value of the subject. Again, the feeling of respect is described as constituted by an a priori pain from which follows a feeling of a priori attraction to the moral law. As to what happens in the observer, it is important to highlight that Kant is interested in a priori sentiment and the affects that arise on the basis of it. The scholar of the moral philosopher is not attracted to law only from reason and superior faculties of the soul. He has feelings which are disposed in a climax which leads from the “mere approval and applause,” to “admiration, to amazement and to the greatest veneration,” and finally to the “lively

that this essay introduces if we compare it with the writing *On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space* (1768), the *Prolegomena* (1783) and the *Metaphysical Principles* (1786) in which the example of hands has been already adduced. In the writing of 1768, the example was used to prove that space is not a concept but rather an object; in the other two writings Kant appeals to it in order to demonstrate that the distinction between right and left hand does not derive from a concept but rather from an intuition.

7 Cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant (1997, 128–129), AA 5:156.

wish that himself could be such a man.” If we value it from the standpoint of the inclinations, virtue has no utility but is founded merely on the purity of moral character which depends on the purity of the moral principle. The conclusion of these considerations is that morality has much more force on the human heart the more purely that it is represented, although this does not mean that he admits that morality always has to be in contrast with empirical happiness.

When Kant says that “virtue is worth so much only because it costs so much,”⁸ this does not concern a positive definition of morality, as Scheler has objected. It costs much to abandon all that is an obstacle to the realization of the moral law but it does not cost much to embrace the spiritual dimension of the law. Virtue costs much from the standpoint of the inclinations, not from the standpoint of the sublime feelings to which it gives rise in the “listener.” So, moral beauty is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the moral law having access to the heart and becoming the principle that leads its resolutions. The second exercise, thus, has the task not only of awakening a certain interest, but also of founding a true moral interest, which, as pure interest, is possible only on the grounds of a preceding feeling of a priori pain to which follows an a priori lust, namely, respect. It is significant that Kant connects it, as in the “Dialectic,” to the destruction of needs and inclinations, from which follows a feeling of liberation from the discontentment. The soul is made capable of receiving a sensation of contentment which has a different, namely an a priori origin.

It emerges with clarity that feelings do not have a subordinate role in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, so that we can interpret them as the subjective reflex of the action of reason. Rather, they are essential to the structure of the proof that morality is not a vain chimera, but something that can be translated into practice.

I will now turn to the theme of the unconscious by maintaining that there is no possibility for Kant to justify the reality of moral consciousness through the a priori feelings without adopting the view that the origin of them lies in the *fundus animae*. We become further conscious of the moral law when we are able to produce in us several feelings, namely a feeling of respect, a feeling of satisfaction and a feeling of the exigence. According to the doctrine of the *Faktum der Vernunft*, the fact of reason, which is explicitly introduced in the second *Critique* the philosopher neither needs, nor wants to invent or introduce any new prin-

8 Cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant (1997, 129), AA 5:156.

ciple of morality, but only a new formula. The ground for this is that moral consciousness has already been present to all human beings since they were created on the earth and is an essential feature of their nature. The world has never been ignorant of what good and evil are and has never been in thoroughgoing error about this. "But who would even want to introduce a new principle of all morality and, as it were, first invent it? Just as if, before him, the world had been ignorant of what duty is or in thoroughgoing error about it."⁹

The thesis that Kant's theory of sentimental and rational moral consciousness cannot leave aside the admission of the relevant role of unconscious representations and processes in the soul can be strengthened by citing a passage from the *Foundations*, where we read that it is not required "subtle reflection" to distinguish the sensible from the intelligible world. Even "the commonest understanding" is able "in its own way" to note, that there is a difference between the representations which come to us involuntarily, as do those of the senses, and "enable us to cognize objects only as they affect us and the nature of the objects as they are in themselves so that, as regards representations of this kind, even with the most strenuous attentiveness and distinctness that the understanding can ever bring to them we can achieve only cognition of appearances, never of things in themselves. As soon as this distinction has once been made (perhaps merely by means of the difference noticed between representations given us from somewhere else and in which we are passive, and those that we produce simply from ourselves and in which we show our activity), then it follows of itself that we must admit and assume behind appearances something else that is not appearance, namely things in themselves, although, since we can never become acquainted with them but only with how they affect us, we resign ourselves to being unable to come any closer to them or ever to know what they are in themselves."¹⁰ It is very important to stress what Kant says only incidentally and without further argument about it: this distinction can be made by even the commonest understanding for the reason that the commonest understanding, has been endowed with "an obscure discrimination of judgment which it calls feeling."

9 Cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant (1997, 7) AA 5:8.

10 Cf. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant (1997, 56) AA 4:451.

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Genius as a Chiasm of the Conscious and Unconscious: A History of Ideas Concerning Kantian Aesthetics

Tanehisa Otabe

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) Kant argues, “art can be only called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (5:306).¹ At first glance Kant appears to specify the conditions under which art can be beautiful. It would follow that there could also be non-beautiful art, but we would then miss Kant’s meaning. By art Kant understands art in the broadest sense, including the craft in art, not limiting art in the modern sense of *fine* art. Kant’s thesis determines the criteria under which art in the modern sense is to be distinguished from art in the broad sense, the specific difference of *fine* art. For Kant *fine* art should be beautiful without exception. Apart from Hegel,² Konrad Fiedler (1841–95) first questioned the connection between *fine* art and beauty.³

The Kantian thesis is based on a principle of classical rhetoric prohibiting speech from betraying the hidden intention of the speaker. Aristotle argues that “authors should compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally. The latter is persuasive, the former the opposite.”⁴ Aristotle does not relate this poietic argument in the *Rhetoric* to his natural-philosophical proposition in the *Physics* that “art imitates nature,”⁵ by which he means that nature is the model guiding the principal structure of art in the broad sense of the word. By late antiquity, however, this natural-philosophical proposition in the *Physics* was already associated with the critique against artificial speech proposed in the *Rhetoric*.⁶ Several lines from Pseudo-Longinus’s first century A.D. ar-

1 All references to Kant’s work appear in parentheses in the text. Page references are to the *Akademie-Ausgabe*. For quotations from Kant, unless otherwise indicated, I use *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

2 See Gethman-Siefert (2000, 37).

3 See Fiedler (1991, 9).

4 Aristotle (1991, 222).

5 See Bolotin (1998, 35).

6 See Otabe (2009, 8).

ticle, “On the Sublime,” serve as a quintessential example: “the best prose-writers . . . imitate nature and achieve the same effect. For art is only perfect when it looks like nature; and Nature then succeeds when she conceals what assistance she receives from art.”⁷ Kant agrees with Pseudo-Longinus in emphasizing the symmetrical or complementary relationship between nature and art: “Nature [is] beautiful, if at the same time it look[s] like art; and art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (5:306). The Kantian proposition, corresponding with that of Pseudo-Longinus after an interval of seventeen centuries, provides evidence of the mighty tradition of classical rhetoric.

We are not concerned with the influence of classical rhetoric on Kant though. Our concern is considering what Kant meant by his proposition, what extent he innovated in the tradition of classical rhetoric, and what reverberations his theory met with.⁸

1. Kant’s Reflection on the Relationship between Nature and Art Before the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

Before publishing the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant expresses his view on the relationship between nature and art in a number of notes in preparation for his logic and anthropology lectures. In notes written between 1776 and 1778 we find the seeds for his theory.

In R 962 Kant mentions the symmetrical or complementary relationship between nature and art, as did Pseudo-Longinus: “Beautiful nature is that which seems to be art and yet is nature. Hence also art which appears like nature . . . is beautiful art” (15:424). The question is what Kant understands by nature in this context. In R 1855 we read, “Nature signifies what is unforced [das Ungezwungene] in beauty, art what is purposive and orderly [das Zweckmäßige und Ordentliche]. What is painstaking is, however, artificial [gekünstelt]. Everything is natural that seems to have arisen in accordance with a universal law of efficient causes. / If art resembles the contingent [Zufall] and the contingent art, this is the unexpected” (16:138—slightly modified by the author). Kant here equating nature with the contingent does not mean that nature lacks laws. On the contra-

7 Longinus (1932, 193), slightly modified by the author.

8 For the influence of classical rhetoric on Kant, see Österreich (1992) and Paetzold (1995).

ry, nature is determined by universal natural laws. Kant simultaneously opposes a teleological worldview, denying that nature has any intention. Therefore, we can certainly inquire into the causes of natural phenomena, but not into their grounds. In this sense Kant regards nature as contingent in itself. For art, we can certainly consider it as contingent because art depends on human capacity for choice. As far as art presupposes human intention or purpose though, we can ask for its grounds. In this sense art is not contingent, but purposive, which is why Kant describes beautiful nature in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as that which “shows itself as art, not merely by *contingency* [durch Zufall], but as it were *intentionally* [absichtlich]” (5:301—italics are mine; slightly modified by the author). If art which is essentially grounded on a determinate purpose is not bound by the purpose, and presents itself as contingent, as with nature, or conversely, if nature which is essentially contingent presents itself as intentional, as with art, we are faced with the unexpected. To Kant the unexpected is the beautiful.

Nature and art should coexist in beauty. Art without nature, art bound by rules, degenerates into artificiality; nature without art, nature that lacks order, cannot be beautiful. In R 823 Kant contrasts nature with art:

Nature and art. [Art and contingency]. The contingent is opposed to that which is contrived [das Gesuchte]. *Gout baroc*. The contingent [Zufall] and intention [Absicht]. Natural play.⁹ Nature combines art and the contingent. Art: nature and contingent.¹⁰ The contingent is in free motion and in the action of the powers of the mind. There is nevertheless method therein; in the conflict or change of representation: that something is art and yet only contingent, that it is nature and yet seems to be art, etc.: that is where the gratification actually lies (15:367–368—slightly modified by the author).

9 What Kant understands by natural play corresponds with what Addison argues in “The Spectator” (No. 414, 25 June, 1712): “we find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art. . . . Hence it is that we take Delight in a Prospect which is well laid out, and diversified with Fields and Meadows, Woods and Rivers, in those accidental Landskips of Trees, Clouds and Cities, that are sometimes found in the Veins of Marble, in the curious Fret-work of Rocks and Grottos, and, in a Word, in any thing that hath such a Variety or Regularity as may seem the Effect of Design, in what we call the Works of Chance.” See Addison (1965, 549–550). See the unconscious concerning the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, see Bloch (1976, 97–99) and Nicholls and Liebscher (2010, 16–18).

10 Kant probably wrote “the contingent” where he should have written “intention.”

The question now arises as to how Kant appreciates the baroque taste. In a marginal note to *Anthropology* written between 1796 and 1797, Kant regards the *gout baroc* as false taste together with “[t]he grotesque, . . . the *a la Grec*, and the *arabesque*” (7:409). However, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* he approves the “baroque taste in furniture” which is akin to “the grotesque” (5:242) and refers to “designs à la grecque” as a typical example of “free beauty” (5:229). From this perspective Kant positively mentions the baroque taste in R 823. This note, criticizing what is contrived, anticipates his proposition in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that “everything contrived and laborious in [beautiful art] must be avoided” (5:321).

In his anthropology lecture (1781/82) Kant says, “If art looks like nature, even though we are aware of it as art, it pleases much more. English gardens please because art is driven so far that it looks like nature. Similarly the eloquence that looks like natural expression is the best one” (25:1101). The reader first notices that Kant is under the influence of classical rhetoric, but Kant referring to English gardens is more noteworthy.¹¹ This passage reminds us of his mentioning English gardens in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: “the English taste in gardens [...] pushes the freedom of the imagination almost to the point of the grotesque, and makes this abstraction from all constraint by rules the very case in which the taste can demonstrate its greatest perfection in projects of the imagination” (5:242). Kant contrasts the English taste in gardens with a “pepper garden where the stakes on which the plants [are] trained form[] parallel rows” which can be compared to French gardens because of the geometrical order (5:242–243). Kant argues, “All stiff regularity (whatever approaches mathematical regularity) is of itself contrary to taste” (5:242).

As these examples show, Kant expresses his opinions on the relationship between nature and art in notes from the 1770 s and 1780 s. In 1790, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, he examines the issue. Now we turn to his theory of beautiful art in §§ 43–54 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

11 For English Gardens, Kant says in R 298 (1762–63?) that “English gardens give alternation” (15: 115).

2. Art in General and Beautiful Art

In § 43 Kant determines art in general in contrast to nature. Nature exists in a chain of causes and effects in which an end or purpose does not share. While a work of art also has a cause, this cause is distinguished from the cause of an effect of nature in that art presupposes an end. The cause that produces a work of art conceives of an end, which determines the form of the product. Only human beings who have freedom, a capacity for choice, can conceive of an end. A work of art is always understood as a work of human beings (5:303).

In § 44 Kant classifies art in general as follows:

If art, adequate for the *cognition* of a possible object, merely performs the actions requisite to make it actual, it is *mechanical*; but if it has the feeling of pleasure as its immediate aim, then it is called *aesthetic* art. This is either *agreeable* or *beautiful* art. It is the former if its end is that pleasure accompany the representations as mere *sensations*, the latter, if its end is that it accompany these as *kinds of cognition* (5:305).

Kant's definition of mechanical art reminds us of the Aristotelian definition of skill [technê]. In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argues, "Every skill is to do with coming into being [genesis], and the exercise of the skill [technazein] lies in considering [theôrein] how something that is capable of either being or not being, and the first principle of which is in the producer and not the product, may come into being."¹² Skill in the Aristotelian sense is activity accompanied by cognition to realize a possible purpose; this determination of skill corresponds to Kant's definition of mechanical art.

Mechanical art is distinguished from aesthetic art. By aesthetic, Kant understands that the art in question has no connection to cognition or concept. Aesthetic art is not identified with beautiful art; aesthetic art is classified into agreeable and beautiful art. This classification is based on Kant's theory of the agreeable and the beautiful. While the agreeable depends on the "matter of the representation, namely mere sensation" (5:225), for example, colors and tones, and is based on passive feeling, the beautiful "concerns merely form" (5:223) that makes a "subjective play of the powers of representation" (5:238) possible and thus presupposes active feeling. The beautiful is distinguished from the agreeable in that its reception requires the powers of representation to act.

12 Aristotle (2000, 106).

Kant distinguishes beautiful art from mechanical art (see § 44) while simultaneously claiming that “there is no beautiful art in which something mechanical, which can be grasped and followed according to rules, and thus something *academically correct*, does not constitute the essential condition of the art” (5:310). Something mechanical means proficiency or skill in accordance with rules; without skill beautiful art is impossible. Excellence only in skill or demonstrated proficiency is, however, insufficient for beautiful art. According to Kant art that clings to rules is merely mechanical and “would not please as beautiful but as mechanical art” (5:306) because such art simply aims at the specific purpose of accordance with rules. Kant explains what characterizes beautiful art:

[T]he purposiveness in the product of beautiful art, although it is certainly intentional, must nevertheless not seem intentional; i.e., beautiful art must be *regarded* as nature, although of course one is aware of it as art (5:306–307).

Beautiful art differs from art in general in reaching accordance with rules “without the academic form showing through, i.e., without showing any sign that the rule has hovered before the eyes of the artist and fetters his mental powers” (5:307). Even if skill underlies beautiful art, the skill should not stand out, but should escape the attention of the recipients.

From this poietic perspective, Kant’s argument agrees with classical rhetoric, but his thesis that “art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (5:306) cannot be fully explained from this poietic perspective. In the next section we address Kant’s theory of aesthetic ideas: the nucleus of his theory of art.

3. A Surplus of Representation of the Imagination

Kant defines aesthetic ideas as the “representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible” (5:314). An aesthetic idea is a representation of the “imagination, as a faculty of intuition” (5:292), which is distinguished from a representation of the imagination in general in that the aesthetic idea has a specific relationship to a concept.

Kant says that, first, an artist “presupposes a determinate concept of the product, as an end, hence understanding, but also a representation . . . of the material, i. e., of the intuition, for the presentation of this concept, hence a relation of the imagination to the understanding” (5:317). That is, artists should have a determinate concept of their product to achieve sensible imaginative representation. A specific plan must precede execution. To this extent, however, such activity belongs to mechanical art because it merely aims at realizing a determinate purpose. Therefore, according to Kant, what is required of an artist is, second, that “the imagination is free to provide, beyond that concord with the concept, *unsought* [unge-sucht] extensive undeveloped [unentwickelt]¹³ material for the understanding, of which the latter took no regard in its concept” (5:317—italics are mine). Artists presuppose a specific plan, but their work extends beyond merely intuitively realizing the plan through adherence to instructions of the understanding. Rather, an artist’s imagination brings forth extensive material that surpasses understanding. Such a representation of the artist’s imagination is to “let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words” (5:315). No concept can be “adequate to it” (5:314). The artist’s representation is too opulent to be adequately determined by understanding.

Kant names such a representation an aesthetic idea because of this discrepancy between a representation of the imagination and a concept of the understanding. This idea is the “counterpart (pendant) of an *idea of reason*,” which is “a concept to which no *intuition* (representation of the imagination) can be adequate” (5:314), which cannot be adequately intuited. Cognition is acquired when a representation of the imagination is subsumed under a concept of the understanding. However, for ideas, such a subsumption never occurs because no concept is sufficient for aesthetic ideas, and no representation of the imagination is sufficient for ideas of reason. According to Kant, an artist is characterized by the abil-

13 Development is a technical term of logic. In *Acroasis logica* (1761) Baumgarten explains it as follows: “Propositio ex affirmante et negante cryptice composita, exponibilis (ein zu entwickelnder Satz) dicitur (A proposition that is cryptically composed of an affirmative and a negative proposition is called an exponible proposition, i. e. a proposition that is to be expounded or developed).” See Baumgarten (1761, 47; §162). Development generally consists in making explicit those elements which are implicitly contained in a concept or proposition. In *Logic* (1800) Kant writes, “Implicitly identical propositions . . . clarify the predicate which lay undeveloped [unentwickelt] (implicite) in the concept of the subject through development (explicatio) [Entwicklung]” (9:111).

ity to bring forth an “inexplicable¹⁴ representation of the imagination” (5:342).

This artistic ability is free from the “constraint of the understanding” (5:316) and cannot be determined by the understanding. Therefore, it is not by an intentional, but an *unsought* process that an artist provides extensive material for the understanding.¹⁵ That is, an artist “does not know himself how the ideas for [the product] come to him, and also does not have it in his power to think up such things at will or according to plan” (5:308). An artistic creation cannot be reduced to a conscious activity, but is based on “nature in the subject,” or on an “inborn productive faculty of the artist” (5:307). Therefore, Kant’s proposition that “art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (5:306) concerns more than beautiful art looking to us, the recipients, like nature. His proposition means that artistic creativity “belongs to the nature” (5:307) of the artists and breaks free from their consciousness.

We may reasonably conclude that Kant’s definition of beautiful art escapes clear dichotomic classification. First, beautiful art is, as far as it is a subdivision of art, “distinguished from *nature*” (5:303), and yet “looks . . . like nature” (5:306). Second, beautiful art is, as far as it is a subdivision of aesthetic art, opposed to mechanical art (5:305), and yet “there is no beautiful art in which something mechanical, which can be grasped and followed according to rules, . . . does not constitute the essential condition of the art” (5:310). This paradox underlies beautiful art.

4. Reverberations of Kantian Theory

In this section, examining Schelling and Schiller, we address the reverberations Kantian theory met in post-Kantian aesthetics. Being based on Kantian proposition, Schelling introducing the concept of the unconscious is noteworthy.

Kant argues that a work of art is “certainly intentional, must nevertheless not seem intentional” (5:307). Schelling calls these two moments, namely the intentional and the unintentional, conscious and unconscious

14 For the adjective “inexplicable,” see note 13.

15 As has been indicated, Kant argues in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that “everything contrived [alles Gesuchte] and laborious in [beautiful art] must be avoided” (5:321).

activity. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800),¹⁶ Schelling explains: The “conscious activity” is “usually called *art* [Kunst],” but “merely one part of art.”¹⁷ This art is “practiced with consciousness, deliberation, and reflection, which can also be taught and learned, received from others, and attained by one’s own practice,” in a word, “the merely mechanical features [das bloß Mechanische] of art.”¹⁸ Therefore, conscious activity cannot be identified with art in the proper sense of the word. What is needed here is unconscious activity. This is what “cannot be learned, cannot be attained by practice or in any other way, but can only be inborn by the free gift of nature,” that is, “what we may call in one word the *poetry* [Poesie] in art.”¹⁹ Art consists of art and poetry, or conscious and unconscious activity. Schelling says, “neither poetry nor art can produce a perfected work singly each by itself,” but “only the two in conjunction can bring forth the highest.”²⁰ What Kant denoted by beautiful art in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) is what Schelling ten years later simply called art, without any qualification.

The question then arises as to what distinguishes art without poetry (the merely mechanical features of art) from art in the true sense of the word; how art in the proper sense of the word is to be distinguished from mechanical art. Schelling answers that the product of art without poetry is “nothing other than a faithful impression of the conscious activity of the artist,” because “intention and rule lie on the surface.”²¹ Both artist and recipient can certainly understand the meaning of the product, which means that such a product “simulates the character of a work of art”²² and the result is “a semblance of poetry.”²³ The lack here is infinity:

... the artist, however specifically purposeful [absichtsvoll] he may be, nevertheless, in regard to what is truly objective in his creation, seems to stand under the influence of a power that sets him apart from all other men and

16 Page references to Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism* are to the *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, Stuttgart and Augsburg 1858. For quotations from Schelling, unless otherwise indicated, I use the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, translated by P. Heath, Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia 1978. For the place of the unconscious in Schelling’s philosophy see Völmicke (2005, 118–194).

17 Schelling (1858, 618).

18 Schelling (1858, 618).

19 Schelling (1858, 618).

20 Schelling (1858, 618).

21 Schelling (1858, 620).

22 Schelling (1858, 620).

23 Schelling (1858, 619).

compels him to express or represent things he does not himself fully see through and whose meaning is *infinite*... The artist seems to have presented in his work, as if instinctively, apart from what he has put into it with obvious intent, an *infinity* which no *finite* understanding can fully develop [entwickeln]... each [work of art] is susceptible of *infinite* interpretation, as though there were an *infinity* of intentions within it.²⁴

Art is worthy of being designated as art when it is free from the finite intention of mechanical art and presenting an infinity that cannot be unambiguously interpreted by finite understanding. The possibility of infinite interpretation characterizes true works of art. A work of art can present infinity when the “ego” of the artist “begin[s] with consciousness (subjectively) and end[s] in the unconscious, or *objectively*.”²⁵ When the artist’s conscious activity results in unconscious activity, he or she “puts into his work *involuntarily*” the “inexhaustible depth”²⁶ that cannot be developed by finite understanding.

Kant argues that, first, an artist “presupposes a determinate concept of the product, as an end” (5:317) and that, second, the artist’s imagination is “free to provide, beyond that concord with the concept, *unsought* extensive undeveloped material for the understanding, of which the latter took no regard in its concept” (5:317—italics are mine). To this extent Schelling’s argument that the intersection of the conscious and unconscious characterizes art agrees with that of Kant. Both argue that art, which is Kant’s beautiful art, ought to be more than art, which is Kant’s mechanical art.

Schiller disagrees with Schelling about the proposition in the *System of Transcendental Philosophy*. In a letter to Goethe on March 27, 1801, Schiller reports his conversation with Schelling:

Only a few days ago I attacked Schelling about an assertion he makes in his Transcendental Philosophy, that “in Nature one starts from the Unconscious in order to raise it to the Conscious; whereas, in Art, one proceeds from the Conscious to the Unconscious.” ... [However], in experience the poet ... starts with the Unconscious... There can be no poetic work without an obscure, but mighty total-idea of this kind, which precedes all technical work; and poetry seems to me, in fact, to consist in being able to express and communicate that Unconscious state—in other words, to transfer it to some object.²⁷

24 Schelling (1858, 617, 619–620—italics are mine).

25 Schelling (1858, 613—slightly modified by the author).

26 Schelling (1858, 619—italics are mine).

27 Schiller (1890, 371–372).

While Schelling argues that artistic creation begins with consciousness (subjectively) and ends in the unconscious (objectively), Schiller emphasizes that artistic creation ought to be preceded by an obscure, but mighty total-idea. This argument seems to rest on his experience as a poet. “The musical (i. e. the harmonious tones) [das Musikalische] of a poem,” writes Schiller to Körner in a letter on May 25, 1792, “much oftener engrosses my being when I sit down to write, than any clear notion of what I purpose writing.”²⁸ Schiller’s position is also opposed to that of Kant who claims that an artist “presupposes a determinate concept of the product, as an end, hence understanding” (5:317). Schiller regards the unconscious as musical because there is “as yet no idea of what the poem will be, but a presentiment.”²⁹

However, Schiller is not against the participation of the conscious in artistic creation, regarding the creative operation itself as entirely conscious. He says that a poet “may consider himself fortunate if, by being most clearly Conscious of his operation, he gets to that point where he meets again in the work he has completed, with the first, obscure total-idea of his work, and finds it unweakened.”³⁰ The conscious is necessary for a poet to realize his or her unconscious idea in a poem. Schiller concludes, “Unconsciousness combined with reflection constitutes the poet-artist.”³¹ To this extent, Schiller shares Schelling’s opinion that art is in the intersection of the conscious and the unconscious.³²

Schiller is quite familiar with Kant’s proposition that “art can be only called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (5:306), even proceeding so far as to argue that only his own theory can explain Kant’s thesis, as his letter to Körner on February 23, 1793 shows.³³ However, Schiller applies Kant’s proposition to ethics against Kant to whom, as he correctly summarizes, “an action out of duty cannot be brought into harmony with demands of nature.”³⁴ “A moral action,” writes Schiller to Körner in a letter on February 19, 1793, “might be only then a beautiful action if it looks like a spontaneous effect of na-

28 Schiller (1849, 173—slightly modified by the author).

29 Schiller (1849, 173).

30 Schiller (1890, 372).

31 Schiller (1890, 372).

32 In his reply to Schiller on April 6, 1801, Goethe writes, “I not only agree with your opinion, but go even further. I think that everything that is done by genius as genius, is done unconsciously” (Schiller, 1890, 374).

33 Schiller (1992, 209).

34 Schiller (2005, 161).

ture.”³⁵ Such reinterpretation implies that by nature Schiller understands something quite different from what Kant does. That is, he no longer means something contingent, but “what is by itself.”³⁶

As discussed, Kant argues that the artist’s imagination is “free to provide, beyond that concord with the concept, unsought extensive undeveloped material for the understanding, of which the latter took no regard in its concept” (5:317). Based on Kant’s proposition Schelling argues, “The artist seems to have presented in his work, as if instinctively, apart from what he has put into it with obvious intent, an infinity which no finite understanding can fully develop.”³⁷ Combining all this, a work of art whose meaning can neither be traced back to the intention of its author nor dissolved into each interpretation is open by its nature and has its own independent life. The Kantian proposition, “art can be only called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature,” would refer to this quality in a work of art.

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Kant's Defeated Counterpart¹

Moses Mendelssohn on the Beauty, Mechanics, and Death
of the Human Soul

Anne Pollok

In his letter from September 11, 1770, Marcus Herz sings the swan song for any possible reconciliation between the dawning Critical Philosophy and traditional metaphysics. Moses Mendelssohn, he writes, follows Baumgarten word by word, incapable of accepting any aspect of Kant's thoughts that contradicted Baumgarten's premises (AA 10, 100). Clearly, such a thinker is not willing to accept any aspect of Kant's ground-breaking reshaping of philosophical inquiry.

Indeed, although Kant asked him more than once for critical comments, Mendelssohn never seriously considered Kant's philosophy as grounds for changing his own point of view. In his second-to-last work, the *Morning Hours* (*Morgenstunden*, 1785), he ultimately admits the destructive force of Critical Philosophy. Indirectly, Mendelssohn seems to imply that the old system is not done for. But he also complains that Kant fails to replace the edifice he tore down with a better one.² Accordingly, his *Morning Hours* could also be interpreted as offering an even more refined refutation of Transcendental Idealism³, thereby turning

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- 1 I want to thank Lanier Anderson and Paula Schwebel for revising my paper. With the hope that I could address their concerns and follow their suggestions for improvement I should also stress that all remaining mistakes are entirely due to obscure parts of my own understanding. I dedicate this paper to Reinhard Brandt, who introduced me to the exciting field of the Long&Grand Eighteenth Century and whose wonderful sense of humor I am still trying to emulate.
 - 2 See JubA III/2, 3. From Kant's point of view, however, it is understandable that he did not feel all obliged to enter into the infamous Pantheism-debate between Jacobi and Mendelssohn a few years later. And it was also not necessarily due to his favor for Mendelssohn, that he finally raised his voice (in: "Was heißt, sich im Denken orientieren?"; which offers a friendly, but not overall supportive reading of Mendelssohn's works), but more that he feared for his own undertaking being understood under the guise of pantheism (Zammito 1992, 12).
 - 3 Most recently, Dyck ("Turning the Game against the Idealist: Mendelssohn's Refutation of Idealism in the *Morgenstunden* and Kant's replies", unpublished

Kant's *Critique* into a mere correction of the status quo, but not its revolution. Apparently Mendelssohn himself did very little or nothing to contribute to a radical philosophical reform—at least it seems so on the surface, since in his published works of this time he mainly sticks to Baumgartian or Leibnizian assumptions. But that does not necessarily mean that Mendelssohn was in no way innovative. In this paper, I intend to show that Mendelssohn's philosophical potential becomes particularly obvious in his treatment of the unconscious. In different philosophical areas, Mendelssohn inverts the immediate impression that anything unconscious must be irrational in that he shows it as the enabling condition of rationality. Wherever the unconscious seems to be at work, in aesthetic appreciation, in moral reasoning, and—most fundamentally—in the making of our personality, it proves our deeply ingrained rational weaving pattern rather than making us subject to irrationality and chance. I will attempt to support his thesis by the following arguments:

a) Thinkers of the Enlightenment obviously had their problems integrating the unconscious into their philosophy (section 1). Nevertheless, it plays a decisive role in Mendelssohn's metaphysics. Elsewhere I argued⁴ that it is more appropriate to view Mendelssohn's version of 'metaphysics' as a form of 'rational anthropology' in that it is less concerned with a general approach to metaphysical issues, but with their respective effects on our notion of humanity. Thus, his philosophy takes human beings' actual life into consideration, in that it inquires into the role and importance of sentiments, the body, human instincts (and our ability to act against or to re-form them), hopes, and our cultural outreach. In this paper I shall limit my scope to Mendelssohn's treatment of psychology as a part of rational anthropology, and more specifically as a science of the human soul, considering both its metaphysical foundation and its phenomenal side.⁵ However, the unconscious is not only the foundation of mental phenomena, as I intent to show in the first part of this paper (sec-

manuscript) argued convincingly that in fact the *Morning Hours* are a more refined rejection of Kant's *Critique*, especially the Transcendental Aesthetics, as previously noticed. Mendelssohn's ultimate counter-argument against Kant's Transcendental Idealism, once more, rests on his attempt to secure all unconscious parts of ourselves within the divine mind (see "Turning the Game...", 9).

4 See Pollok 2010.

5 Actually, the two aspects are not easily distinguishable. According to the Leibnizian postulate of continuity, the transition from obscure to clear perceptions is in principle continuous, hence the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible is gradual, not categorical.

tion 2), but also a main aspect in Mendelssohn's metaphysical-practical argument about the nature of the human soul (section 3).

b) The center of Mendelssohn's philosophy, the human soul, is not as 'empty', or formal, as the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception (see KrV, B157–8). Instead, Mendelssohn argues that it must be substantial. For him, this notion contains more than pure functionality. It has to be seen as what we may call 'ontologically furnished' in that it possesses certain innate properties that unfold over time. It has to be stressed here that Mendelssohn apparently did not look very deeply into Kant's much more sophisticated take on the different aspects of this functionality as presented in the first *Critique*⁶, but limits the apperceptual activity to two parts: i) having perceptions at all, and ii) uniting them under the apperception of the soul itself. Mendelssohn's main reason to cling to the idea of a substantial notion of the soul is not only a result of his aforementioned belief in Leibnizian metaphysics, but ultimately rests on *practical* reasons, as the third dialogue in his most famous work, the *Phaedon* (first published in 1767) shows. In sections three and four of my paper, I will focus on how Mendelssohn reformulated the unconscious in order to secure the validity of personal immortality, guaranteed by divine providence.

1. Accessing the Unconscious

The Cartesian *Cogito*, or its subject, the Cartesian "I"—as the uniting force behind any sort of mental activity—is the point of perspective from which to understand and to reconstruct most of 18th century psychology. What, then, did philosophers make of the negation of this particular mode of awareness, or consciousness; how did they treat the seemingly blind aspects of human behavior and conduct? It seems that the need to integrate the unconscious perceptions (*Vorstellungen*) and sensations (*Empfindungen*) into the full picture ultimately led to the abolition of traditional metaphysics. This is illustrated by the emergence of new disciplines from *prima philosophia*, first rational psychology, then, more rad-

6 For a deeper discussion of Kant's ideas see Lanier Anderson: "Synthesis, Cognitive Normativity, and the Meaning of Kant's Question, 'How are synthetic cognitions a priori possible?'," in: *European Journal of Philosophy* 9/3, 2001, pp. 275–305 and Konstantin Pollok: "'An Almost Single Inference': Kant's Deduction of the Categories Reconsidered", in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 90/3, 2008, pp. 323–345.

ically, empirical psychology, aesthetics, and ultimately anthropology, all of which include a new awareness of these dark areas of our minds.

According to contemporary vocabulary, the unconscious is defined as the area of obscure perceptions.⁷ They seem completely useless for rational understanding, for we lack the ability to intrinsically differentiate their composition—which would make them “distinct”—and even to extrinsically separate these perceptions from each other—which would render them “clear”. Leibniz and others refer to the unconscious as an “ocean” of minute perceptions (*petite perceptions*), thus marking the indistinguishability of its parts, but also its enormous share in the human mind. These unconscious areas mainly govern sensory contents and reactions. They refer to what we may call the mental representation of our body. Others represent too distant and too vague impressions of our environment, due to our perspective on the world and the human incapability of representing everything *sub specie aeternitatis*. These perceptions never reach the higher state of clarity that accompanies apperception, or self-awareness as the conscious separation of the activity of perception from its content. Therefore they mark the purely passive aspect of the human “mind” and do not show clear signs of self-reflectivity.⁸

Thus, passivity and obscurity are *prima facie* not overwhelmingly advantageous attributes, since they do not seem to enable us to practically or theoretically cope with the world. But undeniably they are important aspects of human nature and may therefore be worth philosophical attention. Baumgarten made it clear that the “logic of the senses” (*logica sensitiva*), a science of sensible cognition and its perfection, is a necessary correlate to the investigation into metaphysics and logic. Even more, it

7 See Leibniz’ *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis*, 1684 (see Pollok 2010, 158–67). A somewhat hilarious approach to this topic can be found in Kant’s lectures on Anthropology. See for example *Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken* (1791/92), Konvolut 75–83. Man is merely the toy of his obscure perceptions, but he also plays with them. He does never know what is on his mind if asked to come up with a story. But if others tell a story he will be more than happy to jump in. In the first case he thinks he knows nothing, but the latter case makes him wonder about the God in his head.... Generally, obscure and therefore unconscious perceptions as Kant defines them here seem to be rationally not justifiable. Kant depicts this with the wish of having a dry place for one’s grave: this cannot be rationally justified if death is accepted as the end of the living body, for which the place of burial does not make any difference.

8 I put this in quotations because this kind of “mind” already includes body as well as soul: it is not their nature which is different, but their respective status of clarity.

would be a shame for humanity to miss this opportunity for exhaustive self-assessment. Therefore, understanding the perfection of sensibility is not only supplementary, but marks the completion of philosophy. The minute or obscure perceptions are not epistemologically void, but offer a more refined picture of a humanly possible perception of the world. In a first step, Baumgarten refers to the richness (*ubertas*) of inherently obscure notions (which are defined as “clear and confused ideas”) as “extensive clarity” (*extensive Klarheit*).⁹ In such extensively clear representations we do not gain conceptual knowledge out of which we can form notions of the understanding, but we—nearly instinctively—grasp a potentially endless field of perceptions at once. In its most elaborated forms, such as in poetry, this extensively endless field cannot be completely reduced to clear and distinct parts except at the price of utterly reducing its richness. Thus, neither can art be ‘translated’ into science, nor a Homeric epic into a scientific description. On the one hand, this points towards our limitations; the complexity of our world can only be grasped by abstractions, or conceptual abbreviations of what is “really there”. But on the other hand it allows for grasping the universe’s richness in a uniquely human way. Poetic representation may be less exact than science, but it offers an indispensable human perspective and a distinctively human way to understand our cosmos.

Following Baumgarten, different schools developed different perspectives on this phenomenon. Johann Christoph Gottsched used the Baumgartian scheme to develop his version of poetics as an instrument to improve human sentiment and thought by means of aesthetically pleasing lessons in the theater. His opponents, Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger, promoted the faculties of wit and imagination. Both schools had a huge impact on the development of aesthetics as a literary discipline, in particular on the theory of tragedy and the development of the novel. Further reaching were the concepts developed by the promoters of the Enlightenment in Berlin, such as Friedrich Nicolai, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and—philosophically most distinguished—Mendelssohn. With their critical journals they not only changed the face and usages of literary criticism; they also promoted the value of human sentiments for the improvement of human understanding and behavior. Ultimately they offered what one could in a broader sense call a holistic approach towards the understanding of the human mind and the

⁹ See *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), § 16, *Metaphysica* (1739), § 531.

respective limits of ‘pure’ rational thought without falling prey to irrationalism. Still, it seems as though all of them were more concerned to explain and justify merely clear and confused, but not entirely obscure notions. I will argue that Mendelssohn’s philosophy shows an awareness of the importance of this wider and more challenging area, which renders his philosophy more provocative than it may seem on the surface.

Generally, his version of a rationalistic anthropology does not negate the impact of biology and history on humankind.¹⁰ But its focus lies on the human ability to individually and socially develop within *culture*, whose beneficial influence he views as being secured by divine providence. The establishment of this culture needs enlightened people, who are able to make unhindered use of their own reason, and who rely on their own conscience. This sounds as if the unconscious, in good rationalistic tradition, needs simply be overcome and ‘illuminated’, i.e. turned from obscurity to clarity. However, Mendelssohn had a more refined view on this phenomenon, which stresses the importance of the unconscious as a means for the success of human enlightenment. First, the unconscious explains our pleasure in art and the motivation of our actions, and, second, it guarantees for our personhood, and that is, our immortality. For Mendelssohn, this is the real achievement of his age.

2. Yet Another Rational Psychology?

As mentioned, the unconscious plays an important role both in Mendelssohn’s thoughts on aesthetics and in his consideration of moral motivation. Ultimately both aspects could be reformulated as a kind of ‘mental training’, where a rational, clear thought is “translated” into an obscure intuitive motion. A Kantian might claim that this kind of unconscious is not unconscious at all, for it is in principle open to clarification.¹¹ But this potentiality is foreign to Mendelssohn’s idea, since he subscribes

10 The areas of biology and history served as counter-pieces to a still viable mechanical approach to explain the nature of humankind. See for example Zammito 2002, 230.

11 See Kant’s lectures on Logic. According to him, it does not make sense to talk about “unconscious cognition” (“unbewusste Erkenntnisse”), because what is unconscious cannot be known *in principle*. Any such reference to unconscious notions actually refers to the fact that these notions are not immediately (instantaneously/actually) conscious—but potentially open to clarification by (logical) reasoning (AA 24:341)

the Leibnizian claim that there are only gradual differences among particular mental contents. Therefore, ideally any one of them could be grasped and dealt with rationally. But Mendelssohn's theory of the unconscious is more sophisticated than those of his predecessors. As I shall show first, in following Baumgarten's account of the emotional impact of poetry through the sheer amount of perceptions it has to offer to the human mind, Mendelssohn achieved a more refined approach toward the explanation of aesthetic pleasure in seemingly un-pleasurable objects. With that he helped to uncover the all-too-human delight in ambiguity.¹² Additionally (see 2.b), he applies this effect to (moral) deliberation, thus providing possible explanation of the problem of weakness of will. But due to an overly instrumentalizing view his take may be seen as an insufficient solution to this problem.

2.1 The Aesthetic Unconscious: The Complicated Case of Pleasures

In his 1757 essay *On the Main Principles of the Fine Arts and Sciences*¹³ Mendelssohn stresses the importance of aesthetics for our understanding of the human soul. As he mentions already in the introductory passage, on the "obscure paths" (JubA I, 427/Dahlstrom, 169) of aesthetic phenomena we can gather information about the functioning of our mental apparatus that we could never have detected through mere rational analysis. In other essays of that time, Mendelssohn continues to explore this vast ocean of the unconscious for "improving" our understanding (i. e. making it more clear), or at least as a means to enhance the full range of our aesthetic approval. Instead of just accepting the unconscious, Mendelssohn seeks to reconstruct the unconsciously effective pleasure, and therewith to provide us with the means to deliberately and rationally influence it.

The necessary existence of obscurity within our consciousness—and the possibility of its rational improvement without turning it into conscious clarity—is a major issue in his first publication on the topic: the *Letters on Sentiments* (1755). This is reflected in its very composition, for Mendelssohn tackles the problem in two voices: the elderly British ra-

12 See Kaus 1993, and 1995.

13 *Über die Hauptgrundsätze der Schönen Künste und Wissenschaften*. First published in *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste* I, 2 (Leipzig 1757), pp. 231–68. With some revisions Mendelssohn includes it 1761 (2nd edition 1771, 3rd edition 1777) in the second volume of his *Philosophical Writings*. See JubA I, 165–190, 425–452, Dahlstrom 169–91.

tionalist—if this were not already a *condradictio in adiecto*—Palemon,¹⁴ and the younger, more feverish enthusiast (*Schwärmer*) Euphranor, ironically a German. Mendelssohn's position is revealed in the interplay¹⁵ between the two characters. One could even add that with his purposeful reversing of the standard applications of certain character traits of specific nationalities (i.e. rationality=German; enthusiasm=British) Mendelssohn aimed at reversing a whole set of standard expectations in academic philosophy. It is indeed possible for a German not to be a convinced rationalist—as it is for a Jew (in this case: Mendelssohn himself) to offer philosophical insight.¹⁶ On this line, it is Palemon who offers the more rational, Leibnizian point of view, which is seriously challenged by Euphranor's objections and demands for which his counterpart Palemon is obviously unable to give.

In essence, the *Letters on Sentiments* inquire into the nature of sentiments, how they function within human life, and whether they benefit our being or not—up to the point of whether their total absence is desirable or not.¹⁷ The mode of presentation reveals the inherent problems in these areas: the ambiguity of the issue (and Mendelssohn's take on it) is shown by two *conflicting* voices which ultimately do not achieve sufficient agreement. Euphranor favors pure pleasure and fears the destructive, or at least the cooling effect of thought on aesthetic pleasure. Palemon, on the other hand, holds that a “refined” understanding of our sentiments improves our general world perception (see the fourth letter, JubA I, 54–58/Dahlstrom, 18–20). In particular, it enhances our pleasure in aesthetics and the speed and correctness of our decisions in practical issues. Taking up Euphranor's suggestion that our pleasure in clear and confused, or even in obscure perceptions enhances our overall appreciation of beauty, Palemon introduces a process of the productive interplay of

14 To make his rationalistic point of view even more obvious Mendelssohn renamed him as Theokles in the second edition from 1761.

15 Other scholars hold that Mendelssohn speaks through Palemon alone. But Mendelssohn's high esteem of British thinkers and the circumstances of Euphranor's possible role in the *Letters* seem to stand against such one-sided reading. It is not by accident that Mendelssohn favors the ambiguous Platonic style. See Pollok 2010, 169.

16 This twist, of course, was fairly hidden by the date of the first publication. The *Letters on Sentiments* appeared anonymously. But after the reviewers found out about Mendelssohn's identity, this book also stirred a debate about contributions to philosophy by Jews.

17 *The Letters* thus also deal with the justification of suicide. I will leave this issue aside here.

thought and passion. First we need to clarify every single perception, and find the grain of rationality that allows us to put it in a justifiable connection to related perceptions. This, of course, is not a matter of aesthetic pleasure, but of scientific inquiry. But the process could and should be reversed to enable bodily and mental pleasure in its results. Palemon illustrates this with the activity of a mathematician (see JubA I, 91/Dahlstrom, 54). This poor fellow has to investigate into the meaning of each equation, each term in question first—a merely exhausting and dry activity. But after having understood and reconstructed the whole mathematical proof, our mathematician is able to take a step back and intuitively enjoy the proof as a whole. This is not possible by a clear and distinct perception of every single step, but rather by letting all distinct parts deliberately pass back into confusion, up to the point where they become indistinguishable, or obscure, and thereby form a whole. While the mathematician is enjoying the whole proof, all steps are indeed obscure in that they are internally and externally indistinguishable *for the moment*, but potentially each step could be brought back to clarity again. Thus, there is no unconscious as such but a deliberate re-making of the unconscious: aesthetic pleasure becomes a whole piece of work by the perceiver's ability to turn perceptions into qualitatively different states, thereby improving the quality of their impact by a renewed understanding of their connections, and an improved insight into their actual quantity. The decisive point is that, without painstakingly distinguishing each and every aspect, the concept of extensive clarity does not come to its full force. In other words, the formerly completely obscure aspects have to become clear, that is distinguishable, in one instance of the process. Put back into obscurity, they serve to enrich the immediate intuition. What changes is not their actual nature, but their potential capacity to become clear again more easily. In the moment of aesthetic enjoyment, they are not confused but obscure, to be sure, since in the moment of pleasure they are taken as one indistinguishable whole. But the potential awareness that this whole is formed out of actually different parts makes the experience richer overall, thus fulfilling the Baumgartian notion of extensive clarity in a diachronic mode.

According to Palemon, this has an effect on the body as well; the fibers and nerves get the tension and relaxation they need to set the whole system in a pleasurable mood. Thus, the mathematician has enjoyment on all levels: rationally, emotionally, and bodily. The obstacle of obscure perceptions is translated into one side of the coin of aesthetic pleasure which also becomes more complex in its temporal order.

Mendelssohn's theory sounds somewhat plausible for a certain kind of pleasure in artworks. We can, for example, enjoy an antique fresco which is beautiful in itself, but which becomes even more beautiful when we know about its history and the pictorial specifics—and this is so even if this knowledge is only virtually at hand, but not explicitly conscious at the moment of our perception of the fresco. If we were clearly conscious of it, we would be merely engaged in its rational assessment rather than enjoying it. But one cannot help but notice that this refinement does not cover all areas of unconscious impressions of artworks. Additionally, the “bodily pleasure” that Palemon refers to seems to be more of a byproduct than an essential part of Mendelssohn's account of aesthetic appreciation. Moreover, Baumgarten's theory of the irreducibility of aesthetics appears in a different light. Rather than insisting on the peculiarity of aesthetic pleasure as in principle untranslatable into clear and distinct notions, Mendelssohn characterizes this pleasure as a mere mode of thinking, whose parts (if seen distinctly) are by no means different from any rational inquiry. Thus, the aesthetic dawn is essentially already daylight.

Along the same lines, the explanation of our enjoyment in *prima facie* unpleasant or evil aesthetic beauty remains problematic, too. In the *Letters on Sentiments* Euphranor mentions the enjoyment of witnessing war scenes or of observing a sinking ship; a well-known topos since Lucretius. Palemon tries to explain all these phenomena as an effect of curiosity and reassurance: since we know that we can only perceive the bad event but are helpless and cannot do anything to improve it, we seek to satisfy our drive for knowledge and therewith to at least improve ourselves. None of this, Palemon tries to explain, shows any trait of human evil but could be reformulated as an intrinsically positive trait of character in that we always strive, within the scope of our abilities, to become more perfect. Thus, a seemingly negative joy in other peoples' suffering just shows our unconscious drive to self-perfection. What he cannot deny, however, is the obvious human need to perceive and enjoy such scene.¹⁸ In the *Letters* Mendelssohn refers (with both his “voices”) to Dubos' theory of human beings' natural propensity to avoid *ennui* and therefore seek the most compelling, exciting, and emotionally uplifting sensations, be they inherently good or evil. What makes them aesthetically pleasing is the level of passion they allow for, not their moral worth. “The theatre has its own morality”, concludes Palemon (JubA I, 94). However, these

18 See Zelle 1987, 353, Pollok 2010, chapter III.3.

'evil' or unpleasant situations tend to be more interesting for us than Palemon's positive characterization for humankind allows: to put it briefly in Euphranor's terms, it arouses more aesthetically relevant passion to enjoy seeing the sinking ship than to admire a beautifully crafted, but safely sailing one. We seem to be less interested in witnessing a serene scene, and more interested in observing conflicts, or experiencing action rather than passive enjoyment, being appalled rather than lifted up.

Obviously Mendelssohn himself was not fully satisfied by his own explanations. In the *Rhapsody*¹⁹, a subsequent reflection on the themes from the *Letters on Sentiments*, he makes several attempts (here in his "own" voice) to explain this unsettling pleasure via a further differentiation of the human apparatus. What we enjoy in these ambiguous scenes is not their content, but our ability to *reject* this content—and, on a more formal level, to still enjoy it as artfully crafted. What could be seen as a (perverse) enjoyment of a bad situation actually turns out to be an unconscious training of a whole set of (positive) human powers: being able to distinguish form and content, and judging each of them according to their criteria—all in one moment of aesthetic pleasure, now a peculiar mix of appreciation and rejection. These movements, which Mendelssohn coins as a "mixed sentiment", explicitly call for a "secret consciousness" of the fact that what we aesthetically enjoy is actually not real. This sets us free to distinguish content and form, which in turn enables us to take a more critical stance.²⁰ Thus, pleasure in ambiguity proves to be more sophisticated than pleasure in mere beauty, even though we are not aware of our role as art critics, while we seem to be simply attracted by a powerful painting or an intoxicating tragedy.

Overall, it may be convincing that our delight in these ambiguous kinds of situations is more complex than our pleasure in, say, a beautiful rose. For convinced rationalists it may also be convincing that a painted beautiful rose offers a richer enjoyment than a real rose. Perceiving the former includes not only the enjoyment of beauty, but also the flattering yet probably unconscious notion that it is within human power to artfully

19 The *Rhapsody* was first published in the *Philosophical Writings* in 1761, and modified in 1771. I argued elsewhere (Pollok 2010, 184–86) that the modification is not as fundamental as other scholars see it, see Zelle 1987, 348.

20 On the theory of mixed sentiments see Zelle 1987, Pollok 2010, and Guyer 1996 and 2005. This mode of consciousness of artistic imitation is mentioned in the *Rhapsody*, JubA I, 390; Dahlstrom translates it with "inner consciousness" (p. 138).

craft this beauty.²¹ Still, the problematic aspect of our pleasure, not in roses, but in witnessing forms of human suffering, is unclear. By experiencing these ‘mixed sentiments’ we may in fact improve by viewing particular artfully crafted scenes, but we improve *just and only* ourselves—admitting the cost of other people’s actual (or potential, if in a painting) suffering. Mendelssohn addresses this concern by turning it upside down: our pleasure in these ambiguous modes shows that unconsciously our natural propensity to feel pity is affected. Thus, self-perfection does not include the *actual* miserable other, but our ability to exercise this fundamentally human trait by seeing the *potential* harm of such an event.

If we would only take similar pains in art as the mathematician does in his calculation, we could become consciously aware of this mechanism of artistic attraction and ethical repulsion. Seen in this light, Mendelssohn’s treatment of unpleasant pleasure or ‘mixed sentiments’ reveals an explicitly functionalist take on the unconscious. In his analysis emotions are in fact translated into unclear knowledge, which ensures that they cannot be essentially irrational, or unethical. This should guarantee their internal positive worth. With this, Mendelssohn tries to prove that the unconscious is an inherently positive feature, showcasing our benevolent, rather than egoistic traits. He further sees it as rationally justifiable, therefore, as being potentially open to rationalization. Thus, perceiving something obscurely does not mark it as a specific kind of mental content as such. Its higher efficiency is not only a matter of difference in quality, in that its parts and shape cannot be differentiated at any given moment, but it is mostly due to a difference in quantity, in that more of these impressions together offer more occasions for the soul to exercise its powers. For a theory that strives to make qualitative propositions about art and aesthetic judgments, this may very well be too little. But it could indeed explain why some sensory impressions work in a particular way—and how this could be translated back into the key points of Leibnizian metaphysics: that everything is due to the best possible reason, and that everything is connected within a greater whole. This rational super-structure of our being is not confined to aesthetic appreciation, but also becomes visible in moral reasoning.

21 See *Main Principles*, JubA I, 433–34/Dahlstrom, 174.

2.b The Practical Unconscious: A Training of the Mind

Crafted as a response to David Hume's skeptical implications against the reality of causality, Mendelssohn's *Rhapsody* as well as earlier drafts (*On the mastering of our inclinations*, 1756/57, and shortly afterwards, *On the Kinship of Beauty and Good*), his essay *On Probability* (1756), and his prize-essay *On Evidence in Metaphysical Sciences* (1763) plus some related notes explicate the role of the unconscious in human motivation.²² Thus, Mendelssohn's theory mostly covers the ground of a Humean approach to the (empirical) laws of mental association and reclaims it for Rationalism.

Parallel to his argumentation concerning aesthetic pleasure, Mendelssohn holds that the deliberate darkening of perceptions by the mere speed of their succession could be used to train specific actions.²³ In Mendelssohn's model of the human mind this ability is represented by the so-called minor faculties: the sense of truth (*Wahrheitssinn*, which Mendelssohn sometimes also calls "common sense"), conscience, and taste.²⁴ "Conscience is a proficiency at correctly distinguishing good from evil by means of indistinct inferences, and the sense for the truth is a proficiency in distinguishing good from evil by similar means." (JubA II, 325/Dahlstrom 303)²⁵ Accordingly, taste is the ability to sense the higher quality of a work of art (or any other kind of "beauty"). All three are structurally equivalent to the working of the higher faculties, which on their side deal with "higher" forms of perception—i. e. clear and distinct

22 I will not deal with Mendelssohn's argument concerning causality, which parallels our inductive reasoning about similar events with the laws of probability.

I will also not deal here with similar ideas by Johann Georg Sulzer.

23 It must be noted, though, that Mendelssohn did not follow a more extreme position as held by Johann Georg Sulzer, who claims in his *Anmerkungen über den verschiedenen Zustand, worinn sich die Seele bei Ausübung ihres Hauptvermögens, nämlich des Vermögens, sich etwas vorzustellen, und des Vermögens zu empfinden, befindet* (1763, cit. from *Vermischte philosophische Schriften* Bd. 1, 225–43, here 213) that *only* obscure ideas have motivational force; see Pollok 2010, 306–08.

24 Kant will call this the aesthetic perfection of cognition, which is characterized as the subjective impression of easiness (*Leichtigkeit*), interest (*Interesse*) and liveliness (*Lebhaftigkeit*) in the act of cognition (see *Anthropologie Dohna-Wundlacken*, 1791/92)—in short, it is defined by a merely subjective mode of cognition.

25 "Das Gewissen ist eine Fertigkeit, das Gute vom Bösen, und der Wahrheitssinn, eine Fertigkeit, das Wahre vom Falschen durch undeutliche Schlüsse richtig zu unterscheiden." (JubA II, 325)

ideas. The “senses” for truth, beauty and morality on the lower part of the scale have the advantage that they work on an instinctive basis, do not demand any conscious deliberation, and are therefore faster than their “higher” equivalents. They are not inborn, but are developed throughout human life; this allows for the possibility that they could go astray, but also that they could be improved.

The speed and number of ideas perceived mark their motivational as well as their qualitative state: “With every sensitive feeling an ocean of notions enters our soul. The soul thinks if it perceives some of these notions distinctly; and it feels if it surrenders to the impression which contains them all.”²⁶ To actually act badly is therefore grounded on a false ratio between what is clearly known and what is (unconsciously) felt.²⁷ Accordingly, the appropriate aim is to control the content of the latter area. Mendelssohn identifies this as the aim of “applied morality” (*ausübende Sittenlehre*, see *On Evidence*, JubA II, 315).

Mendelssohn’s account of the senses for truth, morality, and beauty could be seen mostly as a pragmatic abbreviation of thought-processes. By training a particular action, it is transformed into an obscure pattern. This means that, first, the intellectual apparatus is not actively involved anymore, and, second, that this one pattern could be joined with other, similar patterns. They together form an “accumulation of compelling reasons”²⁸, with all the “reasons” being merely unconscious motivations.

26 “Mit jedem sinnlichen Gefühl strömt ein Meer von Begriffen in unsere Seele. Die Seele denkt, wenn sie einige von diesen Begriffen deutlich wahrnimmt; und sie empfindet, sobald sie sich dem Eindruck überläßt, der sie alle faßt.” (JubA II, 183, *Verwandschaft des Schönen und Guten/On the kinship of beauty and good*) This is even applicable to the artistic genius who—despite an innate predisposition, or talent—could improve his skills by learned rules, which, if applied correctly, serve as orientation in the back of one’s mind (i. e. obscurely). But when we as perceivers can sense that the artist slavishly followed rules which were conscious and clear to him in the moment of the creation of his artwork, the sensory experience and hence the aesthetic impression of the artwork will be severely limited. Mendelssohn does not claim, as Young or Warton (see Zammito 1992, 28), that genius is destroyed by any knowledge of rules. But the ratio between knowledge and unconsciously working talent is to be taken seriously. A mere improvement in knowledge, so the not-so-rationalistic conclusion, does not necessarily serve to improve the genius.

27 See *Von der Herrschaft über die Neigungen/On the Mastery over the Inclinations* (around 1756/57), JubA II, 149.

28 Mendelssohn’s term “Bewegungsgründe” could also be translated with “motivating reasons”. See *Rhapsody (1761)*, JubA I, 571; *On Probability*, JubA I, 164/Dahlstrom, 250, *On Evidence*, JubA II, 327/Dahlstrom, 305.

Given their number and speed, they work merely intuitively. Mendelssohn's example is the pianist, who practices a certain movement long enough to reach a state of mastery where he does not have to think about what he is doing. Apparently, the better he is acquainted with his work and the more he practices, the more the formerly artificial movements become part of his "nature" – hence, the more natural his performance.

But this accumulation of actions or "Beweggründe" does not exhaust Mendelssohn's treatment of the workings of the unconscious. In the Leibnizian tradition he also mentions the innumerable amount of "petite perceptions" as being responsible for the ultimate weight in decision-making. According to Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason, it is impossible to remain undecided in any case, since the perfect equilibrium between two things is a chimera. There will always be a "reason" why we decide on a particular action, even though this reason might be indefinitely small and hardly recognizable. Mendelssohn discusses this case in light of his theory of probability (see JubA I, 512–15/Dahlstrom, 248–49) as an argument against voluntaristic notions of a divine freedom of choice. In essence, his argument runs like this: we have to suppose that every free action is indeed decisively influenced by "compelling reasons" (ibid.) and therefore not free in the sense of being arbitrarily chosen, because otherwise not even god could have probable prescience. Taken down to earth, Mendelssohn reiterates Hume's argument that we do indeed expect certain actions from a certain kind of character (see *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, VIII, footnote), even though we view this character as having free will. That "the soul cannot choose otherwise than according to compelling reasons and impulses" (JubA I, 515/Dahlstrom, 250), however, does not mean that the agent herself perceives all of them clearly. Indeed, quite a few are hidden in the "vast ocean" of her "sensitive feelings", or the unconscious, which is legible only to a divine mind.

In line with this, Mendelssohn does not explicitly state one obvious conclusion from the aforementioned remark about the enormous amount of obscure notions entering the soul with every "sensitive feeling". Given that the soul perceives *some* notions distinctly, this still leaves a vast part of this "ocean" obscure. Mendelssohn mostly deals with those parts that become clearer and subsequently are moved back into obscurity again—which does not say anything about those petite perceptions which are not involved in this mechanism, nor in any way related to it. One could argue that some of these minute perceptions are indirectly formed by those

which are part of the process and that therewith potentially all unconscious areas are *affected* by conscious acts. Still, this does not and can not take into account the possibility that it merely works the other way around and the minute perceptions have their own influence on our mental apparatus. Mendelssohn's argumentation does not offer an answer to this concern, and therefore leaves the works of the unconscious in practical philosophy ambiguous.

The relatively unsuccessful story of Mendelssohn's version of "applied ethics" might have two main reasons, both connected to this diagnosis. First, his notion of mental training is far too close to human conditioning and therefore does not quite cohere with Mendelssohn's call for Enlightenment as the ability to make use of one's reason, not one's "senses". Perhaps his later insistence on the value of culture, and his warning that reckless enlightenment produces more depressed outlaws than reason-guided citizens could be traced back to his earlier moralistic views. Second, it conveys a far-reaching problem of Leibnizian metaphysics due to a confusion of qualitative and quantitative aspects of perception. If the faster and deeper reaching obscure perceptions always outwitted our reasoning, what could be the need of deep rational analysis; what could be the worth of what Mendelssohn calls "dead ideas", which may be clear and distinct, but carry no motivational power at all? On the other hand, in line with Ploucquet's criticism (see JubA I, 97 and 139), minute perceptions could also be seen as highly ineffective, even if a vast amount of them is put together. Any amount of "nearly zero" could hardly add up to a positive (here in the sense of effective) notion. Mendelssohn himself constantly shifts between promoting the power of obscure feelings and the necessity and predominance of clear reasoning without offering a resolution of the resulting tension.

Perhaps a view on his metaphysics can help to clarify and define the role of practically and aesthetically relevant obscurity, since this vast ocean plays an equally important role here. In accord with Leibniz' central doctrine of the monads as mirrors of the whole universe Mendelssohn holds that the soul indeed represents the whole world, may it be unconsciously or with active apprehension (see *On Evidence*, JubA II, 277–78/Dahlstrom, 260; also in *Phaedon*, JubA III/1, 96–97, *Morning Hours*, JubA III/2, 141). As the following section will show, the human "inner ocean" should also ensure the individuality and personality of the human soul even beyond death. This was Mendelssohn's greatest hope.

3. Practical Ends, Eternal Aims

Mendelssohn can claim the dubious honor of having been referred to by name in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The second edition contains an explicit refutation of his proof of the immortality of the soul (KrV, B413–15), as an example of a paralogism in rational psychology, where the mistake lies in confusing the metaphysical and empirical nature of the middle term in the argument. Several scholars before me have already noticed that Kant did not bother to argue against the whole set of proofs put forward by Mendelssohn. More accurately, he only argues against the soul's permanence—which says nothing about immortality of the soul as a person at all. Given that the account for immortality is the key point to understand how Mendelssohn utilizes the unconscious in metaphysics, it is important to figure out whether Kant's refutation is appropriate.

Let's start from the fundamentals. For Mendelssohn (and, even if justified in a new and groundbreaking way, also for Kant), the unity of the soul is not factual as the unity of an atom, but it is an *act* of unifying all perceptual activity.²⁹ The synthesis done by the faculty of thinking (*Denkungsvermögen*) is thus the enabling condition of complexity. Without the “thinking being,” all manifold entities, such as beauty, perfection, and harmony are nothing. The “infinite amount of concepts, cognitions, inclinations, passions, which occupy us incessantly” (see JubA III/1, 96³⁰) are the material out of which the mind forms its world. Hence, the vast ocean of impressions is potentially given shape by our understanding. Without being formed and thereby focused, its force remains decisively low. By indirectly referring to Ploucquet³¹, Mendelssohn's Soc-

29 To a certain degree, this is a refined version of the Platonic proof, which draws on the soul's knowledge of the forms. Any being which could claim such knowledge must be of the same kind as the forms. This evokes quite some objections, which Mendelssohn seeks to avoid with his version. Against Sassen 2008, 223, who finds it “surprising” that Mendelssohn mentions this function as the soul's essence, I claim that this is good school philosophy and simply reiterates the main points of Leibniz' *Monadology*.

30 “—Sage mir, mein lieber Simmias! finden wir nicht in unsrer Seele eine fast unendliche Menge von Begriffen, Erkenntnissen, Neigungen, Leidenschaften, die uns unaufhörlich beschäftigen?—Allerdings!” (JubA III/1, 96).

31 See also JubA III/1, 97 and 139: here Mendelssohn mentions Ploucquet's remark, that a vast number of perceptions which have the quality of “nearly zero” can never add up to any perception of qualitative value. Therefore, the minute perceptions are merely meaningless because they cannot be effective at all.

rates holds: “Set all obscure, inadequate, and unsteady concepts side by side. Does this result in an enlightened, complete, and defined concept?—It does not seem so.—Where there is no mind (*Geist*), which compares them and by consideration and contemplation builds a more perfect cognition from them: there these concepts will never cease to be obscure, deficient and unsteady.” (JubA III/1, 97)³² In this understanding, clear notions do not simply contain any number of obscure aspects, but order and concentrate them in a particular way; may the perceiver be aware of the constitutive parts as in clear and distinct ideas, or just be able to perceive its overall shape, as in clear and confused ideas.

On the other hand, this mental activity of shaping the “vast ocean” is not necessarily always conscious, since Mendelssohn let his Socrates claim that personality as the shaping force remains even within “sleep, fainting, vertigo, enchantment” (JubA III/1, 103), all only delivering obscure notions. That said, self-awareness, the most fundamental mode of *apperception*, is not necessarily and always given within the activity of unifying perceptions.³³ But apart from its complicated set-up, having self-awareness is taken as the decisive source of knowledge in general. As Mendelssohn lets one character in the dialogue, Philolaus, hold (JubA III/1, 53), real knowledge does not come about by observation of external events, but by inward observation of the soul’s inferences from these events, or better, by the soul’s own working on all sensory material. Thus, real knowl-

As mentioned here in section 1, Mendelssohn himself is not explicit enough as to whether he sides with Ploucquet or Sulzer.

- 32 “Setze viele verworrene, mangelhafte und schwankende Begriffe neben einander, wird dadurch ein aufgeklärter, vollständiger und bestimmter Begriff hervorgebracht?—Es scheineth nicht.—Wo nicht ein Geist hinzu kömmt, der sie vergleicht, und durch Nachdenken und Ueberlegen sich eine vollkommnere Erkenntniß aus derselben selbst bildet: so hören sie in Ewigkeit nicht auf viele verworrene, mangelhafte und schwankende Begriffe zu seyn.” Possibly “Geist” should be translated with “spirit” (not “mind”) to stress the fact that Mendelssohn takes it as an equivalent to “soul”.
- 33 Here Kant is of course much more clear. The transcendental apperception, the “I think” (*Ich denke*), is referred to modally: it does not necessarily *have* to accompany all my perceptions in actio. But all unified perception, i.e. thought, is only possible as being unified under it. So, in reconstruction, all thoughts can only be understood as being potentially accompanied and formed by the “I think”, even though one was not aware of this connection in actio. This is the guise of the very formulation: “Das *Ich denke* muss alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten *können*” (B 131). Thus, it is not only a mere state of awareness, but the enabling condition of unity.

edge is gained by observing mental operations.³⁴ Aside from Kant's arguments against introspection, these notions at least correspond to Kant's view in that they stress activity or function versus gathering material. In Mendelssohn's case, this serves to elucidate the essential properties of a simple, non-extended substance called "soul". In Kant's case, however, this serves as a counter-argument to the apparent immediacy of inner experience. But before considering the differences, let us turn to Mendelssohn's proof: In the first dialogue, he argues in line with Leibniz that since the soul is simple, it can only cease to exist by a divine act of destruction. Each and every step, however small it may be, is taken under the law of continuity.³⁵ Under this law the decisive step from an infinitely small degree to nothingness (i.e. death) is an incredible jump. Therefore, under regular circumstances (that is: by natural laws)³⁶ the soul cannot just cease to exist. The proof that the soul indeed is this kind of substance follows in the second dialogue, which is the main target of Kant's refutation. Irritatingly, Kant does not directly address the problematic aspect of the soul's substantiality, nor does he mention (as in the "Anticipations of Perception", see A207/B252) the empirical status of our perception of continuity.³⁷ Instead, his argument against Mendelssohn's reasoning draws on the difference between extensive and intensive magnitudes, and therewith concentrates on the soul's activity. In the "Anticipations of Perception" Kant has already argued that, "in all appearances, the real that is object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree" (KrV, B207) "of influence on the senses."³⁸ In the later refutation of Mendelssohn's proof in the "Paralogism", he stretches the qualification of

34 "Alle unkörperlichen Begriffe, sprach Philolaus, hat die Seele nicht von den äußern Sinnen, sondern durch sich selbst erlangt, indem sie ihre eigenen Wirkungen beobachtet, und dadurch ihr eigenes Wesen und ihre Eigenschaften kennen lernt."

35 Later Mendelssohn stresses that this is not only Leibniz, but also resting on Pater Boscovich's mathematical works; see Mendelssohn's addendum to the second edition, 1768, JubA III/1, 135. Kant also subscribes to this law, but just and only for empirical issues; see also *Prolegomena*, AA 4:306 f., §24.

36 See the discussion in the first footnote in Falkenstein 1998, 561–62.

37 As Powell 1985, 204–05 points out, Kant has his own transcendental version of continuity. I will not go into this issue here.

38 Powell 1985, 214 is correct in his criticism of Chisholm's reading of the refutation, that Kant is not referring to a "degree of reality" here (which would put his own refutation of reality being a predicate at risk, see Powell 1985, 212), but to the degree of the object of sensation's influence on our "mental image" of it. Thus, once more, any mental operation of the "I" requires empirical data.

having intensive magnitude not only to “objects of sensation” but also to its subject, the “soul”. If the soul is seen under this light it becomes nothing more than another *object* of sensation. This soul is not an extensive magnitude (like matter, for instance), but always (empirically) contains a degree of perceptual content. This intensive magnitude could very well approximate zero, which is not achieved by any alteration of parts but by gradual diminution of degree. Thus, the soul ceases to exist simply by the lack of any perceptible quality of inward activity.

Kant’s argument seems simple, but also uncharacteristically picky.³⁹ First, to conflate zero with the infinitesimally small may be adequate for a pragmatic approach, but it is not adequate for questions of metaphysics.⁴⁰ It could hence be argued that what is left after gradual diminution is perhaps not a conscious empirical “I”, but an unconscious one, which might still be capable of doing the job of the transcendental apperception (A166/B208). Second, Kant charges Mendelssohn of neglecting a suitable option (i.e. gradually ceasing), whereas Mendelssohn indeed mentions it several times.⁴¹ We can therefore hold that Kant’s objection against Mendelssohn is at least incomplete as the very argument is concerned.⁴² But why does he choose this mode of argumentation, which could be criticized as either unfair or inaccurate?

One way to defend Kant’s choice is somewhat *ad hominem*: he might have quoted Mendelssohn from memory, or perhaps even according to the discussions which followed the Pantheism debate, which ultimately lead to the breakdown of Mendelssohn’s philosophical reputation.⁴³ Ac-

39 Altmann 1972, 179 is pretty short on Kant’s Refutation: “Kant did not do full justice to Mendelssohn”, since, for instance, Boscovich’s law of continuity indeed includes intensive magnitudes. For a more detailed account, see Falkenstein 1998, Appendix A, 587–88.

40 In particular I do not quite buy into Powell’s argument that Mendelssohn had not shown the possibility that nothing can just vanish. He is definitely not relying on “experimental” information here. Powell does not only seem to ignore Leibnizian metaphysics, but also the whole second dialogue of the *Phaedon* (see Powell 1985, 202—more arguments against Powell are to be found in Falkenstein and Dyck).

41 See JubA III/1, 71–73, 83, 103, and then again in the Addendum to the third Edition of the *Phaedon* 1769, *ibid.*, 155.

42 See Falkenstein 1998, 587, Sassen 2008, 216, 220, among others.

43 See Alexander Altmann: “Das Bild Moses Mendelssohns im deutschen Idealismus”, in: *Moses Mendelssohn und die Kreise seiner Wirksamkeit*. Ed. by Michael Albrecht, Eva J. Engel, Norbert Hinske. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 1994, pp. 1–24.

ording to this reading, Kant would not refute Mendelssohn, but would only object to a secondary understanding of Mendelssohn's main point. Regardless, this is not satisfying and most likely not correct. Another option is to argue from an architectural point of view. From this perspective, the main counter-arguments against Mendelssohn's proof are already mentioned in the constructive part of the *Critique*, the "Analytic". What remains to be said in the "Dialectic" are the results from denying the soul any substantiality. This could justify why Kant restricts himself to attacking Mendelssohn via the consequences of this view for the soul's degree of intensive magnitude, because he indirectly shows how Mendelssohn's argumentation only allows him to admit the soul's essence as an accompanying⁴⁴ function of perception. Thus, no further step towards proving its substantiality could be taken and hence immortality as a substance rests only on the "soul's" ability to unite perceptions. If this function is gradually annihilated, it cannot be said to endure eternally.⁴⁵

As Kant has shown in the preceding parts of the *Critique*, the soul is not a substantial entity, but can only be understood as the pure function of apperception⁴⁶—as pointed out, for instance, in the "Deduction", the "Anticipations of Perception" (A 176/B 217), and repeatedly in the "Paralogism" (B 407–8). The soul—or what traditionally is referred to as a soul—does not "cease to exist" as any kind of substance (e.g. matter with extensive quality), since it does not *exist* the same way. All we can say about it as a transcendental subject is that it enables experience. All claims beyond this, as claims about the soul *materialiter* are bound to empirical information, hence not part of metaphysics. Any possible way of thinking about the "soul" means either thinking about its operations, or about its empirical content. If it is the latter, the stage is open for Kant's refutation of Mendelssohn's proof. If it is the former, Mendelssohn's claims go not far enough.

44 Not, as Kant himself claims to have proven, as the *enabling condition of experience*.

45 See Powell 1985, 205 who argues that Kant first shows how any such proof could be still true in light of Critical Philosophy and then, second, reveals the most crippling argument in the Refutation. This clever version of charitable reading and then even more forcefully destroying the previous option seems to hint into the right direction.

46 It also follows that rational psychology is impossible (A 347/B 405–6; see Hatfield 1992 et al.).

Stripping the soul of all metaphysical content is exactly what Mendelssohn seeks to avoid, since it would lead to abolishing the Leibnizian philosophy of perfectibility. For a suitable defense he deems it necessary and sufficient to refute materialism⁴⁷, since he takes this as being the only possible option besides Leibnizian Ontology. At the end of the second dialogue (JubA III/1, 93) he stresses that even though the essence of the soul is its functioning as giving unity to the (perceived) manifold, its origin is not this mere functioning but its being a simple substance (up to p. 97). With this, his option against any form of materialism becomes obvious: the soul is different from matter. Therefore, its thoughts are fundamentally different from all quantifiable bodily reaction to a given stimulus (see *ibid.*, 99) and are suitable for a metaphysical proof.

It is also clear that the unconscious serves as the material of the subject's activity and guarantees its continuity. As considered in the previous section (2), it could be used to explain different phenomena and therefore even serve to explain the unconscious perceptions as a part of the soul's activity. Unfortunately, however, this cannot prove the thinking subject's primacy as a *substance*, or at least of this substantiality being anything more than its function. The aforementioned claim (see JubA III/1, 103) that unconsciousness over a period of time does not harm continuous personality remains questionable. One way to justify how "unconscious perception" without any consciousness of oneself (*Selbstgefühl*, JubA III/1, 106) still serves to define one particular person as the unifying function could be to hold that the unifying force does not rest within the person, but within god as the supervening power over all monads. But: Mendelssohn does not make this claim at all. The invulnerability of the monad remains untouched. All he mentions (especially in the third dialogue) is that it is only due to god's *benevolence* that the fundamental persistence of the soul after death still includes this "consciousness of oneself" (*Selbstgefühl*). And this is necessary to offer the path to further perfection. Here the unconscious is crucial, since Mendelssohn argues that every impression and even the remembrance of it leaves a tiny trace. This might grant an—unconscious—continual activity within the soul without its body as a sensorium. But there is no sufficient argument as to why this is enough to preserve the essence of the soul and ensure its further perfection *apart from* heavily resting on god's benevolence (here—as always in Mendelssohn's works—treated as the ultimate embodiment of the Leibnizian principle of sufficient reason). In the "Adden-

47 The main topic of the second dialogue, see Sassen 2008, 221–22.

dum” to the second edition of the *Phaedon* (1768) Mendelssohn mentions some of his readers' skeptical comments on the substantiality of the soul (JubA III/1, 133) and addresses them. Here he concentrates on the soul's *activity* as its distinctive mode of being, but essentially he does not get further than in the last part of the second dialogue. And again, Mendelssohn's arguments do not lead further than to mere functionality, thus leaving room for the third way: Kantian Idealism.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, if we go this route we cannot reasonably say more about the soul's immortality than just acknowledge the *possibility*⁴⁸ of a severe decrease of mental activity and therefore its ceasing to serve its essential function. Given that the mode of existence is the activity of unifying given sensory material, this mode becomes the crucial aspect in any “proof” for its eternity (“immortality”). The fundamental “force” of the soul's activity, as it seems here, can only be captured in its degree of consciousness, i.e. the soul's intensive degree of activity. Just given the argument that the soul is simple, then, does not hinder that natural forces can reduce the soul's activity to approximately zero, thus preventing its “fundamental function” (B406). If consciousness is all there is, a nearly zero degree of consciousness is insufficient. Thus, the soul as a pure function has indeed ceased to exist, since there was just and only a function to cease. Given unconsciousness about each and all activities and contents within the soul, including their relation to the “I” itself, no distinction is possible, no apperception, no application, no content gathering.⁴⁹ Without the notional presupposition of the “I” neither cognition nor sensitivity is possible, lest their mutual application—therefore, the “soul” indeed ceases to exist and any substantial permanence remains impossible to prove (see B415). And even if the latter could be proven, it would not suffice to reasonably talk about the soul's permanence, since it is not preserved in its essence. This is worth pointing out: for Mendelssohn, obscure perceptions serve to guarantee personhood for they are part of the complete (and in rationalistic diction: real) notion of every soul. For Kant, they prove to be metaphysically useless since we cannot take up the divine perspective which has to serve as their ultimate basis.

48 See Powell 1985, 216–17: it does not show the *fact* that the soul ceases to exist. All Critical Philosophy shows is the impossibility to prove either way.

49 Kant also refers to this issue in a letter to Herz about Salomon Maimon, see AA XI, 51–52.

Kant himself claims that the proof for the soul's substantiality would be crucial (B409) for the further proof of the continuance of the soul's personality after (bodily) death. Unfortunately, after the fire bath of critical philosophy, souls are left as functions of apperception, but not as substantial or at any rate "furnished" entities. It seems almost mocking to refer to the decrease of intensive magnitudes if Mendelssohn's proof is already done for with the denial of substantiality, but one could also say that with this step Kant manages to assign and clarify the new paradigm of functionality. Kant treats Mendelssohn's proof as *the* representative case of rational psychology, and that is certainly correct. But taken for itself, the possibility of a death-like (but not death-identical) state of nearly zero consciousness remains as an unsatisfactory remnant of Kant's overall successful refutation of traditional metaphysics, for Kant could have refuted Mendelssohn much more clearly and distinctly.⁵⁰ The only aspect left to discuss is the aforementioned aspect of god's benevolence. Ongoing consciousness after death—and therefore no ceasing in its essential function, as Mendelssohn claims, could be god's best reason to ensure the soul's perfection. If only he existed.

4. Why Immortality Matters. Concluding Mendelssohnian Remarks

It is not only Mendelssohn's, but also the pre-critical Kant's claim in his lectures in the 1770s that the real issue at stake is not whether the soul as a substance endures, but whether the soul's personality remains after death: "*personality* [is] the main matter with the soul after death" (AA 28:296) An issue he already claims being an issue of "hope", not knowledge.⁵¹

As Dyck⁵² points out, in traditional rational psychology it is not necessarily identity of consciousness (or the decisive part of consciousness in

50 Especially in this context it seems worthwhile to include the Refutation of Idealism from the second edition of the *Critique* (B274–79) into the anti-Mendelssohn picture, see Dyck, "Turning the Game...", 18.

51 Perhaps Kant supports Georg Friedrich Meier's claim here, that immortality is far more an issue of faith than of metaphysics; see Meier *Gedanken von dem Zustande der Seele nach dem Tode* (*Thoughts on the State of the Soul after Death*, 1746), Dyck 2010, 106–7. Likewise, it might also be possible that Kant's discussion of these issues was influenced by the published debate between Mendelssohn and Abbt about the vocation of man (see Pollok 2010, 416).

52 See Dyck 2010, 97.

the “I”) over time that guarantees personhood, but only “the very capacity for a consciousness of its own identity” which should serve “to distinguish it from animal souls”. Mendelssohn, however, indeed requires more than this “very capacity”, but builds his main proof of the immortality of the soul around the notion of personal identity as the *awareness* of being the same person over time and keeping this personhood eternally. Thus, the soul should not only be seen as separated from the worldly body (which is Mendelssohn’s main concern in the first two dialogues in the *Phaedon*), but it should also be eternal as this particular individual.⁵³

Mendelssohn lets his Socrates argue that the state of the soul after the body has died cannot be mere unconsciousness. However, this does not follow from any logical reasoning (since “a complete lack of consciousness does not contradict the pure nature of a mind”, JubA III/1, 103), but only from God’s benevolence. Like Leibniz, when it comes to this topic Mendelssohn heavily draws on the principle of sufficient reason. Apart from his considerations concerning natural law, which will not be treated in this paper⁵⁴, he focuses on the main trait of humanity: the human capacity for perfectibility. In a passage pointing once again to the vast ocean of “notions” entering our soul, Mendelssohn claims that the idea of our perfection is essentially the active improvement of our overall world-perception, which cannot simply stop at the end of our physical life (see JubA III/1, 105–6). For Mendelssohn, the soul’s inherent tendency to infinity (“Unendlichkeit”) is proof of its actual, dynamic, and enduring realization of its telos—and necessarily, but only from the

53 In fact, but for other reasons, Mendelssohn is much closer to Locke than to Wolff; see Dyck 2010, 103 (not mentioning Mendelssohn). It is also worth mentioning that the word “should” implies Mendelssohn’s own ambivalence as concerning claims about reality and aspects which essentially presuppose god’s existence. With Kantian Philosophy, this latter aspect becomes *normative*, not (as Mendelssohn himself had always tried to show) descriptive.

54 This argument starts off *ex negativo*: what would be the consequences given the soul were indeed mortal? If the continuance after her physical death left the soul in the state of a mere unconscious point (i. e. a less than vegetative state, even for a Leibnizian), the worth of this worldly life would dramatically increase. If man had nothing to expect after his physical death he would do whatever is suitable to provide him with a longer life-span. And even god would have no sufficient reason to decide whether one or another individual is right if it comes to the clash of interests (which would inevitably happen, see JubA III/1, 117–22).

human perspective, presupposes the unconscious as the material out of which the soul forms its world.⁵⁵

Moreover, not only the soul's own improvement but all of nature can reveal perfection if represented by an apperceiving (conscious) soul.⁵⁶ Hence, the world's richness just becomes meaningful if perceived by a mind, and it is ultimately and completely formed if this mind stretches out to every aspect of it, may it be conscious or—given the vastness and sheer number of unclear impressions—unconscious of it.

This highly rhetorical passage directly appeals to the necessary reality of the principle of sufficient reason. If this principle were not actually realized the world would be senseless, and human perfectibility in vain. Kant seems to be willing to allow for a “belief” in personhood “for practical use” (*zum praktischen Gebrauche*, A365–66), but not in issues of theoretical insight into the nature of the human soul. The “practical use” of the notion of personal immortality, however, is aptly portrayed in the third dialogue of the *Phaedon*⁵⁷, not at all addressed by Kant's refutation in the *KrV*, since Kant could even subscribe to it—but only as an *Ideal of Pure Reason*. Idealism, though, was not what Mendelssohn wanted to deal with.

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55 In tandem with a new “scientific proof for god's existence” (JubA III/2, 88), Mendelssohn utilizes this thought in his attack on Kantian Transcendental Idealism in his *Morning Hours*. There (see JubA III/2, 141) he explicitly mentions the soul's obscure and confused “knowledge” of itself which only gains objectivity if thought by an eternal mind (see Dyck, “Turning the Game...”, 9–10). In his *Phaedon*, however, Mendelssohn stresses god's benevolence, thereby hinting at the principle of sufficient reason. In the *Morning Hours*, the proof for the existence of god rests on his theory of objective reality as the necessary connection of thinkability and being actually thought by one divine mind.

56 “Auch sind sie in dem großen Entwurfe dieses Weltalls nicht um ihrer selbst willen hervorgebracht worden: denn sie sind leblos und ihres Daseins unbewußt, auch an und für sich keiner Vollkommenheit fähig.” JubA III/1, 107.

57 Altmann 1972, 155–57: it all sounds like the continuation of his debate with Abbt

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Pre-conceptual Aspects of Self-consciousness in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*¹

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A question that has gone unasked for a long time in Kant research is whether and to what extent, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the central concept of apperception or the so-called transcendental or original self-consciousness implies a form of concrete consciousness beyond purely formal and functional characteristics. It is thought to be entirely uncontroversial that that which produces objective knowledge and which Kant denoted with the concept of apperception only has transcendently necessary significance and is entirely inaccessible to concrete consciousness. This deeply entrenched interpretation can be explained by programmatic reasons above all, whereby the lesson of the paralogisms chapter in the *Critique of Pure Reason* plays an important role. Here Kant shows that there can be no justification for assuming a Cartesian soul that would be accessible to knowledge. This can only make it seem substantially wrong-headed to wish to interpret the consciousness involved in apperception, which according to Kant underlies all structured thought, as a form of phenomenal consciousness that could somehow be made apparent from the first-person perspective. One could even argue that the very attempt to locate any phenomenal self-consciousness in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is contrary to the entire project of the critique of knowledge, since Kant is concerned to justify propositional knowledge through conditions that are independent of experience and can be legitimately applied to the material of empirical intuition. This sort of approach necessitates a strict distinction in the theory between a priori structures on the one hand and empirical or psychological aspects of the consciousness of objects on the other hand—a distinction famously reflected in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the sharp terminological oppositions of attributes such as “empirical” and “pure/transcendental”, “a priori” and “a posteriori”.

1 This paper was originally published in German in 2007 under the title “Vorbe-griffliches Selbstbewusstsein bei Kant?”. Translation by Karsten Schöllner.

ori”, etc.² A “phenomenal consciousness” that is neither conceptually structured experience nor purely aprioristic in form clearly cannot be sensibly incorporated into the underlying Kantian epistemological structures. If we accept the theoretical necessity of Kant’s dualistic structure of principles, it does in fact seem rather logically doubtful to offer, alongside the purely principle-oriented description of apperception, an explanation of it as being at the same time phenomenal consciousness, since apperception is explained as being absolutely simple in its essence and the condition of all concrete consciousness.

However, the past years have seen individual interpretations here and there that at least point towards the idea that Kantian apperception involves more than just the analytic characteristics of purely logical self-consciousness—that in contrast with concrete empirical self-consciousness, apperception also introduces a pre-theoretical component. This is suggested by the interpretations of Konrad Cramer and Dieter Sturma, for example, who draw in particular on Kant’s statements in the paralogisms chapter.³ The following will examine whether these text passages are sufficient to support the thesis of a pre-theoretical self-consciousness. However, this also raises the question of what could have led Kant to refer to a phenomenal self within the framework of his rigorous critique of knowledge, since the programmatic goal of that critique is precisely to ascertain whether the phenomena of consciousness can be justified as instances of knowledge whose objects can be described by means of specific characteristics.

However, in looking for evidence of a theory of phenomenal, pre-theoretical self-consciousness it would be amiss to restrict oneself to the A and B editions of the paralogisms chapter.⁴ To avoid a reductionist interpretation it is necessary to turn as well to Kant’s arguments from the deductions of the pure concepts of understanding in the transcendental analytic, where he establishes the consciousness he calls apperception as the highest principle of thought presupposed by the concepts of the under-

2 Citations from Kant’s works, except for the *Critique of Pure Reason*, are by volume and page numbers of the *Akademie* edition of *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, 1900); the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR) is cited by the standard A and B pagination of the first (1781) and second (1787) editions respectively. The translations are taken from Guyer and Wood, 1998.

3 Cf. e.g. Cramer, 1987 and 2003; Frank, 1993; Sturma, 1997.

4 Rolf-Peter Horstmann has quite correctly made this point. Cf. Horstmann, 1993, p. 409.

standing.⁵ Thus my first step will be to analyze Kant's basic argumentative strategy for the assumption of this consciousness as well as its functional characteristics. The preliminary goal of this analysis is to bring to light those aspects that already, taken on their own, can point to a phenomenal content of apperception accessible in the first-person. The second step will be a closer reading of those passages from the paralogisms chapter where Kant turns to the theoretical features of the judgment 'I think'. Here I will argue that the *Critique of Pure Reason* does in fact speak of a phenomenal self-consciousness—if only in a limited sense—which, however, stands in an irresolvable tension to the program of the critique of knowledge.

1. Apperception and the First-person Perspective

In § 16 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant defines pure apperception as the identity of consciousness and the synthetic unity of the manifold, which is given a priori and produces "the representation 'I think'". This characterization of the *original* self-consciousness, as Kant calls it, follows from the transcendental arguments in §15, which display a specific theoretical perspective: the structural conditions of concrete mental acts are brought into view from the objective third-person perspective in order to justify the transcendental necessity of assuming an "original" self-consciousness. Although the thinking subject is here the object of the theory, §15 avoids any reference to the perspective of the thinking subject in discussing the acts of the understanding that "combine" the manifold, which combination ("synthesis") has to be seen as an act of spontaneity that at the same time implies the concept of unity: "Combination is the representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise from the combination; rather, by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes the concept of combination possible." (CPR B131)

Thus Kant's justification starts from the structure of the mental acts that bring the manifold of the data given in intuition under a concept and combine multiple representations with each other. To explain this

5 While Heiner Klemme has emphasized that the arguments of the paralogisms chapter of the later edition no longer directly connect up with the deduction of the table of categories, this aspect is not relevant here, as I am not concerned with the systematic consistency of the various parts of the critique. Cf. Klemme, 1996, p. 289 f.

structure, a spontaneous synthesis and unity that is detached from all empirical implications is assumed to underlie the concrete act of thinking—thus, put in coarse outline, is the general argumentative goal of §15.

Now §16 begins to approach the (first-person) perspective of the subject of knowledge, as it seeks to justify the central thesis that the ‘I think’ produced by apperception “must be able to accompany all my representations”. (CPR, B 131 f.) Here Kant describes two functional characteristics in particular that he ascribes to the “original self-consciousness”: synthesis and unity. Synthesis describes the central and foundational function of cognitive activity, namely the rule-bound combination of data received by the senses and considered by means of this process under a specific general aspect, i.e. a concept of the understanding. This active rule-bound combination of the disordered material of intuition is, for Kant, the very act of acquiring knowledge: an object of knowledge is a data set combined into a *unity* according to rules. However, the fundamental significance of this function of synthesis only becomes sufficiently clear once we see how it explains the thesis that the judgment ‘I think’ must be able to accompany all my representations. For this thesis expresses the requirement of the theory of consciousness that various representations must all belong to one self-consciousness, for which the function of synthesis of apperception is a precondition: “this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of the representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis.” (CPR B133) Kant then goes on to explain how this consciousness arises: “The latter relation [to the identity of the subject] therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my adding one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis.” (CPR B133) The point, then, is that when in the course of a complex cognitive act I bring together various representations and relate them to each other according to a rule, I have not only a consciousness of the *unity* of these representations, but at the same time a consciousness of myself as the same subject bearing different representations. Thus it is a condition of this consciousness of identity that representations are added together and combined with one another according to a rule. I only attain to a unified consciousness of myself in the course of this active rule-bound combina-

tion.⁶ In contrast to a sense-data model of a Humean bent, Kant's theory of apperception implies the consciousness of a subject understanding itself as the same throughout the changes of various acts of thought.⁷ Thus it is that Kant can write: "The synthetic proposition that every different empirical consciousness must be combined into a single self-consciousness is the absolutely first and synthetic principle of our thinking in general." (CPR, A 117, note) Moreover: "It is [...] absolutely necessary that in my cognition all consciousness belong to one consciousness (of myself)."

In the justification outlined here for assuming the a priori consciousness that is apperception, the primary theoretical emphasis is clearly on the internal characteristics of apperception in terms of the functional architecture of conditions. In contrast, the question of to what extent this consciousness can be described from the first-person perspective—from the perspective of the subject that has representations and performs acts of thinking—is almost entirely neglected.

Transcendental apperception is brought somewhat closer to the first-person perspective in being described in § 16 as that a priori consciousness that produces the representation 'I think', which Kant says must be able to accompany all of my representations. Thus under a certain point of view the initial interpretation of the relation between the abstract concept of transcendental apperception and the representation 'I think' would be that the transcendental apperception, as an a priori structure of consciousness that we must necessarily assume, *expresses* itself in the proposition 'I think', which Kant describes as a "representation". In calling this a "representation", does Kant wish to point to what might be an empirical-phenomenal aspect of the proposition 'I think'? There has been a great deal of debate in the literature about this very singular application of the concept of representation to the 'I think'.⁸ For in conceptual terms

6 The difference between the original synthetic unity of apperception and the identity of self-consciousness is not always made sufficiently clear in the Kantian terminology. For a more detailed examination of this see Sturma, 1985, p. 70 f.

7 On the identity function of apperception see Rohs, 1988, p. 62 ff.

8 For Rohs, the representation of the 'I think', in contrast to empirical representations, has to be credited with intertemporal identity, which is not possible in the case of empirical representation: Rohs, 1988, p. 62 f. Against this Malte Hossenfelder has argued that the 'I think', as a representation, could have consistently been called 'I represent'. He justifies this with a quotation from the CPR where Kant argues that without the 'I think' there would be "representations" in me that were not mine (Hossenfelder, 1978, p. 100). However, as Cram-

it seems natural, *prima facie*, to read the concept of representation analogously to Kant's use of the concept in the context of empirical consciousness, in the sense of an object-oriented representation, intuition or appearance.⁹ However, it speaks strongly against such an interpretation that that which accompanies cognitions "as their vehicle"¹⁰ (B406) cannot itself be a conscious representation and thus cannot be intentional in nature. Kant makes this unmistakably clear when he writes that the 'I think' is that representation that "must be able to accompany all others and which in all consciousness is one and the same, cannot be accompanied by any further representation." (CPR B132)

If we look at the specific relation implied by the multiple-place predicate "accompany", it expresses a very characteristic function of the 'I think' in the theory of consciousness. "[A]ll manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the I think in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered."¹¹ The 'I think' corresponds to the postulate of a thoroughly identical self and is thus to be understood as a moment of formal self-reference that immanently structures concrete predicative thought. For this reason the 'I think' has to underlie intentional cognitions whose objects are determined by means of concepts, and thus predicatively, and this relation is a logical relation due to its "necessity". But how are we to understand this from the perspective of the 'I' that thinks and produces mental acts?

Since a formal self-ascription occurs in all of my mental acts, they are acts that are *for me*, that I see as *mine* and that I can relate to *as mine*. In terms of the theory of consciousness, the 'I think' refers to the thought of the *mineness* of concrete acts of thought and representation, which means that I have a consciousness of performing mental acts.¹²

er rightly objects, it cannot be derived from the judgment 'I represent' that a representation is not just *in* me but something *for* me. Cramer, p. 62 f.

9 This reading is plausible at least in the context of Kant's systematic development of object-oriented thought in the transcendental analytic. A more in-depth analysis of the concept of representation, aimed at distinguishing it from the concept of idea, is found in the first book of the transcendental dialectic, where Kant defines representation as the general category for (empirical) cognitions of various degrees of clarity: from conscious representation, sensation, and knowledge. CPR, B376 f.

10 CPR, B405.

11 CPR, B132.

12 Cramer offers a pertinent interpretation of the function of the mineness of a mental event: "A representation in me is something for me precisely when I do not just have it but have a consciousness that I have it." Cramer, 1987, p. 171.

Now, Kant does make it clear that the 'I' emphasized in the subject role of the proposition 'I think' has no descriptive or empirical content of its own apart from the empirical acts of thought that I call mine by means of this judgment. This is very clear from the often-quoted footnote in the paralogisms chapter: "For it is to be noted that if I have called the proposition "I think" an empirical proposition, I would not say by this that the I in this proposition is an empirical representation; for it is rather purely intellectual, because it belongs to thinking in general." (B 423)

In contrast to empirical consciousness, which makes an object determinable by predicates and which is characterized differently depending on what objects it turns to, no further characteristics can be predicated of the 'I think', i.e. of the thought of the mineness of representations. However, it also follows from the fact that it is not an empirical and independent representation that the "representation" of the 'I' can *not* be the sort of consciousness that is based on sensible data. The "representation" 'I' involved in concrete and direct self-ascriptions such as "I know that I ϕ " does not, in and of itself, refer to any sensory data. As Kant says, the 'I' is "the simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation [...] of which one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept."¹³ The representation described here has no sensible content and is therefore entirely without content; thus it lacks a decisive requirement of concrete consciousness, the content of which could be analyzed and described by means of predicates. According to the basic underlying assumption of Kant's theory of knowledge, this would only be the case when a mental state is based on data given to sensibility that can be considered under categorical aspects, which is clearly not true in the case of the 'I'.¹⁴ Thus the 'I' cannot be seen as a single mental act, which is why Kant famously refers to the 'I' as a simple representation.¹⁵ This means that the self-ascription of representations occurs in formal and invariant fashion—in a process that is not bound to any data given to sensibility. In the B edition Kant makes

13 CPR, B404.

14 "For the I is, to be sure, in all thoughts; but not the least intuition is bound up with this representation, which would distinguish it from other objects of intuition." (CPR, A350) The subject as transcendental apperception and manifold representations are in a relation of mutual dependence. Rolf-Peter Horstmann has brought out this point very well by comparing the I with an (immaterial) center of gravity that relies on bodies subject to gravity in order to 'exist' (Horstmann, 2007).

15 CPR, B135.

it clear that the mere thought of the I by itself is to be seen as an act of spontaneity and that it explicitly has no content that could be presented in a sensible representation.¹⁶ It only describes a purely ‘logical’ consciousness, not a consciousness *of something* or even *of itself* in a phenomenological sense. The majority consensus in Kant research has been to adhere to this passage, and to consider apperception as an exclusively logical self-consciousness and leave it at that.¹⁷

However, authors such as Konrad Cramer, Dieter Sturma and Manfred Frank have noted that although the ‘I’ in the subject role of the judgment ‘I think’ is empty of content, Kant does attribute it with a sort of content that eludes the epistemological framework of the critique of knowledge, both terminologically and theoretically. Such a “content”, under the conditions described above, could only be such that presents a phenomenon that resists any further analysis.

2. The Relation between the Judgments ‘I think’ and ‘I exist’

The textual basis for this thesis consists essentially of Kant’s formulations in the paralogisms chapter of the B edition, which culminate in the statement that the proposition ‘I think’ implies the sentence ‘I exist’: “The “I think” [...] contains within itself the proposition “I exist.”” (CPR B422 note) Here Kant speaks of an entirely distinct type of consciousness that evidently goes beyond the formal characteristic of the attributability of acts of thought (“mineness”). Whenever I execute any act of thought or representation, I am also thereby conscious or can be conscious of the fact *that* I exist; hence this fact presents itself somehow in consciousness. But how can we get a more precise handle on the possible content of this “phenomenon”, the “representation” of the ‘I’?

The first question that arises concerns the peculiar relation Kant has in mind in speaking of the proposition ‘I exist’ being “contained” in the proposition ‘I think’. Konrad Cramer has offered a practicable interpretation that explains the relation between ‘I think’ and ‘I exist’ in terms of the feature of simplicity that characterizes the “representation” ‘I’ for Kant. Cramer draws on three relevant citations from the A edition of the paralogisms chapter that claim this simplicity.¹⁸ Tellingly Kant

16 Cramer emphasizes this central point in Cramer, 1987, p. 200.

17 Rohs puts a very fine point on this: Rohs, 1988, p. 76 ff.

18 Cramer, 2003, p. 66 f.

only offers negative determinations in this context. The concept of simplicity means, firstly, that the representation 'I' cannot be given in intuition so long as we accept Kant's thesis that that which is given in intuition always contains a manifold of sensible data.¹⁹ Secondly it means that the representation 'I' cannot be conceived as an act of the understanding, the content of which would be describable by means of attributes; the representation 'I' is not a concept of something given in intuition, since it "never contains a synthesis of the manifold."²⁰ And thirdly it cannot be a *form* of intuition or representation, i.e. something within which intuitions could be given and that would be immutable due to its status of being form.²¹

But speaking positively, what *does* correspond to the mental state that expresses the 'I'? Cramer begins by concluding from the various negative specifications of simplicity that the mental state, in formal terms, has to have the status of a thought—a thought that is not directed either at something given or capable of being given in intuition, or at a rule-bound synthesis of sensible data.²² Thus the use of the indexical 'I', in the context of the self-ascription of mental acts, refers to something "that can only be *thought* and not *intuited*."²³ That which can be thought must have a form of intentionality and hence must have a content of some sort, even if, as in the case of the 'I', it cannot be any predicatively specifiable empirical content, since this latter would require a sensible intuition, which, however, as we have seen, Kant definitively rules out for the "representation" 'I'.

More precisely, in determining the (non-sensible) content of this cognition Cramer introduces two aspects: the first aspect, which essentially corresponds to the argumentation in the B edition of the paralogisms chapter, is that Kant ascribes to the 'I think' the status of an "act of spontaneity".²⁴ Hence the point is that the "representation" 'I think' does not

19 CPR, A355

20 CPR, A356

21 CPR, A350

22 Cramer, 2003, p. 67.

23 Ibid. It should be clear that this "thought" should not be seen in terms of the Fregean concept of the thought as an objective (common) content of propositions and representations.

24 CPR, B132. Rolf-Peter Horstmann has noted, quite rightly, that the B edition of the paralogisms chapter is particularly dominated by Kant's thesis that the subject can only be conceived as an act or action; from which it follows that the question of the knowability of the 'soul' is made senseless from the very begin-

arise from an act of spontaneity, as in the case of predicatively determinable contents of representation, but rather *is* such an act. For Cramer this very decisive circumstance, along with the previously mentioned thesis that the content of the “representation” ‘I’ can only be thought and not intuited, suggests that I attribute acts of thought to myself and thereby make reference to myself as subject because “I possess a *concept* of myself that can be spontaneously generated in every self-ascription” [my emphasis].²⁵

It is at first glance rather surprising that Cramer speaks here of a “concept” that I (allegedly) must have of myself when in my self-ascription I make reference to myself as the subject of a propositional attitude. However, a closer consideration shows that the phrase “concept of myself” refers to the epistemic status of the consciousness I have when I attribute concrete representations to myself and consider them to be mine.²⁶ Yet despite our fuller characterization of the ‘I think’ as an act of spontaneity, it remains unexplained what this “representation” of the ‘I’ is directed at, if we assume, as Cramer does, that the representation is (or must be) “about” something.

Here Cramer returns to Kant’s central claim that the ‘I think’ is a proposition that contains within itself the proposition ‘I exist’. *I* am the content of the thought of the ‘I’, insofar as I am aware of myself as the subject of acts of thought. This means, for Cramer, that the thought of the ‘I’ is directly related to the consciousness of my own existence. This consciousness of existence inevitably sets in as soon as I ascribe cognitive acts to myself and express (or am able to express) my consciousness of this ascription in propositional form. Hence we can say that, for Kant, the “representation” ‘I think’ corresponds to the consciousness “that can accompany all thinking”, and thus it is “that which immediately in-

ning. However, he does not mention the parallels that can be seen between the act-structure of the subject and both Fichte’s concept of the I as *Tathandlung* and the structure of intellectual intuition. Horstmann, 1993, p. 416.

25 Cramer, 2003, p. 68.

26 Hence we should take into account Cramer’s systematic emphasis: he is concerned with the analysis of a specific function of the consciousness of apperception, of the judgment ‘I think’, insofar as it accompanies concrete and substantial representations, and specifically with the explication of the thought of the ‘mineness’ of representations. The question of what phenomenon of consciousness could correspond to the ‘I’ as the grammatical subject of the judgment ‘I think’ is not at the center of Cramer’s analysis.

cludes the existence of a subject in itself".²⁷ "In the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general [...] hence in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am."²⁸ It is important to note that in executing a mental act one is only conscious of one's factual existence as the 'unconcrete' subject of mental states and acts. In other words: whenever I think or represent to myself anything, I am present to myself, but I lack any representation of myself as a spatio-temporally existing concrete individual.

Peter Strawson has also mentioned this form of (possible) immediate self-reference in executing concrete acts of thought, and emphasized that this corresponds to the peculiarity of our use of 'I' that we do not need to specify who is meant by it.²⁹ This is exactly what Kant means when he says about the relation of the proposition 'I think' and the spontaneous judgment 'I exist', i.e. the judgment of my factually experienced existence, that they are ultimately identical.³⁰ Thus Dieter Sturma is right to insist on seeing the relation of identity as identity of the act of consciousness involved, and to emphasize "that the experiential evidence of self-consciousness includes, *uno actu*, the explicit consciousness of one's own existence, which is evidently empirically determined."³¹

All in all Kant's argument does in fact represent a substantial expansion, in terms of the perspective of first-personal experience, compared to the purely functional description of apperception in the transcendental analytic.

However, does the discovery that the 'I think' represents immediate self-certainty entitle us to speak of a form of pre-theoretical self-consciousness in Kant? For the moment, at least, we can note that the mental mode of immediacy that is characteristic of experiential evidence represents a conceptual contrast to mental acts that are reflective and thus the-

27 CPR, B277.

28 CPR, B157. We should also note that 'existence' does not represent a real predicate, but rather something that can be added to a representation qua sensible perception (according to the premise of Kant's refutation of the ontological proof of God in the transcendental dialectic, CPR, B620 ff.)

29 Strawson, 1987, p. 211.

30 "Hence my existence also cannot be regarded as inferred from the proposition "I think," as Descartes held (for otherwise the major premise, "Everything that thinks, exists" would have to precede it), but rather it is identical with it." CPR, B422 note.

31 Sturma, 1997, p. 121.

oretically anchored; and thus we can take the characteristic of immediacy to be an important indication in favor of the thesis. However, a satisfactory answer to the question requires a closer look at the type of cognition that Kant associates with the ‘I think’ in the sense of ‘I exist’.

3. The ‘I think’ as “Indeterminate Perception”

The decisive textual reference for this is found in the above-mentioned note to the paralogisms chapter in the B edition. Here Kant describes the form of cognition underlying the judgment ‘I think’ as an “indeterminate perception”.³² The comment immediately following is supposed to explain how this is meant, but we cannot deny that Kant finds himself in very difficult conceptual straits here: “An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real, which was given, and indeed only to thinking in general, thus not as appearance, and also not as a thing in itself (a noumenon), but rather as something that in fact exists and is indicated as an existing thing in the proposition “I think.”³³ These vague formulations suggest that Kant has evidently left the firm foundation of his clear, systematically anchored epistemological terminology, and is confronted by phenomena that elude his sharp analytical gaze. After all, an “indeterminate perception” is not a concept, and it is only “indeterminate” in contrast to a determinate perception, a sensible intuition organized by the activity of the understanding; this follows unmistakably from the quotation above, according to which the indeterminate perception is not an appearance. But this contrast is by no means trivial: for an indeterminate perception is not nothing just because it is epistemologically underdetermined; rather, it has to be seen as a pre-reflexive mental state in which the subject is aware of itself, or rather present to itself, in a minimal sense. Although Kant does not offer any more detailed statements, we can interpret this as a basal consciousness, an experience of the self immediately given with the first-personal perspective. That this is very much a phenomenon of consciousness is made clear by further statements that are quite problematic for the Kantian theory of knowledge. For example, in summarizing the paralogisms in the *Prolegomena*, Kant emphasizes: “The representation of apperception, the I, [...] is nothing

32 CPR, B422 ff.

33 CPR, B424.

more than a feeling".³⁴ We see the same tendency in the statement that a "sensation, which consequently belongs to sensibility, grounds this existential proposition", i. e. the 'I think' in the sense of 'I exist'.³⁵ However, Kant immediately notes that this sensation is not logically situated at the level of structured thought, of experience, since the sensation of 'I think' *precedes* experience. This brief hint of a return to the logical significance of apperception also makes it clear, however, that the 'I think' as a phenomenon of consciousness cannot be understood in purely empirical and psychological terms. And it seems quite appropriate to speak here of a pre-theoretical self-consciousness which at the same time forms the foundation of object-oriented thinking.

However, it is important to note that for Kant nothing follows, systematically, from this finding—unlike for Fichte. Fichte's writings on the *Wissenschaftslehre* around 1798, in particular, show a systematic consideration and integration of the immediate, pre-conceptual consciousness. Unlike for Kant, in Fichte's theory of consciousness the justification of subjectivity can and must be realized from the first-person perspective. This thesis goes hand-in-hand with the claim that the content of transcendental principles can be demonstrated in consciousness itself.³⁶ In other words: the "original self-consciousness", the self-positing I, is a transcendental principle that one can summon to consciousness. In the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* Fichte says quite unambiguously: "We have to know something about this final ground, since we talk about it."³⁷ For this reason, for Fichte the structural conditions of self-consciousness cannot only be functional in the transcendental sense; and consistency then requires that the phenomenal content of self-consciousness in an original sense, as an immediate awareness of intuition, has to also be bound to the justificatory conception of subjectivity.³⁸

The Kantian text, in contrast, does not offer any more precise specification concerning pre-theoretical self-consciousness, which, however, is not surprising given his theoretical strategy. Quite the contrary: that Kant

34 "[D]ie Vorstellung der Apperzeption, das Ich, [...] ist nicht mehr als ein Gefühl". AA 4:334 note; English translation by Karsten Schöllner.

35 CPR, B423

36 For more on this point see Crone, 2005, p. 47 ff.

37 "Wir müssen etwas von diesem letzten Grund wissen, denn wir sprechen davon." WLNm 31; English translation by Karsten Schöllner.

38 Whether such an approach can, in fact, live up to the claim of a priori justification is definitely more than doubtful from the viewpoint of Kantian transcendental philosophy; however, I cannot pursue this problem here.

keeps the pre-theoretical self-consciousness so well under wraps should be taken as an indication that he knew he was leaving the clearly delimited framework of the critique of knowledge, which is *the* central concern of Kant's theoretical philosophy.

4. Conclusion

The foregoing considerations can be summarized as follows: alongside the purely functional characteristics of logical self-consciousness, Kant's theory of apperception also implies a form of immediate consciousness that can be called a phenomenal, pre-conceptual self-consciousness. This thesis is founded on several points of textual evidence. For one thing, the relation of the judgments 'I think' and 'I exist' refers to the mental state of experiential evidence, more precisely to the spontaneously generated, immediate consciousness of one's own existence. For another, the cognition associated with the 'I' is characterized as an "indeterminate perception", hence as a consciousness that cannot be interpreted either as a conceptually structured experience or as an a priori form or structural condition. However, it needs to be emphasized that we cannot speak of a fully developed Kantian *concept* of phenomenal self-consciousness. Rather, what we have our several remarks that can be taken as indications that Kant was fully aware of the issue as well as of the fact that the realm of consciousness located between non-sensible structural conditions and (empirical) propositional attitudes is conceptually very hard to get a handle on. Unlike in Fichte's conception of subjectivity, the phenomenal character of the 'I think' does not have any significance within the theory, since Kant, in his critique of knowledge, is essentially interested in the functional significance of apperception, particularly with a view to the structural conditions of contentful, predicatively determinable mental acts. Thus it is entirely irrelevant to Kant's aim whether the "indeterminate perception" could be somehow described more precisely and put to theoretical use: "Now it does not matter here whether this representation be clear (empirical consciousness) or obscure, even whether it be actual; but the possibility of the logical form of all cognition necessarily rests on the relationship to this apperception as a faculty."³⁹

Finally we can say that the consciousness of apperception—within the framework of the critique of knowledge—is to be exclusively understood

39 CPR, A117 note.

as an epistemological principle of formal self-reference that grounds the circumstance that I attribute representations to myself and call them mine. Within this framework the 'I think' expresses the mere logical unity of the subject—a unity that is not a product of experience but given prior to all experience. The phenomenal 'I' as "indeterminate perception" lies beyond this framework.

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Kant, Blows of Tears*

Tommaso Tuppini

1. Crying as a Sign

Kant lists in his writings different feelings that are able to induce men to tears. Quite possibly, the most significant phenomenology of crying and tears is to be found in the chapter *On Affects by Which Nature Promotes Health Mechanically* from *Anthropology*:

There are some affects by which nature promotes health in a mechanical way, and these include, in particular, laughing and weeping. Anger [*Zorn*] is also a fairly reliable aid to digestion, if one can scold freely (without fear of resistance), and many a housewife has no other emotional exercise than the scolding of her children and servants. Now if the children and servants only submit patiently to it, an agreeable tiredness of the vital force [*Müdigkeit der Lebenskraft*] spreads itself uniformly through her body. [...] Weeping—inhaling with sobs (convulsively) [*convulsivisches Einathmen*], when it is combined with a gush of tears—is likewise one of nature’s provisions for health, because of the soothing effect it has; and a widow who, as we say, refuses to be comforted—that is, will not hear of stopping the flow of tears—is taking care of her health without knowing it or really wanting it.¹

Crying and shedding tears of laughter are basically mechanical means, with which nature provides human beings in order to regain a healthy vital force. This vital force, *Lebenskraft*, is the feeling of life, and life is mind: “the mind [*Gemüt*] for itself is entirely life (the principle of life itself), and hindrances or promotions must be sought outside it, though in the human being himself, hence in combination with his body.”² Vital force is the concept that links inner life of mind with external occurrences, events of nature. Regarded as vital force, the whole of mind is considered

* I would like to thank my friend Gregory Roman K. Skibiski for his assistance editing.

1 Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, translated by Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), 129–30.

2 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 159.

in itself, as complexity, but linked to the outer world that surrounds it. Environment is never neutral, it always assumes the value of hindrance or facilitation of vital force. Mind considered as vital force is therefore structurally bounded to what is external, to what has a natural, not mental, consistency and to which belongs the power to strengthen or weaken the mind.

Vital force finds itself in a healthy state when it is not stuck in the same condition, but swings back and forth, proceeds through “slight inhibitions” and “slight advancements.”³ Dynamism, ascending and descending the scale of intensity, is synonymous with a healthy state of the vital force. On the other hand, mind left to itself is trapped in an unhealthy condition of steady balance among its constitutive forces. This balance represents a dangerous cramp for the normal, healthy dynamism of mind. The young Kant saw the mind constituted by “real grounds [*Realgründe*]”⁴, that is, forces, drives opposing one another. The vital force is a clutter of forces; the inner forum of mind consists of tensions between these forces. Illness, bodily and mental, represents in itself a spastic condition of such forces, a *Krampf* of their reciprocal tension: “all pathological attacks in which man’s mind can master [...] feelings by sheer steadfast will, as the superior power of a rational animal, are convulsive (cramplike) in nature.”⁵ In order to modify the unhealthy state of mind, nature provides us with such affects, which have the function to bring the previously cramped vital force into motion again, to put the forces of mind, that is, the *Realgründe*, in a healthy state of conflict. Crying with tears is for Kant a typical example of those remedies that nature invented to restore health. A weeping widow is the most suitable figure of the human comedy with which it is easy to represent the situation of a suffering human being. The function of weeping is for Kant twofold, it has indeed an inner effect, but it works also as an exterior sign. Already in this twofold effect tears show an ambiguous character, suspended between inner and outer nature, freedom and nature. Both effects of tears (tears as having an immediate inner effect as well as mediation as an exterior sign) tend to free the mind of the weeper from its cramped com-

3 Kant, 1974: 100.

4 Immanuel Kant, *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*, in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, translated by David Waldorf and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992a), 232.

5 Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, translated by Mary J. Gregor (New York: Abaris, 1979), 205.

plexion, from such situation, which is both, morally unfree and bodily unhealthy. Let's begin our analysis from tears regarded as exterior sign.

In weeping, human beings make show of their weakness, that is, of their dependence on the external world or other human beings for the preservation of their own freedom. The crying human being is a weak being. Tears show the fact that somebody is in need of help. In Kantian understanding such a weak being is generally portrayed as a woman. In the brief description above this woman is specifically a widow. The widow is a human being whose social weakness is due to the fact that she lost the (male) counterpart who used to protect her and guarantee her freedom. Weakness and anger are the two essential emotional states that induce human (female) beings to tears. Weakness and anger form an almost indissoluble conceptual pair in understanding the mediating function of tears. The tearful anger Kant is talking about, mostly in *Anthropology*, is always an anger arising from impotence. It is rage deriving from consciousness about lack of power. Tears are originated by the feeling of impotence, and anger appears more or less as an immediate consequence of such feeling:

Weeping accompanies the melting [*schmelzende*] sensation of impotent anger [*ohnmächtigen Zürnens*] with fate or with other men, when we have suffered an affront from them, and this sensation is chagrin [*Wehmut*].⁶

The sensation of impotence is described as “melting” by Kant. Such melting sensation is indicative of a soul, whose tension of forces is about to lower, whose vital force is hindered. As we previously read, for Kant, “hindrance or furtherance has to be sought outside.” In the case of impotent anger the hindrance factors are fate or other men. Both (fate in its dull imponderability, other men in their free unpredictability) are sign of a possible hindrance of my vital force, for the pragmatic exercise of my spontaneity.

From Kant, only women being aware of their impotence are allowed to cry. Men must not shed tears. “*Der Mann schähmet sich der Thränen. Sie fließen aus dem Bewustseyn seiner Ohnmacht.*”⁷ Men are allowed to let tears come to their eyes, but not to let them fall. Masculine tears exist, but they have to remain invisible. Sobbing and letting tears fall, weeping in a recognizable and visible way, is a matter for women.

6 Kant, 1974: 123.

7 Immanuel Kant, *Reflexionen zu Anthropologie. Kants handschriftlichen Nachlaß, in Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. XV (Berlin, Leipzig: De Gruyter, 1928), 854.

Why? Because tears are basically a sign of impotence and in Kant's anthropologic frame the characteristic figure of impotence is the woman ("we call feminine ways weakness [*die Weiblichkeiten heißen Schwächen*]"⁸, "*Vom Nahmen Weib, Frauenzimmer. Sie muß schwach sein.*"⁹). But, as we already noticed, it is not a mere passive state of *Wehmut* (sadness, wistfulness or weakness) that induces tears. *Wehmut* in itself is the feeling of one's own impotence in front of something, which is beyond our capability to master (such as fate, bad luck, or offences suffered because of someone who is clearly stronger than us). But *Wehmut* can also be the preliminary state of anger, that is, the desire to overcome the present state of distress: "it is not always sadness [*Wehmut*] that makes women and children weep: anger [*Zorn*] can also reduce them to tears"¹⁰. *Ohnmächtiges Zürnen*, impotent anger, is the most precise expression that explains the state of mind that induces human beings to tears. Kant repeatedly emphasizes the link between tears and impotence and the fact that impotence evokes the emotion of being overcome, which is anger. Therefore, who sheds tears is not just powerless. While weeping, he or, better said, she is in a state of anger and anger in itself represents the regret to not be able to overcome one's own impotence.

Female tears are therefore a sign of awareness regarding one's impotence that can not be overcome without external help. Awareness of impotence to overcome one's impotence, to bring vital force in healthy motion again, doesn't exclude, rather, it requires the ability of someone else to perform it. That's the reason why crying with tears is never a mere passive behavior, but shows an attitude of reaction in dealing with one's own impotence. Thus tears are not just a sign of self-awareness, they also become a sign able to awake awareness (about my own impotence) in my neighbor. Tears communicate one's state of impotence to others. Flowing tears make others aware of the impotence I was previously aware of. Tears have a sign-value, a communicative skill. They represent a call for help addressed to others:

For their feeling of impotence against some evil that arouses a strong affect (whether of anger or of sadness) summons to its aid the external natural signs of it which (by the right of the weaker) then at least disarm a masculine soul. But this expression of frailty [*Zärtlichkeit*], as a feminine weakness, should not move a compassionate *man* to weeping, though it may

8 Kant, 1974: 167.

9 Kant, 1928: 567.

10 Kant, 1974: 130.

well bring tears to his eyes. [...] But if he were not moved at all, he would not show the compassion toward the other sex that his masculinity makes his duty.¹¹

Tears are shed mainly by women in order to call other people to their aid. A widow who lost her man sheds tears to have other men help her. Tears are natural signs of women's real or pretended impotence. Tears and the convulsive breathing that accompanies them are contagious. The communicative, mediating value of tears expresses itself in the first place by soliciting tears from a neighbor: "The sight of a man in a convulsive or epileptic seizure induces similar convulsive moments in the spectator."¹² It is the duty of men to help weaker human beings, that is, women, and to be sensitive to the communicative skills of tears. Women know that very well, therefore they often simulate an impotence that doesn't really exist: "*der Mann hilft aus Großmuth gern den weiblichen Schwächen ab, dies wissen die Weiber auch mehr als zu gut; daher affektieren sie bisweilen Schwächen, wo gar keine sind.*"¹³ In such cases, what we might call *theatrical*, tears are solicited from inside, they originate solely from the subject, not from an external situation that occurred, and are provoked arbitrarily. In front of real or simulated impotence, tears glisten in a generous man's eyes: tears are a sign of his tact, his sensitivity, his potential helpfulness. But tears must only glisten in a man's eye. Shedding tears would be extremely inappropriate for a man, because it would put him on the side of those who can not be helpful, because they need help themselves, also betraying an authentic duty to be active for other people's sake: "for Kant's own version of the Stoic sage has as its enemy not emotion but passive sentimentality. The latter, Kant holds, is a way of being emotional that makes no contribution to outward benefaction or altruistic regard. It is to take part in the suffering of others [...] merely sentimentally or passively. Thus, certain shows of sentiment are more acts of self-indulgence than active interventions on behalf of others."¹⁴

11 Kant, 1974: 130.

12 Kant, 1974: 54.

13 Kant, 1928: 581–82.

14 Nancy Sherman, "Concrete Kantian Respect", in *Social Philosophy and Policy*, vol. 15 no. 1 (1998), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 129.

2. Crying For a Miracle

Tears are basically tears from angry grief—they are shed mainly by those (women and, as we will see, children or newborns) who make experience of their own impotence in front of a problem they can not face, an obstacle that occludes the space of their freedom. Tears are the visible signs that help is needed. “*Ohnmächtiger Zorn preßt Thränen aus. In Traurigkeit stellen sie uns als einen Gegenstand der Theilnehmung anderer Vor und zertheilen den Schmerz.*” They represent a call for compassion and sympathy. Tears are communicative and contagious. Therefore they represent an implicit double statement: 1. that I cannot overcome an event contrasting my freedom, and, 2. that someone must exist who can, and I cry for him. By shedding tears the one who is powerless shares the feeling of impotence with another being who is supposed to be able to face the upcoming event. In Kant’s sexist reconstruction: the woman sheds tears in order to obtain help from a grown up man. That’s the reason why the man is not supposed to weep: he should be able to help himself and others. The masculine human being is properly autonomous: he knows the *nomos*, the moral or intellectual rule that masters the matter of the upcoming event. His authentic autonomy prevents him from looking for solidarity outside the range of his own freedom. Nevertheless, he can not be deaf to the call for help from others who are not (yet?) autonomous and free. Tears that glisten without being shed in a man’s eyes are the sign of his sensitivity to the impotence of others (there are tears) and of his own power (tears are not shed, they only glisten).

Being hindered in one’s own freedom means not to experience coincidence between inner and outer freedom. It means the impossibility of being not just practical (i.e. being free, moral, self-determined, which has to be always possible), but pragmatic, that is: acting in a world that often resists against the expressions of our self-determination: “The man whose happiness depends on another man’s choice (no matter how benevolent the other might be) rightly considers himself unfortunate.”¹⁵ Unfortunate is by definition the weeping human being, who solicits by tears the intervention of other beings in order to gain outer freedom: “if one’s options are not at one’s disposal a person can lack sensuous

15 Kant, 1974: 135.

outer freedom. If others determine what our options are, we are not free to go and do as our inclinations propose.”¹⁶

The being that female tears are calling for is nevertheless a being whose inner and outer freedoms have to coincide. The only being able to save, properly said, has to be a being who doesn't know unhappiness and dependence. If this is the state of things, no human being can expect to be saved by another human being. It belongs to all human beings to suffer from the lack of coincidence between inner and outer freedom, that is, to be hindered in the expression of their freedom by fate or other human beings. Impotence is structurally a part of the human finite condition. The call for help that comes from human impotence is a call for power. But only an absolute power, that is, a being whose inner freedom coincides with his outer freedom, can be properly called for help in distress and unhappiness. “Now the idea of a being commanding according to moral-practical laws contains the idea of a *person* having all *power* [in] relation to nature as a sense object”¹⁷, but “a being, which has unrestricted power over nature and freedom under laws of reason, is God.”¹⁸ God, the quintessence of personality, therefore of freedom as self-determination after the fulfillment of the moral law, is the one whom we properly ask for help when we cry.

“The concept of *God* is that of a *person*—hence, that of a being who has rights, but against whom no other possess a right.”¹⁹ It is exactly this lack of symmetry that justifies the fact that tears can be shed in front of God much more than in front of another human being, that is, a finite being. A human being can call another human being for help when he/she suffers. But another human being might himself need help, therefore being unable to offer help to others. There is only one being who never suffers injustice and that is God. God is freedom and absolute expression of this freedom in front of the natural world, which often contradicts our expression of freedom. Crying because of one's impotence is crying for more freedom, for experiencing the coincidence of inner and outer freedom, that is, crying in this world for the advent of God as absolute power. God cannot be impotent in front of nature, or fate, or human beings,

16 Holly L. Wilson, *Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology. Its Origin, Meaning, and Critical Significance* (Albany: SUNY, 2006), 63.

17 Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, translated by Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 213.

18 Kant, 1993: 200.

19 Kant, 1993: 218.

therefore he is the only being who can properly help or at least can be evoked *a priori* for help. The person who sheds tears is basically always asking for a divine intervention, that is, for a miracle. A miracle happens when the outer world seems to be arranged in an order that supports my inner freedom and offers to it an adequate expression.

An event in the world that does not happen according the order of nature is a miracle. The word *miracle* is supposed to mean an event which does not happen in conformity with recognized nature, although it could be in conformity with a higher order. We are amazed [*wir wundern uns*] only when something is contrary to the cognized order of nature.²⁰

Miracles point at the presence of “God’s hands”²¹ within nature. Human beings ask for miracles when they are hindered in the pragmatic exercise of their freedom. We may define such entity as the God of religion and prayer. Obstacles represented by hostility from other human beings or nature are removed by the God of religion and prayer: “The overthrow of Sennacherib by means of an angel”, or “the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea” are the best examples of miracles. To the people of Jerusalem under siege or Jews fleeing from the Egyptian army, nature or other human beings posed obstacles that God removed through mediation of nature. The same outer world, which functions via mechanical criteria and doesn’t have anything to do with human freedom, suddenly seems to support human projects.

One likewise endeavors to explain the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea, in that one says: the wind so divested a part of the Red Sea of water that the children of Israel were able to go through. Here the cause lies indeed in nature, but it does not occur according to the order of nature that a wind had to blow then, when a people was oppressed and persecuted by a foreign king; thus a special direction is required here.²²

That makes the miracle, in spite of the rarity of its occurrence (miracles “must be only seldom”²³), an essential modus of being helped, in order to restore the previously menaced outer freedom. Nature and outer world miraculously assume a direction, the same direction of the steps of the fleeing Jews, who are seeking to preserve their freedom from the Egyp-

20 Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, translated by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 38.

21 Kant, 1997: 39.

22 Kant, 1997: 39.

23 Kant, 1997: 41.

tian menace. If I call for help I am basically calling for a miracle, that is, for the removal of the hindrance that nature or human beings might represent, towards my free action. In the greatest distress I might call for an intervention from the outside over something which I have no control or authority: *nur noch ein Gott kann uns helfen!* This is the same God, for whom there is no difference between inner and outer freedom.

3. Being Moved and Being Unconscious

But if shedding tears and asking God for a miracle is a female business, waiting for miracles is not worthy of a free, autonomous man. Experiencing miracles means to abdicate one's own freedom. We encounter more miracles in life than we might think we do. Or at least, we react in front of worldly events as if they were miracles, yet they are not. In a remarkable passage from his precritical essay *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, Kant mentions the case of a scholar who is put in front of a demonstration of a theorem of mechanics, in which bodies sliding on chords drawn with different inclinations from the highest point of a circle take the same time in order to cover their distances. What to the man of knowledge appears as a theorem doesn't make the same impression on a smart, yet untrained, student.

I once explained this theorem, along with its proof, to an intelligent student. I recall that once he had thoroughly understood all the details, he was as impressed by it as he would have been by a miracle of nature [*Naturwunder*]. One is, indeed, amazed and rightly astonished to find, in such a seemingly straightforward and simple thing as a circle, such wondrous unity of the manifold subject to such fruitful rules. Nor is there a miracle of nature [*Wunder der Natur*] which could, by its beauty and order, give more cause to amazement, unless it did so in virtue of its cause being less apparent, for wonder is a daughter of ignorance [*die Bewunderung eine Tochter der Unwissenheit ist*].²⁴

What is understood in English as “impressed” is in German *gerührt*. Now, *gerührt* means rather “touched” or “moved”. Kant doesn't mention tears here, yet surely an emotional situation is involved. What actually touches the sensitivity of the student? The amazing thing is that “order and har-

24 Immanuel Kant, *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, translated by David Waldorf and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992b), 138.

mony, along with such necessary determinations, prevail throughout space, and that concord and unity prevail throughout its immense manifold [*in einem ungeheuren Mannigfaltigen, Zusammenpassung und Einheit herrsche*].²⁵ The scholar is touched by the uniformity of events occurring in the previously prepared circular space, that is, by the presence of a rule that unifies and frames the manifold of the given space. Or, as Kant says, its monstrous manifold. *Ungeheuer* is actually something that provokes fear and puts into desperation the one who has to face it. The fact that the monstrous manifold of space is dominated (*herrscht*) by a certain unity amazes (*überrascht*, literally: being overrun) and astonishes (*in Bewunderung gesetzt*) the scholar. This intensity of surprise is prerogative of a sensitive, but not well-trained mind. The feeling of a dazzling surprise in front of the development of a theorem of mechanics is only possible for a scholar who doesn't perceive the events occurring as consequences of a theorem, but as natural events, having an order in themselves, fulfilling the expectations of our rationality, but without any active intervention of our knowledge. An intelligent scholar, indeed. But still just a scholar. In the couple old/young, Kant/scholar only the second party feels emotion in front of the rebirth of a mechanical truth. The reason is that the untrained scholar's mind is not aware of itself and takes the theorem with its accompanying proof as an event of nature fulfilling our expectations, that is, more or less for a miracle.

If the widow is moved by her own incapacity to overcome practical difficulties, because of lack of spontaneity and strength, and therefore cries, in the case of the student it is surprise that arouses emotion. External obstacles induce the woman who expects something like a miracle, to tears. Tears are shed in front of an obstacle, and its overcoming is imagined as a miracle. In the case of the scholar, the event of being surprised happens in front of a miracle that has not been requested, yet occurs anyway. Miracles—as we already saw—happen when the subject and the world walk in the same direction, when the needs of human spontaneity find fulfillment in the conditions of outer world without having actively taken part in the determination of such conditions. The regularity immediately perceived from bodies sliding on chords drawn within a circular space appears as a natural event that seconds our rational striving for unity, therefore as a miracle.

The student mistakes the theorem for a miracle of nature only because he is not aware his own mind has projected the rational frame of

25 Kant, 1992b: 137.

knowledge on the plan of outer nature, which is in itself meaningless. Such lack of awareness induces the student to take the result of his understanding as an unexplainable givenness. The scholar is touched because he mistakes a product of his mind for nature, inside for outside, rule for miracle. The woman asks for masculine, that is, potentially divine help in order to be delivered from external nature that hinders, she is asking for God's hand. The scholar is surprised and touched by having received such help without even having asked for it. Amazement, *das sich Wundern*, is the emotional sign that points to a miracle. Now, the scholar, *in Bewunderung gesetzt*, is surprised and amazed in front of the dominating uniformity of how bodies slide with regularity within a circular space. Nature in itself, its monstrous manifold, seems able to provide the systematic unity of experience that confers regularity to phenomena, as the waters of the Red Sea were parted by the wind exactly at the moment when the fleeing Jews needed it.

If something is felt as a miracle it means that a danger has to be faced. In fact, a significant danger has been averted from the scholar. What poses a threat to the scholar's freedom? We already named it: the *ungeheures Mannigfaltige* of space, the monstrous manifold, something that contradicts our rational striving for unity. This character of monstrosity rests on the fact that the multiplicity of space is opposed to the discipline of conceptuality. We are put in front of a panorama of spacial *dissecta membra*. Such dismembered *datum* is the material reality the intelligent scholar has to face, manifold without unity. The theorem of sliding bodies puts us in front of something like a systematic, logical truth: that the monstrous manifold of nature might appear as unified, coherent wholeness. The material manifold is inhabited by the possibility of ideal and of relation, but one doesn't coincide with the other, even if our first tendency is to do like the scholar, that is, to attribute the unity to the spacial manifold itself, to make nature out of mind.

For the young Kant we have to postulate an ultimate position, that is, a God as personality or free being, as the condition of relation, as ground that makes possible those systematic truths, the uniformity of experience which is fully separated from the material content of such experience. "The more unity one finds, the more one uncovers economical laws that govern several different phenomena according to one simple, perfect principle, the more one can be convinced of the necessity of a God."²⁶ The

26 Diane Morgan, *Kant Trouble: The Obscurities of the Enlightened* (London: Routledge, 2000), 126.

presence of God means the necessity of a unifying, systematic principle that makes possible the single regulated experience we perform from time to time. This is not the God of religion and prayer, who miraculously suspends the order of things, the supernatural being whose intervention is “contrary to the cognized order of nature”, as we read before. Now God stands for a figure that summarizes in himself all human spontaneity, the order that our mind puts in the manifold of nature, that in itself doesn’t follow any intellectual regularity: “God and the world. Freedom and nature. [...] There is a God, not a world-soul in nature, but a personal principle of human reason.”²⁷ This is rather the God of philosophy, in front of which it is no use to cry and shed tears. But the student is not aware of the existence of such a God, in the first place because he is not aware of the power of his own mind. Him being touched and amazed is the proof of his ignorance about himself, therefore of the God of philosophy as principle of human reason. The student is basically moved by unconsciousness of intellectual rules that give a structure to reality. Kant doesn’t say if the student’s amazement is accompanied by tears or not, but we might imagine that the student gets emotional without shedding tears and without even letting them glisten in his eyes. Tears belong to a conscious experience. Unconsciousness of one’s own power and faculties rather produces emotion without tears. In Kant, one always knows why he or she is crying, there is nothing like unconscious weeping. Tears are about the awareness of one’s need for help (or readiness to give it, as for the tears just glistening in somebody’s eye). The student doesn’t need to shed tears, because he doesn’t even know he needs to be helped (the help his Kant teacher might give him in order to become fully aware of his determining intellectual power). From his perspective, the manifold of bodies presents itself as already uniform and organized. The being touched of the student has a significantly different meaning than the impotence of crying women, and from sensitivity of the helpful man. Different, yet not totally unrelated. The crying woman is a being hindered in the expression of her inner spontaneity. The helpful man with tears only glistening in his eyes is a being partly affected by unhappiness of the woman, but potentially able to remove the hindrance and to return to the weaker being her negated freedom. The tearless being touched of the student means a radical unconsciousness about one’s own intellectual life, the ignorance of the unity, the regularity that gives shape to the given space: the unity is ignored in his constructive powers and therefore deprived of itself. The student

27 Kant, 1993: 225.

(like the widow) is deprived of his freedom, but not from the outside, rather from inside, from himself, from his unconsciousness of it.

The regularity of how bodies fall on the chords drawn within a circular space is essentially a proof of existing spontaneity as the determining power of the mind. Freedom already corresponds, for the young Kant, to the spontaneity, activity, and personality which are bases for the lawfulness of (moral or intellectual) experience: “*spontaneity* is action which issues from *inner principle*.”²⁸ But also for the Kant of the critical period, beyond any distinction between knowledge and morality, “personality as the unified exercise of freedom is analogous to the unity of apperception itself as the product of the exercise of our cognitive spontaneity, and is maximally pleasing as answering what is our most fundamental need of all, our need for unity itself.”²⁹ The reason why the scholar is touched in front of the sliding bodies is the lack of awareness, that is of apperception, perception of himself and his own power to build concepts. What Kant defines as the ignorance of the student is therefore an ignorance about himself, unconsciousness. The student doesn’t lack understanding skills, because Kant tells us that he is intelligent and apparently gets the whole path of the proof. The scholar does make use of his own understanding. But he doesn’t know he makes use of it. His being touched comes from undergoing an unconscious intellectual experience. The scholar doesn’t know he knows, he doesn’t know what he knows, nor what he can make with his knowledge. Following development of the proof the scholar understands the unifying function of the law, which is necessary to give coherence to the manifold of events, but he doesn’t understand from where the theorem originates; he is not able to comprehend a difference between the existing manifold and the unifying law. The student puts together what is supposed to stay separated. He thinks of the regularity of nature’s events as something that rests on them, and it is such erroneous thought that touches him deeply. Such fantastic, surprising unity rests on the fact that the function of the unifying law remains unanalyzed and therefore unconscious. The student is still convinced that is possible to ground his own knowledge in outer nature and therefore remains unfree. To the contrary, the free, autonomous being, who

28 Immanuel Kant, *A new Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition*, in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, translated by David Waldorf and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992c), 25.

29 Paul Guyer, *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 115.

makes proper use of his knowledge, institutes himself as a separate being, independent from the occurrences that surround him in the external world: “in Kant [...] autonomy is what makes an independent, separate individual; autonomous, that is, made individual and therefore true is the one who has separated himself and purified his I from the residue of dependence, urges, and conflicts, in order to be able to think and act independently: truth, neutrality and freedom are bound together.”³⁰ The knowledge act, as intentionally directed on the outer world, the action turned toward outside, presupposes the institution of difference, presupposes distance, therefore skepticism toward the fantastic unity of regularity and matter the young student shows still to believe in. Such belief in unity is the naïf empiricism of those who think to receive everything as it is from the outside, without an active intervention of their own. It represents the condition of those who have not yet conquered themselves as free and intelligent beings. The free and intelligent subject institutes itself in the previous separation from outer reality: “discernment addressed to objects implies, as its first and minimal requirement, to draw a distinction between the object and the one who knows, therefore self-consciousness. Intentionality as direction toward something arises through the act of distinguishing oneself from things, and this overlaps with the possibility to represent something as external. [...] Self-consciousness [...] arises from an original partition between what is in the subject and what is outside it, and this character of externality is instituted by such difference.”³¹ The singularization of the intellectual subject, its institution as spontaneity and separated entity, is provoked by such difference that breaks a never existing or mythological unity between inside and outside, knowledge and thing, subject and object, inner and outer freedom.

30 Massimo Bracalenti, “L’ascolto e la neutralità terapeutica” in Raffaele Bracalenti (ed.), *Da inconscio a inconscio. Considerazioni sul problema dell’attenzione ugualmente fluttuante in psicoanalisi* (Napoli: Guida, 1994), 113.

31 Claudio La Rocca, “L’intelletto oscuro. Inconscio e autocoscienza in Kant” in Claudio La Rocca (ed.), *Leggere Kant. Dimensioni della filosofia critica* (Pisa: ETS, 2007), 71.

4. Tears of Freedom

Such singularization, the original separation of freedom and nature, the drowning of their false unity, is linked to the very early discoveries of life, to birth, and once again to tears:

The inclination to freedom seems to be the reason why even a child who has just emerged from his mother's womb enters the world with loud cries, unlike any other animal; for he regards his inability to make use of his limbs as *constraint* and so immediately announces his claim to freedom (an idea that no other animal has). [...] The *tears* that accompany his screaming a few months after birth reveal that his feeling of uneasiness comes, not from physical pain, but from an obscure Idea (or representation analogous to it) of freedom and hindrance, *injustice*; they express a kind of exasperation when he tries to approach certain objects or merely to change his general position, and feels himself hindered in it.³²

Self-awareness, the perception of inner freedom, represents an act of singularization, putting a distance from the world, in which it becomes now problematic to express one's own power and also be pragmatic (that is, to tend to bring inner and outer freedom to coincidence.) This is the same reason why women cry. But the cry of the newborn, even if it possesses the same origin, has a different meaning. It is not a call for help. The newborn suffers the same injustice the weak suffers and that grown up men are sensitive to (injustice is the Kantian name for a lack of coincidence between inner and outer freedom, it is the objective concept for what is subjectively felt as impotence). But unlike women, the newborn (whom at this point we can easily imagine having a masculine sex) doesn't want to be helped. He cries not because he wants somebody to help him, but because he wants to be alone, to be delivered from everybody and everything, even his own body, except his own freedom. He sheds tears due to the fact that his birth has broken the unity between freedom and nature: "this image of mankind leads Kant to a strange interpretation of the first cry of the newborn child [...]. If the newborn child cries, it is not to demand what is necessary for life and existence, it is to protest against his dependence in regard to others."³³

The claim to singularization, to loneliness, as the last proof of power and independency, is demonstrated in the soul of the newborn and by his

32 Kant, 1974: 136.

33 Tvetan Todorov, *Life in Common: An Essay in General Anthropology*, translated by Katherine Golsan and Lucy Golsan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 6.

desire to restore the lost unity of inner and outer freedom from which he came. He cannot stand injustice, a structural condition of finite existence like the human one.

Man's self-will is always ready to break forth in hostility toward his neighbors, and always presses him to claim unconditional freedom, not merely independence of others but even mastery of other beings that are his equal by nature—something we can see in even the smallest child. (*Footnote*: The cry of a newborn child is not a note of distress but one of indignation and raging anger; he is screaming not from pain but from vexation, presumably because he wants to move about and his impotence feels to him like fetters restricting his freedom.)³⁴

The sense of injustice arises at the same time as consciousness. Being conscious, trespassing the threshold that parts unconsciousness from consciousness, means to have a sense of injustice, that is, the gap between inner and outer freedom. The newborn cries as soon as his sense of freedom is hindered by the givenness of his body, from the moment of his birth. The presence of a hindrance produces the rebound of the previously unconscious freedom to itself, therefore making it conscious. It is particularly useful at this point to compare the figure of the newborn with the one of the student previously considered. We must conclude that the scholar is active, he makes use of his determining power, but in an unconscious way: he misunderstands his own understanding as a product of nature, as a *Naturwunder*. The scholar is in a certain way deprived of his own activity, because he is not aware of the difference between freedom and nature. He guiltily deprives himself of his own activity, because he lets such activity persist in an unconscious state. To the contrary, the newborn cries because of his lack of activity. He can not make use of the freedom he possesses. The newborn is conscious of his freedom and of the bodily conditions that deprive him of such activity and it is this awareness that makes him cry. The scholar is touched by the presence of an activity he doesn't know he already possesses. This activity is radically absent within him, because it is present in front of him as a miraculous externality. He mistakes the possession of a power of his mind for the surprising *chance* of a miracle, and this surprise makes him emotional³⁵. The newborn is hin-

34 Kant, 1974: 188.

35 The link between tears and miracle, almost 150 years later, will particularly draw to itself the attention of Georges Bataille. Tears are induced by the surprising character of an event which is impossible to foresee, as remarked in his unpublished essay, *On Sovereignty*: "for many years I was struck by the ambiguous aspect of tears, which a happy event provokes as readily as misfortune [...]. I had

dered in taking advantage of the same spontaneity the scholar doesn't even know to possess. The difference between the two situations lies in the different degrees of consciousness both exemplary figures possess of their own spontaneity. The fact that the newborn cries and the scholar does not, forces us to conclude – a bit paradoxically – that the newborn has a higher degree of consciousness about own freedom than the scholar.

5. Building Concepts

The conceptual figures of tears and crying are therefore strictly bounded to questions about awareness and consciousness. The problem of consciousness has been present to Kant since the two great essays of 1763, *The Only Possible Argument* and *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*. The path that leads to the critical figure of apperception is clearly drawn from those precritical essays.

If you ask a man of even the greatest learning at a moment when he is relaxing and at rest to recount something to you or to share part of his knowledge of things with you, you will find that he knows nothing in this state, that he is empty and that he has no definite thoughts or judgments. But stimulate him [*Gebt ihm nur Anlaß*] by asking him a question or by expressing a view of your own, and his learning will reveal itself in a series of activities. And the tendency of that succession of activities will be to make both him and you aware of his understanding of things.³⁶

Such man of greatest learning finds himself in a situation which is not very different from the one of the young scholar. Both of them ignore what they are supposed to know: they don't know that they know, and

observed that on occasion these tears would well up in my eyes in circumstances that left me disconcerted. [...] Then it dawned on me [...] that a *miracle*, that only a miracle, caused those happy tears to arise. A miracle, or, if not, something that seemed that, since in such circumstances we cannot expect a repetition of the same fact. In any case, we cannot expect it from our efforts... This *miraculous* quality is conveyed rather exactly by the expression: *impossible and yet there it is* [...]. From the beginning, this content, the *miraculous*, that I ultimately recognized when one would least expect it, in the object of tears, seemed to me to be in basic agreement with humanity's expectation." in Fred Botting—Scott Wilson, *The Bataille Reader*, (Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 306. Bataille's miracle in front of which tears are shed is hard to assign to the God of religion and prayer, rather to the eventmental God as Uninvited Guest which we will briefly consider at the end of this essay.

36 Kant, 1992a: 236.

they are deprived of their own knowledge which is of a form of freedom. The amazement and the emotion of the scholar is echoed by the relaxed indifference of the man. Scholar and man are both potentially able to form concepts in order to understand and master outer reality, that is to become active, to be spontaneous, but they don't do it. The scholar ascribes the conceptual consistency of experience to nature itself (he makes a miracle of nature out of spontaneity). The man of greatest learning is in the present unable to construct conceptuality, because nature or other beings haven't yet stimulated him to such performance.

Apperception, or awareness, is not merely becoming aware of what is already present but not previously perceived. Becoming aware of the real forces of the soul has in itself a constructive meaning that needs to be emphasized. Becoming aware of the conflict among forces taking place in the inner forum of the soul means, already for the pre-critical Kant, being able to build concepts that can be applied to external reality. Becoming conscious has an explicit constructive value. When the soul succeeds in being clear about itself, the conflicting encounter of its forces might build concepts:

The soul embraces the whole universe with its faculty of representation, though only an infinitesimally tiny part of these representations is clear. It is, indeed, the case that concepts of every kind must have as the foundation on which alone they are based the inner activity of our minds [*der inneren Thätigkeit des Geistes*]. External things may well contain the condition under which concepts present themselves in one way or another; but external things do not have the power actually to produce those concepts. The power of the soul [*Denkungkraft der Seele*] must contain the real grounds of all concepts, in so far as they are supposed to arise in a natural fashion within the soul.³⁷

The soul has a power to think, *Denkungkraft*, and it can build concepts with the real grounds already present within it. Those concepts built in the soul prefigure the synthetic a priori judgments of the forthcoming *Critique of Pure Reason*. "The question how synthetic a priori judgments are possible can be regarded as further development of the question that Kant posed in his work from 1763: how is knowledge about the relation between real grounds regarded from the perspective of their consequences, as well as, in the state of their opposition possible, even if those real grounds are not founded in external things, but in the inner activity of our

37 Kant, 1992a: 237.

mind, in so far as it contains the real grounds for any kind of concept?"³⁸ The form of the concept (or we might say: conceptuality in itself) is the form that opposition among real grounds acquires within the soul, when the same opposition becomes conscious. Real grounds within the soul, mere potential forces, become concepts only if they cross the threshold of consciousness. It is not to deny that for Kant is very possible to make an unconscious use of already disposable concepts. But in order to build concepts and judgments (*Denkungskraft* is a creative power), it is necessary to be conscious, to let the real grounds of the soul cross the threshold of consciousness, which produces, starting from the material of their unconscious reciprocal opposition, an aggregation into a coherent construct. Consciousness transforms forces and is in itself constructive power. It gives the form of conceptuality to opposition among real grounds of mind. Real grounds provide the matter for those concepts that are elaborated by consciousness. But—Kant says it clearly—the solicitation to consciousness, and to elaboration of concepts, doesn't come from consciousness itself. It doesn't come from the forces taken as matter for concepts either. Consciousness, in order to build concepts, needs a solicitation that is external to the soul both in its energetic and rational consistency.

6. Blows of Reality

The situations of the young scholar and the man of the greatest learning are similar, but at the same time, not identical. They both presently live in a state of unconsciousness. The first is unable to build a concept of the surrounding events, even if stimulated by external occurrences (he is put in front of a theorem of mechanics somebody else is developing). The latter isn't giving shape to concepts, because nothing in the environment stimulates him sufficiently. In both cases the *Denkungskraft*, the power to build concept, is sleeping, and stays undeveloped. Being touched, being amazed, in front of a concept taken as an occurrence of nature, is the clearest sign of the scholar's unconsciousness of his own spontaneity. Inactivity and indifference are the signs of the same unconsciousness for the man of greatest learning. If the newborn of *Anthropology* cries because an external matter resists the use he wants to make of

38 Heinz Eidam, *Dasein und Bestimmung. Kants Grund-Problem* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2000), 121.

his spontaneity, the young scholar of *The Only Possible Argument* does make use of such spontaneity (he develops the proof of the theorem, he unifies the manifold of the space after certain rules), but he is not aware of his spontaneity as such; he is not aware of the fact that this activity belongs to him as inner power. The man of greatest knowledge, on the other hand, doesn't make use of his spontaneity, because he is not sufficiently stimulated to do it. We are put in front of three different ways of being hindered in the exercise of spontaneity. The external world might hinder the expression of inner freedom just with its presence. But also its absence can represent a problem to spontaneity. The man of greatest learning cannot adequately form concepts, that is, be spontaneous, because the external world does not solicit him sufficiently. An excess of presence hinders the expression of spontaneity and confines freedom in its inner circle of pure self-referentiality, but lack of pressure on the soul prevents freedom from instituting itself. If an excess of external pressure from the outer world can endanger the expression of freedom, total lack of it might be deadly for the existence of freedom itself.

The newborn cries for help and is ready to shed tears. The scholar is touched, but apparently without shedding tears. The balance within the soul of the man of greatest knowledge results in a tensional state that is too weak and apparently destines him to everlasting unconsciousness, until something from the outside pops up to disarrange the inertial balance of his forces. All three figures are presently deprived just of their own freedom. But the newborn is deprived of the faculty to express his freedom. He is potentially, practically free, not pragmatically, and is aware of such limitation. The scholar and the man of greatest learning, on the other hand, are not aware of their lack of pragmatic freedom. In order to become active and spontaneous again these latter two need to be put in the same situation as the newborn, which is to newly feel the pressure of the outer world. The newborn is trying to make use of his freedom, but he feels the resistance his body opposes to this performance, becomes aware of his potential freedom, and cries. The obstacle his body presents to the use of freedom is to the same extent the reason why freedom becomes conscious for him and might be performed in the external world, when the present distress is overcome. The external body works as a rude awakening that reveals the activity of the subject (spontaneity, freedom) to the subject itself. The inner forces of the newborn, the balance among the real grounds of his soul, are put in motion by the resistance that the body opposes to submit to those forces. Bumping into his body as an external matter induces the newborn to the painful conscious-

ness of his spontaneity that is therefore awakened and hindered by the same worldly factor. The man of greatest learning needs a similar occasion that he cannot give to himself but he might expect from something or someone else (for instance: the questions people might ask him). In order just to be there, to exist, spontaneity needs to encounter some resistance, some *Anlaß*, some blow that causes external pressure. The inertial equilibrium of inner forces needs to be shaken, so that the soul becomes spontaneous, forces awaken and become active, and produce concepts able to unify worldly reality.

Such vision of external pressure as something that puts forces in a condition of imbalance is clearly presented by Kant in order to explain how the man of greatest knowledge can become spontaneous again. The casual, unforeseeable event from outside is what brings the equilibrium of forces into unbalance and produces the activity of the soul:

Without any doubt, the real grounds of this occurrence had long been present in him, but since the consequence, as far as consciousness was concerned, was zero, those real grounds must have been opposed to each other. Thus it is with the thunder which, invented by art for our destruction and carefully preserved in the arsenal of a prince ready for a future war, lies in menacing silence until, touched by a treacherous spark, it explodes in lightning and lays waste to everything around it. Tensions constantly ready to explode lay dormant within it, the prisoners of powerful forces of attraction, waiting for the stimulus [*Reiz*] of a spark of fire, to be released.³⁹

The relaxed man of greatest learning, in order to become active and free, needs to be stimulated,⁴⁰ exactly like a certain amount of gunpowder needs a tinder, so that its hidden forces, previously kept in a inertial

39 Kant, 1992a: 236–37.

40 The stimulus that the man of greatest knowledge needs in order to develop his conceptuality recalls the story of stimulating elderly Kant, from the biography of Thomas de Quincey: “And I remember, in particular, that upon the very last Monday of his life, when the extremity of his weakness moved a circle of his friends to tears, and he sat amongst us insensible to all we could say to him, cowering down, or rather, I might say, collapsing into a shapeless heap upon his chair, deaf, blind, torpid, motionless—even then I whispered to the others, that I would engage that Kant should take his part in conversation with propriety and animation. This they found it difficult to believe. Upon which I drew close to his ear, and put a question to him about the Moors of Barbary. To the surprise of everybody but myself, he immediately gave us, by the way, that in the word *Algiers* the *g* ought to be pronounced hard (as in the English word *gear*).” Thomas de Quincey, *Last Days of Immanuel Kant, and Other Writings*, (Edinburgh: Black, 1862), 155.

state of balance, get unleashed until final destruction, go from zero up to a certain level. The menacing quiet of the gunpowder is the *analogon physicum* of the relaxation of the man of greatest learning. Both the gunpowder and the man are waiting for stimulus to express their sleeping forces, to become active, to transform their premises into consequences, that is (in case of humanity) to transform the real grounds that are in a state of inertial balance into concepts.

The *Reiz*, stimulus, for the gunpowder to unleash its destructive power echoes the *Anlaß*, occasion, that the man of greatest learning needs in order to build concepts. Before the encounter with the stimulus or the occasion, before being hit by something external, the forces within the soul find themselves in a condition of balance that doesn't allow them to cross the threshold of consciousness. Such state hinders the construction of concepts: conceptuality is so far wrongly regarded as a miraculous fact that belongs to external nature. The perfect balance of real grounds, the rest of the forces, means that the soul is unconscious of its own activity. Kant found a notion in 1763 to signify unconscious representation, the lack of any apperception: this is the concept of nothing, or "*nihil privativum*", that is, "zero, the lack of a clear representation."⁴¹ To be pulled out of such a null and void unconscious state and become spontaneous again, both the scholar and the man of greatest learning need a stimulus or an occasion from outside. The same occasion the newborn finds in the resistance of bodily givenness. The minimum we have to presume in order to produce awareness about spontaneity and freedom is therefore a certain "sensitivity of the soul [*Reizbarkeit der Seele*],"⁴² the excitability of mind. Excitability of mind means availability to random encounters and readiness to meet unforeseeable, external reality. Freedom and spontaneity can not build concepts or judgments, in which they frame and make reality foreseeable, until they are activated by the unframed and, at this extent, unforeseeable reality of things. The soliciting reality is clearly connoted by Kant as a reality without shape. An occurrence in which the undetermined part prevails over the determined features: an already developed theorem of mechanics is not able to solicit adequately the attention of the student; the words able to awake the man of greatest learning from

41 Kant, 1992a: 228.

42 Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, translated by John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley—Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 46.

his intellectual slumber possess the form of a question. They are not categorical statements, but a crystallization of doubtfulness.

What duty does this excitement or nature's stimulus actually perform? It brings the inertial-balanced forces of the soul into motion, so that they become able to create concepts, so that soul can become spontaneous and productive again. The unproductive balance of vital force finds its only possible occasion of vivification in encounters with dead matter or in intervention from the outside. The creation of concepts, spontaneity, is made possible through the mediation of some dull *materia*. This is the conclusion that drives Kant to his paradoxical assertion in *Anthropology* that "the inclination to freedom is the most vehement of all inclinations."⁴³ Freedom, i.e. spontaneity, is designated as a natural inclination of human beings. How can freedom possibly be an inclination? How can freedom, in its ideal and anti-natural consistency, be mistaken for an entity depending on nature? Spontaneity and freedom are both paradoxically designated by Kant as *Neigung*, or, inclination: "a sensuous appetite that serves the subject as a rule (habit) is called an *inclination*."⁴⁴ The paradox is that freedom is designated as an inclination, therefore having a sensuous derivation: the centripetal movement of self-constitution, to gain consciousness of oneself, autonomy, seems to overlap with a movement toward the outside, dependency. "Although animals don't share the idea of freedom, Kant still calls this a natural inclination to freedom because it occurs as soon as a baby is born. Culture, or socialization, has no chance to have an input before the inclination to freedom arises."⁴⁵ And this is correct. But the fact that freedom for Kant is not a product of culture or history doesn't mean it is therefore an *Anlage*, anything innate or something like a specific 'human instinct'. *Neigung* doesn't mean 'instinct' or 'predisposition', but inclination, eccentric movement, radical heteronomy, sensitivity: "every inclination turns outward, it leans out of the self in the direction of whatever may affect me from the outside world. It is precisely through inclination, through leaning out of myself as I may lean out of the window to look into the street, that I establish contact with the world. Under no circumstances can my inclination be determined by my intercourse with myself."⁴⁶ Therefore, even more remark-

43 Kant, 1974: 135.

44 Kant, 1974: 133.

45 Wilson, 2006: 63.

46 Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (New York: Schocken, 2003), 81. I thank for this reference Prof. Adriana Cavarero.

able is the paradox if freedom itself, autonomy, intercourse with oneself, is designated as inclination and heteronomy. But, even if it might sound surprising for a traditional interpretation of Kant's philosophy, such statement is very coherent with the specific figure of freedom regarded in its genealogical features. Freedom is designated by Kant as the specific answer to the blows of nature. It co-exists and co-forms itself with the first assault of reality as its inner fold. Intercourse with oneself, autonomy, independence, is the *verso* of a *recto*, which is the experience of inclination, heteronomy, dependence. Neither the one, nor the other, taken alone, are original experiences. Original, rather, is their reciprocal parting. Such parting destroys the mythological unity of freedom and sensitivity, the fantasy of nature being rational in and of itself and allowing freedom. A newborn's tears are the most reliable witness of the nonexistence of such nature.

7. Crying as Immediate Affect

We have considered until now the affect of crying as mediative-communicative sign. Nevertheless, as we already saw, Kant also assigns to crying with tears an immediate affect on the vital force. Tears are not just a sign addressed to others. They also communicate an effect to the mind without any mediation. Tears share this immediate effect with laughter. What crying shares with laughter is that "both [...] cheer us up, for they release [*sind Befreiungen*] us from hindrance to the vital force by the effusions they involve."⁴⁷ Also, in this case, as having an immediate effect on the mind, tears are directly connected with the concept of freedom. Tears in themselves work as *Befreiungen*, they set us free from cramplike constitution of our mind. The capability of shedding tears represents in itself, irrespective of the effect it might have on other human beings, a kind of regained freedom from previous hindrance. Let's read again the second part of the first Kantian quote of this essay, taken from *Anthropology*:

Weeping—inhaling with sobs (convulsively) [*convulsivisches Einathmen*], when it is combined with a gush of tears—is likewise one of nature's provisions for health, because of the soothing effect it has; and a widow who, as we say, refuses to be comforted—that is, will not hear of stopping the flow of tears—is taking care of her health without knowing it or really wanting it.

47 Kant, 1974: 123.

Tears allow a blocked vital force to flow into the paths of health again. The convulsions of crying, *convulsivisches Einathmen*, shake the cramped balance of a mind and put it in motion again, set it free from the cramps that block it. Weeping and laughter both have to do with breath, as each of them emphasizes one phase of the rhythm: inhalation/exhalation. Laughter (like sneezing) is associated by Kant mostly with exhalation,⁴⁸ while weeping—as we can see from last quote—is linked to inhalation.⁴⁹ Such difference in the phases of breathing is emphasized by their gender connotation, as we find again in the pages of *Anthropology*:

Laughter is *masculine*; weeping, on the other hand is *feminine* [weiblich] (in men it is *effeminate* [weibisch]). And when tears glisten in a man's eyes [*die Thräne im Auge glänzt*], it is only if it comes from generous but helpless [*ohnmächtiger*] sympathy with another's suffering—but not if he lets tear-drops fall, and still less if he sobs along with them and so makes disgusting music.⁵⁰

While laughter is masculine-exhaling, weeping is feminine-inhaling. Another significant difference between the two related but opposite affects is that even if laughter is also characterized as a convulsive phenomenon, it is nevertheless regarded by Kant as “continuous [...] exhalation,”⁵¹ something like a calm, single, large convulsion. Its character of continuity lessens the syncopatic value. A properly convulsive, discontinuous character is specific to crying. Such connotation associates crying to the syncope of surprise, the suspension of the previously present state (that is not necessarily involved in the phenomenon of laughter). The syncopatic outburst of tears means that the subject is determined to break the inertial balance of forces that previously weakened its mind. And at the same time it makes us think of a kind of homeopathic cure, because crying is designated to cure the cramp of mind through convulsions. But the cramp of the mind we have to be cured of is a *state*, meaning an inertial balance of the forces, while the convulsions of sobbing aggress discontinuously this inertia in order to bring it to a healthy condition of imbalance. The affect of crying possesses the peculiarity of making the cramped balance of mind unstable and alive again through such discontinuous blows. The multiplicity of convulsions of sobbing is supposed to bring into

48 “In laughter, the exhaling of air by fits and starts [...] strenghtens our feeling of vital force by its salutary movement of the diaphragm.” Ibid. 129.

49 “Weinen ist ein Schluchzen und einathmen, Lachen Ausathmen.” Kant, 1928: 853.

50 Kant, 1974: 123.

51 Kant, 1979: 207.

healthy motion a vital force blocked in a singular cramp. Health obtained from tears is the mirror in which regained freedom, restored spontaneity, recognized itself: “health is the visible plane of an existence where the organic totality is dominated, without remainder and without opposition, by a form of rationality that, beyond any division, is at once ethical and organic; it is the playground of freedom – the space in which freedom can play.”⁵² The Kantian parallelism between mental and bodily inertia, as well as the occurrence able to overcome it, is emphasized by Foucault’s essay: “the master of his own thought process is also the master of this vital movement which is its organic and indispensable complement. If the mind were immobile, then life would go to sleep – which is to say that it would die [...]; and if the movement of life risks being thrown off balance, or getting jammed up in a spasm, then the mind must be able to restore its proper mobility.”⁵³ Through convulsive blows of sobbing the mind again becomes master of itself. The peculiar fact that such mastery is gained through pretense of receiving a stimulus from outside. Crying as *convulsivisches Einathmung*, inhalation and convulsion, being shaken from a state of previous unconsciousness and laziness, mimics the situation of being besieged by a world (the newborn’s body, the questions put to the man, etc.) against which the I is able to institute itself as (hindered) spontaneity.

Inhaling (the phase of breathing emphasized by weeping) means indeed an absorption from the world, openness to what comes across. Crying induces in the soul the same effect as hazardous blows from external matter: the vivification of unconscious spontaneity. The multiple convulsions of crying reproduce the blows with which external reality awakens the soul. There is nevertheless a significant distinction that makes the phenomenon of crying more problematic: in this case the convulsive blows are called from inside. In the act of crying and shedding tears there is a structural reference to the external world, inhaling as intention directed toward the outer world. But at the same time crying is an affect, therefore inner occurrence, motion of the mind.⁵⁴ The blows that tears turn against the unconscious soul in order to awake it come from the soul itself: by crying the soul solicits itself in order to produce an outer excitation. The soul is not just passively hit, but also behaves actively to-

52 Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology*, translated by Robert Nigro and Kate Briggs (Cambridge: MIT Press 2008), 46.

53 Foucault, 2008: 49.

54 “*Affekt ist Gemüthsbewegung*”, Kant, 1928: 736.

ward the blows. The activity of the soul consists in this particular case of provoking its own excitability. Therefore, there is something deeply autonomous in crying, which is not to be found in the simple solicitation Kant hypothesizes for the spiritual awakening through blows of reality. Such autonomy has the peculiarity of emphasizing the passivity of the mind: it solicits the blows of reality; it solicits the soul to be more excitable. The mind asks to be solicited in order to become spontaneous, asks actively to be hit by blows of reality.

We can portray the crying personality of someone as a movement in and out from himself: one violently inhales and at the same time tears gush out from the eyes, because of an “affect” that “works like water breaking through a dam.”⁵⁵ Crying is absorption and excretion at the same time. Tears of human free being flow from the inside on cheeks as an exhibited and desired evidence of dependency on the outer world (the blows) in order to gain independency. Tears are the phenomenal *analogon* of the pure self-affectation of the first *Critique*, on which Heidegger built his interpretation of Kantian criticism. But crying and its convulsive breathing represent the phenomenon of self-affectation upside down. In pure self-affectation of time mind affects itself as another, *je est un autre*. On the contrary, in the affect of crying, an effect that has the physiognomy of the external world is provoked spontaneously from inside, *un autre est moi*. I don’t encounter myself as a part of reality; rather blows of reality are provoked by me. Such occurrence, doesn’t mean that provoked otherness is assimilated and digested by the mind: convulsions stay external convulsions, and the blows of tears solicit the mind without becoming a part of mind, they are just *Anlaß* to the health of *Lebenskraft*. But the solicitation of tears and sobs is solicited by the mind. The affect of crying represents in itself—so to speak—the inner solicitation of outer solicitation, the autonomy of heteronomy. Through violent inhaling of crying the soul provides itself the necessary shocks that sometimes outer world is ungenerous with, but the human beings that we are need in order to be free and spontaneous. Men and women know too well the instants of dead calm, in which the world doesn’t solicit them anymore, and they are urged to escape such dead calm through lighting up a cigarette, just for the sake of feeling the stinging of tobacco, taking toxic substances (affect is in itself a “drunken fit”⁵⁶), or cutting one’s own arms with a blade. They aggress themselves to put their vital force in motion again.

55 Kant, 1974: 120.

56 Kant, 1974: 120.

The affect of crying is the basic gesture of aggression called from inside, an inner surprise, a gift from ourselves to ourselves. The autonomy of crying sketches out a paradoxical autonomy of excitability and counts on the intimacy of hazard.

If we might be allowed to follow the theological metaphoric we have been using until now, we could say that if there is a God involved also in such seductive tears, it is neither the God of religion and prayer, nor the God of philosophy and knowledge. The God of self-provoked tears is rather an *evenemential* God, God as event and uninvited guest.⁵⁷ For the same reason such tears of self-solicitation introduce ambiguity in sex distinction. Tears are in themselves feminine. But a man who sheds tears is *weibisch*, says Kant, effeminate. Man is, as we know, the figure of autonomy, woman of heteronomy. The inclination the two sexes have for freedom is not strictly equivalent. Through the self-solicitation of tears man becomes ambiguously free. He becomes free while paying the price of involving mechanism and while tempting nature, nature as something that convulsively addresses the soul. He who sheds tears obtains a sexually ambiguous state. He is basically a man, because its aim is to restore health, that is vital force, freedom and spontaneity with it. But the way he strives for vital force is extremely doubtful: excreting convulsions will help him to restore vital force. It resembles too closely the

57 Tears having an immediate effect also evoke their own God, whose physiognomy does not overlap with the previous two. Beside the omnipotent God of miracle and the systematic God of knowledge, the will of solicitation is longing for a gift from the outside, but not in the recognizable shape of the Saviour or a metaphysical Idea. Rather, as a stranger met without any forewarn, yet still evoked. John Climacus, the Desert Father, abbot of Mount Sinai, who lived in the 7th century and whose meditations on tears are fundamental to Christian East and Orthodox faith, said: “when the soul grows tearful, weeps, and is filled with tenderness, and all this without having striven for it, then let us run, for the Lord has arrived uninvited and is holding out to us the sponge of loving sorrow and the cool waters of blessed sadness.” (John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, translated by Colm Luibheid and Norman Victor Russell [Mahwah: Paulis Press, 1982], 139). John Chryssavgis commented: “as a gift, tears testify to a visitation [...] from the Holy Spirit. This is preceded by an earlier visitation from that ‘Uninvited Guest’ who arrives, but later leaves us to mourn [...] the divine absence.” (John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* [Burlington: Ashgate, 2004], 153). Inviting the uninvited God as a stranger is the temptation of tears, what ratifies “*le caractère prophétiques de ces pleurs, provoqués par un événement à venir*” (Piroska Nagy, “Les larmes du Christ dans l’exégèse médiévale,” *Médiévales* 27 [Fall 1994]: 38), an event yet to come, and already present, different from us, but evoked by ourselves.

behavior of women, who call other human beings to their help. The difference is that by crying regarded as an immediate effect, no other free and independent being is properly called for help. I call for help blows of reality, as belonging to me. I solicit the otherness of convulsions as obeying my solicitation. And that's why a man who cries doesn't become a woman, he's just effeminate. Crying as immediate affect represents the femininity of masculinity. The distinction becomes less marked between honest, sincere tears as call for help, and theatrical tears sometimes women shed without any necessity. The effeminate character of blows of tears is a product of sincere distress and at the same time, a self-provoked gesture, exactly as theatrical female tears are. The blows of tears have the gratuity of a pathetic, unnecessary gesture, and—in spite of that—they arise from an authentic and inescapable sorrow.

Pure self-affection represents the being outward of the inside (the peculiar way of being outward, that belongs to inside). On the contrary, the awakening tears represent the inwardness of externality. As the title of the quoted *Anthropology* chapter says: through tears “nature mechanically promotes health”. Tears put bodily mechanisms in motion for the sake of the soul, they solicit the intelligent character of bodily mechanisms. Tears say that autonomy is rooted in heteronomy, freedom is a rebound from nature originating in inclination (tears of newborns). Tears also say that freedom is occasioned by encounters with external matter as an effort to negate this origin, and to extend its inner power over the outside with the help of others (tears of anger, female tears). Tears speak a resolution to bring together inner and outer freedom, the overcoming of difficulties of the external world (tears that glisten only, tearless crying, miraculous tears, tears of men). But, more radically, tears tell of the desire to tempt reality, the desire to become free and spontaneous by an assault from the world that we ourselves have provoked (tears of excitability, effeminate tears).

A Linneaus of Human Nature:
The Pragmatic Deduction of Unconscious Thought
in Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology**

Nuria Sánchez Madrid

I. Introduction

Probably the most important feature in Kant's approach to the issue of obscure representations is his calmness and firmness when he establishes that they are the most numerous, since their field, unlike that of clear representations, is enormous¹. In fact, it is enough to apply the synthetic unity of apperception—the highest point of understanding—on materials of pragmatic origin, to uncover some regions in this field. Thus, the best procedure is to head from the cognitive operations which we are conscious of towards those which still remain covered with mist. Nothing in the Kantian deduction of the existence of this kind of representations, deduction which starts from their effects, announces an inversion or a dis-

* This text was achieved while I belonged to the research team of the Project “Naturaleza humana y comunidad. Una investigación, a partir de Kant, sobre los principios antropológicos del cosmopolitismo” (HUM2006–04909), financially supported by the MICINN of Spanish Government. I would like also to acknowledge the academic mobility grant for teachers of the Complutense University of Madrid, which I received in 2008 for a short-term research stay at the University of Pisa. In the references to Kant's writings I have made use of the original German text according to the Akademie edition. In the case of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* I have made use in the main text as well as in the footnotes of the translation by R. B. Loudon, Cambridge U.P., 2006. Quotes of the *Critique of pure reason* follow in the main text the translation by N. Kemp Smith, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2003. Citations of Kant's scholarship appear in the original language. I would like to thank Aurora Santamaría, Jesús González Fisac, Eduardo Cañas and Guillermo Villaverde, whose comments have helped me to put the final touches to the text and to improve different drafts of this study.

1 *ApH*, § 5, AA 07: 135; *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 868; *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1221–1222; *V-Anth/Busolt*, AA 25: 1440 and *V-Log/Philippi*, ad §10, AA 24: 341.

turbance either in the realm of objectivity or in the arts which discipline and cultivate human sociability². The discovery of the predominance of obscure regions of the mind does not supply an instrument to reveal the most concealed human thoughts either, since it cannot break the resistance which human beings can oppose, in order to keep their thoughts hidden³. One could say that, *avant la lettre*, Kant makes the same reproach against the theories about the unconsciousness of the 20th century that he levelled to the naive gentleman De Luc. This gentleman only dared to conclude, after completing a long journey with a philanthropic purpose, that “[a]s regards benevolence the human being is good enough [...] provided that no bad propensity to subtle deception dwells in him”,⁴ even though he had the essential elements to deliver such a judgment in his own heart, without ever leaving his country. Similarly, those who find in the thoughts which we start without being conscious of them a kind of secret bottom of the mind—as Baumgarten’s *fundus animae*⁵—, do not pay enough attention to the fact that only a “certain pragmatic freedom”⁶ offers the occasion to identify in a mediated way the regions of the mind

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- 2 Kant’s interpretation of unconscious thought is far from the progresses of psychology which Schiller imagines in the tale “Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre”: “Es ist etwas so Einförmiges und doch wieder so Zusammengesetztes, das menschliche Herz. Eine und eben dieselbe Fertigkeit oder Begierde kann in tausenderlei Formen und Richtungen spielen, kann tausend widersprechende Phänomene bewirken, kann in tausend Charakteren anders gemischt erscheinen, und tausend ungleiche Charaktere und Handlungen können wieder aus einerlei Neigung gesponnen sein, wenn auch der Mensch, von welchem die Rede ist, nichts weniger denn eine solche Verwandtschaft ahndet. Stünde einmal, wie für die übrigen Reiche der Natur, auch für das Menschengeschlecht ein Linnäus, der das nach ihm benannte Pflanzensystem aufstellte auf, welcher nach Trieben und Neigungen klassifizierte, wie sehr würde man erstaunen, wenn man so manchen, dessen Laster in einer engen bürgerlichen Sphäre und in der schmalen Umzäunung der Gesetze jetzt ersticken muß, mit dem Ungeheuer Borgia, berüchtigt durch seine Verbrechen in einer Ordnung beisammen fände”, in: F. Schiller, *Erzählungen und theoretische Schriften* (Sämtliche Werke in 5 Bd.), W. Riedel (Hrsg.), München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 2008: 13.
- 3 G. Böhme (2002: 217 ff.) tells a funny anecdote, according to which in 1962 Christian Thomasius conveyed to the Prince curator of Brandenburg the discovery of a new science, Anthropology, where “the things hidden in the heart of other men would be known, even against their will, through everyday conversations”.
- 4 *MpVT*, AA 08: 271, transl. by G. de Giovanni
- 5 Baumgarten, *Met.*, § 511.
- 6 Foucault (2008: 27).

where obscure representations lie⁷. These representations do not remain foreign at all to the study of what man “makes of himself, or can and should make of himself”⁸, in spite of the tendency to reduce them to a mere play of sensations, which is only suitable to a physiological analyse. Kant considers that, in the space covered by the arts of human treatment, the alleged object of empirical psychology meets something “unthought”, which has been traditionally concealed by metaphysics, and which, as an “always open dimension, never permanently defined”⁹, accompanies conscience as its reverse.

Thus, just as one can glimpse from the island of truth the wide and stormy ocean of illusion¹⁰, the darkness of the mind ought to be located, as indistinctly as it could happen, on an ideal map of the mind, which will never find its customized Linnaeus¹¹. In order to accomplish this task, the question about the unconscious order of our thought must satisfy first the conditions of every *quaestio domestica*¹², that is to say, the question ought to be resolved by resorting to the sources which it stems from: the cognitive faculty of understanding. Therefore, obscurity of mind does not forecast a crisis for this faculty, but understanding confirms that this matter is

7 See Manganaro (1983: 102–103 and 117).

8 *Anth, Vor.*, AA 07: 119.

9 The purpose of Foucault (1966: 333–339) to accomplish, beyond the Kantian transcendental analytic and against the modern *cogito*, a transcendental reflection which would give account of “the unthought” which is contented in the epistemic configuration of man, such a purpose, we say, might be well considered as a *repetition* of the research that the Kantian Anthropology carries out. Cf. Foucault (2008: 57), where he focuses the function that *Kunst* performs in order to unfold the anthropological order in Kant. Actually, this order regulates the production of a fictive reality (taste, protocol, courtesy, seduction...) and establishes both its meaning and its means of communication.

10 *KrV*, A 235/B 294 s.

11 The fact that a Linnaeus of the human mind never could arise obeys to the same reason why it is impossible that some day a Newton able to give account about the origin of a blade should be born (*KU*, § 75, AA 05: 400). Whilst the *Critique of Judgment* asserts that the systematic unity of an organism could not be explained by mere mechanical means, the *Lectures on Anthropology* distrust that social intercourse would be tackled in terms of an empirical psychology. Instead of this, the last matter should be submitted rather to a Critique of sociability, that is to say, to a Critique of the semblances that the developed human community produces. M. Horkheimer offers suggestive remarks about the seeds of a “sozialen Schematismus” in Kant; see “Eine Kantische Soziologie”, in: ID., *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VI, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1991, pp. 191–192.

12 *KrV*, A 476/B 504 s.

a metaphysical and anthropological object of study. After its plunge into this *terra incognita*, logic will see increased its archive of rules, once it identifies the principles and the transcendental instances which are already working, increased in the common experience without the subject's knowledge. One of the most evident signs of Kantian interest for the unconscious thought can be recognized in the discovery of a transcendental principle, which, even if it does not concern the objectivity of experience, works as a subjective guiding thread for the research and classification of nature. At first glance, such principle seems to be merely tautological and to belong to a general logic. But, actually, we are faced with the wretched entanglement of a transcendental assumption of the faculty of judgment, the roots of which settle so deep in the domain of reason that the inquiry of its legitimacy as a maxim cannot spare a certain obscurity¹³. Since the condition of possibility of every logical classification has eventually become outshone by the most humble knowledge¹⁴, theory vindicates the existence of an original pleasure which is already absent from the *factum* of logical subsumption. Unlike Aby Warburg's *dictum*, the descent of Kant to the "first ground" [*die erste Grundlage*] of the faculty of reason does not confirm that "Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail", but rather that the mud, the dirt and the hair of Plato's *Parmenides* have been conveniently 'detheologized'¹⁵. Thus, it is not the promise of a total release from the conditions of possibility of experience, as the light dove of the *KrV*¹⁶ dreams, what moves Kant to problematise the hidden forces of judgments of which we only know the results. It is rather the "consciousness of ignorance", which does not block further philosophical inquiries. On the contrary, this consciousness actually initiates them, and begins with the examination of the first sources of our knowledge¹⁷.

13 *EEKU*, AA 20: 211–212 and *KU, Einl.*, AA 05: 168 and 170. Cf. G. Lebrun (1970: 272).

14 *KU, Einl.* § VI, AA 05: 187–188.

15 See Foucault (2008: 75–76).

16 *KrV, Einl.*, § III, B 8. As the pathological self-observation reveals, accomplishing such a wish would entail to submit the region which holds the "supposed discoveries" made by self-observation (*Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 133) to an influence even more tyrannical than that of the understanding, that is to say, to the control of a consciousness higher than the human one, which allegedly would inspire to some privileged people visions stemming from suprasensory realms (*WDo*, AA 08: 145).

17 *KrV*, A 758/B 786.

II. The Dialectic Path to the Obscure Representations: The Pathological Self-observation

The main caution that needs to be applied before displaying the field of obscure representations is to consider the representation “I” as the unique point of departure of every cognitive biography. A different beginning is not allowed, at least to us men, if our purpose is to classify the representations in our mind¹⁸. Given the tempting Leibnizian proposal to consider consciousness as a threshold too rough to catch the *petites perceptions*, which however leave their subtle and continuous traces on our mind¹⁹, the representation “I”, which “raises us infinitely above all other living beings on earth”²⁰, definitely expels man from animal realm²¹. Even though the endeavour to pay attention and to turn away

18 *PhilEnz.*, AA 29: 44: “Das erste, was ich bey mir gewahr werde, ist das Bewußtseyn. Dies ist kein besonderes Denken, sondern dasjenige worunter ich die übrige Vorstellungen etc. bringen kann, es ist die Bedingung und die Form unter der wir denkende Wesen oder intelligentzen sind”.

19 See Manganaro (1983: 105): “Il problema del medium, dello strumento che ci permette di esplicitare ciò che già risiede nella nostra coscienza, ciò che ci appartiene come territorio di nostra proprietà, questo è, in un certo senso, la chiave della distanza che Kant prende da Leibniz. [...] La “modernità” di Kant su questo aspetto che a prima vista appare del tutto marginale rispetto ai grandi temi gnoseologici sta in questo: al modo delle rappresentazioni oscure non perveniamo, come avviene con le *petites perceptions*, come al sostrato della nostra individualità e della nostra potenza. [...] Ciò che io come soggetto chiarifico nella cosa è un evento che implica una chiarificazione stessa dell’universo. La soluzione Kantiana passa attraverso la distinzione di sensibilità e intelletto” and M. Oberhausen (2002: 133–134): “Kant is kein Leibnizianer. Für ihm sind alle Erkenntnisse erworben, und zwar entweder a posteriori aus den Sinnen oder a priori aus den Erkenntnisvermögen selbst. Die dunklen Vorstellungen sind für ihn kein ursprünglich gegebener Vorrat, der in seiner Gesamtheit die Welt vollständig widerspiegelt. Kant hat die dunklen Vorstellungen von diesem metaphysischen Hintergrund abgeschnitten—wenn eigentümlicherweise auch eine Spur davon bei ihm erhalten geblieben ist”.

20 *Anth.*, § 1, AA 07: 27; cf. *Fortschr.*, AA 20: 270: “Wie es möglich sey, daß ich, der ich denke, mir selber ein Gegenstand (der Anschauung) seyn, und so mich von mir selbst unterscheiden könne, ist schlechterdings unmöglich zu erklären, obwohl es ein unbezweifeltes Factum ist; es zeigt aber ein über alle Sinnenanschauung so weit erhabenes Vermögen an, daß es, als der Grund der Möglichkeit eines Verstandes, die gänzliche Absonderung von allem Vieh, dem wir das Vermögen, zu sich selbst Ich zu sagen, | nicht Ursache haben beyzulegen, zur Folge hat”.

21 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 854: “Wenn ein Thier ich sagen könnte, so wäre es mein Camerad”. Regarding the Kantian difference between the procedure

from an idea reflects the freedom of the faculty of thought and the authority which the mind has over itself²², there is no situation more miserable for man than the one caused by the *involuntary* course of both operations²³, where, as the main character of the E. A. Poe's tale *Berenice* declares, visions and ghosts stand for appearances²⁴. The reader of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* is surprised to find the unexpected note which Kant adds to § 7, where he distinguishes between logical and psychological consciousness. This note does not really belong to the subject of this work. Its purpose is rather to prevent the speculative extravagances of the *illuminati* being detrimental to the operation of the "I think"²⁵. The pretention to compose an inner story with the invol-

that men and animals follow in order to make a distinction see N. Sánchez Madrid, "Si un caballo pudiera captar el pensamiento "yo"... " (AA 25: 854). Consideraciones sobre la presencia del animal en la 'biología gris' de Kant", *Proceedings of the VIII Philosophical Anthropology International Congress*, Madrid, UNED (in print), accessible as e-print UCM (2009), <http://eprints.ucm.es/8031/>.

22 *Anth*, § 3, AA 07: 131.

23 *V-Parow*, AA 25: 263–264. See Pirillo (2003: 387): "La sana autoosservazione pragmatica termina là dove comincia quella patologica, così come la coscienza empirica termina là dove la realtà dell'autoosservazione è scambiata con la sua possibilità trascendentale"; cf. Desideri (1999–2000: 35–36). Freud's text *Formulierungen über die zwei Principien des psychischen Geschehens* (1911) surprises for its closeness to the Kantian assessment about the aporetic background of the self-observation.

24 Poe, *Berenice*: "The realities of the world affected me as visions, and as visions only, while the wild ideas of the land of dreams became, in turn, not the material of my every-day existence, but in very deed that existence utterly and solely in itself [...]. This monomania, if I must so term it, consisted in a morbid irritability of those properties of the mind in metaphysical science termed the attentive. It is more than probable that I am not understood; but I fear, indeed, that it is in no manner possible to convey to the mind of the merely general reader, an adequate idea of that nervous intensity of interest with which, in my case, the powers of meditation (not to speak technically) busied and buried themselves, in the contemplation of even the most ordinary objects of the universe". We owe this reference to Manganaro (1983: 95). See F.-X. Chenet, *L'assise de l'ontologie critique*, Lille, PUL, 1994, p. 44: "Kant n'enseigne pas seulement que l'objet est donné, mais qu'il ne peut être donné que comme effet d'une affection. Le concept d'affection ne se réduit pas à l'affirmation que la sensation est donnée, qu'elle est inconstruible et qu'elle est a posteriori, il est indispensable à la pensée de la réceptivité comme telle, c'est-à-dire comme passivité"; cf. Lebrun (1982: 208).

25 *Anth*, § 7, AA 07: 143: "But it was nevertheless necessary to go back so far simply in order to stop the offenses of the speculative mind in regard to this question". The question concerns the possibility of *a priori* knowledge.

untary course of one's own thoughts and feelings is, according to Kant, the direct path to alleged inspirations received from the sky and, in general, the direct path to a chimerical community with spirits which we really ignore, a community which substitutes for our *real* community with other human beings, known to us as world²⁶. The main illusion entangled with these practices is the discovery of contents which we have actually carried into our inner self. This happens when we do not consider as objects of our observation the very representations which ourselves have summoned, and which we are the legitimate owners of, but rather the acts of representation which allegedly come on their own into the mind, without anybody having appealed to them. The visionary, whose internal journeys only announce to him a subsequent arrival at the coast of Anticyra, chooses Nietzsche's statement that thought comes when "it" wants, not when "I" want²⁷ as his motto. However, the visionary receives as a reply the Kantian firm "decision"²⁸ to make the logical consciousness

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- 26 Anth, § 2, AA 07: 130. Cf. Longuenesse (2006: 302): "[A]ccording to Kant, one is conscious of oneself in this empirical sense not when one directs one's "mental gaze" to one's inner states. But rather when, in directing one's mental gaze to outside objects, one becomes also aware of the distinction between the temporal determinations of those objects and the temporal determinations of one's perceptions and experience of them"; cf. KrV, "Refutation of Idealism", B 275: "even our inner experience, which for Descartes is indubitable, is possible only on the assumption of outer experience" and R 3826, AA 17: 304: "Gott erkennt alles, indem er sich selbst erkennt. Der Mensch erkennt sich selbst, indem er andere Dinge erkennt"; see Goldmann (1948).
- 27 *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, § 17. The following passage from *Iliad*, chant XV, vv. 80–83, might be a Greek counterpoint, closer to Kant's position than to Nietzsche's one, regarding the hidden machinery of our thoughts: "Swift as the thought of one whose fancy carries him over vast continents, and he says to himself, 'Now I will be here, or there', and he would have all manner of things – even so swiftly did Juno wing her way till she came to high Olympus and went in among the gods who were gathered in the house of Jove" (S. Butler's translation).
- 28 We believe that Kant would not reject this "charge", rather he would plea for its opportunity; see *op. cit.*, § 16: "Mag das Volk glauben, dass Erkennen ein zu Ende-Kennen sei, der Philosoph muss sich sagen: ,wenn ich den Vorgang zerlege, der in dem Satz, "ich denke" ausgedrückt ist, so bekomme ich eine Reihe von verwegenen Behauptungen, deren Begründung schwer, vielleicht unmöglich ist,—zum Beispiel, dass ich es bin, der denkt, dass überhaupt ein Etwas es sein muss, das denkt, dass Denken eine Thätigkeit und Wirkung seitens eines Wesens ist, welches als Ursache gedacht wird, dass es ein "Ich" giebt, endlich, dass es bereits fest steht, was mit Denken zu bezeichnen ist,—dass ich weiss, was Denken ist. Denn wenn ich nicht darüber mich schon bei mir entschieden

a principle that precedes all the experience amassed in the inner sense²⁹. This decision establishes “the natural order in the faculty of knowledge”³⁰, according to which the spontaneity of imagination is always kept under control by the spontaneity of understanding. The inner sense alone cannot yield any fruitful observation, because it is an uninterrupted flow of representations. Only if we represent to ourselves the inner changes of the soul as representations which belong to one and the same subject, we will gain consciousness of them or, if one prefers, we will not find any appearance within ourselves, within our own self unless the logical consciousness sets up beforehand the “stage” of objectivity against the blackboard of nothingness, as it was called by the Machadian philosopher Abel Martín.

The reason that definitely destroys the expectations of psychology to become a science—whose situation regarding this point is even more needy than that of the chemistry, which at least can become a systematic art—is that mathematics cannot be applied to the appearances of the inner sense, which flow only in the temporal dimension. Indeed, we can separate these appearances only in our mind, but it is not in our hands to keep them in this state long enough to combine them and, finally, to leave them as they were at the beginning. In fact, the observation already “modifies and dissimulates”³¹ the state of the observed object, so that we are only allowed to carry out a *natural description* of the soul, not even an *experimental* psychological doctrine, which probably, even if Kant does not pronounce a word about it, will be feasible with animals. Actually, there will be an experiment suited to human nature, but one so connected with the exercise of freedom that, as we will see later, it is better to abandon the term “experiment” for that of “rules of game”³². Albeit the rep-

hätte, wonach sollte ich abmessen, dass, was eben geschieht, nicht vielleicht “Wollen” oder “Fühlen” sei? Genug, jenes “ich denke” setzt voraus, dass ich meinen augenblicklichen Zustand mit anderen Zuständen, die ich an mir kenne, vergleiche, um so festzusetzen, was es ist: wegen dieser Rückbeziehung auf anderweitiges “Wissen” hat er für mich jedenfalls keine unmittelbare “Gewissheit”.

29 Anth, § 7, AA 07: 143: “So it is advisable and even necessary to begin with observed appearances in oneself, and then to progress above all to the assertion of certain propositions that concern human nature; that is, to inner experience”.

30 Anth, § 4, AA 07: 134.

31 MAN, AA 04: 471.

32 Cohen-Halimi (1994: 324) has highlighted the figure of the “experimental moralist” (expression which is used in a remark of an anonymous annotation to the *Essay about the mental illnesses* of 1764), which Kant, who breaks up clearly with

resentation “I” is the narrow path which leads us to the world we form part of when we are awake³³, we can turn it into the narrow pass of egoism, an abuse of reason and freedom, which strangle the use of all the higher cognitive faculties. An especial mention deserves the logical trap which leads to the “physical egoism”³⁴—a Kantian *hapax*—, a pathology where the mind refuses the reality of the world and considers itself as the unique object of reflection.

The § 4 of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, devoted to the observation of ourselves, ends with a note³⁵ that reminds to us that, due to our finitude, we cannot spare the “consistent inconsistency”³⁶ of the “I” to *appear double to us*—where this duplicity concerns the manner of representation, not the represented content—, that is, as *pure* apperception of reflection and as *empirical* apperception of apprehension. The pure apperception is not an object of psychology, but rather the ground of the “whole of logic”³⁷, that is, the “formal element of consciousness” [*Förmliche des Bewußtsein*]³⁸, that “can be clear (empirical consciousness) or obscure”³⁹. The important point is that without it we will only find a chaotical amalgam of states in our mind, which remain untied to any representation. Both dimensions of the “I” are neither cooriginal—one displays the stage where the other appears—, nor evolutive phases that a look at childhood could ever distinguish⁴⁰. Since the empir-

the method followed by the empirical psychologists, from Plattner to Hamann, turns into an anthropologist *in nuce*: “[L]a connaissance de la nature humaine ne peut proceder que d’une experimentation. L’expérimentateur suppose et induit la où le moraliste décrit et déduit. Le premier défait l’évidence à laquelle le second adhère naïvement, à savoir l’existence d’un homme naturel perceptible par delà les dénaturations auxquelles le soumet la civilisation”.

33 *TG*, AA 02: 342.

34 *V-Anth/Busolt*, AA 25: 1438: “Der Phisische Egoist ist der der sich immer an die Stelle eines Objects Hat”; cf. *V-Parow*, AA 25: 251–252.

35 *Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 134; cf. *op. cit.* § 7, AA 07: 141–142.

36 We quote this expression which F. Martínez Marzoa (1995) uses in his consideration of the Paralogisms of the pure reason and, more concretely, of the Kantian analysis of the structure “I think”.

37 *KrV*, § 16, footnote, B 134.

38 *Anth*, § 7, AA 07: 141. See The commentary of M. Foucault (2008: 23–24 and 35) about the attention that the H manuscript of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* pays to the self-knowledge.

39 *KrV*, A 117, footnote.

40 M. Capozzi (2007) argues an interpretation of the § 1 of *Anth* which heads from this assumption; cf. M. Baum (2002: 109). See *Anth*, § 1, AA 07: 128: “However, the memory of the teacher’s childhood does not reach back to that time; for it

ical consciousness is always necessarily “changing” [*wandelbar*], it cannot provide itself a “fixing and abiding self” [*stehendes oder bleibendes Selbst*]⁴¹. Therefore, when the subject is conscious of the succession of the apprehensions which integrate the series of inner experiences, that consciousness will be the sign that he always represents “himself as one and the same *subject* in the different states”⁴², to the extent that he rarely notices it. There are two manners of misinterpreting the function of transcendental consciousness in Kant. One of them declares that the empirical consciousness causes a *doubt* about our own phenomenal existence. In fact, this is a malicious twist of Kantian terms, because nothing in his description of the manner we represent us to ourselves could equal the following statement: “it only *seems* to me (*mihi videri*) that I have certain ideas and sensations, indeed it only seems that I exist at all”⁴³. Instead of spreading a doubt which the factual feature of our finitude could easily vanish, it would be better to refuse every intuitive approach, that is, without mediation of time—“which is not a concept of understanding”⁴⁴—to the content of the “I think”. For example, when we execute a basic calculation⁴⁵ the logical consciousness leads the entire process, and, even if we can allude to that highest point of our judgments with expressions as little subjective as “I or he or it (the thing) which thinks”⁴⁶, we do not gain ac-

was not the time of experiences, but merely of scattered perceptions not yet united under the concept of an object”; cf. the interesting commentary of this § by Cohen-Halimi (2008).

41 *KrV*, A 107.

42 *Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 134.

43 *Anth*, § 7, AA 07: 142.

44 *Anth*, *Ibid* See F. Desideri (2005: 531): “[P]erché vi sia coscienza della propria esistenza come determinata temporalmente, il tempo va pensato nella sua articolazione con lo spazio. Solo alla luce di questa articolazione strutturale, di questo coappartenersi di tempo e spazio, diviene infatti possibile affermare “Io esisto” con il valore di una proposizione empirica ovvero di un giudizio di esperienza”.

45 *KrV*, A 103.

46 *KrV*, B 404. We consider suggestive the next hermeneutical proposal of Longuenesse (2006: 304): “‘I’ in Kant’s ‘I think’ is not a selfreferring expression in the modern sense of theories of reference. Rather, it is a term, or a thought, playing a role in our activity of binding representations in a way that makes them both, and inseparably, related to objects “in the weighty sense” ascribed to the agent that is accountable for the act of binding, whoever or whatever that agent might be. Considered in this way, if we want to find a modern descendent to Kant’s “formal” or “logical” I, perhaps it could be found more in the direction—horrible dictu?—of Freud’s ego as opposed to id (both of which, rather than refer-

cess to that consciousness in the same manner we face any other object. If we insist to move us forward onto the logical consciousness in such a manner, having renounced to recognize its real identity, that is, the identity of a transcendental function, we could only—Kant tinges—“revolve in a perpetual circle” [*in einem beständigen Cirkel herumdrehen*]⁴⁷. The other misleading understanding of the transcendental consciousness finds in the pure apperception a kind of “universal mind”, not provided with personality⁴⁸, which does not concern us as empirical subjects. But, although we deal with a logical function and not with the empirical quality of a person, it should not be neglected that each subject knows that *he*—and not a foreign understanding, even a higher understanding—*affects himself* when he observes himself⁴⁹. This fact entails a great risk, because, even if everyone is able to think for himself, he may do it in an obscure manner, in such a way that he can accomplish an outstanding discovery without being conscious of the principle which has guided his thought. Moreover, it is noteworthy that those who never think for themselves “have the sharpness to discover everything”⁵⁰, so that they believe they already know beforehand all the things which other people could convey to them. This last kind of man, not the first one, would ruin every inquiry, as well as the exercise of philosophy itself.

ring to a particular entity, define a specific logic of the mind)—than in the direction of contemporary theories of self-reference”.

47 Ibid

48 As W. H. Walsh (1966: 190) and Ph. W. Rosenmann (1999: 185–230) suggest.

49 J.-L. Marion (1997: 349) has replied to this kind of lecture of the transcendental apperception in Kant; see the analysis of H. Heimsoeth (1971), which is more concentrated on the practical use of reason, about the averroist echo which is allegedly sent out from the Kantian “I think”; cf. also P. Merlan (1969) and S. C. Tornay (1943). See T. de Aquino, In *I ad Corinthios*, 15, 19, lect. 2, n° 924: “Anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego”.

50 This is the reproach that Kant directs against the academic reception of the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, see Prol, § 3, AA 04: 270. Regarding the legitimate phenomenon of employing a method in science without actually being conscious of it see KrV, A 834/B 862: “Niemand versucht es, eine Wissenschaft zu Stande zu bringen, ohne daß ihm eine Idee zum Grunde liege. Allein in der Ausarbeitung derselben entspricht das Schema, ja sogar die Definition, die er gleich zu Anfange von seiner Wissenschaft giebt, sehr selten seiner Idee; denn diese liegt wie ein Keim in der Vernunft, in welchem alle Theile noch sehr eingewickelt und kaum der mikroskopischen Beobachtung kennbar verborgen liegen”.

Far away from the Kantian warning for preserving the mental health, “illuminists” as Madame de Bourignon, Pascal or Haller⁵¹ share the tendency to “eavesdrop [*belauschen*] on oneself” through thoughts which were caught in a, so to speak, virgin state, since they expect that these thoughts appear “unbidden”⁵², that is, before they become acts of consciousness. Therefore, “the principles of thought do not lead the way (as they should), but rather follow behind”⁵³. This would not be possible were not the imagination, instead of the understanding, the faculty that leads the observation to a pathology associated with “melancholia” [*Grillenkrankheit*], which grants more soundness to fantasy than to reality⁵⁴. However, an intense discipline is required to shape this realm of shadows. Actually, everyone is able to notice how the understanding determines the inner sense while producing the effect called *attention*:

Ich sehe nicht, wie man so viel Schwierigkeit darin finden könne, daß der innere Sinn von uns selbst afficirt werde. Jeder Actus der Aufmerksamkeit kann uns ein Beispiel davon geben. Der Verstand bestimmt darin jederzeit den inneren Sinn der Verbindung, die er denkt, gemäß zur inneren Anschauung, die dem Mannigfaltigen in der Synthesis des Verstandes correspondirt. Wie sehr das Gemüth gemeinlich hiedurch afficirt werde, wird ein jeder in sich wahrnehmen können⁵⁵.

The disturbance derived from the prolongation of this state is to be ascribed, to a large extent, to a subreption, stemmed from the will, consisting in conferring a position in space to the soul, so that the soul comes into contradiction with its main function, which Thomas of Aquinas calls *transcendentia* and Aristotle formulates as the capacity to be, in some man-

51 N. Pirillo (2003: 393–394) has collected some annotations from the *Lectures on Anthropology* where Kant praises Montaigne’s self-observation, which takes place *im singulari* and only regards the empirical I. Kant seems to discover in this method a powerful medicine against the inner illumination which all the authors of diaries allege.

52 *Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 133.

53 *Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 134.

54 See the description of the awaked dreamer [*wachender Träumer*] in *TG*, AA 02: 343–344. Cf. *op. cit.*, AA 02 317: “Das Schattenreich ist das Paradies der Phantasten. Hier finden sie ein unbegrenztes Land, wo sie sich nach Belieben anbauen können. Hypochondrische Dünste, Ammenmärchen und Klosterwunder lassen es ihnen an Bauzeug nicht ermangeln”.

55 *KrV*, § 24, B 156–157. In the *Fortschritte* (AA 20: 270) Kant stresses the fact that every act of attention affects the inner sense and that, if it goes on for a large time, it could become bothering [*beschwerlich*]. “Attentio prolongata fatigat”, we read in a reflexion of the 60’ (AA 15: 59).

ner, all the things⁵⁶. The pre-critical text *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* establishes that an endeavouring meditation, an anxious or happy state are occasions which make possible to downplay the demand of an accurate place for the “organ of the soul”, because sometimes one thinks it lays on the brain, and some other times on the heart or on the diaphragm. This fluctuation shows that mind, by suffering the semblance that thoughts factually lie in one of those organs, shakes a different organ each time. Kant holds responsible for such subreption the physiological theory of the *ideae materiales*, which was of wide use among the supporters of the Cartesian metaphysics:

Die Ursache, die da macht, daß man die nachdenkende Seele vornehmlich im Gehirne zu empfinden glaubt, ist vielleicht diese. Alles Nachsinnen erfordert die Vermittelung der Zeichen für die zu erweckende Ideen, um in deren Begleitung und Unterstützung diesen den erforderlichen Grad Klarheit zu geben. Die Zeichen unserer Vorstellungen aber sind vornehmlich solche, die entweder durchs Gehör oder das Gesicht empfangen sind, welche beide Sinne durch die Eindrücke im Gehirne bewegt werden, indem ihre Organen auch diesem Theile am nächsten liegen. Wenn nun die Erweckung dieser Zeichen, welche Cartesius *ideas materiales* nennt, eigentlich eine Reizung der Nerven zu einer ähnlichen Bewegung mit derjenigen ist, welche die Empfindung ehemals hervorbrachte, so wird das Gewebe des Gehirns im Nachdenken vornehmlich genöthigt werden mit vormaligen Eindrücken harmonisch zu beben und dadurch ermüdet werden⁵⁷.

Kant does not support this explanation, but he acknowledges that at least it does not mixture the reasons of the physiologist with those of the met-

56 *TG*, AA 02: 325 and *V-MP-K2/Heinze*, AA 28: 756–757. Euler rejected all the essays to place human soul in the space in *Letters to a German Princess*, XII, Charpentier, 1843, pp. 235–236: “mon âme n'existe pas dans un certain lieu, mais elle agit dans un certain lieu”.

57 *TG*, AA 02: 324; cf. *op. cit.*: 345. For the Kantian attribution of the *ideae materiales* to Descartes we refer to the erudite footnote that G. Chamayou (2007: 250–251) prepared for his edition of the French translation of the Epilogue to the “On the soul's organ”. The footnote collects interesting remarks about this elusive Kantian term from scholars as J. Ferrari and R. Brandt. The last one points out that the *ideae materiales* appear, as far as we could check, in different passages (§§ 23, 33, 35 and 42) of the Latin but not of the french edition of the *Passiones animae*. Descartes refers in the *Treatise of Man* to “the ideas that take form on the surface” of the pineal gland (AT XI, 184). Max Dessoir (1924: 226) says that during the XVIII Century the formation of figures which are claimed to be the effect of movements produced in the brain was an extended method used among doctors and metaphysicians in order to find the place which thought occupies.

aphysicist. The alleged organic traces, which ideas leave behind, repeat, as a kind of pathological reverse of our receptivity, the manner in which the wordly things affect us, so that, whereas in the case of ideas, the guidelines of the thought movement “meet in the brain,”⁵⁸ producing futile ghosts—*velut aegri somnia, vanae finguntur species*—, in the case of things, the same guidelines meet outside the brain, conveying us the existence of an external world.

Nonetheless, if one hopes to inquire what thinking actually means, it is necessary to dispense with the Cartesian support of the organic traces which the thought is supposed to leave on the brain. Inner experience confirms that the only non pathological approach to the soul [*Seele*] stems from its activity and force—*virtus*—, that is, from the use of the cognitive faculties, whose effects we perceive in the mind [*Gemüth*]:

[T]he soul is an object of the inner sense and, therefore, it does not occupy any place. But, if I ascribe a place to it, I make of it an object of external sense and I turn it into matter. For this reason, its presence in the body cannot be determined *localiter*, but *virtualiter*, deriving from the influence that it has over the body⁵⁹.

As we read in Kant’s *Epilogue* to the text *About the Organ of Soul* of the anatomist Sömmerring, “although most people believe to feel the thought in the brain, however it is only a mistake of subreption”⁶⁰, because they confuse the *judgment about the cause* which could have produced this sensation *with the sensation* of the real locality of the cause. The presence *virtualiter* of the soul requires accomplishing a hermeneutics of its effects,

58 *TG*, AA 02: 345.

59 V-MP/Mron, AA 29: 909 and V-MS/Vigil, AA 29: 1028–1030. It is advisable to read the introductory study of G. Chamayou (2007: 16–19) to the french edition of Kant’s writings about the link between body and soul, because it offers a profitable outcome about the Kantian critique of those projects which intend to locate the human soul. Cf. V-MP/Dohna, AA 28: 680: “anima, könnte man Seele, das Subjekt der Empfindung, animus, Gemüth das Subjekt der Gedanken, und spiritus Geist—als Subject der Spontaneität—nennen”. Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum naturae*, III, vv. 136–161, where is called anima the vital principle scattered through the body and animus the faculty to think and desire, placed into the breast.

60 *Aus Sömmerring: Über das Organ der Seele*, AA 12: 32–35. Regarding the reach that this short writing has on the Kantian position about the opening of the mind to the world, we refer to the paper of J. González Fisac, “El mundo como ámbito intencional: vida y virtualidad. La (di)solución hermenéutico-metafísica del problema de la comunidad alma-cuerpo en Kant”, *Proceedings of the VIII Philosophical Anthropology International Congress*, Madrid, UNED (in print).

which will dissolve any claim to the assignment of a place in space to it. This last remark is important to a large extent for the Kantian analyse of unconscious thought⁶¹. Once abandoned the criterion of the anatomist, we will search the soul assessing the *interest*⁶² of our forces or faculties, so that mind [*Gemüth*], that is, “the faculty that combines the given representations and produces the empirical consciousness”⁶³, will supersede the place of soul [*Seele*]. This remark is of great importance for the “localization” of the obscure representations in the mind, because they also need the virtual presence of the transcendental consciousness or apperception, in absence of which the representations neither would be object of thought, nor would become something for us. In the *virtualiter* presence of the soul is to be found the Kantian formulation of the classical Aristotelian sentence, which claims that “the soul is, in a certain manner, all things”, so that “where the body is, there is also the soul”⁶⁴. According to this statement, every meditation which has been made according to the Cartesian proposal to speculate “back and forth over the traces of impressions remaining in the brain”⁶⁵ is destined to turn into a theoretical helplessness, since this procedure reduces us to mere spectators of the operations that nature executes on us. But as essential as the act that makes us an intelligence is the existence of some material to determine:

The proposition ‘I think’ or ‘I exist thinking’ is not a mere logical function [...] and cannot take place without the inner sense⁶⁶.

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- 61 Starobinski has analysed the link between body and soul, indissoluble while we are alive (1981: 273) and his conclusions are to a large extent valid for Kant's reflection on the unconscious: “Cessant d'avoir pour source exclusive la vie du corps, l'inconscient échappe à la compétence exclusive d'une approche médicale et relève d'une herméneutique”.
- 62 *KpV*, AA 05: 119, where the principle which contains the condition which enhances the exercise of a faculty is called “interest”.
- 63 *Aus Sömmerring...*, AA 12: 32, footnote; cf. the valuable comment of Krüger (1967: 43 ff.) about the distinction of *Seele* and *Gemüth* and its meaning for the Kantian question concerning the human nature.
- 64 *V-MP-K2/Heinze*, AA XXVIII: 757.
- 65 *Anth*, Pref., AA 07: 119. The letter addressed to Marcus Herz to the end of 1773 expresses Kant's distrust towards a physiological approach, as the one of Plattner, to the origin of our thoughts, see *Br*, AA 10: 145–146.
- 66 *KrV*, B 429 s. In a letter to Tieftrunk of 5th April 1798 (*Br*, AA 12: 241), Kant admits to be puzzled by the Fichtean idea of the subject, since a mere form of thought without any matter [*Stoff*] to determine would produce astonishment in the reader, who has not “anything in front of him to apply it to”; see observations about the letter and its bearing for understanding the Logic of Kant in Capozzi (2002: 141). Cf. *Opus postumum* (AA 21: 76).

Far from its application, the highest act of the faculty of understanding is an “undetermined empirical intuition”, an “undetermined perception” and “something real”⁶⁷, which still does not produce any experience. We will say, then, as a provisional conclusion that the healthiest state for a cognitive faculty depends on its use, so that we will lack psychological consciousness if we do not refer it to the logical consciousness⁶⁸. This is equivalent to claim that the most harmful thing to the mind is getting obsessed by self-observation. It should not be a surprise that the first progress a doctor has to make with a hypochondriac patient is to succeed in leading him to forget himself⁶⁹. Turning to oneself and becoming the object of the own thoughts must be practised from time to time [*Zwischenräume*], but it must be carefully prevented that this endeavour becomes a habitual propensity, because it would exhaust the faculty of thought⁷⁰. The vital force gets stronger with the observation of external objects, whereas it weakens itself when the subject dives into the fearful images that he produces in his own mind. For this reason, it is better not to think about anything, to empty oneself of thoughts, instead of fixing the attention on oneself following that physical egoism discussed appropriately in the “Lectures on Anthropology”. The tree of life may be green and golden, but we have no other option left than to observe it through the unbiased and grey lens of theory⁷¹. And, since we speak about *our* life, theory first of all must withdraw the privileged approach which we allege to have over it, in order to clear what makes our *life* a *common* life, which takes place in the community with others. To fill this theoretical *locus vacans* a pragmatic *episteme* rises, which offers to the blind alley of speculation about oneself an exit called *game*, that is, a pluralist stage, which we will return to in the third epigraph. Proceeding in this way, Kant indeed follows a remark which Descartes conveyed to Princess Elisabeth in a famous letter of 1643, where the French philoso-

67 *KrV*, B 423, footnote. Cf. Ameriks (2002: 81) and Mathieu (1994: 80).

68 *V-MP-LI/Pöhlitz*, AA 28: 227 and *KrV*, A 108 and A 118.

69 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 862: “Je mehr wir aber außer uns sind, und uns mit andern Gegenständen beschäftigen, desto mehr schonen wir unsre Seelenkraft”; cf. *V-Parow*, AA 25: 251–252.

70 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 862–863.

71 Goethe, *Faust*, part I, vv. 2038–2039. The following passage of *Log*, AA 09: 33, displays in an excellent manner the priority of the transcendental apperception to every empirical act of representation. Actually this order is condition of possibility of our experience: “Eigentlich ist das Bewußtsein eine Vorstellung, daß eine andre Vorstellung in mir ist”; cf. T. de Aquino, *STh*, I, qu. 14, a. 1, sol.

pher referred to common social intercourses as the best means to comprehend the union between body and soul⁷². Before that, we will look into Kant's disapproval towards the psychological discovery of obscure representations which the German followers of Leibnizian metaphysics had made.

III. The Only Possible Argument for the Deduction of Unconsciousness: The Transcendental Consciousness as Thread to Discover the Obscure Operations of the Mind

The majority of the research dedicated to inquire about the emergence of the unconscious in occidental philosophy usually considers the Leibnizian theory of the *petites perceptions*⁷³ as the first appearance of this matter⁷⁴. Leibniz leads the consciousness to submerge in a dream which will yield a positive result, if only the consciousness renounces to interpose its spontaneity in the reception of the qualitative variety of the world. This exhortation fits to the comparison of the mind with a marble stone with subtle veins, not totally compact, on which different events have left their trace. The cause of our subtle and ephemeral contact with those particles of the universe is our incapacity to comprehend with distinctness the infinity, as

72 *Letters to Princess Elisabeth*, 28th June 1643, AT, III, pp. 691–695: “Les choses qui appartiennent à l’union de l’âme et du corps ne se connaissent qu’obscurément par l’entendement seul, ni même par l’entendement aidé de l’imagination; mais elles se connaissent très clairement par les sens. [...] C’est en usant seulement de la vie et des conversations ordinaires, et en s’abstenant de méditer et d’étudier aux choses qui exercent l’imagination, qu’on apprend à concevoir l’union de l’âme et du corps”.

73 *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Preface, in *Philos. Schr.*, ed. C. J. Gerhardt, vol. V, Berlin, 1882 (reprint.: Hildesheim/New York, G. Olms, 1965), pp. 46–48. See also Deleuze (1991: 31 and 37): “L’inclusion, l’inhérence, est la cause finale du pli, si bien qu’on passe insensiblement de celui-ci à celle-là. [...] l’âme est l’expression du monde (actualité), mais parce que le monde est l’exprimé de l’âme (virtualité)”. Cf. *Deutl.*, AA 02: 277: “Leibniz dachte sich eine einfache Substanz, die nichts als dunkle Vorstellungen hätte, und nannte sie eine schlummernde Monade”. In *Nova Dilucidatio*, AA 01: 408, is considered out of doubt the existence of an “*infinita, quae semper animae interne praesto est, quanquam obscura admodum totius universi perceptio*”.

74 I agree with La Rocca (2007: 63–64) in pointing out the disregard that has suffered the Kantian reflection about this subject. Several of his writings, but specially *L’intelletto oscuro. Coscienza e autocoscienza in Kant* (2007), have been crucial for laying out my own text.

God⁷⁵ is able to do. So we gain a clear idea only after gathering enough quantity of them. The Leibnizian monad lies on the antipodes of the Lockian conception of the mind⁷⁶, which refuses diametrically the existence of a latent activity in it, composed by microscopical perceptions, since there cannot be any shadowy side within the consciousness.

The thought of the Baroque revitalized the gigantomachia of being and not being thanks to a classification of human representations. In a text dated in 1684 Leibniz propounds a division of the representations in four levels—obscure and clear; confusing and distinct; adequate or inadequate and symbolic or intuitive—, so that human understanding will only reach the cognitive summit of intuition in the case of primitive notions, extremely simple. According to the precedent scheme an obscure notion is, unlike what it happens with clear knowledge, insufficient to know the represented thing—*quae non sufficit ad rem repraesentatam agnoscendam*—, opposed to the feature of clear knowledge:

An *obscure* notion is one that is not sufficient for recognizing the thing that it represents. Example: I once saw a certain flower but whenever I remember it I cannot bring it to mind well enough to recognize it, distinguishing it from other nearby flowers, when I see it again. Another kind of example: I have obscure notions when I think about some term for which there is no settled definition—such as Aristotle's *entelechy*, or his notion of cause when offered as something that is common to material, formal, efficient and final causes. And a proposition is obscure if it contains an obscure notion as an ingredient. Accordingly, knowledge is *clear* if it gives me the means for recognizing the thing that is represented. Clear knowledge is either confused or distinct. It is confused when I cannot list, one by one, the marks that enable me to differentiate the represented thing from other things, even though the thing has such marks into which its notion can be resolved. And so we recognize colours, smells, tastes, and other particular objects of the senses clearly enough to be able to distinguish them from one another, but only through the simple testimony of the senses, not by way of marks that we could list⁷⁷.

75 “Dieu seul a l’avantage de n’avoir que des connoissances intuitives” (*New Essays...*, l. IV, chap. 17, ed. de Gerhardt, vol. V, p. 472); cf. H. Adler (1988: 201).

76 In *New Essays* Leibniz, with the voice of Teophilus, charges Locke-Philathetes that he has identified, first, the confusion with the obscurity of representations and, second, the idea of something with its image, which can have faults originating in the senses and the imagination (book II, cap. XXIX). For Leibniz, our body is not on a par with our mind. For Locke, the body does not suppose any obstacle for the operations of understanding.

77 Leibniz (1765: 422–423).

Chr. Wolff informed Leibniz that the lecture of this text, which is from the *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis*, threw him “an unexpected light about the differences between notions”⁷⁸. In the *German Logic*, loyal to the Leibnizian approach, a *notio obscura*⁷⁹ is a notion whose *marks* are *insufficient* to make it known. Wolff mentions different reasons which make clear why some concepts become obscure, that is, a) the vagueness of certain objects, due to the distance which we contemplate them from; b) the difficulty to get to the proprieties of abstract concepts such as cause, end or essence, which would also explain the obscurity of philosophical vocabulary throughout the centuries and c) the distraction with which we perceive an object, which “just as when we pass through a garden and do not pay attention to the noun of an ignored plant that the gardener convey us, because our thoughts are more directed to the lady we intend to visit than the plant”⁸⁰. The examples mentioned above concern both the objective insufficiency of representations, which can be caused by the limitation of human cognitive faculties and the consequences of a deficit of attention. Either the thing itself does not let to be perceived with clarity, or we provoke that it is not perceived at all. On the contrary, if we had to spell out to a handicapped person what the red colour, the whistle of wind, the sound of the sea or the bang of waves⁸¹ are, we would meet other kind of thoughts. This time the thoughts would be necessarily confuse in logical terms, because we only could clarify them by leading that person to a place where he could observe the object of these clear but confuse representations⁸². Thereby, if his physical faculties allow it, we would offer him a direct experience of those things which we cannot put analytically in front of him. The Leibnizian nomenclature depends strongly upon the sense of sight, which actually guides the classification, so that we “judge, from the constitution of our thoughts, about the

78 Letter of Wolff to Leibniz, 21th february 1705, in *Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Chr. Wolff*: 18. In *German metaphysics* we read, according strictly to the Leibnizian classification, that “the difference of notions is the same that the one of perceptions: they are indeed *clear* and *obscure notions*, and the clear ones, *distinct* or *confused*” (§ 50) and the *German Logic* (chap. I, § 9) reproduces the Leibnizian division.

79 Wolff, *DL*, chap. I, § 13.

80 *Op. cit.*, § 23.

81 *Ibid*

82 *op. cit.*, § 14.

distinctness of vision”⁸³. For this reason, we use to say that when our thoughts are clear the light comes into our mind⁸⁴. From a cognitive point of view this means, regarding clear representations, an increase of the manifold of marks which are under the control of subject⁸⁵.

If for Leibniz the subject was no conscious of the perceptions which in an imperceptible manner left their trace on the marble surface of the mind as if they were veins, Wolff, as Baumgarten afterwards, declares that we actually have *some consciousness* of obscure representations in the mind. It is not the representation which is removed from the consciousness, but the object which the representation refers to. We only identify totally obscure perceptions⁸⁶ by inference from other perceptions that we observe with some clarity, but it must be admitted that, as we suppose an unconscious thought in them⁸⁷, it seems that we deal with a lack of thought. But obscure concepts “do not leave us without thoughts”⁸⁸, in spite of the mistakes they provoke, due to the fact that such representations entail a wide margin of error for our judgments. The obscurity of the mind entails, then, according to Wolff, a kind of inner mist, which belongs to the *remains* of our sensory contact with the world that the consciousness did not absorbed⁸⁹, what is very fruitful for the field of aesthetical knowledge. So Wolff goes beyond Leibniz by considering a sort of unde-

83 *DM*, § 200. In § 33 of *Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften*, Halle, Hemmerde, 1754 (Hildesheim/New York, G. Olms, 1976 reprint) of Meier, whose work serves as textual basis of Kant’s Lectures on Logic, we read that a representation is “clear [...] when we are conscious of it, or we know its difference with regard to others”. Obscurity, on the contrary, is defined by the impossibility to reach that state of clearness, absolutely (*cognitio absolute obscura*) or relatively (*cognitio relative obscura*) (§ 125); however, “none true knowledge is absolutely obscure”, so that there is nothing which should be considered absolutely obscure in cognitive terms. Every obscure knowledge is obscure only relatively, that is, “the forces of this or that one thinking being are not enough to clarify it” (*Ibid*). An absolutely obscure knowledge would be a “chimere” (*op. cit.*, § 156), which, although it should not be identified with a complete ignorance (*op. cit.*, § 157), would hidden so much its content to the extent to hamper its clearing with examples.

84 Wolff, *DM.*, §§ 203–204.

85 *Op. cit.*, §§ 207–209.

86 *Op. cit.*, §§ 193 and 213.

87 *Op. cit.*, § 731; cf. *PE*, § 200 and Meier, *Vernunftlehre*, § 156. La Rocca (2007: 75, n. 41).

88 Wolff, *DL*, § 10.

89 See La Rocca (2007: 74–76).

terminated objectivity⁹⁰, defective but positive in its indetermination, as reference of the obscure representations. Baumgarten will link these representations with the *fundus animae*⁹¹ and the aesthetical *impetus*.

This classification of representations moves from a hypothesis abandoned definitively by Kant, that is, the psychological genesis of consciousness from an original act of distinguishing [*Unterscheidung*], which enables us to split the external things from our inner self. If this act was absent we would not be able to recognize ourselves as subject of our thoughts either. In the Leibnizian-Wolffian school to observe [*bemerken*] a mark [*Merkmal*] that distinguishes something from something else is a general act, in contrast with the consciousness of our selves; even more, that psychological operation generates the latter, which amounts to making empirical psychology the key piece to build a rational or logical psychology. It is worth mentioning that the latter will consider all judgments of an analytical kind. To observe [*bemerken*] grants to the consciousness the possibility to notice the difference between what is external and itself, that is, the possibility to direct its attention to its own acts⁹². It should not surprise Kant's temporary admission of empirical psychology in the household of metaphysics, according to the scholar use, as a foreigner who receives a provisional asylum, "until it is in a position to set up an establishment of its own in a complete Anthropology, the pendant to the empirical doctrine of nature"⁹³. It is a piece too important to be expelled outright from metaphysics, but it should radically modify its approach to the question about the origin of human knowledge, if it intends to deserve something more than a provisional settlement. In fact, the first decision Kant makes in order to abandon the analysis of the obscure carried out by Wolff, Baumgarten and Meier is to abolish the link between *mark*

90 Baumgarten, *Met.*, §§ 511 and 522; cf. the Kantian use of the term *vagum* in the context of the claim of a systematic unity of reason in *KrV*, A 680/B 708. Cf. La Rocca (2006: 41, n. 64; 44–48; 52–53); Agamben (2005: 8–11 and 18–19).

91 About the relationship between the *Grund der Seele* [*fundus animae*] (*Aesth.*, § 80) with the "notre propre fonds" of Leibniz (*Phil. Schr.*, vol. V, 46, 373) and the German mystic tradition from Eckhart, see La Rocca (2006: 44, n. 79).

92 Cf. La Rocca (2007: 71–72): "[L']atto del differenziare è appunto più originario della autocoscienza in quanto tale, perché quest'ultima sorge da una divisione originaria tra ciò che è nel soggetto e ciò che si trova fuori di esso, il cui carattere di essere "esterno" è istituito dalla sua differenza. La sfera della coscienza, per quanto comprenda una implicita componente riflessiva (distinguere sé da altro), è costituita tuttavia dall'atto di *Bemerken*, del notare distinguendo"; cf. Wolff, *DM*, §§ 45 and 201 and *PR*, § 21.

93 *KrV*, A 848/B 876-A849/B 877.

and *consciousness*⁹⁴. Rationalist philosophers remained within the boundaries of empirical psychology, which deals with the chaotic and rough matter deposited in the *fundus animae*. Afterwards, the soul elaborates this matter until achieving the level of clarity and distinctness⁹⁵. Meier, whose *Vernunftlehre* Kant uses as basic manual in his *Lectures on Logic*, can be used to consolidate the fixed correspondence between distinction and consciousness, which makes the first the source of the second and ascribes obscurity to those representations lacking this origin⁹⁶. Since “from nothing, nothing comes out” [*aus Nichts wird Nichts*]⁹⁷, the obscure representations will be the origin of the rest.

The Kantian separation, mentioned above, entails two important consequences. First of all, the way rationalism inquired about the origin of the representative force suffers from a fundamental flaw, for this kind of inquiry leaves aside the question of the logical right a representation has, restraining itself to describe the psychological content of that force. The discovery of unconscious marks reveals that the distinction cannot be either the unique or the first cause of objectivity of representations, the “stage” for which has not been ascribed yet to a concrete instance, which could only be transcendental. To display the structure of objectivity is, indeed, the function that transcendental apperception accomplishes, which, far from being a live-experience of our psyche, is the best antidote against every spirit-seer, since it distinguishes the subjective validity of representations from the objective and universal. Thus, the empirical psychology leaves the little and less oxygenated place [*Plätzchen*] it occupies in the ancient shelves of scholar metaphysics, which are already at the risk of collapsing, to move to the stage [*Schauplatz*] of the world⁹⁸. This departure will entail a really transfiguration for a discipline which aspires to be a science, whose corollary shall be the discovering of a pragmatic use of

94 R 2275, AA 16: 296: “Beym Bewustseyn sind Merkmale. aber wo Merkmale [se] vorgestellt werden, da ist nicht immer Bewustseyn”.

95 Meier, *Auszug*, § 161.

96 Meier, *Auszug*, § 115 and *Vernunftlehre*, §§ 146, 155 and 158. Cf. La Rocca (2007: 77).

97 Meier, *Vernunftlehre*, § 159.

98 PG, Einl. § 2, AA 09: 158: “Die Welt ist das Substrat und der Schauplatz, auf dem das Spiel unserer Geschicklichkeit vor sich geht. Sie ist der Boden, auf dem unsere Erkenntnisse erworben und angewendet werden. Damit aber das in Ausübung könne gebracht werden, wovon der Verstand sagt, daß es geschehen soll: so muß man die Beschaffenheit des Subjectes kennen, ohne welches das erstere unmöglich wird”; see also the use of the term “Weltbühne” in IAG, AA 08: 17, 32.

reason. At first, it will be necessary to distinguish between the issue about consciousness and its unity, on the one hand, and the issue regarding sources of representation, on the other, to stop ascribing to sensibility the mistakes stemmed from the obscurity and confusion of representative marks⁹⁹. Understanding, as occurs with imagination, thinks also in the obscurity, although in these circumstances we just obtain consciousness of their effects. So the unconsciousness is no longer a mere default or privation, usual in the data given by the senses, nor the lowest level of the life of the mind. Only overcoming the opposition between obscurity and clarity, corresponding to sensibility and understanding, the field of unconsciousness will be opened in Kant's thought. It is not enough to distinguish the structure of an analytical judgment from that of a synthetic one to go forward. Thus, the *opportunity*¹⁰⁰—the use of rules *in concreto*—ought to appear in order to recognize the traces that obscure judgments of the mind have left in us. This recognition cannot employ the same means provided by the material ideas of the Cartesianism, but should rather adopt a *pragmatic* modulation, which will bound the huge field of the obscure in the mind without appealing to a concealed metaphysical order. Actually, the notion of game has finally made the charm of the *petites perceptions*¹⁰¹ disappear. If the pure logic tiptoed around the “applied logic”¹⁰², now the information that the senses, the games of imagination, the laws of memory and the power of habits convey about our concepts and judgments is especially interesting. It should not be forgotten that general logic had not qualms to draw the heuristic principles which guide the thought from the common understanding, be-

99 *V-MP-LI/Pöhlitz*, AA 28: 229–230 and *V-Anth/Collins*, AA 25: 31–32; cf. *Anth*, §§ 6–7 and *Log, Einl.*, § V, AA 09: 34–35.

100 This term, which entails an objective indetermination and, consequently, a claim of reflection, is really important to elaborate a theory of prudence, at least from the work of B. Gracián. S. Vaquero (2009) is a valuable work regarding the subject, since S. Vaquero connects the project of a “Reason of State neither political nor economical, but of yourself”, announced in *The Hero* of Gracián with the foucaultian notion of “gouvernementalité”, understood as “rencontre entre les techniques de domination exercées sur les autres et les techniques de soi” (1994: 785). Cf. Jankélévitch (1980: 124 and 126) and the erudite contribution of N. Elias to this subject (1997: 90 s).

101 Satura (1971: 55–64) offers a list, which pretends to be more exhaustive than systematic, of the Kantian examples of obscure representations; cf. Manganaro (1983: 105–109) and Tortolone (1994: 258–263). Kant displays the three first classes of Satura's division in the R 177, AA 15: 65.

102 *KrV*, A 52/B 77; cf. *Logik Hechsel* (Kant, *Logik-Vorlesung*: 546).

cause a large stock of abstract laws awaited there to be disclosed¹⁰³. As a matter of fact, without the hunter who senses the trace of the prey the academical logic would have never emerged, as without the land surveyor Geometry would have never appeared.

We must not forget the second consequence mentioned above. It seems paradoxical that the feature of understanding as a faculty would be associated to the disclosure of the field of representations we are not conscious of. But that is what actually occurs. The ground to tear apart judgments the predicate of which lies retreated and concealed [*versteckter Weise*]¹⁰⁴ in the concept of the subject from those which express what happens in the world is the unique thread to locate logical decisions we made unconsciously. Without the opening to the worldly syntax provided by the structure called synthetic judgment *a priori* it would not be possible to clarify anything from the analytical bottom of obscure representations, whose reality depends on the transcendental apperception, as occurs with any other appearance of the world. Even more, if we do not enter *into the world*, the obscure representations will have serious difficulties to be conveniently identified. As soon as we feel ourselves affected by something, reflection begins to work¹⁰⁵, albeit we are not conscious of this activity, which is often hectic. We forget too early that any content we are conscious of is owed to the understanding, to the extent that the best argument against the fear to death is that “the thought *I am not* simply cannot *exist*”¹⁰⁶. The following extract from the *KrV* makes the synthetic unity of apperception the sole possible source for the clarity of representations:

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

103 *WDO*, AA 08: 133; cf. *KU*, § 20, AA 05: 238: the common understanding or *sensus communis logicus* works with concepts according with “dunkel vorgestellten Principien”, unlike the *aestheticus* works according to principles which are usually overlapped in the common language; *Log*, AA 09: 11; *Anth*, § 6, AA 07: 139–140 and *Prol*, AA 04: 369.

104 *KrV*, *Einl.*, § IV, B 10; cf. *FM*, AA 20: 322: “Urtheile sind nämlich *analytisch*, wenn ihr Prädicat nur dasjenige klar (*explicite*) vorstellt, was in dem Begriffe des Subjects, obzwar dunkel (*implicité*), gedacht war; z.B. ein jeder Körper ist ausgedehnt”.

105 *V-MP-LI/Pölitz*, AA 28: 233–234.

106 *Anth*, § 27, AA 07: 167. Cf. R 1482, AA 15: 666: “Bewusstseyn der Vorstellungen und Bewusstseyn seines Zustandes der Vorstellung; der letzte kann klar seyn [ohn] und doch dunckele Vorstellungen enthalten”.

gleich selbst noch nicht das Bewußtsein der Synthesis der Vorstellungen ist, so setzt er doch die Möglichkeit der letzteren voraus, d.i. nur dadurch, daß ich das Mannigfaltige derselben in einem Bewußtsein begreifen kann, nenne ich dieselbe insgesamt meine Vorstellungen; denn sonst würde ich ein so vielfärbiges, verschiedenes Selbst haben, als ich Vorstellungen habe, deren ich mir bewußt bin [my emphasis]¹⁰⁷.

The empirical unity of apperception cannot generate any experience alone, because it is not able to unify the different representations according to any objectivity¹⁰⁸. The original synthetic unity of apperception is the transcendental-logical structure entrusted to open the realm of objectivity. For this reason it grants to our judgments of perception a necessary combination that transforms them into judgments of experience¹⁰⁹. Kant does not deny that the obscure representations prevail in our mind, but what he rather denies is that we could not notice them without submitting them at a given moment to the principles of objectivity, whose highest point is the original synthetic unity of apperception. If obscure representations *can* be *mine*, to declare both that they are possible representations and that they could become representations for me will be enough¹¹⁰. We

107 *KrV*, § 16, B 134; cf. *op. cit.*, A 117. Cf. La Rocca (2007: 99): “la coscienza della sintesi “scopre” l’identità, non la costituisce”.

108 Kant’s following remark stresses this default of the empirical consciousness: R 5923, AA 18, 386: “Allein das Bewusstseyn der Wahrnehmungen bezieht alle Vorstellung nur auf uns selbst als Modificationen unseres Zustandes; sie sind alsdenn unter sich getrennt, und vornehmlich sind sie nicht Erkenntnisse von irgend einem Dinge und beziehen sich auf kein Object. Sie sind also noch nicht Erfahrung, welche zwar empirische Vorstellung, aber zugleich als Erkenntnis der Gegenstände der Sinne enthalten muß”.

109 *KrV*, § 15, B 130: “[S]o ist alle Verbindung, wir mögen uns ihrer bewußt werden oder nicht, es mag eine Verbindung des Mannigfaltigen der Anschauung oder mancherlei Begriffe, und an der ersteren der sinnlichen oder nichtsinnlichen Anschauung sein, eine *Verstandeshandlung*, die wir mit der allgemeinen Benennung Synthesis belegen würden, um dadurch zugleich bemerklich zu machen, daß wir uns nichts als im Object verbunden vorstellen können, ohne es vorher selbst verbunden zu haben” [my italics].

110 *KrV*, § 16, B 131–132: “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*” [my italics]. Cf. La Rocca (2007: 106): “La autoconscienza psicologica ha come sua condizione (che aiuta a manifestare) la possibilità di una coscienza intenzionale, la quale—è la scoperta di Kant più decisiva—non è un atto puntuale di relazione di un singolo stato ad un singolo oggetto, ma è originariamente complessa, ossia presuppone la costitu-

perceive this *potentiality* as a suspicion that obscure representations hang around or that a latent judgment has moved us to perform some action. This is the Kantian correction to the rationalist question about what decides if a representation is something or rather nothing¹¹¹, which the following excerpt of the *KrV* shows with eloquence:

Klarheit ist nicht, wie die Logiker sagen, das Bewußtsein einer Vorstellung; denn ein gewisser Grad des Bewußtseins, der aber zur Erinnerung nicht zureicht, muß selbst in manchen dunkelen Vorstellungen anzutreffen sein, weil ohne alles Bewußtsein wir in der Verbindung dunkeler Vorstellungen keinen Unterschied machen würden, welches wir doch bei den Merkmalen mancher Begriffe (wie der von Recht und Billigkeit und des Tonkünstlers, wenn er viele Noten im Phantasiren zugleich greift) zu thun vermögen. Sondern eine Vorstellung ist klar, in der das Bewußtsein zum *Bewußtsein des Unterschiedes* derselben von andern zureicht. Reicht dieses zwar zur Unterscheidung, aber nicht zum Bewußtsein des Unterschiedes zu, so müßte die Vorstellung noch dunkel genannt werden. Also giebt es unendlich viele Grade des Bewußtseins bis zum Verschwinden¹¹².

Kant makes the transcendental apperception the necessary threshold for any representation referred to objects, but it is not indispensable to this threshold to be noticed with distinctness, not even with what is usually called clarity. Often the transcendental apperception remains in a floating state, more obscure than clear¹¹³, as the normative system of their mother language can be obscure to numerous speakers, but they do not stop to communicate with each other. As what happens to the rest of acts which understanding structurally sustains, we are only rarely conscious of the “blind function of mind” which synthesis is. The task of the under-

zione di un intero mondo conoscibile da *una* coscienza: presuppone la dimensione che Kant chiama dell’ “esperienza possibile””; cf. R 5923, AA 18: 386.

111 *KrV*, A 103–104: “Denn dieses *eine* Bewußtsein ist es, was das Mannigfaltige, nach und nach Angesehene und dann auch Reproducirte in eine Vorstellung vereinigt. *Dieses Bewußtsein kann oft nur schwach sein*, so daß wir es nur in der Wirkung, nicht aber in dem Actus selbst, d.i. unmittelbar, mit der Erzeugung der Vorstellung verknüpfen: aber unerachtet dieser Unterschiede muß doch immer ein Bewußtsein angetroffen werden, wenn ihm gleich die hervorstechende Klarheit mangelt, und ohne dasselbe sind Begriffe und mit ihnen Erkenntniß von Gegenständen ganz unmöglich” [my italics].

112 *KrV*, B 414–415; cf. *op. cit.* A 731/B 759; cf. *Prol.*, § 24, AA 04: 306. Cf. La Rocca (2007: 109): “Questo livello minimo non è un livello minimo di autoconsapevolezza, ma un livello minimo di ordine strutturale—regolarità—che possa tradursi in possibilità (solo possibilità) di autoscoscienza completa, ossia di *coscienza degli oggetti e insieme delle regole della loro unificazione*”.

113 *KrV*, A 104, A 106, A 116 and 123.

standing is to bring this synthesis “to concepts” and this task turns it into a specific faculty¹¹⁴. If some obscure representations can belong to the interconnected context of experience, it will hold them as the legitimate bottom of it, kept latent in the empirical consciousness¹¹⁵. The obscure representations are not *effectively* submitted to the original synthetic unity of apperception. The proof of that is that we do not remember them nor their acquisition has been registered in the treasury of consciousness. But it would be enough to be *virtually* submitted to that unity. This is the only shelter that understanding offers the obscure representations. This explains a remark of great importance for the *Anthropology* of Kant, since, although man could pretend to regard his obscure representations as an animal would do it, that is, without being conscious of them, nevertheless, man is *determined* to see them—even to recognize that he is not able to clarify them—with the aid of light which self-consciousness delivers, what the animal is not able to do. Thus, the Leibnizian-Wolffian approach to the unconscious thought is turned over. Not to mention the romantic sympathy for the unconscious, for the obscure has already no lessons to give to the transcendental apperception. Rather, it is the unique means to notice the presence of the unconscious in the mind. Therefore, the best explorer of obscure representations would not be the visionary, but one who not only knows enough the conditions of possible experience, but is also a man of world [*Weltmann*], that is, somebody who knows when to interrupt the periods devoted to speculation to have leisure with other human beings in society¹¹⁶. The fact that we are able to give reason of the sequence of steps which guided our unconscious judgments (in case we decide to compose its hypothetical genesis as far as we can), proves that the operations executed in the obscurity of the mind are not mere organic events. One more time, the power to say “I” raises us infinitely above the animal, which certainly distinguishes, but has no consciousness of the distinctions it makes¹¹⁷:

114 *KrV*, § 10, A 78/B 103; cf. *op. cit.*, § 15, B 130.

115 Cf. La Rocca (2007: 115–116 and 2008: 61 and 66).

116 Kant's *Anthropology* closes the gap that Hume's scepticism established between the speculation and the philosophical delire, on the one hand, and the effects of leisure and distraction, on the other; see *Treatise of Human Nature*, I, IV, vii, SB 269, where that gap appears as methodic condition of the “unique science of man” (*op. cit.*, 273), that is, of the science of human nature.

117 Spitzfindigkeit, AA 02: 59–60. C. Ginzburg finds in this “physical distinction” the intuition claimed by the “indiciary paradigm”, which he proposes to apply

Alles in der Natur, sowohl in der leblosen als auch in der belebten Welt, geschieht nach Regeln, ob wir gleich diese Regeln nicht immer kennen. [...] Auch die Ausübung unsrer Kräfte geschieht nach gewissen Regeln, die wir befolgen, zuerst derselben *unbewußt*, bis wir zu ihrer Erkenntniß allmählig durch Versuche und einen längern Gebrauch unsrer Kräfte gelangen, ja uns am Ende dieselben so geläufig machen, daß es uns viele Mühe kostet, sie *in abstracto* zu denken. So ist z.B. die allgemeine Grammatik die Form einer Sprache überhaupt. Man spricht aber auch, ohne Grammatik zu kennen; und der, welcher, ohne sie zu kennen, spricht, hat wirklich eine Grammatik und spricht nach Regeln, deren er sich aber nicht bewußt ist¹¹⁸.

The general logic is a matter of surface, whose task is to rule the most visible and illuminated zone of our judgments and reasoning. Even a logic attentive to the contents, as transcendental logic, which recognizes the existence of a “blind function of the mind” as synthesis is, does not inquire the reflective activities retreated in the shadowy side of the mind. This task is eminently metaphysical and, to be precise, belongs to the matter Kant considers the heiress of the needy empirical psychology of rationalism, namely, the anthropology as a pragmatic knowledge.

IV. From the *petites perceptions* to the Concept of Game: The Pragmatic Map of the Representations in the Mind

The appearances bearing on the obscure activity of the cognitive faculties of the mind show also the connection between these faculties. The fact that reason prepares the field to understanding¹¹⁹, by ordering the collection of its concepts in accordance with a systematic unity, remembers—*mutatis mutandis*—what happens to someone who decodes the characters

to the field of historiography and which “closely connects man as an animal with others animal species”. Cf. Ginzburg (2000: 193); Mathieu (1994: 82).

118 Log, AA 09: 11. cf. V-Lo/Blomberg, § 125, AA 24: 119: “Die Logic schreibt uns die Regeln vor, welche wir anwenden sollen, um zu wissen, wie wir verfahren sollen mit Erkenntnißen deren wir uns bewust sind, daß wir sie wircklich besitzen” and § 131, AA 24: 123: “Die Lehre von den dunkelen Erkenntnißen ist gar nicht logisch, sondern nur Metaphysisch. Die logica ist nicht eine Wißenschaft über die Natur des Subjects, der Menschlichen Seele, um zu erkennen, was darinnen eigentlich verborgen liege. sondern sie sezet schon klare Begriffe zum voraus, und handelet von dem Gebrauche unseres Verstandes, und unserer Vernunft”; V-Lo/*Philippi*, ad § 10, AA 24: 340.

119 *KrV*, B 685.

of a text: he suspects to have been performing unconscious calculations¹²⁰. The reader, as well as his understanding, only notices the authentic point of departure afterwards, namely, after having finished reading either a literary text or the experience as an interconnected space of appearances. This is a restraint, regarding the knowledge about the human nature, that Anthropology has to take seriously into account, for when the springs of a mental operation are active, we cannot observe them, whilst when we observe them, they stop working or they radically modify its activity¹²¹. Just then the crucial question emerges: Have I been conscious of the whole cognitive operations required to do what I have been doing? The question does not undertake an exhaustive inquiry of what kind and how many operations and assumptions were required promptly for the activity of spelling and after for the one of reading. The question is settled when noticing the existence of an “unconscious cognitive”¹²², what often occurs in a so ephemeral manner that merely to spell out becomes a really thorny task¹²³. A different description of this phenomenon,

120 *NG*, AA 02, 191: “Allein welche bewunderungswürdige Geschäftigkeit ist nicht in den Tiefen unsres Geistes verborgen, die wir mitten in der Ausübung nicht bemerken, darum weil der Handlungen sehr viel sind, jede einzelne aber nur sehr dunkel vorgestellt wird. Die Beweisthümer davon sind jedermann bekannt; man mag unter diesen nur die Handlungen in Erwägung ziehen, die unbemerkt in uns vorgehen, wenn wir lesen, so muß man darüber erstaunen. Man kann unter andern hierüber die Logik des Reimarus nachsehen, welcher hierüber Betrachtung anstellt”; cf. *KrV*, A 314/B 370–371, *Prol.*, § 30, AA 04: 312 and *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 479; see Kitcher (1999: 381) and Volkelt (1876).

121 *Anth*, *Vor.*, AA 07: 121.

122 The relevance that Kant recognizes to these operations that the mind carries out should be enough to consider its analysis of intellectual obscurity close to the studies of Piaget about the cognitive unconsciousness. See “Inconscient affectif et inconscient cognitif”, in: Id., *Problèmes de psychologie génétique*, Paris, Denoël, 1972, p. 11: “le sujet [...] a conscience des résultats qu’ils obtiennent, mais nullement des mécanismes intimes qui ont transformé sa pensée, les structures de celle-ci demeurent inconscientes en tant que structures. Ce sont ces mécanismes en tant que structures et que fonctionnement que nous appellerons globalement l’inconscient cognitif”. Cassirer (1956: 203–204) has appealed to an analogous argument against the reduction of a linguistic form to a sound matter.

123 Manganaro has highlighted that Kant’ discovery of the existence of obscure representations does not intend a complete illumination of the mind (1983: 105): “[I]l processo Kantiano di *Aufklärung*, la quale ha tante affinità con la *Erklärung* di Wolff, non va semplicemente dall’oscuro al chiaro, bensì dal chiaro all’oscuro, ossia da ciò che è dato come un chiaro “indizio” alla ricostruzione del campo dell’oscuro. In questo processo, che è un processo memorativo, più che cognitivo in senso freudiano, l’assoluta completezza del mondo oscuro è postu-

where a faculty overcomes the boundaries of another one for its own sake, is the connection between *thinking* and *knowledge*. So that, in opposition to the conditions of possibility of knowledge, the only thing demanded of me to think something is not to contradict myself¹²⁴. Kant asserts that we never stop thinking while we are alive, what does the same as affirming that understanding is not the unique faculty which takes part in knowledge. We cannot try to forecast in the most diligent manner the conclusions that our judgments will finally draw. This is a requirement [*Bedürfnis*] which urges on our faculty of judgment, whose performances we are not allowed to interrupt in an arbitrary manner¹²⁵. Even more, the whole judging activity assumes that things, natural or not, will let themselves be classified in accordance with the conditions of a logical system. Occasionally, due to a habit, we do not notice this appeal [*Geheiß*] originally rooted in the faculty of judgment¹²⁶, but without it the complete activity of this faculty would sink. On the other hand, according a particular interpretation of the *sumpnoia panta* that Leibniz borrowed from the stoics, none of our judgments remains isolated. In fact, each judgment depends on an amazing activity enacted by the faculty of judgment. In this perpetual exercise of anticipation the shadow of the unconscious perceptions of Rationalism should not be noticed, but the influence that the systematic order searched by reason on the works of understanding should. Actually, reason displays like a stage the field of understanding, as emerges from the investigation of the natural purposiveness [N.B. purposiveness is the translation of *Zweckmässigkeit* according to the Cambridge edition] which confirms the rational tendency to produce transcendent concepts¹²⁷. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the existence of purpo-

lata, ma mai data". Foucault (2008: 38–39) emphatically remarked the relationship between the mind regions that we control and those that in the best case we play with, in an active or passive sense, taking as thread the relationship between *Gemüt* and *Geist*.

124 *KrV*, B XXVIII.

125 *WDO*, AA 08: 139.

126 *KU*, *Einl.*, § VI, AA 05: 87–188.

127 *Prol*, AA 04: 362 ff. To the extent to say that “auch Erfahrung mittelbar unter der Gesetzgebung der Vernunft stehe” (364), assertion to which could be added that the connection, the most direct, between both orders is generally a regulative sign which remains obscure for the researcher, who only achieve to continue with difficulties. Cf. *KrV*, A 737/B 765 s., where Kant, regarding the impossibility to use a dogmatic method in philosophy, asserts that our reason is, in a subjective sense, a system, but that, when its use proceeds with concepts, reason

siveness concerns specially the use of a faculty¹²⁸, so who denies or conceals its existence would ground a peculiar “tyranny of values”, which perhaps would turn the mind as *Gemüth* into the proper object of study of a philosophy of mind. In this sense, sciences as arithmetic and geometry would never have arisen if their founders would have been guided by the stingy question: *what is this for?*¹²⁹ Nothing great has been done in science without granting a horizon which must be maintained in half-light. On the contrary, regarding the practical use of reason, the half-lighted horizon where passions and their obscure misinterpretation of the practical tenets move generates actually a cancer for the practical reason.

Now I suggest focusing on the rich content that Kant's lectures on logic and anthropology offer about obscure representations. First, we have to tackle what discipline is incumbent to determine “the reflections that understanding has done in obscurity”¹³⁰. Metaphysics, and not logic, should be chosen to carry out this task, since, as seen above, if such goal were attempted from a logical point of view, it would be severely hampered. The discovery of the darkness of the mind is so indissolubly associated to the history of this sought-after science¹³¹ and, indeed, to the entire philosophy, that cannot leave in the hands of the mathematical calculation the results derived from concepts that have been exhaustively refined. For this reason, the latter makes progress insofar as the analysis of its concepts also progresses. Taking into account that “most part of the activity of understanding occurs in the darkness”¹³², the scholar of metaphysics cannot get rid of the responsibility of research; as far as possible, the sources where “the hidden springs of what takes place at light”¹³³ lie. Indeed, such a study is no trifle¹³⁴:

should be considered as a “system of research according to unity principles”, which the experience provides the necessarily material with.

128 *KrV*, A 817/B 845.

129 *Log*, AA 09: 42. The article of Pozzo (2005: 198–202) contains valuable information about the influence of the doctrine of the logical horizon in Kant.

130 *V-Lo/Pölitz*, AA 24: 536.

131 *V-Lo/Blomberg*, AA 24: 123: “Die Lehre von den dunckelen Erkenntnißen ist gar nicht logisch, sonderen nur metaphysisch” and *V-Lo/Philippi*, AA 24: 410.

132 R 177, AA 15: 65; cf. R 2342, AA 16: 324: “Die dunkele wahre Erkenntniß ist das *materiale* zu klahren Wahren Begriffen, *e. g.* des Christen in der Religion”. In a letter addressed to Reinhold, dated on the 20th september 1791, AA 11: 288, Kant declares that the analysis promotes the elaboration of a *Critique of pure reason*, since it allows that “what still appears obscure becomes distinct”.

133 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 479.

134 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 481; cf. *V-Parow*, AA 25: 252

Diese duncklen Gründe zu entwickeln ist das Geschäft des Philosophen, wobei wir oft die Vortrefflichkeit der entfalteten Einrichtung des Menschen bewundern. Die Keime unserer Gedanken liegen nur in uns selbst, und dies ist der wahre Schatz der menschlichen Seele; das, was man bis jetzt entwickelt hat, ist unendlich wenig gegen das, was man noch entwickeln könnte. Alle Metaphysiker, Moralisten, müssen demnach zur Aufklärung der dunklen Vorstellungen in dem Menschen beitragen, weil es darin auf die Begriffe der Menschen ankommt, die sie bei sich haben¹³⁵.

In this overall context of the research the *judgments in advance* [*vorläufige Urteile*]¹³⁶ deserve a special mention, as pieces of a heuristic logic spread along Kant's writings. The natural procedure is to notice the presence of this hidden ground of the faculty of judgment once a determined judgment has been given out, in order to reconstruct from it the content and the aim of the one which has fortunately guided the search¹³⁷. It would help to bear in mind that the logic resulting of the previous attempt must remain always in a sketchy state, as the desire of getting a complete control of the judgments, which take place secretly in the mind, would entail the dispossession of our finitude, which therefore would ruin the primacy of the game as the most profitable experience to recognize the action of concealed cognitive operations¹³⁸. In this case, the facticity of the obscure side of the mind would stop to surprise us, as the audience which attends a puppetry spectacle, once it is conscious of the principles of its activity. Likewise, scientists like Linnaeus would neither boast unconsciously of the fact that the manifold of natural beings would let themselves be classified in accordance with a logical system, nor would they make reference to worry and hope as suitable terms for the severe tone

135 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 871.

136 La Rocca (2003: 119) is author of a profitable study of this kind of judgments in Kant: "Se Kant avesse sviluppato in modo più compiuto la sua "logica dei giudizi provvisori", avrebbe delineato un sistema di autoanalisi, in base all'intersoggettività di principio, della rete di anticipazioni che rendono possibile, guidandola, la conoscenza empirica".

137 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 481.

138 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 502; the satisfaction of this desire would shatter the balance among the faculties of the human mind, see *KpV*, AA 05: 147–148. Peirce threw other glance about the materials offered by these judgments, which turns the obscure genesis of our judgments in the effective motor of all synthesis *a priori*. It is not at stake to value that provisional judgments have guided our understanding to achieve an objectively valid judgment, but that "the whole cognitive process is put under the sign of the hypothetical inference" (Eco, 1997: 79).

of the logic necessarily used by scientific research¹³⁹. The fact that applying the sceptical method¹⁴⁰, regarding metaphysical problems, or that taking part in a *game*¹⁴¹—between scholars or social mates—which only an adult would be able to appraise, is a phenomenon compatible with the purposes of *Enlightenment* is not a negligible finding associated to the discovery of the obscure representations. If this is true, this topic would interest both metaphysics and Pedagogy, since it brings out a discipline for the use of reason and the exercise of freedom. Indeed, in the game that understanding undertakes with itself in the realm of the obscure representations, where it is not always the leading element, a powerful obstacle must be recognized. This obstacle does not let this faculty get too enthusiastic on account of its spontaneity; a faculty that draws consciousness of itself from an “obscure distinction of Judgment”¹⁴², no matter how coarse or rough it could be, between the sensible world and the intellectual one. Thus, the reflective operations which cover as a concealed thread the darkness of the mind become a burden for the understanding, when this cognitive faculty is victim of the illusion which would wish to see it free of such faults. They shall be, however, of an odd benefit if employed to draw the critical geography of this faculty¹⁴³. So, the reflection about the judgments in advance may “give rules regarding the way we should judge in advance about an object”¹⁴⁴, but it should be more careful with the uncontrolled aim to turn all the judgments in advance into determining judgments. If this could be possible, the transcendental logic would stop being a mere *canon* for the pure understanding, as the general logic is with a formal reach for understanding and reason, in order to become the always yearned *organon* of philosophy. But “we do not possess

139 *EEKU*, § V, AA 05: 215, Kant's footnote; cf. Lebrun (1970: 263 ff.). see Aristotle, *Met.*, IX 8, 1050 b21–23. see the accurate article devoted to the “Kantian logic of scientific research” of M.Á. Santos Gracia (2004).

140 *KrV*, A 424/B 451–452.

141 My lecture of the unconscious in Kant's writing is deeply indebted to the following study of J.L. Pardo (2004: 49 and 463–488) and the respective notions of game 1 and game 2, of Wittgensteinian origin, that he uses there; cf. R. Ronchi (1996) and A. Cohen (2008a and b).

142 *GMS*, AA 04: 450–452.

143 Cassirer's theory of the symbolic forms is considered heir of the Kantian method, even though it does not consider in its real sense the originality of the Kantian thought about the unconscious, dispersed in its work, see specially *Die Logik des Symbolbegriffs*.

144 *Log*, AA 09: 75; cf. Logik Hechsel, in: *Logik-Vorlesung. Unveröffentlichte Nachschriften* (1988, 359).

it yet"¹⁴⁵ and there are more than enough reasons, as it has been said before, to state that the *Critique* never had the purpose of grounding something similar.

Kant seems to have read Wittgenstein when he highlights—in a second context of entries stemmed from the obscure representations—that we will be appraised in society first from our appearance, gestures, clothing, although upright men shall retroactively judge us from our intelligence or character. Likewise, we must acknowledge that we cannot avoid judging a stranger from his face or that a book arouses our interest from its title. Or perhaps can we avoid behaving this way? Kant chooses an intermediate solution, which would gradually lead the judgments in advance to the state of conscious judgments. He also tags that the rhythm we deliver judgments never tallies with the rhythm of the worldly things, that is to say, that our finitude prevents us to react immediately and in a complete right manner to the phenomena we have to face. Maybe this unavoidable upheaval is the framework of human life¹⁴⁶. A total right answer seldom occurs and when it happens we notice, no matter how obscure it could be, that an unconscious appraisal guided us unintendedly to success. Otherwise, if we could become those perfect speakers, how would we be conscious of the difference between sensibility and understanding, that notwithstanding we ascribe to a “common, but to us unknown, root”¹⁴⁷? So, all the judgments necessarily shelter a history that, first and foremost, is unknown to us. We are only allowed to dream that we can exercise instantaneously the determining faculty of judgment¹⁴⁸, because we would be able to do it only if we could dispense with the synthesis of apprehension and, therefore, with the combination between the functions of understanding and the manifold material supplied by sensation. What does not surprise us is the fact that the paragraphs of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* devoted to the obscure representations and its distinctness or indistinctness are followed by a long reminder about the heterogeneity of sources of representation, that is to say, the basis of the knowledge possible to us. An intui-

145 *V-Lo/Wiener*, 24: 861; cf. *KrV* A 60/B 85-A 61/B 86 and A 796/B 824.

146 *KU*, § 29, *All. Anm.*, AA 05: 277–278; cf. *V-Mo/Mron*, AA 27: 1502–1503.

147 *KrV, Einl.*, § II, A 15.

148 *PhilEnz*, AA 29: 24–25. Kant's reluctance to a logical absorption of the set of provisional judgments may give the chance to assess the closeness of his interpretation to the freudianian definition of unconsciousness. The reading of Freud's work as *Das Unbewusste* (1915) and *Einige Bemerkungen über den Begriff des Unbewussten in der Psychoanalyse* (1912) could clarify this point.

tive understanding would abruptly interrupt the game that the obscure representations set in motion in the mind, so that it is well-grounded to assert that judgments in advance are a point of an odd depth in the building of human reason. Indeed, this type of judgments contents an *unconscious subtract*, which no logic could turn into the state of an abstract rule. In fact, every research “must always first presuppose something here”¹⁴⁹, that is to say, it must begin with a hypothesis which was not previously taught and which, in either case, stems from a decision so impossible to prove directly as the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction¹⁵⁰. Due to this, this faculty must be considered a natural gift, what explains that the logic of the scientific research sets out a hermeneutical circle which prevents the transcendental logic to become one day a productive organon of knowledge not falling into the dialectic. This fact displays also the defences that a game, generated in the obscurity of the mind, provides to conserve the human health, contrary to that other game, very dangerous and normally neglected, performed by those minds bewitched by their power to cover, it does not matter the topic, all thoughts with the logical form of thinking.

It must be emphasized that the analysis of the obscure representations has a certain argumental homogeneity in the lectures that Kant devoted to Anthropology. If we attempt to display this framework, it would be advisable to take into account that the obscurity of the mind should be considered, first and foremost, a paradox. Indeed, in accordance with the famous objection of J. Locke¹⁵¹, which Leibniz argues against, how could we know if we are in possession of representations without being con-

149 *Anth*, § 56, AA 07: 223; cf. the phenomenon of the premonition of something future, which covers “judgments arising from obscure concepts of such a causal relation”, AA 07: 187 and the general efficacy of obscure judgments in *op. cit.*, AA 07: 140 and 144. The ‘rest’ which provisional judgments entail, and which is non-objectivable in logical terms, remembers to what a linguist as K. Bühler, in response to certain analytical and structuralist excesses, called “experience of meaning” (1934, § 4: 58). Freud’s text *Triebe und Triebchicksale* (1915) may be the counterpoint of Kantian theory about the natural givenness of the cognitive faculties.

150 It would be of interest to assess the closeness between what we consider here “pragmatic deduction” of the unconscious thought and the validity of the refutation in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle as an indirect proof of the truth of a principle.

151 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 135. See *Essay*, I, II, 1, §§ 15–19. Freud and Breuer suggest the very expression “representative substrate” in order to scape from this objection, see *Studien über die Hysterie* (1895).

scious of them? Nevertheless, a better beginning than this one could not be found in order to deal with the representations which cover most part of the map of mind¹⁵², since the absence of a *directly* consciousness of the obscure representations allows us precisely to be *indirectly* seized in accordance with the influence they have on our conscious life¹⁵³. Once we accept the possibility of an indirect consciousness of this kind of representations, the Kantian analysis uses a distinction which is not specifically stated, but which powerfully reminds us the one Freud established between the *preconscious* and the *unconscious*¹⁵⁴. Next we will focus on both terms. First, the perceptions whose faulty character we are not conscious of, the use of devices which broaden the feature and details of the things we observe and thereby allow us to recognize an unsuspected depth also in the sounds we hear, all these phenomena prove that the most part of the operations of the faculties of mind occur in the obscurity. Anyway, we are enabled to recover those operations, either hypothetically or with the contribution of technical devices.

For the purpose of enlightening this first aspect of the obscure representations Kant delivers various examples, some of them recurrent in the Lectures on Anthropology. The example of the confuse perception of a meadow or of a man we see in the distance is paradigmatic of the manner—which is as progressive as impatient—how we perceive¹⁵⁵. In fact,

152 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 868. In *Studien über die Hysterie* Freud and Breuer also use the image of light to underscore the quantitative decompensation between conscious and unconscious life.

153 See Tortolone (1994: 258–260).

154 It puzzles that a recognized specialist in Kant's Anthropology as R. Brandt, regarding the treatment of the question in *Anth*, § 5 (1991: 96), supports: "In a nutshell, [...] Kant is not interested on a broader specification of the unconsciousness" [my translation]. See Freud, *Einige Bemerkungen...* (1912): "Wir waren gewohnt zu denken, daß jeder latente Gedanke dies infolge seiner Schwäche war, und daß er bewußt wurde, sowie er Kraft erhielt. Wir haben nun die Überzeugung gewonnen, daß es gewisse latente Gedanken gibt, die nicht ins Bewußtsein eindringen, wie stark sie auch sein mögen. Wir wollen daher die latenten Gedanken der ersten Gruppe *vorbewußt* nennen, während wir den Ausdruck *unbewußt* (im eigentlichen Sinne) für die zweite Gruppe reservieren, die wir bei den Neurosen betrachtet haben. Der Ausdruck *unbewußt*, den wir bisher bloß im beschreibenden Sinne benützt haben, erhält jetzt eine erweiterte Bedeutung. Er bezeichnet nicht bloß latente Gedanken im allgemeinen, sondern besonders solche mit einem bestimmten dynamischen Charakter, nämlich diejenigen, die sich trotz ihrer Intensität und Wirksamkeit dem Bewußtsein ferne halten".

155 *V-Lo/Pölitz*, AA 24: 510–511, *V-Anth/Busolt*, AA 25: 1441 and *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 479. Brandt (1999: 142–143) is precisely based on this peculiarity of

our perception does not wait to utter a judgment about an object which faces it until it has gained a complete vision of such object. And in this judgment reflection will bring forward the complete shape of what has not been clearly seen yet—the place that eyes, nose and mouth, which are still not noticed in detail, have in the whole—, “[drawing the conclusion] that that thing was a man”¹⁵⁶. It is not clear if in this perception is still working a rational instance, which would determine the provisionally fittest conceptual scheme for the sensory data which are still meager. However, it would not be difficult to connect this appraisal of the methodological assumptions which inhabit our perception with the observations about the transcendental principle of purposiveness which is contained in the *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment*. It makes no sense to charge the sensibility with the defaults of the judgments uttered in such circumstances, since the faculty of judgment is the unique responsible for those assessments which will be afterwards thrown away. The obscure perception of what is far-off from us also conveys the power which adjacent representations can have over main representations, albeit the first ones do not provide such a relevant information, in objective terms, as the last ones. We ignore actually why these countervailing representations enthrall our attention with such intensity¹⁵⁷.

A second group of examples concentrates in the manner how devices as the telescope and the microscope modify our perception, whereas they uncover data, which already existed in it, after enlarging and enhancing the sharpness of the images which are pictured on the retina¹⁵⁸. This modification tears up the association that the ancient Greeks established between the Milky Way and the imaginary milk jet of a goddess, but, at the

human perception in order to face this passage of Kant's *Anthropology* with the distinction between the *kathólou* and the *kat'hékaston* in the search of principles at the beginning of Aristotle's *Physics*.

156 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 135. Kant's analysis seems near to the phenomenon of the “request image”, which K. Bühler has studied in his *Sprachtheorie*.

157 *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 266 and *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 946: “Es ist merkwürdig, daß wir erst auf willkürliche Weise uniere Einbildungskraft auf einen Gegenstand lenken können, dann verfolgt dieselbe ihr Spiel von selbst, und wir folgen nicht mehr willkürlich, sondern eine innere Kraft der Seele leitet uns, die Bilder nehmen ihren Gang und wir selbst wissen nicht, wie wir darauf kommen”. The remark is as interesting for the dynamics of the *Pathosformel* in A. Warburg as for appreciating the implications of the Kantian heritage of the logic of symbol which was analysed by Cassirer in *Der Begriffsform im mythischen Denken* and in *Zur Logik des Symbolbegriffs* (1959).

158 Locke, *Essay*, II 23; see *Log*, AA 09: 35; cf. Satura (1971: 57).

same time, they confirm that the white patch was only, *in objective terms*, the obscure representation of a group of stars¹⁵⁹. Therefore, the fault needs not to be charged to the sensibility, but rather to the faculty of judgment and its impatient *subjective* tenets. The active cognitive life appears associated to this kind of examples, a life which underlays a musical fantasy which is plaid on the organ, whose freedom in the improvisation moves blindly on without leaving any trace on the consciousness of the musician, who “perhaps otherwise with all diligence and care could never hope to bring off so well”¹⁶⁰. Unlike the previous examples, the field of artistic creation, which from Baumgarten is a common and productive region where obscure representations show specially their activity, has not, as happens with the natural gift of inquiry, a suitable microscope. Quite on the contrary, the one who listens to a musical piece, starting with the author himself, notices the presence, although the perception could be confused, of a reflective and unconscious depth¹⁶¹, which supports the final result as a kind of structural bottom which the subject suspects, without being able to define it in a more precise manner. A last group of obscure representations, which have their root in metaphysics and moral¹⁶², remind the philosopher that he ought to bring them to the clarity, for the purpose of uncovering the hidden forces which move them, as the physician, observing the bodies, discovers the forces of matter. Moreover, it is a duty of the philosopher¹⁶³ to research, as far as possible, in the obscurity of the mind.

These examples set out a first pattern of the unconscious in Kant, which gathers pre-conscious reflections and latent perceptions that, according to a Leibnizian-Wolffian hypothesis, would be possible no emphasis to be utterly clarified¹⁶⁴. Such an achievement would turn our mind in a motive of perpetual admiration, basically because we would become a kind of divinity. It would not be possible to distinguish between

159 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 479 and *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 868–869.

160 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 136, *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 249 and *V-Anth/Mrongrovius*, AA 25: 1221. See Giordanetti (2005: 67–77, 104 and 176–177); cf. Locke, *Essay*, II 33 and Brandt (1999: 156).

161 V. Rohden (2009: 5–6) finds this Kantian description close to some observations about the mechanism of musical reception, collected by D. Barenboim in *Klang ist Leben. Die Macht der Musik*, München, Siedler, 2008.

162 *GMS*, AA 04: 450–451, cf. *MS, TL*, AA 06: 376, *V-Log/Philippi*, § 130, AA 24: 410 and *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 869.

163 *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 250.

164 See Wolff, *PE*, § 35 and Baumgarten, *Aesth.*, § 300.

the genial and the third rate performances, either between the called “logical tact” and the science, without the high cost of ruining the order among soul [*Seele*], mind [*Gemüt*] and spirit [*Geist*]¹⁶⁵. Yet this desire stems from a preconceived idea of the unconscious thought, the idea of taking the conscious representation as the only valid criterion, namely, the clear and, if possible, distinct representation, instead of appreciating the heuristic support of the reflection which has worked in the obscurity. It is beyond all doubt that the examples assessed up to now belong more to an Anthropology from a physiological view than to a pragmatic one, since the “play of sensations” they bring about is uncovered only in a passive manner, a play whose consequences concern the private sphere more than the sociability. Kant's writing called *Menschenkunde* may make easier for us to transit to the authentic use of the obscure representations. This lecture, which is devoted to Anthropology, invites to analyse the case of a cultivated man, whom someone asks for to argue about a topic, which the man believes not to have licence to pronounce a word about. Yet this man is not a reliable source of the contents which his mind conceales. Thereby, Kant asserts that if the guest does not accept the pleas of this man, but on the contrary, the first one continues to encourage the last one to speak, this behaviour would unconsciously set in motion the capacity of reflection of the speaker, as confirms the fact that occasionally it is enough “to begin with a subject and, suddenly after, to be able to narrate this story or that other”¹⁶⁶. It is worth noticing the presence of the term “occasion” [*Veranlassung*] in the text, which replaces the magnifying optic glasses mentioned above. Everyone can use a telescope in the loneliness of a lab, yet nothing would give a better performance as the pragmatic publicity and the “refined humanity” of a dinner party [*Tischgesellschaft*]¹⁶⁷—“this little dinner party”¹⁶⁸—in order to find, without the risk of falling into the *Schwärmerei*, the bottom of thoughts which are awaiting to be discovered in the self. In spite of the objection of Locke, the human understanding generally does not know what it actually knows. Therefore, the society, not the private space, must carry

165 *V-Anth/Collins*, AA 25: 16; cf. Foucault (2008). Cf. the suggestions of A. Cohen about the counterpart that a ‘sincere alien’ would mean for man's nature and praxis (2008b).

166 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 868 and *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1221.

167 See Foucault (2008: 64). See also *Anth*, § 88, AA 07: 277–278 and the remarks of M. Ruffing about this § (2009: 50 s.).

168 *Anth*, § 88, AA 07: 278.

out the Socratic role of the midwife¹⁶⁹. Moreover, in a common meal a companion of table supplies to another “with alternative ideas [...] stimulation through new material which he himself had not been able to track down”¹⁷⁰. The proposal to make of social game, of the laws and conversations of social intercourse the most suitable occasion to ‘unload’, in a healthy and reasonable manner, entire files of information, which we ignore to be in possess of, seems to be the best antidote of the pathologies related to self-observation and, borrowing a term of Michel Foucault, it also seems to be the access to a fruitful “gouvernement de soi et par soi dans son articulation avec les rapports à autrui”¹⁷¹. The obscure representations are the intimate realm of the mind, but we will never come to know anything about them without getting out of ourselves and entering into the world, where we shall take part in a common life. This entails a new paradox, which is specially important for the subject at stake. The first paradox that we met was focused on the possibility to have representations without being conscious of them. Now we notice that we must rely on the others in order to extract fragments of our unconscious thought. Precisely this unexpected request of exteriority, which is arisen from the most hidden regions of the mind, leads to the other side of the obscure representations, namely, to the specifically unconscious one. We would argue that its role should be accurately assessed in the light of the *artifice*¹⁷², that is to say, beyond the existence of a suit-

169 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 479, *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 871 and *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1221. On the “Socrates’ Genius”, actually a literary mode in Kant’s times, as a claim of the “Fundgrube in den Tiefen des Gemüths verborgen liegender Schätze” that human understanding (*bon sens*) is supposed to be, see *Anth*, AA 07: 140; cf. letter from Hamann to Kant, the 27th july 1759, AA 10: 8; cf. Brandt (1999: 171–173).

170 *Anth*, § 88, AA 07: 280.

171 Foucault, “Subjectivité et vérité”, 1994: 214. Cf. the helpful article of A. Cohen (2009: 133): “[F]or Kant, from the pragmatic perspective of human action, there is no doubt that we do have access to an experience of freedom and that our rational and moral capacities are empirically exercised rather than happening in some timeless inaccessible world”.

172 Foucault’s following citation has been specially helpful for us, in order to identify the function that unconscious thought has in Kant (2008: 56–57): “Alors que le temps de la *Critique* assurait l’unité de l’originaire (depuis l’originairement donné jusqu’à la synthèse originaire), se déployant ainsi dans la dimension du *Ur...* celui de l’*Anthropologie* reste voué au domaine du *Ver...*, parce qu’il maintient la dispersion des synthèses et la possibilité toujours renouvelée de les voir s’échapper les unes aux autres. [...] Dans la *Critique*, le temps se faisait transparent à une activité synthétique qui n’était pas elle-même temporelle, puisqu’elle

able occasion to experience the presence of the obscure reflection. This new experience encompasses both the game which we undergo, where our nature is too near to the conditions of finitude, and the one which we voluntarily generated in order to protect us from those objects which would put at risk the space of social intercourse.

The connection between the obscure representations and the concept of game is essential to break away from the traditional Leibnizian-Wolfian interpretation. It is necessary to distinguish two modalities of game. On the one hand, game appears as an effect which we cannot control, that is to say, so that we become “a toy of the obscure representations”¹⁷³; for instance, when our understanding runs into the idea of death and therefore falls into logical absurdities, which only express our fear of the mortal condition. On the other hand, less frequently, we intentionally play with these representations, with the aim of covering some concrete subjects with civilisation. Even if it is not approved to mention them, because they are unpolite, in the social intercourse, it would be possible not to renounce to the pleasure of seeing them flow from one conversation to another under the sheltering veil of irony and metaphor. We will tackle the three examples which appear in the § 5 of the *Anthropology from a pragmatic view* and we will focus on death, prejudices and sex. Regarding the first two ones we behave in a more passive than active manner, since the person who meditates about the place where he prefers to be buried certainly knows that this reflection will not achieve anything. Yet he shall not find a most efficacious issue than this tub-thought¹⁷⁴ to move the phantom of death away. The concern to secure a good lot or a beautiful view in the cemetery, which affects even the wisest men¹⁷⁵, lacks sense, even if this thought undertakes its course without our consent and is reluctant to vanish. We feel, thus, under the control of reflections which we do not consider rational to start with. Likewise, it is socially extended that somebody has pity for a recently dead young man, as marks the eloquent utterance of sorrow “after seeing such young blood buried”¹⁷⁶, albeit everybody knows that death is the end of all suffering and that after it there is noth-

était constituante; Dans l'*Anthropologie*, le temps, impitoyablement dispersé obscurcit, rend impénétrable les actes synthétiques, et substitue à la souveraineté de la *Bestimmung*, l'incertitude patiente, friable, compromise d'un exorcice qui s'appelle le *Kunst*”.

173 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 136.

174 *Anth*, § 14, AA 07: 152.

175 *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 250.

176 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 870.

ing neither good nor bad for man. In a less radical way, somebody placed in the highest point of a tower and endeavoring to see downwards might be assaulted by the vertigo. In this case obscure representations may make this person totter, although he is well conscious that a rail solid enough protects him, to the extent that the power of these representations could lead him to fall without other cause than autosuggestion¹⁷⁷. In such a case, the unconsciousness of these representations generates the belief that we have sensations which actually did not take place.

It is also necessary to investigate the first grounds of the prejudices, before which the understanding seems to be helpless. Kant suggests as paradigmatic a case as the following. The sighs that the bourgeois of the XVIII Century breathed before the inexperience [*Unerfahrenheit*] in the art of pretence [*Kunst zu scheinen*]¹⁷⁸, noticed in an adolescent peasant girl, and felt as an ephemeral ray of light in an horizon which is darkened by the egoism, pay tribute to the fact that experience [*Erfahrenheit*]¹⁷⁹, a pregnant term of Kant's reflection on pragmatics, is lacking here. Anyway, as Rousseau already acknowledged, man cannot dream with a non political, and consequently a non social, sphere¹⁸⁰. The only effective medicine against the nefarious effects of the art of pretence, far from slacking the springs of such an art, will tighten and strengthen them, albeit in an unusual direction. This is a feature of the Kantian Anthropology that Foucault has insistently highlighted, since no other work of Kant confronts more decidedly the *animal rationale* with his destination, not as a pure rational being or as a member of the visible Church or of an aesthetic community, but properly as an *animal rationabile*¹⁸¹, who ought to take control of his own reason and, furthermore, within a

177 *V-Ant/Parow*, AA 25: 251; cf. *Anth*, § 29, footnote, AA 07: 169 and § 79, *Allg. Anm.*, AA 07: 264; cf. *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1222 and *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 870: “[D]ie Beschäftigung der Einbildungskraft ist durch die Vernunft nicht ganz widerlegt, und so sind wir immer in der Furcht und in der Widerlegung derselben”; see *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 480 and *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 250.

178 *Anth*, § 4, AA 07: 132–133.

179 *MAM*, AA 08: 117; cf. *GSE*, AA 02: 231, *Nachricht*, AA 02: 312 and R 705, AA 15: 312: “Die allgemeinen Grundsätze entspringen hier *per inductionem* und gelten auf die Fälle des Lebens (Klugheit durch Erfahrung) (logisches Vermögen)”.

180 *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, n. 9: “Quoi donc? Faut-il détruire les sociétés, anéantir le tien et le mien, et retourner vivre dans les forêts avec les ours? Conséquence à la manière de mes adversaires, que j'aime autant prévenir que de leur laisser la honte de la tirer”.

181 *Anth*, AA 07: 321–322 and *KU*, § 5, AA 05: 210.

civil community among other men, enhanced by the “bürgerlichen Umgang”¹⁸². This civilising scope calls for developing a “technique of the self”, which a pragmatic knowledge, basically an “art of prudence”¹⁸³, must devise. On this basis, I submit that the subject of a pragmatic Anthropology, like a galilean experiment which would endeavor to calculate a kind of *civilising inertia*, stems from the result of listening, not the noise—the *phone*—, but more precisely the *subtract* of *logos*, which the city gives out every time it has been voided of politic life. This work problematizes the sole origin of man which we are enable to discover, an origin which is necessarily borne on *language* and *appearance*, hence, on *rhetoric*¹⁸⁴. In this context, the habits that dwell in us as a “second nature”¹⁸⁵, making thornier self-observation, explain the general validity that the Russian proverb “clothes make the man”¹⁸⁶ has in all countries, even those where the civilizatory process has most intensively progressed. At the most, we will achieve to expel prejudices *a posteriori*, after having corrected our judgment in advance. Kant suggests that we should answer the following question: why do we endure more a man who squanders his fortune than a miser man in the social intercourse, even if we have actually nothing objective against the behaviour of the last one? Again, the philosopher ought to search for the origin of this prejudice, which the logician disregards. According to Kant, the explanation lies on the fact that human mind draws quickly the conclusion that the miser person depends on his own properties more than he respects the humanity in himself and in others¹⁸⁷. Such a judgment does not stem from things that the subject has actually seen, but rather from a “presumptive objectivity”¹⁸⁸, which he holds legitimate enough to be applied to the present case.

182 *V-Anth/Pillau*, AA 25: 734.

183 Aubenque (1963) is one of the rare scholars which have underscored the presence, even if through many mediations, of the work of B. Gracián in the Kantian notion of prudence—private and mundane—; cf. *GMS*, AA 04: 416 and 417, footnote.

184 *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1223: “So ist ieder Tropus und iede Figur ein Umweg indem man eine dunkle Vorstellung plotzlich zur klaren macht und darin besteht das angenehme derselben”. To define this term in Kant are indispensable the following textes: *KU*, §51, AA 05: 321 and § 53, AA 05: 327. We commend the lecture of Cohen-Halimi (2004: 147–164).

185 *Anth, Vorwort*, AA 07: 121.

186 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 137.

187 *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 250.

188 Levi-Strauss (1962) and Lebrun (1970: 272).

Regarding the manifold games that we produce employing the obscure representations, the phenomenon which promotes such an inversion of wit is the fact that the civilised man occasionally perceives far too much his relationship with animals¹⁸⁹. Especially his yearn for sexual satisfaction, together with the habits and the utterances which are too mechanical¹⁹⁰, show his relationship with animals, which embarrasses him. This runaway of man from himself makes the human faculties work in order to shelter what one really desires both in the conversation and in the social intercourse. Furthermore, society promotes this process, an authentic “art to darken”¹⁹¹, which, although sparing us “crude expressions”¹⁹², keeps them unharmed in our social intercourses, transparent enough to bring out a smile. The smile is a mark of the aesthetic self-restraint and the beginning of a moral self-mastery, based on pretence, through which the *homo civilis* overcomes the wild and rough man. In fact, Kant acknowledges that the audiovisual archive of such an art shall give the more pleasure the stronger the contrast is. A contrast that one notices between the original obscurity—in ornament, in utterance—and the clarity which finally emerges once the speaker understands what it actually veiled. Here the mind moves in a delicate intermediate zone between the *cynicism* of those who preach the radical deliverance of the animal features of man, and the *purism*¹⁹³ of those who plea for a complete submission of human drives under the chains of culture and education. Besides the spring to the gentleness, one of the most habitual issues which men use as a protective screen to disguise their relationship with

189 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 871; cf. *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1223.

190 *Anth*, § 12, AA 07: 149. The “physical coaction”, which stems from the assuetudo provokes disgust when we perceive it in others, because “here one is led instinctively by the rule of habituation, exactly like another (non-human) nature, and so runs the risk of falling into one and the same class with the beast”. Cf. *MAM*, AA 08: 114, where Kant highlights that human being, in the fourth level of his evolution, conceives “wiewohl nur dunkel” that he is an end of nature, so that nothing on Earth may seize him his title. This enclosed as counterpart the claim, which can also emerge only obscurely in mind, that the same dignity which makes him think he is the owner of nature must be supposed to any other man.

191 *V-Anth/Mron*, AA 25: 1223.

192 *V-Menschenkunde*, AA 25: 871. In this passage Kant comments an amusing letter from Cicero (*Fam.*, IX 22), where the latin author lists the absurds which the cynical philosophers failed in when they tried to naturalize the organic functions that man shares with other animals.

193 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 136; cf. *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 480.

animals is to borrow a foreign term to cover the one he would prefer not to pronounce in their mother language. The explanation that Kant offers of this behaviour is the following. This decision, unconscious at first glance, forces us, every time we meet the term at stake, to take time in order to translate it in our mind. This translation also takes place when one decodes an enigmatic message. Such a detour brings down the intensity of the aggression that the mind notices in the term, without actually being conscious of this fact, as if we had found the most suitable screen to refract a ray of light as powerful as fearsome. Kant delivers valuable psychological recommendations regarding this point: when one fears something, the most advisable behaviour is not to be reluctant to face it, but rather to face repeatedly with an often exposure to the focus that motivates the distrust, after having chosen the convenient angle of refraction¹⁹⁴. So, “through obscure representations we endeavour to weaken or to strengthen the power of the impression”¹⁹⁵, which is normally related to corporal functions or which belongs to the field of sex. This analysis displays the human mind as a complex logical and optical machinery, where understanding and imagination are doomed not only to understand each other, but to do it through a common game. As Kant, who takes the biblical tale of the *Genesis* as a travel map, interprets the fig leaf as the result of man's discovery of his rational control over inclinations such as the sexual instinct¹⁹⁶, the anthropological remark about the attachment that mothers have more to their sons than to their daughters has a probably explanation in the rooted inclination to the other sex, which is a natural disposition of the human being. Therefore, the sexual instinct tallies with the game it provokes in its circular feature: the force of the instinct will soon catch unaware the stakes of the civilisation. The decency that an urban woman exhibits as external appearance finds fulfillment in the tribute that the other sex tributes her and the modesty [*pudicitia*]¹⁹⁷ enlarges the distance between sexes which prevents that both shall reduce each other to a mere mean of enjoyment. Moreover, instead of expelling passion, decency and modesty search to administrate it in an optimal manner. Both practical and empirical phenomena illustrate the “un-dia-

194 *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25: 481.

195 *V-Anth/Busolt*, AA 25: 1439–1440; cf. *V-Anth/Parow*, AA 25: 250.

196 *MAM*, AA 08: 113. We cannot focus here on the interesting effects that the obscure idea of freedom, or an analogous representation of it, has on the practical philosophic of Reason of Kant. Regarding to this question, we refer to La Rocca (2003: 267–285).

197 *Anth*, AA 07: 306–307.

lectized dialectic”¹⁹⁸, which Foucault remarked in the Kantian *Anthropology*. Yet the most outstanding fact of this case is that the polite language endeavours to find the suitable *formulae* for the contents that society does not approve to be pronounced in public and that the art of presence¹⁹⁹ appears as a pragmatic, hence intelligent, use of pleasures. In short, the outstanding point in the human animal is to employ the *logos* to deal with the function that instinct carries out in the other animal species, that is to say, as the voice of God, which the human creature drive away, as a mist, as soon as it begins to behave in accordance with its own tenets.

Finally, the obscurity entails a rhetoric interest, for it works as an epistemological obstacle which, when it is conveniently dosed, the reader, the speaker and the listener shall be thankful, since the obscurity gives them the chance to use their understanding in a ludic manner and, hence, to experience the strength of their faculties²⁰⁰, as they have to fight against the obstacle. Notwithstanding, when this tendency goes to the excess, it is in accordance with the decree of all mystics²⁰¹, who identify the imperative *skotison!*—opposed to the *sapere aude!*—with an organon of alleged knowledge, since there will be no way to sieve the will under an apparent solemnity, attractive for the neophyts, to hide their own ignorance from the legitimate aim to exercise and tune the faculty of judgment.

V. Conclusion

Finally I suggest breaking down the topic of the obscure representations at least into three aspects in order to determine the output that it provides to the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. First, Kant releases this evasive subject from the monopoly which was demanded by its al-

198 Foucault (2008: 39).

199 *Anth*, § 14, AA 07: 152: “In order to save virtue, or at least lead the human being to it, nature has wisely implanted in him the tendency to allow himself willingly to be deceived”.

200 V-*Anth*/Fried, AA 25: 479–480: “Jede Dunkelheit die sich plötzlich aufklärt, macht Annehmlichkeit, und ergötzt sehr, und darinn besteht die Kunst eines Autors seine Gedancken so zu verstecken, daß der Leser sie gleich von selbst auflösen kann, hiezu gehören die Schertze und Einfälle. Das klare aber ermüdet bald” and 482: “So wie in der Dämmerung alles größer erscheint, als im Lichten, so macht auch die Dunkelheit größere Erwartungen”. See Brandt (1999: 164).

201 *Anth*, § 5, AA 07: 137.

leged scholars, namely, the visionaries, to the extent that the study of obscure representations could be considered as a supplement for the paralogisms of pure reason which seizes the last framework of empirical psychology. To support this claim, it could be added that the critical lecture of the obscurity of the mind denounces the fact that philosophy, more often than expected, has fallen into the dialectic when regarding this topic. Against this misconception of the unconscious thought, Kant undertakes an anthropological “didactic”, according to the table which the cognitive faculty, the faculty of desire and the feeling of pleasure and displeasure set out, since the obscurity of thought concerns all these faculties²⁰². Thereby, Kant prevents that the mentioned illuminated gang could allege a privileged experience of the phenomenon. Second, the pragmatic assessment of the referred topic, which stems from the critique of the empirical psychology, analyses the domain that human *Erfahrenheit* identifies in an intuitive manner, therefore transcendental apperception obtain a plea for its rights also over the fragments of the unconscious thoughts which we could be enabled to track down. Moreover, in spite of the astonishment aroused by the discovery of the great amount of our unconscious thoughts, an even more intense and lasting astonishment should be engendered by the principle which the entire logic depends on and which the very understanding consists of, namely, the objective unity of apperception. Transcendental consciousness is the only tenet which is able to avoid the probable shipwreck when we dare to raid the Cocitus Lake of unconscious thought. Yet the submission of the obscure representations to the unity of the logical consciousness reveals also that the game and social techniques provide the occasion for discovering these representations. In fact, the internal logic and the experience of time which those devices entail are essential to the rightful comprehension of human life. Third, an internally consistent pragmatic discours stems from the study of the obscurity of mind, which tackles the human nature from the point of view of the worldly and popular activity of man. It leads us to an order where the problematic nature of man emerges amidst games, conversations, jokes and riddles. The fact that *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* should be considered as a possible and necessary work proves that those arts, with all their glittery bright, have been analysed up to now under the grey glass of the theory. Perhaps there is no other possible achievement when the subject of study is

202 According to Oberhausen (2002: 125), the § 5 of *ApH* is, in relation to the matter of unconscious representations, only the “summit of the *iceberg*”.

human nature. The following excerpt of M. Foucault, surely one of the finest scholars which have interpreted the Kantian *Anthropology*, will allow us to infer what we consider the conclusion of this contribution:

Le *Geist* ce serait ce fait originaire qui, dans sa version transcendentale, implique que l'infini n'est jamais là, mais toujours dans un essential retrait—et, dans sa version empirique, que l'infini anime pourtant le mouvement vers la vérité et l'inépuisable succession de ses formes. Le *Geist* est à la racine de la possibilité lié du savoir. Et, par là-même, indissociablement present et absent des figures de la connaissance: il est ce retrait, cette invisible et “visible réserve” dans l'inaccessible distance de laquelle le connaître prend place et positivité. Son être est de n'être pas là, dessinant, en ceci meme, le lieu de la vérité²⁰³.

The text refers to the spirit [*Geist*], the “faculty to exhibit *aesthetic Ideas*”²⁰⁴, which Foucault tracks in the *Anthropology* in the light of the link between this “principle that vivifies man” and the mind [*Gemüt*], which in fact consists only in life. But the principle that vivifies the mind is also strongly connected with the aesthetic potency of *genius*, whose roots lead to the obscure representations which we have to deal with. The fact that the *genius* and the artistic production belong to the realm of the potency prevents both their exam from a genetical method and their acceptance in the circuit of cultural and artistic progress. It should be admitted that none artist has denied the participation, no matters how minimal it could be, in *genius*, as the Kantian exam of the musical fantasy shows. Furthermore, the aesthetic attributes that the creative spirit uses to vivify rhetoric and poetical works cannot be exhibited. Nevertheless, this failure of exhibition, both in a direct and indirect manner, traces the existence of imaginary representations that, when they go with a determined concept, supply something like an air or an ambiance where everything makes us remember to reason. The relation of *counterpart* or *pendant* between the aesthetic Idea and the Idea of reason is justified by the fact that both refer, although each one in a different manner, to the supersensory ground of the phenomenal world. The distinctiveness of the genius is that it borders this ground with the virtuosity which is necessary for its products not to be decoded some day²⁰⁵. The gathering of phenomena at first glance so distant from each other, as the genial artistic creation, the judgments in advance, the wit, the gift of inquiry, the preju-

203 Foucault (2008: 40–41).

204 *KU*, § 49, AA 05: 313–314.

205 Lebrun (1970: 403 ff.).

dices or the *galateo*, and other ones which could be added to these—then we face an open series²⁰⁶—pushes us to think that the obscure representations lay out a real archipelago in Kant's writings, which is impossible to constraint to a single work. *Esprit*, *genius*, *bon sens*, are brittle terms, more suitable for the writing of a visionary than for the author of the *Critiques*. Nevertheless, Kant did not dismiss, quite on the contrary, facing all of them, in order to discipline their claims and cut up the wings²⁰⁷ of the predominant perceptive field in mind. It could be submitted that the suspected presence of obscure representations is a kind of balancing pole for the transcendental consciousness, which allows this one to *feel* that something will always remain to be known and to be discovered, that is to say, to be brought to the objective unity of apperception. Furthermore, finite understanding can neither be completely correct nor completely wrong. The default of this feeling should be enough for the one who exists when thinking to become another person²⁰⁸, while assuming maybe Fichteian marks. Again, nobody has noticed this with such a great lucidity as M. Foucault, whose remarks about the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, as brief as weighty, have guided without any doubt the present work:

De la *Critique* à l'*Anthropologie*, il y aurait comme un rapport de finalité obscure et obstinée. Mais il se peut aussi que l'*Anthropologie* ait été modifiée dans ses éléments majeurs à mesure que se développait la tentative critique: l'archéologie du texte, si elle était possible, ne permettrait-elle pas de voir naître un "*homo criticus*", dont la structure différerait pour l'essentiel de l'homme qui l'a précédé? C'est-à-dire que la *Critique*, à son caractère propre de "propédeutique" à la philosophie, ajouterait un rôle constitutive dans la naissance et le devenir de formes concrètes de l'existence humaine. Il y aurait une certaine vérité *critique* de l'homme, fille de la critique des conditions de vérité²⁰⁹.

206 The sense of the Kantian critique to the rhapsody of Aristotle's categories must be tinged since there is the same figure of a rhapsody in the pragmatic Anthropology, not only because the methodic difficulties for the research, but also the very dress of the object of study; cf. Foucault (2008: 33: "L'*Anthropologie* se déploie donc selon cette dimension de l'exercice humain qui va de l'ambiguïté du *Spiel* (jeu=jouet) à l'indécision du *Kunst* (art=artifice)").

207 *KU*, § 50, AA 05: 319.

208 Prol, § 46, footnote, AA 04: "[die Vorstellung der Apperception] ist nichts mehr als Gefühl eines Daseins ohne den mindesten Begriff und nur Vorstellung desjenigen, worauf alles Denken in Beziehung (relatione accidentis) steht".

209 Foucault (2008: 12–13).

However, as we argued specially in the third section, after noticing the existence of the unconscious, the obscure balancing pole of the logical consciousness will not be examined within the boundaries of a transcendental doctrine of the faculty of judgment, either using a physiological method, which could only increase the data of an empirical Anthropology²¹⁰. The only path that remains open is, thus, the one which chooses the intercourse [*Umgang*] as the context of discovering, not of explanation, of the unconscious representations. The main part of what we shall find insofar as we track down the pieces of the layer of prejudices underlying in the mind will not please us. Yet this is not at stake here. As Aristotle would say, no one calls us good or evil taking in account the passions which get us rough, but only after having assessed the habits that actually have grafted onto a morally good character, that is to say, onto a “second nature” for us. Hence, the space of the social game is the best both empirical and pragmatic spectrum of human nature, which the rules of elegance and the norms of taste²¹¹ reflect, once that nature has been necessarily framed to ease its entrance in society. This notwithstanding requires selecting foremost that part of the obscurity of mind that our finitude can endure. And this is a worldly glass that the empirical psychology could never have polished by submitting human representations to a mere logical analysis.

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210 *KU*, § 29, *Allg. Anm.*, AA 05: 277.

211 Foucault (2008: 61 s.) has noticed the nature, strongly social, of the vocabulary of the *Anthropology in a pragmatic sense*, used to lay out the interests of the *Weltmann*, who needn't renounce to the ideal of the *Weltbürger*. In this vocabulary dominate terms stemmed from vernacular languages, as variable as peculiar according to the different cultures, as it is admitted in *Anth*, AA 07: 314. Kant has never been more estranged from the academical Latin as in the Lectures on Anthropology, for reasons derived from the very social features of this subject.

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Logical Forms, Indeterminacy, and the Subjective Unity of Consciousness in Kant¹

Seung-Kee Lee

The nature of the relation between logic and psychology is recognized to be an important albeit difficult topic for understanding Kant's aims and argumentation in his theoretical philosophy, particularly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The recent commentators who have tried to understand and to defend Kant's views have warned readers not to confuse our, post-Fregean understanding with Kant's own understanding of the terms like "logic", "mind", "psychology", and "cognition". One such view that the commentators have noted is that in Kant's philosophy logic and psychology are intertwined in a way that is perhaps difficult for us today to fully appreciate or even sympathize with. It is noted, for example, that for Kant the talk about "the rules of logic" is inseparable from the talk about "mental activities" or "cognitive faculties".² In this connection, some have suggested that Kant's view is more in line with the view of the relation between logic and the mind that is elaborated in the Port-Royal logic.³

Even among these commentators, however, there seems to be no consensus on precisely how the relation between logic and psychology is to

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- 1 A shorter version of the paper was presented at the 85th Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, April 2011, in San Diego, California.
 - 2 For a discussion of the relation between logic, epistemology, and "faculty psychology" in the early modern period, see Hatfield, Gary: "The Workings of the Intellect: Mind and Psychology". In: *Logic and the Workings of the Mind*. Ed. Patricia A. Easton. Atascadero, CA 1997, 21–45. For an interesting paper on the relation between logic and consciousness in Kant, see Kitcher, Patricia: "Kant on Logic and Self-Consciousness" in the same volume, 175–90.
 - 3 Arnauld, Antoine and Pierre Nicole: *La Logique, ou l'Art de penser*. Paris 1662, translated *Logic or the Art of Thinking*. Ed. Jill Vance Buroker. Cambridge 1996. See Kitcher, Patricia: *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*. Oxford 1990, 11–13, 234, note 57; Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Princeton 1998, 5, 74; Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 146.

be understood in Kant's philosophy. For example, even among those who are keenly aware that in Kant's philosophy logic and psychology cannot neatly be divorced from each other, some have been criticized for over-psychologizing, while others have been criticized for over-logicizing Kant's account or for offering "anti-psychological" interpretations thereof.⁴ My aim in this paper is not to focus on, let alone, to resolve this conflict, but to explore a particular theme that falls under the broader topic of the relation between logic and psychology.⁵

One aspect of this relation is represented by Kant's famous claim in the Transcendental Deduction sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that consciousness or self-consciousness⁶ is a condition for the possibility of cognition of an object. This claim has been interpreted in various ways. Among the interpreters,⁷ however, what has not received much attention,

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- 4 For example, Patricia Kitcher (*Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, 94) includes Henry Allison among those who "depsychologize" Kant's doctrine of apperception. Beatrice Longuenesse (*Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 6), while crediting Kitcher for providing an analysis of "mental activities", at the same time criticizes her for not taking into consideration the logical forms of judgment. In his review of Longuenesse's book, Graham Bird ("Kant and the Capacity to Judge: Sensibility and Discursivity." In: *European Journal of Philosophy* 7 (1), 1999, 105), on the other hand, says there is "surprisingly little on Kant's account of the self [...]"
- 5 Here I use the word "psychology" broadly. Kant distinguishes between "empirical", "rational", and (some argue) "transcendental" psychology. See Hatfield, Gary: "Empirical, Rational, and Transcendental Psychology: Psychology as Science and as Philosophy." In: *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*. Ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge 1992, 200–227. On the relation of Kant's views to Leibniz's and Hume's views on self-consciousness, see Kitcher, Patricia: *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, 105–107.
- 6 I follow the view of Karl Ameriks, Patricia Kitcher, and Robert Pippin, among others, that Kant's notion of apperception does not entail that consciousness requires self-consciousness. As Pippin ("Kant on the Spontaneity of Mind." In: *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 17, 1987, 459–60), notes, Kant's apperceptive thesis (represented by Kant's claim at KrV: B 131 that "it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations") "does not mean that the fact that I am perceiving rather than imagining is itself directly attended to, but that such an awareness is an inseparable component of *what it is* consciously to perceive, imagine, remember, etc". See also Kitcher, Patricia: *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, 92–94, and Ameriks, Karl: "Kant and Guyer on Apperception." In: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 15 (2), 1983, 183–84.
- 7 In this paper, I examine in detail the views of three scholars: Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 1983 (1st ed.), 2004 (2nd ed.); Freu-

and what I would like to explore in this paper, is the fact that Kant links what he terms the “subjective unity” of consciousness, or the way in which representations are combined merely “empirically”, arbitrarily, and contingently in consciousness, with an indeterminate (as opposed to a determinate) way in which the logical forms of judgment are employed. Although the view that the categories are nothing other than the logical forms of judgment as applied to intuitions has been emphasized and elaborated by many commentators,⁸ few have focused on the fact that for Kant the logical forms can be employed determinately *or* indeterminately.⁹ By exploring the theme of the relation between the subjective unity of consciousness and the indeterminate use of the logical forms of judgment, I hope to make clear this one, fascinating aspect of the relation between logic and psychology in Kant’s theoretical philosophy. By doing so, moreover, I hope to help make better sense of some of Kant’s notorious distinctions, such as that between judgments of perception and judgments of experience, subjective and objective unity of consciousness, and empirical and pure apperception, distinctions which are elaborated in the passages in which Kant relates his theory of judgment with his views on consciousness.

The key idea that will emerge from my analysis is that what Kant calls “the subjective unity” of (or “empirical”) consciousness involves that state of mind in which the understanding leaves undetermined, that is, fails to specify, fix, or determine, the manner in which the concepts in a judgment are to relate to one another. Differently put, it is when the logical forms are employed merely indeterminately that a “relation” of representations that is merely “subjectively valid” or what Kant calls in the *Prolegomena* a relation of representations that is valid for “a conscious-

diger, Jürg: “Zum Problem der Wahrnehmungsurteile in Kants theoretischer Philosophie.” In: *Kant-Studien* 82, 1992, 414–435; and Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*.

8 For example, Young, J. Michael: “Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of Intuitions.” In: *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, 116, and Allison, Henry: *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven 2004, 155.

9 In my “The Determinate-Indeterminate Distinction and Kant’s Theory of Judgment” (In: *Kant-Studien* 95, 2004, 204–25), I explain the function of the concept of determination in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. In the present paper, I focus on the passages in the so-called “B-Deduction” or the Transcendental Deduction in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to provide an account of the relation between Kant’s theory of judgment and his views on consciousness in his theoretical philosophy.

ness in one subject only” (as opposed to “a consciousness in general”) results.¹⁰ Although Kant himself leaves it unexplained why such indeterminacy with regard to the act of judging should result in what he calls the “subjective unity of consciousness”, understanding this key idea will help us find ways to resolve some thorny problems and difficulties that have arisen in interpreting the relevant passages in Kant’s writings.

In the first part of the paper, I explain what Kant means by “the logical use of the understanding”, why this use involves an indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment, and what this employment consists in. In the second part, I explain what role this use of the understanding plays in those passages in the Transcendental Deduction sections in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which Kant relates judgment with consciousness. In the third part, I show that the act of judging objectively involves the consciousness that a representation is a specific or determinate instance of a more general representation. Thus, I will argue that what Kant calls “the subjective unity of consciousness” refers to that form of consciousness in which the subject is aware of an indeterminate relation of representations, that is to say, a relation in which a representation is *not* a specific or a determinate instance of a more general one.

I. Indeterminacy and the Logical Use of the Understanding

What Kant calls the “act of the understanding”¹¹ or judging by means of which cognition is attained is governed by rules. These rules determine the ways in which the understanding judges. The “Table of Judgments” in the *Critique of Pure Reason* lists the ways.¹² Kant claims that the Table is taken from “general” or formal logic. For Kant, however, the rules taken from general logic are only the necessary but not sufficient conditions for cognition of an object. For such cognition to be possible, the understanding must judge in accordance with rules that are taken from not merely a general but a “transcendental” logic. The two kinds of logic differ because one is more “general” than the other. In the *Cri-*

10 Prol AA 04: 304. Translations from the Prol are by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis 1950).

11 “Die Handlung des Verstandes”. KrV, A 69/B 94. Translations from KrV are by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge 1997).

12 KrV, A 70/B 95.

tique of Pure Reason, Kant explains that general logic is “general” because it abstracts from all content of cognition, that is to say, it is indifferent to the question of whether the object has an empirical or *a priori* origin. As Kant puts it, general logic “concerns the use of the understanding without regard to the difference of objects”.¹³ Transcendental logic, on the other hand, is less general or more specific than general logic because it does “not abstract from all content of cognition”: “it concerns the laws of the understanding and reason, but only insofar as they are related to objects *a priori*”.¹⁴ This implies that the “act of the understanding” as it operates merely in accordance with the rules of a general logic differs from the act of the understanding as it operates in accordance with the rules of a transcendental logic. But in what precisely does the difference consist?

For Kant, the two kinds of logic provide rules for two different ways in which the logical forms of judgment can be employed. He provides an example to clarify the difference. Take the judgment, “all bodies are divisible”. This judgment has the categorical form, such that its function is “that of the relationship of the subject [“bodies”] to the predicate [“divisibility”]. But when the understanding follows the rules of a mere general logic, or in Kant’s words, “in regard to the merely logical use of the understanding”, it is left “undetermined which of these two concepts will be given the function of the subject and which will be given that of the predicate. For one can also say: ‘Something divisible is a body.’”¹⁵ Thus, what Kant calls the “logical use of the understanding”¹⁶ leaves it undetermined which of the two concepts will be given which function.¹⁷ Elsewhere, instead of “the logical use of the understanding” Kant uses the phrase “the formal act of the understanding”¹⁸ to refer to that act of the understanding through which the logical forms are employed indeterminately, that is, in such a way that the subject and the predicate concepts may, in Kant’s words, “interchange their logical functions”.¹⁹ So, for example, the two concepts in the judgment “the stone is hard” may inter-

13 KrV, A 50 f./B 74 f., A 53/ B77

14 KrV, A 55/B 80, A 57/B 82

15 KrV, B 128 f.

16 KrV, B 128: “der logische Gebrauch des Verstandes”.

17 See also KrV, B 419.

18 “die formale Verstandeshandlung”

19 MAN, AA 04: 475. Translations from MAN are by J. W. Ellington (Indianapolis 1985). See also Prol, AA 04: 301, 304, 311 f.

change their function so that one can also say “something hard is a stone”.²⁰

It is important to note here that although one might be tempted to take the phrase “logical use” or “formal act” to signify that act of the understanding that is merely “formal”, in the sense of “without content”, such an interpretation would be incorrect. Kant makes it clear that “the logical use” or “the formal act” of the understanding is that which is operative even when representations derived from the senses, including empirical concepts, are combined in a consciousness.²¹ Thus I agree with Longuenesse when she says that “by [‘logical use of the understanding’] Kant meant, not the use of the understanding in logic, but the use of the understanding for empirical knowledge, [...]”²² This is confirmed by the example given in the quoted passage, “the stone is hard”, which is an empirical judgment and in which the logical forms are said by Kant to be employed indeterminately. As we shall see, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant uses the phrase “a logical connection of perceptions”²³ to refer to that kind of relation of representations that is merely “subjectively valid”, i. e., “empirical” and “contingent”.

When, on the other hand, the categorical form of judgment is employed in such a way that it is *determined* which of the two concepts is to function as the subject and which is to function as the predicate, the understanding follows the rules of a transcendental logic, in which the logical form (the relation between the subject and predicate) becomes the category of substance and accident. Thus, when the *category* is employed, the two concepts in the judgment “bodies are divisible” may *not* “interchange their logical functions”; as Kant explains, “Through the category of substance, [...] if I bring the concept of a body under it, it is determined that its empirical intuition in experience must always

20 MAN, AA 04: 475.

21 This view appears to agree with Longuenesse’s interpretation, according to which, the logical forms of judgment are “the forms of analysis of what is given in sensibility” (*Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 11). In fact, she also speaks of “the empirical use of logical functions of judgment” (Ibid., 194, and also 27). However, for Longuenesse, there are different stages at which the logical forms function for different purposes, whereas the account given in the present paper focuses merely on the role of the logical forms in combining concepts into a judgment (or the role they play in the first part [or sections 15 to 20] of the B-Deduction). I discuss Longuenesse’s interpretation below.

22 Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 71.

23 Prol AA 04: 298. My emphasis.

be considered as subject, never as mere predicate; and likewise with all the other categories.”²⁴ Moreover, it is only when the logical forms are employed determinately, that is, *as* categories, that cognition of an object results; the two concepts in the judgment “the stone is hard”, for example, are connected not merely in thought but also “in the object”: “I represent to myself in the object as determined that the stone in every possible determination of an object, and not of the mere concept, must be thought only as subject and the hardness only as predicate, [...]”²⁵ It follows that when the logical forms are employed merely indeterminately, the concepts are connected only in thought but not “in the object”.

Kant contrasts “the logical use of the understanding”²⁶, in which the logical forms of judgment are employed indeterminately, with “the transcendental use of the power of judgment”²⁷, which involves “the sensible condition under which alone pure concepts of the understanding can be employed, i.e., the schematism of the pure understanding”.²⁸ In *Reflection* 5933²⁹ Kant also says that “the Schematism shows the condition under which an appearance is determined in respect to a logical function and, therefore, stands under a category”.³⁰ In other words, it is the provision of the schema (or “the transcendental time-determination”) that makes possible the determinate as opposed to the indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment.³¹

For Kant, “the act of the understanding” or judging, as it is considered by transcendental logic, is nothing other than the act of *determining*, that is to say, of delimiting, restricting, or specifying that which general

24 KrV, B 129. See also KrV, A 245 f.

25 MAN, AA 04: 475.

26 KrV, B 128: “der logische Gebrauch des Verstandes”.

27 KrV, B 167: “der transzendente Gebrauch der Urteilkraft”.

28 KrV, A 136/B 175

29 Dated 1776 to 1789

30 Refl. AA 18: 392. Quoted in Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 1983, 176.

31 See also KrV, A 139/B 178 and A 664/B 692. Allison (*Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 152) contrasts “the logical use” with “the real use” of the understanding. But, as he admits, Kant mentions this distinction only in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (MSI AA 2: 394, 386). In the *Transcendental Analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason*, however, whereas Kant does use the expression “the logical use”, “he does not use the expression [“the real use”]” (474, note 46). In fact, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the expression with which Kant contrasts “the logical use of the understanding” is “the transcendental use of the power of judgment”.

logic leaves indeterminate, namely, the manner in which the concepts in a judgment are to relate to one another, or more specifically, with regard to the categorical form of judgment³², which concept is to function as the subject and which concept as the predicate.

II. Logical Forms and Consciousness in the Transcendental Deduction

Before delving into the passages in which the significance of understanding the distinction between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment becomes clear, I would like to clarify the status of the categories that the foregoing interpretation supports. I have argued that the logical forms of judgment can be employed either indeterminately or determinately, and that it is only in the latter case that they are employed as categories. This implies that whether the logical forms will be employed as categories or not depends on what Kant calls “the act of the understanding”, that is to say, the act of judging. This interpretation differs from the received view regarding the categories. According to this view, the categories exist even before the activity of judging is carried out, so that “the categories are just concepts that make the logically distinct forms and components of judgment applicable to our intuitions”, or that “categories are supposed to describe twelve different ways of conceiving of objects that are necessary in order to make the twelve different logical functions of judgment applicable to them”.³³ Such a view is questioned, however, by Beatrice Longuenesse, whose interpretation seems to agree with the one I am supporting. She notes that:

the categories, as full-fledged *concepts*, [...] are in no way prior to the activity of judging. On the contrary, they result from this activity of generating and combining concepts according to the logical forms of judgment. [...] one should not be misled into supposing that the categories are concepts ready to be ‘applied’ prior to the activity of judgment. Such an interpretation is incompatible with Kant’s consistent opposition to innatism of representations.³⁴

32 As we shall see, Kant also explains how the hypothetical form of judgment (‘If *p* then *q*’) can be employed determinately and indeterminately. Prol, AA 04: 311 f. and KrV, B 233 f.

33 Guyer, Paul: *Kant and the Claims of knowledge*. Cambridge 1987, 132, 134.

34 Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 199.

Although Loguensee's interpretation differs from mine in some details (which I note below),³⁵ both interpretations emphasize the necessity of the activity of judging for the generation of the categories. This idea will be operative in my analysis below of the distinction between subjective and objective unity of consciousness, and the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience.

One of the most intriguing and at the same time controversial views that Kant tries to defend in the Transcendental Deduction sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that cognition of an object or an objective judgment is impossible without the unity of apperception or of self-consciousness.³⁶ Since it is in these sections that Kant brings together his theory of judgment and his views on consciousness,³⁷ it is these sections that I shall focus on in this paper. The sections in question are those in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that lead to the conclusion which Kant himself identified (at B 159) as the goal of "the transcendental deduction of the categories", that is, section 15 to section 20. These are the sections that many, though not all, commentators (following Dieter Henrich's suggestion) refer to as "step one" of the deduction.³⁸ What I shall focus on in these passages is the role the difference between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judg-

35 In fact, Loguensee's view is complex. She notes that the categories are the logical forms before "synthesis of what is given in sensibility" is carried out, but the logical forms themselves "govern the synthesis" (*Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 12).

36 KrV, B 130–143. I restrict my examination to Kant's views elaborated in the B-deduction, for, as I am mainly concerned with the relation between judgment and consciousness, it is in the B-Deduction (but not in the A-Deduction) that Kant makes explicit the mediating role that judgment plays between the categories and the unity of apperception. There are in fact also passages in the A-Deduction that lend support to my interpretation. For example, at A 106–107, even though he does not explicitly mention the act of judging, Kant says that "empirical apperception" (as opposed to "transcendental apperception") is only "the determination of our state in internal perception ... forever variable". I thank Bryan Hall for pointing this out.

37 Allison (*Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 176) notes that the incorporation of the account of judgment in section 19 of the B-Deduction "constitutes a major improvement over the A-Deduction, which attempted to relate apperception to the categories and the latter to experience without explicitly referring to judgment".

38 "Step two" consists of section 21 to section 26. For a discussion of Henrich's view and of this issue, see Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 160–62.

ments plays in Kant's account of the relation between consciousness and the act of judging.

Few recent commentators have discussed this role. This is surprising given that the distinction between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment is noted and alluded to by Kant himself throughout the sections that make up the first step of the B-Deduction. In fact, the paragraph that immediately precedes section 15,³⁹ which is the section that begins the whole of the B-Deduction, is the paragraph that we examined above, namely, the one in which Kant explains the distinction.⁴⁰ The significance of this passage, with which Kant prefaces the whole of the B-Deduction, becomes evident once we realize that this explanation is reiterated in section 20, in which the conclusion of the entire first step of the deduction is stated:

That act of the understanding [...] through which the manifold of given representations (whether they be intuitions or concepts) is brought under an apperception in general, is the logical function of judgments (§ 19). Therefore all manifold, insofar as it is given in **one** empirical intuition, is **determined** in regard to one of the logical functions for judgment, by means of which, namely, it is brought to a consciousness in general. But now the **categories** are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them (§ 13).⁴¹

What Kant emphasizes in this passage is that it is through the act of judging that the manifold of representations is brought to “an apperception in general”, and the *ways* in which this act is carried out are the categories, which are nothing other than the *determinate* ways in which the logical

39 This paragraph is contained in the section titled “Transition to the transcendental deduction of the categories”, to which Kant apparently forgot to assign a section number. Most editors insert “Section 14” into the text. The paragraph was added in the second edition.

40 KrV, B 128 f.

41 In his text of the *Critique* (Berlin 1911), Benno Erdmann, following Hans Vaihinger, most likely realizing that Kant says nothing about the logical functions determining the manifold of intuition in §13, emends the text by replacing “§13” with “§10”. But Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge 1997, 727, note 41), perhaps noticing that Kant says nothing of the kind in §10 either, and finding justification for Kant's reference to §13, defend their decision to leave it as it is in their text. In my view, it seems obvious, and I think the readers will see clearly, that Kant should have referred to §14 (not §13 or §10), since the statement in the passage in section 20 is practically repeated in section 14. But as we know that Kant forgot to assign a section number to this section, it makes sense that Kant could only have referred to “§13”.

forms of judgment are employed. But, as we already know from section 14, the same logical forms can also be employed indeterminately, in which case the manifold of representations will be brought, not to “the pure apperception” but to “the empirical apperception” (B 132).⁴² This means that, although in the quoted passage from section 20 all that Kant points out is the fact that the categories are nothing other than the logical forms of judgment as they are employed determinately, as we proceed to examine those sections that precede and lead up to section 20 (namely, sections 15 to 19), it is crucial to keep in mind what he also points out in the quoted passage from section 14, namely, that the same logical forms of judgments, through “the logical use of the understanding”, can be employed *indeterminately*, and that when they are so employed, the representations are connected only “subjectively” or “empirically”, i. e., not “in the object” (B 142).

The point that there needs to be a determinate use of the logical forms or a “determinate relation” of representations in order for there to be a cognition of an object is emphasized by Kant throughout the B-Deduction sections. To show this, I would now like to run through briefly each of the six sections that make up “step one” of the B-Deduction, namely, sections 15 to 20.

Kant begins the deduction in section 15 by identifying what he calls “combination” as “the action of the understanding”, which, in turn, is equated with “synthesis” (B 130). As we find out later in section 19, this act of combining or unifying, or of *synthesis*, is nothing other than the act of *judgment* (B 142). And, as we also find out in sections 19 and 20, this act involves the employment of the logical forms of judgment, which, as Kant has already made clear in section 14, can be employed determinately or indeterminately.

In section 16, this act of synthesis is tied to the unity of apperception or of self-consciousness (B 133–136). In order for a manifold of representations to be a manifold at all, it must be combined in one consciousness. But in order for a subject to be conscious of its own identity, it must (somehow) be aware of its own act of combining the manifold of representations into a unity (hence, “the synthetic unity of apperception”). Thus, the unity of consciousness is impossible apart from the synthesis

42 Or so I shall argue below, following Jürg Freudiger’s suggestion. In the *Prolegomena* Kant distinguishes between “consciousness in general” and “a consciousness of my state” or “a consciousness in one subject only” (Prol AA 04: 304). Cf. KrV, A 106–107.

of the manifold of representations, and the synthesis of the manifold of representations is impossible apart from the unity of consciousness.

Then, in section 17, Kant argues that the synthetic unity of apperception is required for the representation of objects; for, “an object” is possible only when the manifold of intuitions are unified or synthesized under a concept. But since representations can be unified only if they are combined in one consciousness, the unity of apperception is necessary for the representation of objects. Kant then notes that “cognitions” consist in “the *determinate* relation of given representations to an object” (B137), or that “a *determinate* combination of the given manifold” is what gives rise to a “cognition of an object” (B 138). Thus a cognition arises not from a mere combination or relation but from a *determinate* combination or relation of representations; and when we remember what Kant says in section 14 (namely, that the logical forms of judgment can be employed determinately or indeterminately), representations can also be combined indeterminately, the result of which is explained in the next section.

In section 18, Kant distinguishes between a “combination of representations” that is merely “subjective”, “empirical”, and “contingent”, and a combination of representations that is “necessarily and universally valid”. This distinction is also linked to the distinction between what Kant calls “subjective” and “objective unity of consciousness”, and between “the empirical unity of apperception” and “the objective unity of self-consciousness” (B139–140). Kant notes that the empirical unity of apperception “has merely subjective validity” because its unity “depends on the circumstances, or empirical conditions”; and under such conditions “one person combines the representations [...] with one thing, another [person] with something else”, that is to say, they are not combined *determinately*. Its unity, therefore, is “not [...] necessarily and universally valid” (B 140).⁴³ Thus, from Kant’s claim in section 14 that the categories are nothing other than the determinate ways in which the logical forms are employed, it may be inferred that what Kant calls a merely “subjective” and “empirical” connection of representations can be equated with a connection that is *not* “a determinate relation of representations to an object”, that is, a merely *indeterminate* relation of representations.⁴⁴

43 Cf. KrV, A 106–107.

44 In this section, Kant also says that “the empirical unity of apperception [...] is derived only from the [transcendental unity of apperception], under given conditions *in concreto*, [...]” This claim would seem to challenge my thesis, accord-

In section 19, we learn that the act of synthesis by means of which the manifold of representations is united in one consciousness is nothing other than the act of *judging*. In other words, apart from the activity of judging, no manifold would be unified, and thus no representations would represent anything “for me”, and I could not become conscious of my own identity. A “judgment” is defined as “the way to bring given cognitions to the **objective** unity of apperception” (B 141). As Kant tells us, this means that in a judgment (so conceived) the representations are combined “in accordance with principles of the *objective determination* of all representations insofar as cognition can come from them, [...] [my emphasis]” (B142). A judgment, in other words, “is a relation that is **objectively valid**”, which, as Kant emphasizes, is a relation through which “two representations are combined in the object” and not merely in the “subject” (B 142).

And finally in section 20, Kant says that “the act of the understanding” is nothing other than “the logical function of judgments”, and that it is through this act that “the manifold of given representations” is

ing to which the two kinds of apperception, empirical and pure, underlie two kinds of judgments or two ways of relating representations, one subjective and the other objective; for, Kant seems to be saying that the empirical unity is somehow dependent on or made possible by the transcendental unity of apperception. I make two points in response. First, this claim has been regarded by many commentators as obscure; Kant does not make clear how the one apperception can be “derived from” the other. Allison, for example, in dealing with this difficulty, suggests that the notion of empirical apperception and its subjective unity is not clarified until sections 24 and 26, that is, in “step two” of the B-Deduction. However, Allison concludes his discussion of the latter sections by noting that Kant’s statements therein lead us to an “interpretative dilemma” that “cannot be avoided”. Indeed, Allison suggests as one horn of the dilemma that “Kant himself was unclear about both the nature and scope of the argument” (Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven 2004, 183–185, 198–201). The second point is that in spite of its obscurity Kant’s claim has prompted many commentators to adopt what some have called the “top-down” approach to interpreting Kant, in which one moves from the categories and pure apperception to sensible representations and empirical apperception, an approach that often downplays or even ignores completely those passages in Kant’s writings that would seem more comprehensible and meaningful when the “bottom-up” approach is adopted instead, such as those passages in sections 18 to 21 of the *Prolegomena*, which I discuss in detail below. Although some of the difficulties will remain unresolved, by analyzing and examining some of the crucial terms that Kant uses consistently in his writings, I hope to make connections that will shed some light on Kant’s view of the relation between logical forms and consciousness.

“brought under an apperception in general” (B143). The categories are nothing other than these logical forms of judgment as they are employed in such a way that intuitions are “determined” with respect to them (B 143). Since the categories are nothing other than the ways in which I perform the act of judging, it follows that every manifold of intuition is subject to the categories.⁴⁵

Considering the views that are implicit in the arguments of the B-Deduction summarized above, however, a problem arises. Kant appears to be saying that whenever a manifold of representations is unified in one consciousness, there is a relation of representations to an object, or in other words, a cognition of an object. But this cannot be right, since Kant also speaks of a combination of representations that is merely “subjectively valid” and “contingent”. Indeed, as we saw above, Kant makes it clear in sections 16, 18, and 19, that there is a distinction between “pure” and “empirical” apperception, between “subjective” and “objective unity of apperception”, and between a “subjectively” and an “objectively valid” relation of representations respectively. As Allison points out, however, although Kant makes clear what “a subjective unity” is *not*, namely, a unity brought about by the act of objective judging, he does not clarify what “a subjective unity” *is*. This prompts Allison to bring up what he calls “the problem of subjective unity”.⁴⁶ I will return to this problem in the next part of the paper where I will also propose a solution. There is another problem, however.

The account of judgment given in the B-Deduction, particularly in section 19, seems to contradict the account of judgment given in the *Prolegomena*. In section 19, as we recall, a judgment, *by definition*, is a relation that is “objectively valid”. In other words, a relation that is merely subjectively valid cannot be regarded as a judgment at all. In the *Prolegomena*, however, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of judgment, “a judgment of perception”, which is said to be “subjectively valid” because the representations combined in it hold only “for me” but “not for everyone else”, and “a judgment of experience”, which is said to be “objectively valid” because in it the representations are combined not only “in the subject” but also “in the object” (or they hold not only

45 For a fuller and more detailed exposition, see Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 163–178. I have relied on Allison's interpretation for many of the points mentioned in the summary.

46 *Ibid.*, 178 f.

“for me” but also “for everyone else”).⁴⁷ Moreover, Kant says that a judgment of experience is “objectively valid”, while a judgment of perception is merely “subjectively valid” because, he maintains, whereas the *categories* are involved in a judgment of experience, they are *not* involved in a judgment of perception.⁴⁸ Since the sections in the *Prolegomena* in which the distinction between the two kinds of judgment is elaborated (namely, section 18 to section 21) is supposed to correspond to (and indeed, to represent for Kant a more accessible version of) the transcendental deduction sections in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (section 15 to section 20), it is natural for the reader to assume that the distinction between the two kinds of judgment introduced in the *Prolegomena* corresponds to the distinction Kant introduces in the *Critique* between “subjective” and “objective unity of apperception”. But this assumption is called into question by the discrepancy that seems to exist between the two accounts. This apparent discrepancy along with Kant’s statement that a judgment of perception does *not* require the categories has led many commentators to question the validity of Kant’s notion of a judgment of perception.⁴⁹

Most commentators have dealt with this problem by suggesting that Kant abandoned the account that he gives in the *Prolegomena* (1783) in favor of the account that he gives in the B-Deduction sections in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), which, they argue, he introduced to re-

47 Prol AA 04: 298 f.

48 Prol AA 04: 297 f.

49 Lewis White Beck (“Did the Sage of Königsberg Have No Dreams?” In: *Essays on Kant and Hume*. New Haven 1978, 50–1) argues that judgments of perception, no less than judgments of experience, require the categories inasmuch as they succeed in “telling a connected story, even if it is false”; Henry Allison (*Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 1983, 151), says that “the denial of any role for the categories in judgments of perception is [...] problematic”; Paul Guyer (*Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*. Cambridge 1987, 100, remarks, “It is often asked how the initial distinction [between judgments of perception and of experience] is to be reconciled with Kant’s view that the unity of apperception, thus apparently any form of self-consciousness itself, entails the use of the categories. How can judgments of perception express any form of self-consciousness, yet not use the categories?” Jürg Freudiger (“Zum Problem der Wahrnehmungsurteile in Kants theoretischer Philosophie.” *Kant-Studien* 82, 1992, 420 f.) puts the problem thus: “Nun droht der Einwand, daß Wahrnehmungsurteile qua urteile auch dann gemäß der Urteilstafel verknüpft werden müssen, wenn sie nicht objektiv sind, und daß sie daher die Kategorien voraussetzen. Widerlegt dies die Möglichkeit der Wahrnehmungsurteile?”

place the *Prolegomena* account.⁵⁰ The problem with this suggestion, however, is that it would be plausible only if the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience was never to be found in texts written after 1783. But this is not the case.⁵¹ What is more, a number of recent commentators such as Allison and Longuenesse have tried to show that the two accounts do not contradict one another, that the account in the B-Deduction is consistent with that in the *Prolegomena*, and that therefore it was not Kant's intention to replace the latter account with the former account.

Very few of the commentators, however, have focused on the role the logical forms of judgments play in these works, particularly with respect to the manner in which they are employed in the act of judgment. I shall argue that when Kant's distinction between determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment is taken into consideration, a possible way to show the consistency between the two accounts of judgment can be found.

My aim is to show that the distinction between these two ways in which the logical forms of judgment can be employed in the act of judging is connected to the distinction between what Kant describes as a relation of representations that is "subjectively valid" and a relation of representations that is "objectively valid", and between what he calls "subjective" and "objective unity of consciousness" or between "empirical" and "pure apperception". Moreover, textual evidence exists in the *Prolegomena* that supports the interpretation, according to which, the distinction between a judgment of perception, which is "subjectively valid", and a judgment of experience, which is "objectively valid", is meant to be understood in connection to the distinction between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment. If this interpretation can be shown to be correct, we draw closer to understanding how the account of judgment in the *Prolegomena* and the account of judgment in the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be seen to be consistent with one another.

In section 18 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant says that there are two kinds of empirical or synthetic *a posteriori* judgments: judgments of perception and judgments of experience. As we have already seen, Kant says that

50 For example, see Beck, Lewis White: "Did the Sage of Königsberg Have No Dreams?", 50 f., and Kitcher, Patricia: *Transcendental Psychology*, 158–60.

51 For example, Log AA 09: 113, 608, and *Reflection* 3145 (1790's). See Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 481, n. 46, and Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 188–192.

judgments of perception are “subjectively valid”, while judgments of experience are “objectively valid”. In section 20, Kant explains that “a judgment of experience” requires a connection of representations that is based on the “subsumption” of an intuition “under a pure concept of the understanding”: “it is requisite that the perception should be subsumed under [a “pure”] concept of the understanding.”⁵² Kant explains the function of such a concept: it “serves to determine the representation subsumed under it, with respect to judging in general” or it “determines the form of judging in general relatively to the intuition”.⁵³ In section 21a, Kant says that a pure concept of the understanding “can be nothing else than that concept which represents the intuition as determined in itself with regard to one form of judgment rather than another”; it is “a concept of that synthetical unity of intuitions which can only be represented by a given logical function of judgments”.⁵⁴ In a judgment of experience, therefore, a pure concept of the understanding determines an intuition subsumed under it with regard to one of the logical forms of judgment. In other words, the logical forms of judgment in all judgments of experience are employed determinately, that is to say, so as to refer to an object of intuition.⁵⁵

A judgment of perception, on the other hand, requires “only the logical connection [*der logischen Verknüpfung*] of perception in a thinking subject”⁵⁶. In section 21a, Kant says again that a judgment of perception requires, not a pure concept of the understanding, but a mere “sensuous intuition and its logical connection [*die logische Verknüpfung*] in a judgment”⁵⁷. Kant does not explain what he means by a “logical connection” here. Various interpretations of this phrase have been proposed. Patricia Kitcher modifies the word “logical” to “[psycho]logical”, so that it reads, “the [psycho]logical connection of perception”.⁵⁸ This is understandable given that what Kant seems to be referring to in the passage is a connection that is more than merely “logical” (in the sense of “without content”), and yet at the same time merely subjective and empirical. However, the word “logical” may mean something different here. Jürg Freudiger says, “Kant scheint also davon auszugehen, dass wir beliebige Vorstellun-

52 Prol AA 04: 301.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 304.

55 See also §39, Ibid., 324.

56 Ibid., 298.

57 Ibid., 304.

58 Kitcher, Patricia: *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, 159.

gen sozusagen mechanisch gemäss der Urteilstafel miteinander verknüpfen können”⁵⁹. I think this is closer to Kant’s meaning. Henry Allison seems to agree. He says that judgments of perception “do not make use of the categories, though, [...] they involve the logical functions”⁶⁰.

If, however, Freudiger and Allison’s interpretation is correct, that is to say, if all that Kant means to say in using the phrase a “logical connection of perception” in describing the nature of a judgment of perception is that all such judgments involve the logical forms of judgment, then we are faced with a puzzle. Kant’s categories are commonly defined as “the logical forms of judgment as applied to intuitions”.⁶¹ Indeed, in some passages Kant himself describes the categories in this way.⁶² But if this is how we are to understand the nature of the categories and nothing further is said about it, then we are forced to conclude that a judgment of perception, no less than a judgment of experience, involves the categories, since, if a judgment of perception involves the logical forms, then, since such a judgment is synthetic and *a posteriori* (or empirical), the logical forms involved would have to be applied to intuitions, which is just to say, on the view of the nature of the categories just mentioned, that they are used as categories. But this directly contradicts Kant’s claim that judgments of perception do *not* require the categories.

Faced with such difficulties, commentators have responded in a number of ways. Allison, for example, suggests that Kant’s real position is that the categories *do*, in fact, govern judgments of perception as well as judgments of experience. For example, after stating that judgments of perception involve the logical forms of judgment, Allison remarks that “the change from a judgment of perception to a judgment of experience does not involve a change in logical form”⁶³. But, as has just been noted, if Allison is right, then we are forced to conclude that the categories are involved not only in judgments of experience but also in judgments of perception. But why, then, does Kant say in the *Prolegomena* that judgments of perception do *not* involve the categories?

In response to this question, Allison suggests that in the *Prolegomena* Kant neglected to point out the fact that judgments of perception, no less than judgments of experience, are governed by the categories, because of

59 Freudiger, Jürg: “Zum Problem der Wahrnehmungsurteile”, 420.

60 Allison, Henry: *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 179.

61 See note 8.

62 For example, KrV, B 128–29, and Prol AA 04: 311, 54.

63 Allison, Henry: *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 2004, 480, no. 39.

the different method of presentation used by Kant in the *Prolegomena* (namely, the analytic method) from that used in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (namely, the synthetic method) as well as of their respective goals. The neglect, says Allison, “is attributed to [the *Prolegomena*’s] particular goal and method rather than to any philosophical confusion or doctrinal change on Kant’s part”.⁶⁴ This is not, however, in my view, entirely convincing, since it fails to explain why, then, Kant apparently goes out of his way in the *Prolegomena* to point out that judgments of perception do *not* involve the categories, and that they are “subjectively valid” and not “objectively valid” because the representations combined in them are not “subsumed under” the pure concepts of the understanding. If Kant intentionally wanted to shy away from mentioning (for reasons methodological⁶⁵ or otherwise) that the categories are also involved in judgments of perception, then he probably would have refrained from stating, as he does so bluntly and more than a few times, that such judgments do not require the categories.

Jürg Freudiger offers another interpretation. He maintains as Allison does that the logical forms of judgment are involved in both judgments of perception and judgments of experience. As was noted above, however, this brings up the difficulty that both kinds of judgments must then be considered as involving the categories, which Kant explicitly denies. As Freudiger explains the difficulty, “Nun droht der Einwand, dass Wahrnehmungsurteile qua urteile auch dann gemäss der Urteilstafel verknüpft werden müssen, wenn sie nicht objektiv sind, und dass sie daher die Kategorien voraussetzen. Widerlegt dies die Möglichkeit der Wahrnehmungsurteile?”⁶⁶ To solve this difficulty, Freudiger argues that whereas judgments of experience involve the “schematized” categories, judgments of perception involve only the “unschematized” categories. So, according to Freudiger, when Kant says that only a “logical connection of perception” is required for a judgment of perception, or that a pure concept of the understanding is *not* required for a judgment of perception, Kant means that “das Wahrnehmungsurteil setzt keinen *schematisierten* Ver-

64 Ibid., 182.

65 Moreover, Kant’s statement that the *Prolegomena* employs the analytic method while the *Critique of Pure Reason* employs the synthetic method, while commonly accepted, has been questioned and even challenged by some commentators. See my “analytische/synthetische Methode”: In *Kant-Lexikon*. Eds. Georg Mohr, Jürgen Stolzenberg, and Marcus Willaschek. Berlin (forthcoming).

66 Freudiger, Jürg: “Zum Problem der Wahrnehmungsurteile,” 420 f.

standesbegriff voraus”.⁶⁷ In order to support his interpretation, Freudiger argues that there are no fewer than three ways in which the categories can be applied in judging, and that while all three ways are involved in judgments of experience, only two are involved in judgments of perception. The first way is as “Urteil überhaupt”, the second way consists in “die eigentliche Anwendung der schematisierten Kategorie”, and the third way is as the condition of the “Synthesis der Apprehension”, which “Wahrnehmung [...] voraussetzt”⁶⁸. The third way, according to Freudiger, is elaborated by Kant only in the Analytic of Principles sections in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. While Freudiger’s interpretation is interesting, his claim that the categories can be applied in three different ways in judging would raise some questions and perhaps even doubts. His view, however, that judgments of perception involve unschematized categories is suggestive (and it also enables him to come up with a solution to the difficulty in question), and I would like to return to it later on.

Beatrice Longuenesse proposes an interpretation that is not dissimilar to Freudiger’s. According to Longuenesse, the logical forms of judgment are operative in both a judgment of experience and a judgment of perception, but because the latter involves what she calls “the empirical use of the logical functions of judgment”, such a judgment does not “entitle us to consider” the representations connected therein as “subsumable under the corresponding categories”⁶⁹. Thus, Longuenesse maintains that Kant “distinguishes the logical connection [of perception]” which is involved in a judgment of perception, from “the full-fledged application of the category”, which is involved in a judgment of experience.⁷⁰ In fact, Longuenesse proposes an interpretation of Kant’s account of judgment that is similar to the one that I have given above. She notes that, for Kant, not every judgment requires the use or the “application” of the categories, “even when judgments [...] apply to objects of a sensible intuition”⁷¹. To illustrate her point, she refers to the paragraph in section 14 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 128) that I discussed above, the paragraph in which Kant distinguishes between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment. Having quoted the passage, Longuenesse comments, “To be sure, this text is not easy to in-

67 Ibid., 420.

68 Ibid., 421.

69 Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 194.

70 Ibid., 177.

71 Ibid., 78.

terpret. But at least it unambiguously shows that the relation of subject and predicate in a judgment does not always express one of substance and accident. The same holds for all other categories. I will develop this point in detail in part III.”⁷² Longuenesse discusses the passage in the context of defending Kant’s metaphysical deduction of the categories against the criticisms raised against it by such authors as Jonathan Bennett and Paul Guyer. But she discusses the passage mainly in connection to the second part or “step two” of the B-deduction, particularly section 26, as well as the Schematism chapters, and the Analytic of Principles. She thus misses the opportunity to discuss the passage in connection to the first part of the B-deduction, namely, sections 15 to 20, in which Kant explains the role of judgment and how it relates to the unity of consciousness.

Thus, although she does speak of “a ‘merely logical’ standpoint” in addressing Kant’s reference in B 128 to “the merely logical use of the understanding”, the distinction between the two ways of employing the logical forms of judgment is not thematized by Longuenesse. In fact, even though she devotes the whole first chapter of her book to elaborating what Kant calls “the logical use of the understanding” in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770), she does not provide as detailed an account of the same term “the logical use of the understanding” as it is used by Kant in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787). So, for example, Longuenesse says that “the logical use of the understanding” in the *Inaugural Dissertation* signifies that use of the understanding by virtue of which mere “appearances” (*apparentia*) are turned into “experience” or “phenomena” (*phaenomena*). Longuenesse then argues that this distinction between mere “appearances” and “experience” corresponds to the distinction that Kant later makes in section 14 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* between object as “appearance” (or as “the indeterminate object of an empirical intuition”) and object “as an object”, i.e., object as “corresponding to intuition”. Thus, according to Longuenesse, the term “the logical use of the understanding” as it is used by Kant in the *Inaugural Dissertation* denotes the understanding’s use “in the empirical generalization of our sensible representations” or “the subordination of sensible representations under ‘common concepts’”.⁷³ What Longuenesse does not emphasize, however, is the fact that in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in the very section that Longuenesses men-

72 Ibid., 79, n. 13.

73 Ibid., 26

tions, namely, section 14, Kant says, “in regard to the merely *logical use of the understanding*, it would remain undetermined which of these two concepts will be given the function of the subject and which will be given that of the predicate [my emphasis]” (B 128). In other words, in this passage, Kant defines “the logical use of the understanding” as that use of the understanding in which the logical forms of judgment are employed indeterminately.⁷⁴

In sum, Allison, Freudiger, and Longuenesse all construe (correctly, I believe) Kant’s statement that a judgment of perception requires only “the logical connection of perception” as the claim that the logical forms of judgment are involved in all judgments of perception. What they do not seem to recognize, however, is that the phrase “logical connection” can best be comprehended if it is understood in connection to what Kant calls in section 14 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* “the logical use of the understanding”, which Kant takes to involve the *indeterminate* employment of the logical forms of judgment, that is to say, the logical forms of judgment as they are employed in such a way that “it would remain undetermined which of [the] two concepts [in a judgment] will be given the function of the subject and which will be given that of the predicate”.⁷⁵

This interpretation avoids the difficulty mentioned above. It is true that the logical forms of judgments are involved in both judgments of perception and judgments of experience. On this interpretation, however, this fact does not give rise to the difficulty in question, namely, that the categories would then be involved in both kinds of judgments (which Kant denies) because the *way* in which the logical forms of judgments are employed in the two kinds of judgment are *not* the same: in judgments of perception, the logical forms are employed indeterminately (involving a mere “logical connection of perception”), while in a judgment of experience they are employed determinately, i.e., *as* categories. In other words, in judgments of perception the logical forms of judgment *are* employed but *indeterminately*. This also means that what makes a judgment of perception “subjectively valid”, or in other words, what makes “the connection of perception” in such a judgment to be valid only “in a consciousness of my state, without reference to the object”⁷⁶,

74 See also KrV, A 245 f.

75 KrV, B 128

76 See Prol 04: 299 f., and also KrV, B 142.

is the *indeterminate* (as opposed to the determinate) manner in which the logical forms of judgment are employed.

That a judgment of perception involves an indeterminate employment, while a judgment of experience involves a determinate employment of the logical forms of judgment is confirmed in two passages, one in the *Prolegomena* and the other in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In these passages, Kant uses the *hypothetical* form of judgment as an example, while in the passages we examined above he uses the categorical form of judgment as an example. In his discussion of the concept of cause in section 29 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant writes:

We are first given *a priori*, by means of logic, the form of a conditional judgment in general; that is, we have one cognition given as antecedent and another as consequent. But it is possible that in perception we may meet with a rule of relation which runs thus: that a certain appearance is constantly followed by another (though not conversely); and this is a case for me to use the hypothetical judgment and, for instance, to say if the sun shines long enough upon a body it grows warm. Here there is indeed as yet no necessity of connection or concept of cause. But I proceed and say that, if this proposition, which is merely a subjective connection of perceptions, is to be a proposition of experience, it must be seen as necessary and universally valid. Such a proposition would be that the sun by its light is the cause of heat.⁷⁷

Kant makes it clear in this passage that the logical form of judgment – here, the hypothetical form – is involved in a judgment of perception as well as in a judgment of experience. The way in which it functions in each of the two kinds of judgment, however, is different; in judgments of perception, the hypothetical form is employed so as to make possible a “subjective connection of perceptions,” whereas in judgments of experience, it is employed so as to make this connection “necessary and universally valid.” In the Second Analogy of the Analytic of Principles of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant specifies more precisely in what this difference consists. In the following passage, Kant explains that the hypothetical form of judgment can be employed either indeterminately or determinately:

Now connection is not the work of mere sense and intuition, but is here rather the product of a synthetic faculty of the imagination, which determines inner sense with regard to temporal relations. This, however, can combine the two states in question in two different ways, so that either

77 Prol 04: 311 f.

one or the other precedes in time; for time cannot be perceived in itself, nor can what precedes and what follows in objects be as it were empirically determined in relation to it. I am therefore only conscious that my imagination places one state before and the other after, not that the one state precedes the other in the object; or, in other words, through the mere perception the *objective relation* of the appearances that are succeeding one another remains *undetermined* [my emphasis]. Now in order for this to be cognized as *determined* [my emphasis] the relation between the two states must be thought in such a way that *it is thereby necessarily determined which of them must be placed before and which after rather than vice versa* [my emphasis]. The concept, however, that carries a necessity of synthetic unity with it can only be a pure concept of the understanding, which does not lie in the perception, and that is here the concept of the *relation of cause and effect*, [...]⁷⁸

In this passage we learn that the hypothetical as well as the categorical form of judgment can be employed in two ways: in a judgment of perception the hypothetical form is employed so as to leave “undetermined” which of the two states is to “precede” and which is to “follow” the other; while in a judgment of experience the hypothetical form is employed so as to determine “which [state] must be placed before and which after rather than vice versa,” or which “state preceded the other in the object” (B 233–34). And this is why a judgment of perception merely “expresses a relation of two sensations to the same subject, that is, myself, and that only in my present state of perception”⁷⁹. A judgment of experience, on the other hand, in which the hypothetical form is employed determinately, i. e., as the category of cause, expresses this relation objectively or as determined “in the object.”

When the quoted passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* is read side by side with the quoted passage from the *Prolegomena*, it becomes clear that the distinction Kant makes in the latter between “a subjective connection of perceptions” and a connection that is “objectively valid” or “necessarily and universally valid”⁸⁰ is meant to be understood in connection with the distinction Kant makes in the former between “indeterminate” and “determinate” employment of the logical forms of judgment. In other words, we now have textual support for the crucial link that we assumed above that Kant makes. For Kant, the distinction between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment underlies the distinction between a judgment of perception

78 KrV, B 233–34.

79 ProL 04: 299.

80 ProL 04: 312.

and a judgment of experience. But we also know that for Kant a judgment of perception is “subjectively valid” because in such a judgment the connection of representations, as merely “empirical” and “contingent”, is valid for “a consciousness in one subject only”,⁸¹ while a judgment of experience is “objectively valid” because in such a judgment the connection of representations, as “necessary and universal”, is valid for “a consciousness in general”.⁸² Thus, from these connections it can now safely be inferred that the distinction between the determinate and indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment is also meant to be understood in connection to the distinction between what Kant refers to as “a connection” of representations that is “subjectively valid” and a connection of representations that is “objectively valid”. Indeed, these distinctions help us to comprehend the distinction between a judgment of perception and a judgment of experience in a way that makes it possible to show the consistency between the account of judgment given in the *Prolegomena* and the account of judgment given in section 19 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to which I now turn.

In this section, Kant defines a judgment as “a relation that is **objectively valid**”.⁸³ While one might so construe this definition as to rule out any possibility that there could be such a thing as “a judgment of perception”, which, Kant says, is “subjectively valid”, once we take into consideration the distinctions we established above and the fact that these distinctions are elaborated by Kant and play a significant role not only in section 19 but throughout the sections that make up the first part of the B-Deduction (sections 15 to 20), it no longer becomes implausible to hold the two accounts of judgment to be consistent with one another. For example, in section 19, Kant also defines a judgment as “the way to bring given cognitions to the **objective unity** of apperception”.⁸⁴ But Kant contrasts what he calls here “the objective unity of apperception” with what he calls “a subjective unity of apperception” in section 18.⁸⁵ “The subjective unity of apperception”, in turn, corresponds to what Kant calls “the empirical unity of apperception”, which is said to “have only subjective validity”.⁸⁶

81 Prol 04: 304.

82 Prol 04: 300.

83 KrV, B 142.

84 KrV, B 141.

85 KrV, B 139.

86 KrV, B 140.

Given all this, and given also that in section 19 Kant provides an example of both a relation of representations that is merely “subjective valid”—“If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight”—and a relation of representations that is “objectively valid”—“It, the body, is heavy”—and given that these two judgments are strikingly similar to the examples of the two kinds of judgment that Kant gives in the *Prolegomena*—“if the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm” is the example of a judgment of perception, and “the sun warms the stone” is the example of a judgment of experience—the fact that Kant does not actually use the phrase “a judgment of perception” in section 19 may not be as significant as the fact that the kind of relation of representations that such a judgment is said to represent in the *Prolegomena*, namely, a relation that is “subjectively valid”, “empirical”, and “contingent”, is precisely what Kant describes in section 19 of the B-Deduction in order to distinguish it from a relation that is “objectively valid”. Freudiger is, therefore, justified in concluding that, if Kant wants to define a judgment that is “objectively valid” as “nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the **objective unity** of apperception”, as he does in section 19,⁸⁷ then “wir koennten daher in Analogie zum [...] zitierten Satz aus B 141 nun sagen: ein Wahrnehmungsurteil ist nichts anderes als die Art, gegebene Wahrnehmungen zur subjektiven Einheit der Apperzeption zu bringen.”⁸⁸ Thus, the fact that Kant did not actually use the term “a judgment of perception” in section 19 to describe the kind of relation involved therein may not be as detrimental to Kant’s account as some commentators have thought.

Now, we have already seen that, according to Freudiger’s interpretation, the difference between the two kinds of judgment that Kant distinguishes in both the *Prolegomena* and the B-Deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, between a “subjectively valid” and an “objectively valid” judgment, consists in the fact that whereas the “subjectively valid” judgment (the judgment of perception in the *Prolegomena*) involves *unschematized* categories, the “objectively valid” judgment (the judgment of experience in the *Prolegomena*) involves the *schematized* categories. On Freudiger’s interpretation, then, it is because the unschematized categories are not full-fledged categories that Kant says in the *Prolegomena* that a judgment of perception “does not require a pure concept of the understanding”; in fact, “die Bemerkung, dass das Wahrnehmungsurteil ‘nur

87 KrV, B 141.

88 Freudiger, Jürg: “Zum Problem der Wahrnehmungsurteile,” 427 f.

subjektiv gültig' (Prol. 298) sei, ist gleichbedeutend mit: die Wahrnehmungsurteile 'bedürfen keines reinen Verstandesbegriffs' (ebd.)."⁸⁹ As we have already seen, Kant says that "the sensible condition under which alone pure concepts of the understanding can be employed" is the "schematism of the pure understanding".⁹⁰ This seems to confirm Freudiger's interpretation, according to which, a judgment in which the pure concept of the understanding is not required is a judgment that involves, not the schematized, but the "unschematized" categories.

What Freudiger does not seem to recognize, however, is that, for Kant, the provision of the schema (or "the transcendental time-determination") makes possible not merely the use of "a pure concept of the understanding" understood in the sense of "schematized categories", but more specifically, a determinate as opposed to merely indeterminate employment of the logical forms of judgment. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for example, Kant says that "the actions of the understanding [i.e., judgments], [...] apart from the schemata of sensibility, are **undetermined** [...]"⁹¹ Moreover, in *Reflection* 5933,⁹² Kant says, "the Schematism shows the condition under which an appearance is determined in respect to a logical function and, therefore, stands under a category".⁹³ Thus, for example, Freudiger notes that there are three ways in which the categories can be involved in a judgment, and that in a judgment of perception only two of the three ways are involved (whereas all three ways are involved in a judgment of experience), namely, their function as "judgment in general" and as "the condition of the synthesis of apprehension", which is described in the *Analytic of Principles*. The third function, namely, as the schematized categories, is not involved in such judgments.

Apart from the difficulty of comprehending how there could be three ways in which the *categories* can function in judging, what Freudiger leaves out in his account is the fact that the logical forms of judgment, which are involved in all judgments without exception, can be employed either determinately or indeterminately, and that the application of the categories, for Kant, is equivalent to the determinate employment of the logical forms of judgment. As the quoted passages indicate, it is the

89 Ibid., 422.

90 KrV, A 136/B 175.

91 KrV, A 664/B 692.

92 Dated 1776 to 1789

93 Refl AA 18: 392, quoted in Allison, Henry: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven 1983, 176.

difference between these two ways of employing the logical forms that Kant is concerned with in his account of the schema, which, he says, alone makes possible a determinate (as opposed to a merely indeterminate) employment of the logical forms.

Beatrice Longuenesse proposes another way to reconcile the account of judgment given in the *Prolegomena* with the account of judgment given in section 19 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. She argues that whereas in the *Prolegomena* Kant opposes “two types of empirical judgments”, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he opposes “two origins of judgment”⁹⁴. Thus, “the *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* obey a different purpose”; she explains:

In the *Prolegomena*, Kant distinguishes between two types of empirical judgments. In the *Critique*, he shows what the combinations of our perceptions would be in the absence of a function of judging that we could consider as original, what they would be if our judgments merely derived from empirical associations. Then our representations would have no other connection than those derived from subjective associations, and the only adequate formulation for these combinations would be such as ‘if I carry a body, I feel [a pressure of weight].’ No combination would be adequately expressed by ‘it, the body, is heavy’, since no combination would hold ‘whatever the state of the subject’, that is, as a judgment of experience.⁹⁵

In other words, as Longuenesse sees it, in section 19 of the *Critique*, Kant is rejecting “Humean associationism”.⁹⁶ In her view, Kant is not explaining in this section the difference between two kinds of empirical judgments, as he does in the *Prolegomena*, but rather, he is arguing that, *if* the only way in which we could combine sensible representations were through the associative (Humean) act of the imagination, no *judgment*, in the *Kantian* sense, that is, in the sense of “expressing relation to an object”⁹⁷, could ever arise. Instead, all combinations would be “subjectively valid”, resulting in skepticism.⁹⁸ In the *Prolegomena*, on the other hand, Kant is distinguishing between two kinds of judgments, both of which involve the logical forms of judgments, and, therefore, both of which express “a relation to an object even if this form is ‘filled’ in an empirical, contingent, and (empirically) subjective manner [in a judgment of percep-

94 Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 188.

95 *Ibid.*, 187 f.

96 *Ibid.*, 186.

97 *Ibid.*, 185.

98 *Ibid.*, 187.

tion]”.⁹⁹ On Longuenesse’s view, therefore, Kant’s “judgments of perception” are qualitatively different from Hume’s imaginative association of perceptions, which could never be regarded as “a judgment” in Kant’s sense.

Longuenesse’s interpretation hinges on her claim that, for Kant, “the original”¹⁰⁰ or “the normative”¹⁰¹ function of the logical forms of judgment is “to express the relation of representations to an object”.¹⁰² This definition, Longuenesse maintains, does not force us to reject Kant’s “judgments of perception” which are “subjectively valid”, because even if such judgments fail to “fulfill [this] function”,¹⁰³ “our capacity to judge carries within its very forms (the logical forms of judgment, specified according to quantity, quality, relation) the norms that drive us to progress from judgments of perception to judgments of experience”.¹⁰⁴ Thus, as “a potential judgment of experience”,¹⁰⁵ a judgment of perception does require the logical forms of judgment, though it “adequately fulfills its goal or immanent norm only in judgments of experience”.¹⁰⁶

Whether or not such a characterization of the function of judgment was what Kant had in mind when he distinguished between the two kinds of judgment in the *Prolegomena*, Longuenesse is forced by her interpretation to make a move that I believe is questionable. The examples that Kant gives in section 19 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* of both a “subjectively” and an “objectively valid” relation of representations—viz., respectively, “if I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight” and “it, the body, is heavy”¹⁰⁷—appear to correspond exactly to the examples that Kant gives in the *Prolegomena* of a judgment of perception, which is “subjectively valid”, and a judgment experience, which is “objectively valid”—viz., respectively, “when the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm”, and “the sun warms the stone”.¹⁰⁸ Given this, the most natural way to construe these examples seems to be to regard them as formulating the same distinction, namely, the distinction between a “subjectively

99 Ibid., 185.

100 Ibid., 187.

101 Ibid., 186.

102 Ibid., 172.

103 Ibid., 173.

104 Ibid., 186.

105 Ibid., 193.

106 Ibid.

107 KrV, B 142.

108 Prol 04: 301n.

valid” and an “objectively valid relation of representations” or judgments. This natural reading, however, would have to be rejected on Longuenesse’s interpretation, since, according to her interpretation, in section 19 of the *Critique* Kant is using the examples to distinguish between “mere empirical association”, which is *not* (and can never be) a judgment, and a “judgment”, while in the *Prolegomena*, he is using the examples to distinguish between two kinds of *judgments*.¹⁰⁹ She admits that “it is of course tempting” to construe the examples in the two works as representing the same distinction, “all the more so since Kant specifies that the meaning of the objective form ‘it, the body, is heavy’, is that ‘[the] two representations are linked in the object, whatever the state of the subject’, whereas the formulation of empirical association, ‘if I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight’ is said to hold ‘only in my perception.’”¹¹⁰ But she is forced by her interpretation to resist this “temptation”.

The fact that Longuenesse’s interpretation forces us to reject this natural reading calls into question her interpretation. I believe that an interpretation can be proposed that does not force us into such a conclusion and that does not at the same time commit us to a far-fetched reading of the passages in question. We can sustain the natural reading of the passages if we remember that in both accounts Kant speaks of “the logical use of the understanding” (in the *Critique*) or “a logical connection of perceptions” (in the *Prolegomena*), which he contrasts with “the transcendental use of the power of judgment” (in the *Critique*) or with “a subsumption of perceptions under the pure concepts of the understanding” (in the *Prolegomena*) in order to elaborate the difference between the two ways in which the logical forms of judgment can be employed, that is, indeterminately and determinately respectively. On this interpretation, the example that Kant gives of a relation of representations that is “subjectively valid” in section 19 of the *Critique*, viz., “if I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight”, will not have to be construed (as it would have to be on Longuenesse’s interpretation) as a non-judgmental, merely “empirical association” that is unrelated to the example that Kant gives of a judgment of perception in the *Prolegomena*, viz., “if the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm”, of which Kant says not only that it is “subjectively valid” but also that it is “merely a connection of perceptions within my mental state, without reference to the object”.¹¹¹ Compare the latter char-

109 Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 187.

110 Ibid.

111 Prol 04: 300.

acterization with the example of an “objectively valid” relation of representations that Kant gives in section 19 of the *Critique*, viz., “it, the body, is heavy”, in which, he says, “the two representations are combined in the object, i.e., regardless of any difference in the conditions of the subject, and are not merely found together in perception [...]”¹¹² On this interpretation, we are not forced to deny what seems obvious since both examples, viz., “if I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight” (in the *Critique*) and “if the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm” (in the *Prolegomena*), can be regarded as instances of what Kant calls “subjectively valid” relations of representations that can, moreover, be regarded as *judgments* insofar as they both involve the logical forms judgment as they are employed indeterminately, that is to say, as they are employed in such a way that the representations are connected, as Kant notes, only in the subject, though not “in the object”.

III. The Subjective Unity of Consciousness

If the foregoing interpretation is correct, we can conclude that what Kant calls “the subjective unity” or “the empirical unity” of consciousness or “empirical apperception” refers to that “unity” which results from the indeterminate way in which representations have been combined, that is, in such a way that the manner in which the concepts are to relate to one another in the judgment has not been *fixed* or *determined* in one’s consciousness. In other words, for Kant, the representations’ being combined or unified “subjectively”, “contingently”, and “empirically” is equivalent to their being related to one another in accordance with the merely “logical use of the understanding”, that is, in accordance with an indeterminate employment of the logical forms. Unfortunately, Kant does not make clear precisely how the kind of (self-) awareness that is involved when the representations are combined merely subjectively or “only in the consciousness of my state” differs from the kind of (self-) awareness that is involved when the representations are combined not only in the subject but also “in the object”. For example, Kant, as we saw, argues in the Transcendental Deduction that self-consciousness is required for cognition or objective judgment. Kant seems to be saying that we can be conscious of our activity of combining or be conscious of the ways in which the representations are being combined. But how are we to un-

112 KrV, B 143.

derstand such a claim? Moreover, what is the nature of the state of our consciousness when the representations are unified according to an indeterminate use of the logical forms, i. e., in such a way that “it is undetermined which concept is to function as subject and which concept as predicate”? As we have already seen, Kant does not explain how the “subjective unity” differs from the “objective unity” of consciousness, and, in fact, his account seems to suggest (to our puzzlement) that *any* unification of representations that is effected in *one consciousness* is an “objective unity”. It can perhaps be suggested that, for Kant, even a relation of representations brought about by, say, a mere associative (Humean) act of the imagination constitutes a “unity”, since what he calls “the unity of consciousness” or “the unity of apperception”, whether it be objective *or* subjective, is impossible apart from the combining or synthetic activity that is always carried out in accordance with the logical forms of judgments. But such a suggestion still leaves us with some unanswered questions.

A few recent scholars have dealt with the question of the relation between apperception or self-consciousness and the act of judging in Kant’s theoretical philosophy. Patricia Kitcher, for example, does discuss apperception as it relates to judging,¹¹³ but she does not take into consideration the role of the logical forms of judgment and the categories in her discussion.¹¹⁴ Henry Allison also offers an account of the relation between consciousness and the act of judging, but like Kitcher, he does not bring to bear the role the logical forms and the categories play in this relation. Nonetheless, I would like to examine Allison’s account since it does make reference to the notion of indeterminacy and since, if developed further, it can help bring out another dimension in our comprehension of this relation.

Allison says that Kant’s “conception of knowledge” commits him to two views: one, “that judgment involves a synthesizing, unifying activity, exercised upon the given by the understanding”, and two, “that it involves

113 Kitcher, Patricia: *Kant’s Transcendental Psychology*, 104–115.

114 Kitcher says, “[Kant] believes that the unity of apperception is brought about by syntheses that are guided by rules associated with the categories. I omit this aspect, because it does not bear on the soundness of the reply to Hume [which is her focus in the chapter] and because I do not believe that the arguments for categorically determined syntheses succeed” (Ibid., 105).

a *consciousness* of this activity".¹¹⁵ He suggests that judgment be construed as "the activity of 'taking as'". He explains:

To judge is to take something as a such and such. In the simplest case, an indeterminate something x is taken as an F . In more complex cases, Fx is qualified by further "determinations"; for example, Fx is G (this cat is black). [...] in all these cases the mind must not only combine the items (representations or judgments) in a single consciousness, it must also be conscious of what it is doing. [...] unless one is aware of taking x as an F (recognizing it in a concept), one has not in fact taken it as such.¹¹⁶

Allison says that this "taking" is "a spontaneous, inherently self-conscious activity of the subject".¹¹⁷ He also characterizes this act of "taking as" as "recognition", that is, being "aware of taking x as an F " in a categorical judgment or "the grasping of reasons as reasons" in reasoning or inference.¹¹⁸

Allison's account is highly suggestive. He specifies what it is that the subject must be conscious of in the act of judging that leads to knowledge and thus explains why Kant says that such judgments must involve self-consciousness. What Allison does not incorporate in his discussion, however, is the role the logical forms of judgment plays in one's consciousness of the act of judging. This is unfortunate given that Allison himself describes this act of judging, which he equates with the act of "taking as", as the act of *determining*, that is, in Allison's words, the act of taking "an indeterminate something" as a such and such.¹¹⁹ In another essay, for example, Allison says that "to judge is just to take some intuitively given item or set thereof as a determinate something. [For example,] an indeterminate something = x is taken as an F . Apart from or prior to this conceptual determination, there is no content for thought."¹²⁰ I have shown above that, for Kant, cognition of an object or objective judgment (as opposed to a mere relation of representations that does not refer to an object) requires the determinate employment of the logical forms. In other words, nothing can be grasped as an object unless the logical

115 Allison, Henry: "Kant's Refutation of Materialism." In: *Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge, England 1996, 94.

116 Ibid., 95.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 Allison, Henry: "On Naturalizing Kant's Transcendental Psychology." In: *Idealism and Freedom*, 61.

forms are employed in such a way that the merely logical function that orders the representations is fixed or specified in some way. The same point can be made from the perspective of apperception. The possibility of the unity of consciousness or apperception must be construed in terms of the manner in which the logical forms are employed in the act of judging. Kant explains the state of consciousness in human cognition, whether it is merely “subjective” or “objective” (that is, whether the representations are unified for one subject only or for all), in terms of whether or not the subject succeeds, through the activity of judging, in fixing, delimiting, or determining, the content of thought. In other words, for Kant, cognition and thus the *objective* unity of consciousness is impossible apart from the act of making a particular or specific use of the general forms of thinking that are available to human understanding.

Given all this, Allison’s account seems to give rise to the following problem. According to this account, the act of judging is equivalent to the act of “taking as”, which he construes as the act of determining that which was formerly “an indeterminate something”. Such an account, however, will not be able to distinguish adequately the act of “taking as” that represents a determinate, objective judgment from the act of “taking as” that amounts to a merely indeterminate, subjective judgment. For example, a judgment that results from a mere Humean, associative act of the imagination may take the form of “taking” some item in experience “as a such and such”. But this obviously would not count as an objective judgment. So the problem is that as it stands it seems that Allison’s account of judging as the act of “taking as” cannot explain how an indeterminate, subjective judgment differs from a determinate, objective judgment. In other words, what Allison’s account has to (but cannot) rule out is the possibility that the act of “taking as”, understood as the act of determining, be involved in subjective judgments.

Allison would reply that a Humean association is not a judgment at all, and therefore, is not an instance of the act of “taking as”. But, as we have already seen, for Kant, even a relation of representations that does not refer to an object (including Humean associations as well as various species of what he calls “judgments of perception”) employs the logical forms, though indeterminately and not determinately. In other words, Kant allows for subjective judgments, in which (as we saw) the “unity” of consciousness is said by Kant to be merely “subjective” or “empirical” since, again, the logical forms employed therein are not fixed or determined for cognition of an object. In this connection, Longuenesse points out, I believe correctly, that even those judgments that have the catego-

rical form ('S is P') can result from a mere associative act of the imagination:

The 'subjective unity' ["of given representations"] emerges from the associative combinations of imagination, which are dependent on the contingent conjunctions of our representations. [...] For example, a judgment such as 'Bodies are heavy' may be only the empirical generalization of a customary association between impressions of weight and of carrying a body. If it expresses nothing more than such a generalization, the correlation it expresses is contingent.¹²¹

If my analysis is correct, one way in which Allison's account can be supplemented is to provide an explanation as to how the kind of "taking as" involved in a subjective judgment differs from the kind of "taking as" involved in an objective judgment.

An account that includes such an explanation can be developed if Allison's account is construed in the context of what I have shown above. For Kant, there could simply be no act of "taking as", if this act is construed (as it is by Allison) as the act of determining, unless the logical forms are employed determinately. The same point can be made in the following way from the standpoint of apperception: Allison says that the act of "taking as" involves at the same time a consciousness of this activity. But if this activity is understood (as it is by Allison) as one of determining that which was at first indeterminate, then the unity of consciousness involved in such an activity is objective, not subjective; and if so, this activity can take place only when the logical forms are employed determinately. Kant makes it clear that what he calls "determinations" (*Bestimmungen*) are not mere attributes, but "real predicates" (as opposed to merely "logical predicates") or representations that refer to an object.¹²² It is only in the Transcendental Deduction sections in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the explanation is given of how such representations are possible at all. I have shown above that in these sections we

121 Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 83. Of course, if this judgment emerges from "the objective unity of given representations", then it is objectively valid, as Kant notes in section 19 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Another example of an empirical judgment that could be either subjectively valid or objectively valid is the one given in the passage from MAN discussed above: "the stone is hard" (MAN AA 04: 475). Longuenesse discusses another example of such judgments that Kant gives in the *Prolegomena*, "air is elastic". See Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 84.

122 KrV, A 598/B 626

learn that no representation can refer to an object unless the logical forms are employed determinately.

If the foregoing analysis is correct, Allison's account can be developed further in an attempt to make clear Kant's view of the relation between judgment and apperception. What the subject must be conscious of in the act of judging, according to Allison, is the act of taking something *x* as a such and such. But, since Allison himself describes this act as the act of taking "an indeterminate something" as a such and such, that is to say, as the *act of determining*, it would be more in line with Kant's own views if we say that what the subject is conscious of in the act of judging that leads to cognition of an object is that a representation is grasped or understood as a *determinate* or *specific* instance of a more general one. Kant often explains the act of judging as involving such a relation of representations, namely, in terms of concepts or representations' being brought under or "subsumed under" more general or "higher" ones.¹²³ The "highest" or the most general representations or concepts under which everything that humans can cognize must be brought are, of course, the categories, which are nothing but the specific or particular ways in which the logical forms can be employed. In other words, the only objects that can be cognized by human beings are those that can be represented as specific or determinate instances of ultimately what are the most general forms of thinking available to us, namely, the logical forms of judgment.

Here one might object that, on my interpretation, the act of judging would cover only analytic judgments in which the concepts are combined in a genus/species relationship or in the manner of subordination or super-ordination typical in the Aristotelian tradition. It would not (so the objection would go) cover synthetic judgments in which not only concepts but also intuitions (empirical or pure) are combined. In response to this objection, we must recall that in section 20 of the B-Deduction, Kant says that the logical forms of judgment are employed not only in combining concepts but also intuitions: Kant says that in applying "the category of substance, [...] if I bring the concept of a body under it, it is determined that its *empirical intuition* [my emphasis] in experience must always be considered as subject, never as mere predicate" (B 129). This means that even when intuitions are combined or "subsumed under" the subject concept, such combination is made possible by the logical forms' (here, the form 'S is P') being employed determinately. In other words, the intuition is able to be brought under the concept of the subject at all be-

123 KrV, A 69/B 94

cause it can be represented as a specific instance of a more general concept ('body'), which in turn may be "brought under" a still more general concept, and so on, though in the end the most general concept would be the category. This interpretation is supported by a number of passages, such as the following passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which Kant mentions the condition that must be met if objectively valid empirical judgments are to be possible:

[Empirical laws] are only particular determinations of yet higher laws, the highest of which (under which all others stand) come from the understanding itself *a priori*, and [...] must provide the appearances with their lawfulness and by that very means make experience possible.¹²⁴

As Michael Friedman comments, "Only such [...] [a] procedure, in which empirical laws are successively determined by synthetic *a priori* principles of the understanding, can explain how a judgment of perception can be converted into a judgment of experience."¹²⁵ Every act of judging, then, involves taking something as a determinate or specific representation of a more general one. For Kant, cognition of an object is impossible apart from such an act of determining. So what we must be conscious of in the act of judging that leads to cognition of an object is the act of determining, which should be understood not merely as the act of ascribing properties or "determinations" to "an indeterminate something", but more fundamentally, as the act of grasping or taking something as a specific instance of a more general representation, which, after all, is (as I have shown) how Kant himself understands "the act of determining", and thus of the act of judging itself.

But what does it mean to say that the act of judging objectively is equivalent to the act of determining in which I am conscious of the act of grasping something as a specific instance of a more general representation? Wouldn't this mean that only logicians and philosophers can hope to make objective judgments? To avoid this absurdity, it may be suggested that the awareness need not be explicit. Implicit awareness, recognition in retrospect ("after the fact"), or even awareness as a "second order" act suffices. Thus, what is required is the *capacity* of the subject to be conscious of the act of grasping such a relation.

124 KrV, A 126

125 Friedman, Michael: "Logical Form and the Order of Nature: Comments on Beatrice Longuenesse's *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*." In: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 82, 2000, 202–215.

We can now return to what Allison calls “the problem of the subjective unity of consciousness”, namely, the problem that while Kant does make clear what “the subjective unity” is not, he does not clarify what “the subjective unity” *is*. Taking into consideration the conclusions of the analyses carried out above, we can say that “the subjective unity of consciousness” is “subjective” because no object is cognized thereby. It is a “unity” because in relating or unifying representations, the logical forms are still employed (though only indeterminately). It is a “consciousness” in the sense that what I am aware of is an indeterminate relation of representations, that is to say, a relation in which a representation is *not* a specific or determinate instance of a more general representation.¹²⁶

126 I would like to thank Erik Anderson, Bryan Hall, and Marco Sgarbi for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper.

Non-Apperceptive Consciousness*

Dennis Schulting

Determining the nature of transcendental apperception (hereafter TA) is key to understanding Kant's theory of consciousness. One of the intricate problems with interpreting TA is the dual modal aspect of the famous proposition that Kant puts forward at the beginning of the B-version of the Transcendental Deduction of the categories (hereafter TD) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. At §16, Kant writes that "the *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations".¹ Kant calls it a *Grundsatz* at B135.

* For their comments I should like to thank the audience at a seminar organized by the Centre for Advanced Research on Logic and Sensibility in the Department of Philosophy at Keio University, Tokyo, where a draft of this paper was read in March 2010. Special thanks are due to Wolfgang Ertl who invited me for the presentation. I also thank Christian Onof for his useful comments on the penultimate draft. Parts of section 5 appeared earlier in an issue of *South African Journal of Philosophy* (Schulting 2008). I thank the editor for his kind permission to reuse this material here.

1 Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from the Guyer/Wood edition (Cambridge University Press, 1998). The *Critique* is cited in the standard way by means of the abbreviation A/B. The following additional abbreviations for Kant's texts are used:

AA = *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preußische (später: Deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900- (Akademie Ausgabe).

Anthr. = *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (AA 7). Trans. V.L. Dowdell. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978, 1996.

Inquiry = *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (AA 2). In *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*. Ed. and trans. D. Walford. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 2003.

LM = *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Ed. and trans. K. Ameriks & S. Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2001.

MAN = *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (AA 4). Ed. K. Pollok. Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1997.

Prol. = *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (AA 4).

R = *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik* (AA 18)

ÜE = *Über eine Entdeckung nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll* (AA 8).

The way the proposition is formulated is less straightforwardly analytic than is usually thought by commentators. From the passage that follows it seems that Kant thinks of this ‘I think’, or the *cogito*, as a kind of representation. It is further identified by Kant as pure apperception or original apperception (B132)². As it appears, the ‘I think’ is also closely linked up with, if not identical to, what is called transcendental self-consciousness or the unity thereof (B132 [AA 3: 109.3–4]). In fact, in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, at B68, Kant already identified “simple [*einfache*] representation of the I” as “consciousness of self [*Bewußtsein seiner Selbst*]” (trans. Kemp Smith). ‘I think’-consciousness, transcendental apperception and self-consciousness are, for Kant, thus equivalent.

Trying to grasp the meaning of TA and the relation between the various designations for apperception is requisite in any serious analysis of TD. However, despite numerous attempts at grappling with it no agreement has yet been reached in the literature as to how we should understand this proposition and how it bears on the general argument of TD. In this article, I do not address the many complex issues involved in understanding TD, nor even all aspects of TA (see further Schulting 2008). Due to space constraints, I also hardly talk about *empirical* apperception. I will also not address the question how TA ties in with the derivation of the categories from a principle, and so is part and parcel of the argument concerning objective knowledge (see Schulting, 2012). I must also abstain from talking about synthesis and its correlates (e.g., synthetic unity of consciousness), although this is fundamentally important for fully understanding Kantian apperception.

Here, I am interested in answering two, relatively simple, but important questions: (a) Does Kant allow first-order consciousness without second-order consciousness, that is, does he allow for empirical consciousness that is not transcendently apperceived, and so *not* accompanied by the ‘I think’, either in principle or de facto? In other words, is there non-apperceptive consciousness for Kant? (b) If Kant allows for unaccompanied first-order consciousness, what is the status of this consciousness? Is it in any way possible to be *conscious of* this consciousness? Or is this first-order consciousness in some way a consciousness of which we are and remain ex hypothesi *unconscious*? A related question, which is independent of Kant’s arguments regarding the conditions for self-con-

2 Importantly, at A354 Kant identifies the ‘I think’ as ‘the formal proposition of apperception’, and at A400 he identifies the ‘I’ and ‘mere apperception [*bloße Apperzeption*]’.

sciousness, is whether Kant allows for unconsciousness *strictius dicta*, viz. the total lack of consciousness, at all. I will touch on this in due course.

I approach these questions systematically rather than merely historically. I believe that TA itself provides sufficient ground for establishing Kant's position on unaccompanied or non-apperceptive consciousness. An argument for the thesis that Kant either allows or doesn't allow for non-apperceptive consciousness can be extracted from the positive argument for TA as an analytic principle. We need only look at the logical ramifications of this principle to find such an argument. I do this in the last section of the paper. Certain passages in the *Critique* and elsewhere, e. g. a reference to Locke in the *Anthropology*, confirm this more obliquely. Although I think that Kant is pretty consistent, it is clear that some text passages, especially in the A-version of TD, might at first blush seem to contradict the real possibility of non-apperceptive consciousness.³

1. Possible Construals of the 'I think'-proposition

But before we get to the intricate bits, let's just start, innocently enough, with trying out a few answers to the question how we should read the 'I think'-proposition at §16 (TA). At one extremity, one might want to argue, as the great German Kant scholar Heinz Heimsoeth appears to do⁴, that (1) TA concerns not merely cognitive acts or states, representations that have an epistemic value, but indeed comprises all possible representations that I have or will have (or, more problematically, have had, presumably implying that one's representational history is also involved). In other words, *all possible* representations that a subject has must be regarded as primordially contained in the *cogito*; presumably the unitary self as "simple", as Henrich has glossed it (Henrich 1976, 55 ff.), is *eo ipso* formally implied in the manifold of all one's representations. Each representation, being a mental state, uniquely exemplifies the *cogito*.

3 See esp. A108, A111–112, A116, A117n.

4 Heimsoeth 1966, 83n.115. Cf. Heimsoeth 1956, 235. For Heimsoeth the 'I think' does not concern "eigentliche Denkkakte und Gedanken" only, but representations as such, in the sense of Cartesian *cogitationes*, indeed "alles was sich im Bewußtsein abspielt". This latter equivocation poses problems. For Kant, the 'I think' would *eo ipso* accompany everything that can be thought by me (any *cogitatio* carries a *cogito*) but it would not accompany *all* types of representation. Not all representations are *cogitationes*, for Kant. The pivotal question thus is whether everything 'that occurs in consciousness' is exhausted by thought acts.

No representation an 'I' effectively or possibly has (or indeed has had) can fail to be accompanied by it. This is a notably strong reading of TA.

An importantly different approach could be (2) to emphasize that in any case all representations must *be able* to be so accompanied, expressing the necessity of a possibility, whilst it is not the case that all of one's representations need *effectively* be accompanied by such an 'I'-thought.⁵ The emphasis is put on the difference between actual and possible reflective accompaniment. One could have representations that are not effectively accompanied by, and thus not thereby explicitly contained in the unity of, the 'I'. This constitutes the major difference from view 1. However, according to view 2 representations must still have a *real potential* for such accompaniment.⁶ In other words, representations have a disposition towards apperception. In this way, one believes to have attended to the peculiar modal aspect that appears to be implied by Kant's words 'must be able'.⁷

Or, slightly differently, (3) the proposition is taken to assert, analytically, that all my representations must stand under the condition under which alone I can ascribe them to the identical self as my representations, and thus can grasp them together as my own.⁸ Any representation that I have I must be able, indeed cannot fail, to ascribe to myself as my own, which shows up an analytic relation between the representation that I have and the act that I ascribe it to myself. This view emphasizes the conceptual truth of the relation between a representation and its necessary subjective agent. The concept of representation is such that all representations are acts of representing that imply *eo ipso* an agent—the subject—that does the representing.⁹ For this ability to be *existentially* possible though, specific further material conditions should be met.

5 Cf. Allison 1996, 47. See also Allison 2001, 191, where Allison avers that the principle of apperception implies that it must be *possible* that the 'I think' accompanies all my representations, "not that it actually does so on every occasion. It thus asserts the necessity of a possibility".

6 This is suggested by Allison: "Thus, room is left in the Kantian scheme for intuitions that are not brought under the categories (*though not for those that cannot be brought*)." (2001, 191; emphasis added) The phrase 'real potential' is from Ameriks 2000b, 243.

7 See also Heimsoeth 1966, 81 and 82n.112.

8 This is in fact, with omission of what turn out to be important appositions, Kant's definition of the analytic proposition (see B138). Cf. Guyer's discussion of apperception in Guyer 1980, 208–209.

9 Cf. Ameriks on the Act Theory of apperception in Ameriks 2000a, 250 ff.

These three interpretations attend to different aspects of TA. View 1 implies that all representations that an 'I' has (at any time and in any sense) are primordially contained in the unity of consciousness—which at §16 Kant calls the transcendental unity of self-consciousness—to be at all 'one's' representations. The transcendental unity is analytically implied, as it were, in all of one's representations. This means that an existentially necessary unity of all of one's possible representational states obtains, regardless whether it concerns past, actual or future states; it is not clear whether subconscious representations are included as well. At any rate, from the a priori unifiedness of representations in the unity of consciousness one infers that all possible representations synthetically constitute, as self-same representations, my self-consciousness. The aspect of 'belonging', to which Kant alludes in this section, is emphasized.

Typically, some interpreters who take this interpretive path assume that Kant believes that one necessarily has *a priori* knowledge of the identity of one's continual self, namely of one's identity through the transition of one's representational states. This quasi-Cartesian interpretation of identity has been attributed to Kant by, most prominently, Dieter Henrich (1976; 1988; 1989), who also distinguishes between a construal of TD starting from the unity of self as its premise as opposed to a construal starting out from the identity of self as its premise. Furthermore, it remains to be seen, apart from the apparent historical inexactitude of straightforwardly aligning Kant with orthodox Cartesianism, whether such a construal of the self indeed has its pedigree in Descartes' notion of the *cogito* itself rather than in some adulterated version of it. It doesn't seem true to claim that Descartes, at least in the *Meditations*, believes that I must be able to be *continually* aware of my identity as *res cogitans*. It is in fact the lack of continuity between the instances of the *cogito* over time which leads Descartes to postulate the need for a definite proof of God's existence as its eventual guarantor.

What I would like to emphasize here is, apart from the strong synthetic reading, the patently conflationist view of consciousness and self-consciousness, which differentiates this reading from other readings of TA. It confuses the 'possessive' and transcendental or 'epistemic' unities of consciousness.¹⁰ Note also that no effort is made to distinguish between representing and thinking, surely not to be taken as identical modes of mind; especially for Kant, sensibly representing is not the same as representing by means of conceptual thought. Most significantly, it appears

10 I owe these labels to Ameriks (see Ameriks 2000b: 281).

that on this reading there could indeed *be* no episode of consciousness in a subject that is not a representational state had by it as a selfsame subject over time and who is self-aware of having this representational state being his. By implication, on this reading any (possible) consciousness is an instance of consciousness of one's unitary self-consciousness and consciousness must thus be taken to be always already unified consciousness. Crucially, then, this view simply confuses the conditions for psychological consciousness and the conditions for self-consciousness. Because of this conspicuous feature, I will henceforth refer to view 1 as the Explicit Conflation Reading of apperception (ECR).

ECR: *All possible instances of representation are existentially contained in the unity of the self and, by implication, all episodes of consciousness are eo ipso instances of the transcendental unity of self-consciousness.*

Karl Ameriks has recently remarked with regard to this reading of apperception that it reveals an ontological commitment to the extent that it is "a claim not merely about *how* we are self-aware [but] already a claim that we cannot exist except when self-aware in a certain way" (2000b: 250). ECR makes the intemperate claim that there is an existential entailment between all possible representations that one has, and of which one is *ipso facto* conscious, and the unity of self-consciousness. It is thus that ECR assumes that there is a prior synthesis of *all* of one's *possible* representations (past, present, and future) and that any occurring representation is just a manifestation of the self to which it synthetically belongs.

View 2 is less obviously committed to a strong synthetic argument with respect to the existential unity of instances of one's consciousness and would rather want to emphasize the *conditionality* of apperception. That is, the accompanying of one's representations by the 'I think' is not an existential necessity but a logically necessary possibility for the possibility of self-consciousness. This reading holds that some representations could in fact go unaccompanied by the 'I think', implying that as such, as unaccompanied, representations are not *contained* in the transcendental unity of consciousness. This means that these representations, not being contained in the unity of consciousness, would effectively be "impossible, *or else at least* [...] *nothing for me*" (B132, emphasis added), which should be interpreted as implying that those particular representations are obscure, if not totally non-existent (contra Aschenberg 1988, 58). These obscure representations, which according to this view do not amount to *conscious* representing, do have, in some sense, a causal

influence on my behaviour.¹¹ Unity of consciousness *is* nonetheless necessarily entailed by *all* possible representations to the extent that all representations must be regarded as at least *capable* of being unified by me as the subject of those representations. This view is characterized by an emphasis on the necessary presupposition of apperception. In close connection with this claim it is claimed that apperception is a precondition or supposition of all consciousness.

Representations cannot fail to possibly being accompanied. There is thus a real potentiality for all my representations of being accompanied by the ‘I think’; this potentiality is not a mere hypothesis but implies a necessary entailment of apperception for all representations (it is not clear what the conditions of satisfaction are for what is in the first instance deemed a potentiality or possibility). Henceforth I call this view the Necessary Entailment Reading of apperception (NER). NER is the most widely accepted reading of TA.¹²

NER: All representations that I have have a ‘real potential’ for transcendental apperception, i.e., a relation of necessary entailment obtains between all representations that I have and transcendental apperception to the extent that representations must potentially, but need not effectively, be accompanied by the I think.

This reading argues that for every instance of a representing A there is a parallel instance of an ‘I think’-accompaniment B, and B is, as on ECR, always already formally implied by, although not *existentially* instantiated in, A (this constitutes a difference with ECR). This means that it isn’t the case that for any instance A there necessarily obtains an *actual* reflection of the kind B, but it does mean that there can be no instance A that does not already imply, formally, and so entail a possible instance of B.¹³ Unlike ECR, NER holds that some representations that one has, and is in the business of representing, could and sometimes do in fact go un-ac-

11 Cf. Allison 1983, 153 ff.

12 The idea behind of NER is captured by Pierre Keller’s assertion that “any connection that might hold between individual representations in a particular consciousness must be such that it is consistent with the unifiability of those representations in self-consciousness” (1998: 57), or, somewhat more ambiguously, by his statement that “*all* representational content must have at least an indirect relation to a possible self-consciousness in order to be a determinate representation at all” (1998: 19; emphasis added).

13 Cf. Henrich 1988, 58–59.

accompanied by the 'I think'. Some representations do exist without an 'I think' strictly speaking having been instantiated. Representations are then not non-existent per se, but they are non-existent before the 'I' (cf. again B132). Logically, representations that do not instantiate the 'I think' do thereby not actualize the possibility of 'I think'-accompaniment and *a fortiori* do not exist *as being so accompanied* and are nothing for the 'I'.

A complication for NER arises: how does it account for the difference between unaccompanied and effectively accompanied representations if *all* representations must at least entail possible accompaniment? What actualizes the effective accompaniment? That is, when is the 'I think' effectively instantiated and when not? Another complicating factor, and the most interesting for our purposes here, is that NER holds that unaccompanied representations are *eo ipso unconscious* representations.¹⁴ NER regards apperception as a condition for consciousness tout court, which thus must be fulfilled for representations to be conscious representations. An amended version of NER, call it NER', allows *conscious* representing without any effective accompaniment by the 'I think', that is, without any actual second-order consciousness of an 'I' or self reflecting on a first-order conscious mental state.¹⁵ However, NER' holds that no first-order conscious state can occur *without* at least entailing the *possibility* of 'I think'-accompaniment or self-consciousness (this is the 'real potentiality' or necessary entailment aspect characteristic of NER).

NER': *All representations that I have have a 'real potential' for transcendental apperception, i.e., a relation of necessary entailment obtains between all representations that I have and transcendental apperception to the extent that representations must potentially, but need not effectively, be accompanied by the I think, and such representations as are not effectively accompanied by the I think are not eo ipso unconscious.*

View 3 is close to NER in the sense that it argues that a subject *must* be capable of becoming conscious of his representations as his representations without always being self-consciously aware of his representations. Alternatively put, apperception must be seen primarily as a subject's in-

14 See e.g. Allison 1983, 153; cf. Kitcher 1984, 117n.6 and 140; Pippin 1997, 41; Collins 1999, 131.

15 This version of NER was suggested to me by Stephen Houlgate in discussion.

fallible ability to *self-ascribe* representations as being part of the set of all of his representations so self-ascribed. In Paul Guyer's useful definition, the apperception principle concerns 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" (1980: 208). This reading focuses on the analyticity of the principle and rejects a priori synthesis out of hand. It is particularly in this sense that view 3 differs from NER. It is also able to circumvent quasi-Cartesian commitments to a priori knowledge of the self as a noumenal substance or to constancy claims regarding the self in terms of ECR.¹⁶ This view of apperception is what has generally come to be known, mainly through the achievements of P.F. Strawson,¹⁷ by the name of the theory of self-ascription of representations. Hence, I refer to this interpretation of apperception as the Self-Ascription Reading of apperception (SAR).

SAR: Any representation that one ascribes to oneself must be ascribable, in conformity with certain a priori rules, to the same self to which one ascribes all other representations.

These are three possible construals of TA, which emphasize different aspects of TA. Although two of the most prominent expositors of Kant, Henrich and Guyer, have adopted it, ECR belongs to a minority view and shall not be discussed further here.¹⁸ SAR is a view that is close to NER, although it dismisses or neglects Kant's argument for a priori synthesis. It seems to me that for this reason alone SAR cannot be the right interpretation of Kantian apperception. The received interpretation is based on NER. Let me now expand on the implications of NER by look-

16 Guyer is peculiar in this respect. His interpretation of Kant's apperception thesis is a mix of ECR and the Self-Ascription Reading.

17 Strawson writes for example: "Unity of the consciousness to which a series of experiences belong implies [...] the *possibility* of self-ascription of experiences on the part of a subject of those experiences; it implies the *possibility* of consciousness, on the part of the subject, of the numerical identity of that to which those different experiences are by him ascribed." (1966: 98) See Schulting 2008 for my critique of Strawson's reading of Kantian apperception.

18 I discuss both Henrich's and Guyer's philosophically illuminating positions on the relation between apperception and the Deduction extensively in Schulting, 2012.

ing at one of the best known latter-day accounts of apperception, namely Henry Allison's, which I believe is a paradigmatic case of NER.¹⁹

2. Allison, NER and Representation

The important questions that NER must answer are: (1) In what does the relation of a representation to TA consist? And (2) What is the relation of consciousness to apperception? This second question is appropriate given the fact that Kant has explicit recourse to the notion of *self-consciousness*. With regard to the first question, one presumes, based on the modality of the proposition, that it cannot be the case that, were there no accompaniment of the 'I think', there would not even exist the possibility of having representations. Rather, in the absence of an actual accompaniment of the 'I think' something could very well be represented, albeit perhaps wholly indeterminately (at least in the cognitive or epistemic sense). Possibility works *eo ipso* both ways. If 'I think'-accompaniment is a possibility, even if a necessary one, then logically it must also be possible that it does *not* occur. However, although Kant stresses the words 'be able' in the dual modality of 'must be able', it should not be ignored that the possibility of the principle appears to have a specific quality: the proposition designates a *necessary* possibility. This might appear to contradict the possibility of the absence of 'I think' accompaniment. Indeed, it suggests *necessary* entailment along the lines of NER. On analysis, it will turn out that Kant means something altogether different.

However, holding in abeyance an assessment of the implied necessity of the 'I think'-proposition ('*must* be able'), suppose that Kant indeed allows that there is an actual occurrence of a mental state not being accompanied by the 'I think'. As said, this does not *eo ipso* imply the absence of representation tout court, which Kant appears to confirm in a subsequent clause in §16 (AA 3: 108.21–22). This then appears to suggest that TA must not be seen as designating a principle of representing tout court. Allison, for one, seems to be saying the opposite. He writes: "We can infer

19 Other recent Kant expositors who, to a greater or lesser extent, espouse NER are among others Kirkland 1989, 460, Klemme 1996, 192–194, Carl 1997, 154, Keller 1998, 14 and, more recently, Beiser 2002, 145. See also the early Kitcher in Kitcher 1984, 143–144. Cf. *per contra* Ameriks 2000a, 116; 244; 2000b, 247 *et passim* and 1995, 221–223; and Brook 1994, 224.

from the apperception principle that there can be no representation of objects apart from the unity of consciousness, because *without such a unity there can be no representation of anything at all.*"²⁰ In defence of Allison, one could rejoin (1) that, based on what Allison regards as the conditions under which we can represent objects, Allison is merely saying that no representation of an *object* is possible without the unity of consciousness or apperception, for he means the "reflexivity of objective representation" (Allison 1996, 60). And indeed this is what the passage following the above-quoted one appears to confirm. I have no quarrel with such a view. Or one could rejoin (2) that what Allison means by the unity of consciousness is *merely* the analytic unity of representations, without which no representation (subjective or objective) could ever occur, given that the 'I' think must be able to accompany *all* of one's representations, whereas synthetic unity only pertains to representations taken together as having objective reference. I do not think Allison means the latter view, for he explicitly, and quite rightly, equates the unity of consciousness with the *transcendental* unity of apperception, or the synthetic unity of apperception, not just the analytic unity of consciousness.²¹

Crucially, Allison says, referring to Kant's important qualification in the same passage, that "the claim that a representation is 'nothing to me' means simply that I cannot represent to myself anything by it, not that it is nonexistent" (Allison 1983, 137)²². I take the emphasis in the subordinate clause to lie on "to myself". A representation could certainly be existent, even if the representation has no real epistemic value for me. By implication, Allison appears to recognize that the relation between representations and the 'I think' cannot be an existential entailment relation. The latter clause in aforementioned quote from Allison (p. 146), then, does not seem to imply that Allison has a general definition of representation in mind, but rather a specific one. That what Allison understands by a 'representation' is to be taken as a representation in the thick sense, a genuine representation *of some object*.

On this reading, Allison would have to agree with the claim that representing as such, to wit, what he calls a "representation of anything at all" short of a determinate object, is perfectly possible *without* presuppos-

20 Allison 1983, 146, emphasis added. Cf. Beiser 2002, 156. Also Kitcher 1984, 116–117. Kitcher points to A116 for support. Cf. Kitcher 1982, 63–64, but compare with *ibid.*, 67. See also Pippin 1989, 45.

21 Allison 1996, 58.

22 Cf. de Vleeschauwer 1937, 98.

ing TA. Indeed, at one point Allison rightly observes—in a note he refers to Kant’s letter to Marcus Herz—that TA need not imply that I “cannot have ‘representations’ which are nothing to me *cognitively speaking*” (Allison 1996, 47; emphasis mine). However, based on what he says in the subordinate clause in the previously quoted text passage (1983: 146) I am inclined to think that Allison believes that indeed *having* representations without explicit apperception is possible, but also that, if a representation is to have representational value (and not just remain hidden in the inmost recesses of the mind), it must at least presuppose *the possibility* of TA. That is, a genuine representation must at least have the potentiality to be accompanied by a second-order act of reflexivity which gives it cognitive value. Indeed, the implicit inference that Allison appears to draw is: *if any representation is impossible without at least presupposing apperception, then a fortiori object-representation is impossible without it*. Allison, then, does appear to regard TA as the logical principle that governs representation tout court after all, even if this does not mean that I must always be *explicitly* aware of all my thoughts as mine.²³ This view amounts to NER.

23 See also Robert Pippin’s position in this. He writes: “Kant does indeed insist that consciousness, construed as a representing activity, must be inherently reflexive in order to be representative, genuinely to have objects. [...] Or, stated in representational terms, this means that there is no internal property of a mental state’s occurring in me, and no property of that state’s real relation with other states, that makes it a representation of *X*. For such a state to represent *I* must ‘take it up’, unite it with other (or other possible) representations, and thereby self-consciously represent *X*.” (1989: 45) Earlier (1982: 38) Pippin asserted, even more explicitly, that “the senses do not represent at all, but only contain the results of the affection by objects on our senses [...] and are constructed as representing only when so interpreted by the spontaneity Kant calls the understanding.” Subjective representations are then actually not representations but “undifferentiated subjective affects” (1982: 39). Note that, conversely, for Kant a representation can be an object of other representations, as he argues in the Second Analogy (B234–235=A189–190; see also A108–109); Kant says that “one can, to be sure, call everything, and even every representation, insofar as one is conscious of it, an object”. This in itself does not settle the objective validity of representations, for, as Kant says, “only what this word [i.e., object, D.S.] is to mean in the case of appearances, not insofar as they are (as representations) objects, but rather only insofar as they designate an object, requires a deeper investigation.” Pippin’s reasoning manifests a short argument with regard to the conditions of object-representation. He confuses the empirical conditions of representational mental activity in a general sense and the transcendental constraints of objectively valid representation. See Smit 2000, 239 ff. for an illuminating discussion of B234–235=A189–190.

It appears that Allison conflates not so much the difference between the first-order activity of merely representing and the second-order activity of being reflexively aware of one's representations but two different sets of *conditions*, i.e., the conditions for having representations and the wholly different set of conditions for being aware of one's own representations 'cognitively speaking', which he effectively conflates into one, namely into the principle of transcendental apperception (TA) as that which ostensibly governs representation tout court. Thus, although he recognizes that one could be *de facto* representing without effectively accompanying one's representing (having explicit apperceptive awareness, say), he also seems to think that the incontrovertible *condition* of the very ability of representing as such is TA. This amounts to a confusion of existential (or psychological) and transcendental conditions that is characteristic of NER/NER'. It also, I believe, contravenes the thrust of Allison's own reciprocity thesis with respect to the intimate relation between the unity of consciousness and the constitution of objects (this is a topic outside the scope of this article).

With regard to the second question: If I am not explicitly aware of my representations as mine, but am merely *having* representations, in other words, if apperception is not effectively instantiated, are the representations that I have *conscious* ones? In general, one would presume that representational states that are not attended to by a second-order act of reflection are conscious states of mind regardless, based on the idea that one must distinguish between first- and second-order consciousness. The absence of second-order consciousness doesn't logically entail the absence of first-order consciousness. Allison disputes this (and I note that he is not alone in this view), for he thinks that apperception is presupposed for consciousness even of our subjective mental states (i.e. states that have no cognitive, objective, value), hence for first-order consciousness. Thus, one could not be conscious even of one's own mental states, more precisely, *be* in a state of consciousness, unless TA is satisfied.²⁴

24 Allison 1983, 153 ff.; see also Allison 1996, 72–74. Cf. Kitcher 1984, 117n.6 and 140; Pippin 1997, 41. Collins is the most recent and clearest example of the idea that for consciousness transcendental apperception is required. Collins dismisses pre-synthetic consciousness on the grounds of the unintelligibility of the notion of "conscious experience that precedes the emergence of consciousness" (Collins 1999, 147). To apperceive means for Collins to be conscious, or indeed, "conscious experience is the ultimate product of this mental activity [viz. apperception, DS]," so that "we are not conscious of either the original representations" (ibid., 108). Collins is right of course, if he means that one is not conscious of the

Allison makes an ostensibly crucial distinction between representations and *conscious* representations. For consciousness of representations to occur a further condition needs to be fulfilled, this condition being tantamount to pure or transcendental apperception (TA). Apart from the issue whether discriminating between representations and conscious representations is germane to Kant, one might want to ask first: What are representational or mental states, if not themselves episodes of consciousness or states of awareness (of whatever magnitude), regardless of issues that have to do with epistemic significance?²⁵ Put negatively, does merely subjectively valid experience consist of having representations of which we are *in no sense* aware?²⁶ Given that, according to Kant, it is not governed by pure apperception (B142), are we to believe that subjectively valid experience consists in (necessarily) *unconscious* representation? How, then, could representations still be accorded subjective value, as modifications of the mind that have no *objective* significance, but which may to a certain extent still be reckoned to amount to consciousness (cf. B242=A197)?²⁷

However, one might want to insist (and I take Allison to be insisting on this line of thought) that representing *as such*, i.e., representing of which I am not aware by virtue of a second-order act of apperception, cannot be taken to be coextensive with consciousness. This is not as odd as I may have made it appear, since presumably Leibniz thought the same: perceptual states need not be conscious or apperceived states.²⁸ Consciousness, then, is to be considered to be exclusively something of a higher order, governed by the constraints of TA. Some conspicuous formulations of Kant's appear to imply that such a construal is justified.

already synthesized representations severally. Collins further emphasizes that there is "no consciousness or experience at all apart from the functions of the understanding" (ibid., 113; cf. ibid., 116). Or, even more clearly, Collins writes that "[i]f we did not experience enduring, causally connected objects immediately, we would not have experience at all and *could not even be conscious*" (ibid., 57; emphasis added).

25 I agree with Guyer here, who observes that the fact "that representations just are impingements on consciousness, and thus cannot exist except as states of consciousness, is incontestable" (1980: 209). Cf. Butts 1981, 266 and Brook 1994, 139.

26 Cf. Butts 1981, 260–261.

27 I should note that, properly speaking, one must differentiate between sentient states such as feelings, representational states and sub-cognitive subjectively valid experience respectively.

28 See Leibniz, *Principes de la nature et de la grâce*, §4.

Kant indeed appears frequently to equate consciousness and apperception (especially in the A-Deduction).²⁹ Moreover, at times Kant appears to suggest that for consciousness to occur, whether subjectively valid or objectively real, a combination, more specifically, a synthetic act of the imagination, should at least have taken place (see e.g. B233).

Now even if it were granted that, in general, first-order mental states must ex hypothesi be empirically conscious states for them to *be* mental states (existentially), someone reasoning in accordance with Allison's line of thinking could still insist that for such states to be *conscious* states they necessarily entail a second-order state (viz., transcendental consciousness).³⁰ Proponents of NER (and I believe not Allison) might then further qualify this requirement by maintaining that such representations must be synthesized, in order to be conscious of them, but that they

29 Kant appears to identify empirical consciousness and the transcendental identity of the self at A115–116. At A117n. he writes that it is “absolutely necessary that in my cognition *all consciousness* belong to one consciousness (of myself)” (emphasis added). Also, at A350 Kant asserts that “consciousness is the one single thing that makes all representations into thoughts, and in which, therefore, as in the transcendental subject, our perceptions must be encountered”. See also MAN 98 Anm. (AA 4: 542) and *Metaphysik* L₂, AA 28: 584/LM 344. But see R 5923 (AA 18: 386) and AA 28: 227/LM: 46, 47. For a less moderate conception of consciousness that might appear to give credence to NER, consider for example a passage in *Metaphysik* Mrongovius, where Kant appears to hold the view that the self of transcendental apperception is the condition of consciousness: “Consciousness is the principle of the possibility of the understanding, but not of sensibility. [...] The self underlies consciousness and is what is peculiar to spirit.” (AA 29: 878/ LM 247) Or, a few pages further on: “Inner sense is the consciousness of our representations themselves. (Apperception is the ground of inner sense).” (AA 29: 882/ LM 250–251) By this latter assertion Kant seems to waver between granting inner sense some form of consciousness independent of apperceptive consciousness (in conformity, it seems, with the Critical doctrine of the distinction between inner sense and apperception [B153]) and propounding the view that, if it is to amount to conscious representations, inner sense must have its ground in transcendental apperception, which is the view of NER. Most probably following Baumgarten regarding inner sense, the critical Kant however clearly distinguishes between inner sense and apperception. Given that Baumgarten regards inner sense as “*conscientia strictius dicta*” (*Metaphysica* §535), it seems justified to infer that Kant did not just conflate consciousness with apperception.

30 See Allison 1996, 76. Cf. Allison 1996, 72. Here, in a critique of Gurwitsch, Allison appears to identify consciousness and the conditions for synthesis, for, as he says, “the very act of bringing [a preconceptualized manifold] to consciousness would necessarily subject it to determination by means of the categories.”

may not *effectively* be accompanied by a reflective ‘I think’ (they contra-distinguish the synthetic and analytic unities of consciousness).³¹ In any case, mental states that do not have a relation of entailment to transcendental self-consciousness must be taken, it is argued, to remain hidden in the dark recesses of the mind, indeed they would be, as Kant says at some point, “but a blind play of representations, i.e., less than a dream” (A112).³² A case can then be made for arguing, as we have seen Allison do, that such states have no *real* representational quality (cognitively speaking), to wit that they are ‘without an object’. Allison appears to insist on this latter point, when he claims that by association nothing can be represented, let alone represented *consciously*.³³

However, apart from the question concerning consciousness, if that latter claim is taken at face value, the following question crops up again. What is it we do, in having representations which are not synthesized in and by an act of apperception, other than associatively *represent* ‘somethings’, “in a orderly fashion, as representations connected according to empirical laws of association”, thus in the consecutive order in which they are first prompted, that is, to be so disposed so as to pass from one representation to another?³⁴ We should be mindful that the notion ‘representation’ has a twofold meaning and can be differentiated into ‘representing’ and ‘represented’, so that *every* representing refers *per definitionem* to a represented. These can be further differentiated into ‘representing₁’ and ‘representing₂’ and ‘represented₁’ and ‘represented₂’ respectively. For sure, in the case of mere associative imagination the relation between a representation and a represented would remain epistemically opaque (being ‘nothing to me’) and could only be characterized in terms of resemblance in the Humean sense (the one representation “im-

31 This has been suggested to me by Stephen Houlgate in discussion.

32 See L. W. Beck 1978.

33 Allison 1983, 154. See also his discussion of Gurwitsch’s interpretation of the 1789 letter to Herz, where Kant appears to suggest that atomistic consciousness that accompanies associative successions of representations is possible; Allison disputes this reading (Allison 1996, 72–74).

34 Kant in a letter to Herz (26 May 1789), AA 11: 52.10–15. Cf. Hume, *Treatise*, I, Part I, section iv. Allison insists that by means of “a unity of representations produced by empirical causal factors (such as association) [...] nothing is represented [...] (or intended through) [...], not even the subject’s own psychological state.” Further, in spite of Kant’s explicit words in the letter that I can be conscious of “each individual representation” when I merely associate, Allison avers that “such a unity is [...] not [...] in any sense a *mode* of awareness.” (1996: 74)

mediately resembling, contiguous to, or the cause of the other”³⁵). But a representation would in this case still be a representation and be of *some* significance to the representer (in some subepistemic sense).

As such, mere association would amount to representing representeds without producing any referential content (R-Content) that does not collapse into its presentational content (P-Content), hence without any involvement of the unitary representation ‘I think’.³⁶ To maintain, as Allison appears to do, that in associatively representing *nothing* can be represented is effectively to divest the term ‘representation’ of meaning. Through association representeds are surely represented, namely representeds₂ that are represented by representings₂, in contrast to representeds₁ being the intentional objects of objectively valid representations, representings₁. Evidently, in the case of representeds₂, representations that draw forth other representations would lack, strictly speaking, genuine R-Content. Instead, their representational quality (as representings) or R-Content collapses into their P-Content and no objective reference is made by these representations. But these associative representations nonetheless *represent*. That is what representations do. The view that Allison (and also Robert Pippin; see note 23 above) espouses on this score is, I believe, not supported by the general thrust of Kant’s argument for a distinction between subjective and objective significance (see again A197=B242).

In the following section, I examine more closely the difference between ‘having representations’ and ‘being conscious *of* representations’, which presumably parallels the distinction between sheer representing and consciousness tout court. This discussion bears directly on the issue of the nature of the entailment relation between representations and the ‘I think’, as well as on the parallel relation between consciousness and transcendental self-consciousness.

35 Hume, *Treatise*, I, Part I, section iv.

36 I borrow this distinction from Kitcher 1999, 350–354. The referential content is, as Kitcher writes, “what the mind is aware of through its representation” and presentational content is “what it takes itself to be aware of through its representation”.

3. Are Unaccompanied Representations Unconscious Representations?

I want to dwell on Allison's main point a little longer, viz., the claim that a type difference must be made between 'having representations' (being properties of the mind or mental states) and 'being conscious of having them', which presumably he understands to be the same as a second-order reflexive or apperceptive awareness. Consider an ostensibly similar position advanced by Georg Mohr (1991: 106 ff.), whose detailed view on the matter appears to lend support to Allison's distinction. Mohr reflects on the possible equivalence of 'representation' and 'state of consciousness' (*Bewußtseinszustand*) or 'conscious content' (*Bewußtseinsinhalt*). He believes that these designations are not equivalent. If consciousness were to be taken as equivalent to representation, Mohr reasons, 'having a representation' would indeed imply that one is *eo ipso* conscious of it. It seems that, if representation were equivalent to consciousness this would result in a surreptitious conflation of representing and *apperceiving*, which obviously cannot be true. It is then only appropriate to insist that Kant, as Mohr puts it, "keine Bedeutungsgleichheit zwischen 'Vorstellung' und 'Bewußtseinsinhalt' angenommen [hat]" (107).³⁷

Several reasons seem to corroborate Mohr's distinction and, hence, to bear out Allison's position on this issue. First, Mohr refers to the *Stufenleiter*, which Kant provides at A320=B376–377, where it seems that Kant holds that representation is not to be equated with consciousness. However, I believe reference to the *Stufenleiter* does not lend undeniable support to Mohr's view, for 'representation' is to be taken as the genus of *all* possible species of representation (perceptions etc.), and not itself an actual instantiation of it. The passage does not appear to imply the view that a representation in general (that is, without being a representation with consciousness, i.e., perception) *actually* exists as modification of the mind—as Kant says, "a *perception* that refers to the subject as a modifi-

37 Also Ameriks (2000b: 109) stresses that 'representation' must not be taken to be equivalent to or coextensive with 'consciousness'. I take it that Ameriks does so because he wants to warn against an all too quick identification of consciousness and pure apperception and specifically against Reinholdian speculations regarding the principle of consciousness as a presumed basic ground of cognition (cf. de Muralt 1958, 25, who appears to adopt the Reinholdian view). See further Ameriks 2000b, 238 ff. on what he calls the Strong Apperception Theory (SAT). In many ways, Ameriks' critique of SAT is similar to my critical account of NER.

cation of its state is a *sensation*” (ibid.).³⁸ This would appear to mean that a *perception* is the *minimally* instantiatable form of representation for a mind such as ours. Thus, since any perception is a ‘representation with consciousness’, a sensation is *eo ipso* always conscious, and hence, any *actual* representation, regardless of whether it is objectively or merely subjectively valid, is at least a minimally conscious representation. Given that representations as modifications of the mind must always have a psychological content of some intensity for them to be mentally real (cf. A197), I believe one cannot consistently argue on the basis of the *Stufenleiter* that there are representations that have *no* consciousness attached to them.

The second, systematic, reason Mohr adduces is that, as Mohr writes, “Aufnahme ins Bewußtsein [ist] eine Zusatzbedingung, unter der eine Anschauung stehen muß, um allererst als ‘bewußte Vorstellung’, als Vorstellung ‘vor uns’ gelten zu können”; and further: “Eine Anschauung (sinnliche Vorstellung) erfüllt also die Bedingung, bewußte Vorstellung zu sein, *nicht schon an sich*.”³⁹ Mohr thus asserts that consciousness is the very condition under which a representation can count as a conscious representation, a representation ‘for us’. Apparently, Mohr reasons that it would be logically nonsensical to claim to be consciously representing without the condition for consciousness having been fulfilled. Thus, Mohr rejects the possibility that “A [...] kein Bewußtsein davon [hat], daß es Bewußtsein von X hat” on the grounds that it entails a contradiction. He notes: “Wenn A sich nicht bewußt ist, daß in ihm X vorgestellt wird, dann ist A sich X nicht bewußt.”⁴⁰ Mohr appears to mean that having no second-order consciousness *that* one has a representation implies that there can be no first-order consciousness either.⁴¹ If this is what he means, I believe Mohr commits a fallacy here, which consists in the assumption that consciousness ‘for me’ and consciousness ‘per se’ are equivalent. Presumably, he wants to emphasize that it is trivially true that to be conscious of *x* is not *not to be conscious of x*. But it appears that he understands the notion of consciousness as being already in itself attentive consciousness, that is, consciousness ‘before’ the subject or the ‘I’, although elsewhere he carefully separates intransitive from apperceptive consciousness. One should pay heed that the fact that one does not

38 Notice that Mohr differentiates ‘Bewußtseinsinhalt’ explicitly from Kant’s technical ‘Modifikation unseres Gemüts’ (Mohr 1991, 107; 107n.2).

39 Mohr 1991, 107; emphasis added.

40 Mohr 1991, 115.

41 Cf. Thöle 1991, 68.

consciously attend to one's representations does not constitute in itself a proof of the unconsciousness of representations which are not attended to.⁴²

There is an additional ambiguity in the way Mohr articulates the problem. Mohr is careful not to conflate representing and apperception and also inner sense and apperception. However, given that he argues that *consciousness* is the "Zusatzbedingung" for an intuition to become an intuition "vor uns" and given that according to B132 apperception is precisely that condition which makes a representation be "something for me", apperception and consciousness apparently do coincide for Mohr. On this account, NER would seem unavoidable, the interpretation I take it Mohr works to avoid.

But if one heeds the distinction between mere consciousness and attentive consciousness (only this latter consciousness being coextensive with apperception) there is nothing problematic about the hypothesis Mohr sets up at the beginning of his account and works to undermine, namely the hypothesis that a representational state of mind would perforce be a conscious state of mind (of a particular intensity). The difference, to which Mohr is careful to draw our attention in respect of the epistemically relevant additional condition of *apperceptive* consciousness, would then not be a difference between representing (R) and consciousness (C), but between consciousness₁ (C₁R) and consciousness₂, a 'consciousness *that*' (C₂[C₁R]). This distinction would correspond with the difference between *having* a representation x (a representation being a modification of my mind, viz., a representing₂) and *representing that* one is having a representation x, i.e., having a complex representing₁. What I mean to say here is that differentiated modes of representing parallel differentiated modes of consciousness. In general, when Kant, especially in the A-Deduction, talks about consciousness he means a second-order consciousness, a "consciousness that...", which introduces an obligatory clause (see A103), or "possible consciousness" (B131n.), not just any first-order consciousness.

The transcendental or possible consciousness, which Kant argues is requisite for representational manifolds to be synthesized, is merely formal and not psychologically contentful. This is a point that has been frequently emphasized by Allison. It is not controversial. However, what is often not so clear is that this formal transcendental consciousness should also not be conflated with the empirical *conditions* for psychological con-

42 Cf. Sturma 1985, 42.

sciousness, which are not at issue in TD (see B152). What I am driving at is that nothing in Kant's reasoning with regard to second-order transcendental self-consciousness indicates that unaccompanied or unsynthesized representations (representings₂) must *ipso facto* be unconscious, presumably because transcendental consciousness is a condition of any consciousness. More boldly, I believe that such representations *cannot* really be unconscious, at least insofar as *sensible* representations (percepts of empirical representeds) are concerned, especially if one heeds Kant's thesis that the "proper material [*den eigentlichen Stoff*]" of inner sense consists of the representations of outer sense (B67). Kant says that a sensation—the material of perception (immediately relating to the existence of something=x as that which is not yet determined)—has an intensive magnitude or a degree. In apprehending the sensation at a particular point in time (in abstraction from the extensive magnitude of an appearance, of which sensations constitute its reality or actuality), an empirical consciousness with a certain degree of intensity is effectuated (Kant relates it to "a degree of reality"). The degree of intensity can increase on a scale from zero "until its given measure" or decrease until its magnitude=0, which effectively amounts to its negation.⁴³

As I read this, regardless of the issue whether the matter it furnishes pertains to a subjectively or an objectively valid representation, any sensation is necessarily (empirically) *consciously* apprehended, as consciousness is the measure of intensity. I should note that this does not alter the fact that the intensity-principle itself, as part of the system of synthetic principles, must be regarded as a *categorical* principle that is co-constitutive of objective experience (cf. Prol. §24). This principle designates the a priori form (the category of quality) under which one can synthesize the *reality* of appearance, the *quale* of sensation, into an *objective reality*, viz., the existential content of a determinate object.⁴⁴ The property of sensations "of having a degree" is a priori determinable (A176=B218). However, as is generally the case in Kant's theory of experience, a distinction must be heeded between the transcendental character of the anticipation of the intensity of sensations and the *quid facti* with respect to their reality (as having been affected by the things-in-themselves).

This leads me to believe that sensations as such, that is, as the matter of purely sensible apprehension, must be considered to *have* an existential 'quality', a *quale*, before even what Anneliese Maier has called the *Inten-*

43 A167–168=B209–210 and B208. See also B414. Cf. Prol. §§24 (AA 4: 306, 307).

44 Cf. Maier 1930, 60–61.

sitütskategorie can be applied to it so as to constitute a qualitative formal intuition which is subsequently *eo ipso* amenable to an intellectual synthesis and hence to TA.⁴⁵ It is thus that, contrary to Allison (1996: 73), I believe that, by implication, we may ascribe to Kant the view that sub-categorical consciousness, ‘atomistic consciousness’ of qualitative mental percepts, is a perfectly viable notion and even necessary for any representation.⁴⁶

4. Consciousness, Unconsciousness, and Obscurity

At this point we might want to consider a clearer definition of what one understands by ‘unconscious’: does ‘unconscious’ indeed mean ‘not conscious at all’ in the most literal sense, or does it manifest an attempt to express what is conveyed by ‘not *purely* conscious’ (pure in Kant’s sense)?

The former definition would seem to be out of keeping with what we have just discussed as well as Kant’s enunciations at B414 regarding his position on the possibility of a gradual diminishing of consciousness. It would also conflict with the classification of types of representation in the *Stufenleiter* (A320=B376 ff.), as we have seen above. True, in the *An-*

45 Maier 1930, 62. I note that my reading differs in some respects from Maier’s. Maier argues that the *matter* of experience is not identical to the quale, but is “nur zunächst im Quale gegeben” (63).

46 Kant’s position in the Anticipation-chapter, as I have construed it, is confirmed by several passages in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, for example in *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, where it is reported: “All reality has degree. There are degrees from sensation to thought, i.e., up to apperception, where I think myself with respect to the understanding. *Something can have so little degree that I can scarcely notice it, but nonetheless I am still always conscious of it.*” (*Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA 29: 834/LM: 192; emphasis added) Consider further a passage in the *Metaphysik Vigilantius*: “It follows now from this, that the real, since it has its ground in sensation, therefore in the object of the senses, could not have its abode in the merely intellectual, therefore the degree of the real can thus be thought neither as greatest <maximum> nor as smallest <minimum>”. On the other hand, it is certain that the modification of the degree of the intensive magnitude of the real quality must be infinite, *even if it can also be unnoticeable*. Therefore between the determinate degree A until 0=zero there must be found an infinite multitude of qualities of the real, *even if in an unnoticeable degree, e.g., knowledge, representations, yes even the consciousness of human beings have many degrees, without one being able to determine the smallest.*” (AA 29: 1000/LM: 468, emphasis added)

thropology (§5) Kant talks about obscure representations, of which we are “not directly conscious” (AA 7: 135ff).⁴⁷ Kant does not specifically use the expression ‘unconscious representation’ there, although he speaks, somewhat luridly, of “unconsciousness” as “a foretaste of death” in another passage of the *Anthropology* (Anthr. §27)⁴⁸. ‘Obscure’ does however not denote ‘unconscious’ in the strict sense. I believe that here in section 5 of the *Anthropology* Kant merely finds fault with Locke’s view that in any perceiving I simultaneously (ap)perceive that I so perceive, which could be seen as a proto-adverbial view on consciousness (anticipating Pippin’s thesis of ‘ineliminable reflexivity’⁴⁹, which he presents as an adverbial theory of Kantian apperception). Kant is not saying that there could be actual representations with no intensity of consciousness, nor does he say that there could not be conscious representations of which I cannot remember having them. The issue really is whether each or any perceiving is accompanied (individually) by a higher form of consciousness, i.e., transcendental consciousness. Kant negates this question (I believe he follows Leibniz in this). Many perceptions that we have remain unconscious in the sense of not being directly accompanied by this higher consciousness.⁵⁰ Importantly, this is not to say that unaccompanied representations lack *any* intensity of awareness or are unconscious.

Such a reading is confirmed by what Kant asserts at B414n., to wit, that consciousness does not settle the determination of clarity (as the opposite of obscurity), for which belief he in fact criticizes the ‘logicians’ (he presumably refers to Meier). Again, Kant here emphasizes that even in obscure representations there must be a degree of consciousness (hence the label ‘obscure’) to be able to make a minimal distinction but which is short of conceptual recognition, or, second-order awareness. Mere consciousness would not be sufficient to make a representation clear, just as much as there must be possible consciousness, as an ability to make distinctions, that does not already belong to the ‘higher cognitive faculty’. That amount of consciousness in a representation is concerned that enables a consciousness of the difference between it and other representations (cf. Anthr. §6). In other words, a difference must be made between

47 Cf. *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, AA 29: 879/LM 248.

48 Cf. Klemme 1996, 188, who quotes a passage in Kant’s lecture on Anthr.Menschenkunde, where Kant speaks of ‘unconscious’ representation.

49 Pippin 1997, 39.

50 See also Kitcher 1999, 346 ff. esp. 348–349.

mere consciousness and its various grades and clear consciousness, not just between consciousness and unconsciousness—notice that the clarity of apperceptive consciousness might equally not be great, psychologically speaking (see e.g. A103–104).

Moreover, as we saw Kant observe earlier, unconsciousness in the literal sense would be close or perhaps identical to (the instant of) death. Even a comatose person therefore cannot be said, on a purely physiological level, to be completely unconscious, given the graded nature Kant accords to consciousness. Evidently, there is a difference between being in a coma, i. e., being in a certain psychological or sensible or even vegetative state that is utterly unreportable, and the instant when death, viz., absolute unconsciousness (brain death), actually sets in. This suggests that absolutely unconscious representations have no real purchase because the corresponding sensations would perforce have no reality (since their intensive magnitude would equal zero). Consciousness is thus strictly related to existence (B414), whilst unconsciousness in the strict sense is equivalent to non-existence.

Two correlated remarks are in order: (1) unconscious representations would not have any physiologically registrable correlate in reality, whether in outer or inner sense, and more importantly, (2) it is impossible that one could perceive the absence of the real, hence consciousness, in sensible intuition, and so prove that unconsciousness is something real. Kant remarks at A172=B214: “[N]o perception, hence also no experience, is possible that, whether immediately or mediately [...], would prove an entire absence of everything real in appearance, i. e., a proof of empty space or of empty time can never be drawn from experience. For, first, the entire absence of the real in sensible intuition cannot itself be perceived, and, second, it cannot be deduced from any single appearance and the difference in the degree of its reality, nor may it ever be assumed for the explanation of that.” Mutatis mutandis, given that for Kant consciousness is coextensive with reality (B414), one could argue that neither proof of unconsciousness nor a disproof of the consciousness of merely subjectively valid representations, i. e., non-apperceptive states, is feasible.

Considering an insight offered by Strawson’s critique of sense datum experience could shed light on this.⁵¹ Strawson argued that in the case of a pure sense datum experience (putatively a unitary consciousness of separate awarenesses at any singular time) the *esse* and *percipi* of a sense datum would collapse into each other. There would be no distinction be-

51 See Strawson 1966, 100 ff.

tween object of awareness and act of awareness in a single sense-datum-experience. The accusative of awareness has no existence independent of the awareness of it. In having the sense datum one would *eo ipso* be instantly aware of it, without however recognizing that one is aware of it, for there is no web of co-referentiality within which the single datum could be contrasted with other such data. Only the relation to an identical item over time (in a co-referential sequence of such awarenesses that refer to this item) saves the recognitional component from being absorbed into its object. For Strawson, evidently, this gives rise to the belief that a pure sense-datum experience is intrinsically contradictory: no awareness of a separate impression (I perceive *x*, I perceive *y*, I perceive *z* and so on) could occur without certain constraints that enable the recognition of the impression as that particular impression, these constraints solely being provided by the connectedness of impressions, which in turn rests on the connectedness of spatiotemporal objects. This then, presumably, invalidates the cogency of the claim that one could be (intuitively) aware of a single sense datum, given that by awareness one understands a *bona fide* consciousness of the recognitional type and not mere animal sentience.

Pace Strawson, however, I believe the opaqueness of the relation between act and object of awareness in an ostensible sense-datum experience does not *ex hypothesi* invalidate the concept of a sub-recognitional relation between an act of empirical apperception and its object (I mean recognition in the specific sense of conceptual recognition). Without the capacity for recognition, one could not know that one was severally conscious of one's sense data (the multifarious representations that I have consecutively), but—and this is in contrast to Strawson—even so one could not know that one was *not* conscious of them severally (i. e. in a sub-recognitional sense).

On Kant's account subrecognitional consciousness is surely possible, given that he elsewhere associates empirical apperception with the intuitive, i. e., non-discursive, consciousness of the 'I' of apprehension, viz., an accompaniment by empirical consciousness that has no relation to an 'identical subject', which latter is the co-referential 'I' of cognitive reflection (see also his account in the letter to Herz [26 May 1789], AA 11: 52.7). Wolfgang Carl has rightly observed, with reference to A107, that empirical apperception, the type of accompaniment also meant by Kant at B133 (AA 3: 109.16 ff.)⁵², is a type of empirical consciousness that is

52 Cf. B235 (AA 3: 168.15–19).

“forever variable”. In other words, as Carl writes, “[d]as Bewußtsein der Apprehension ist [...] ein Bewußtsein, das sich mit der Veränderung der Vorstellungen selber ändert”.⁵³ He further notes that this kind of consciousness “nur die Art und Weise charakterisiert, in der wir gegebene Vorstellungen haben”.⁵⁴ Because this kind of consciousness modulates in accordance with the persistent flow or flux of representations as they are prompted, the relation between such consciousness and representations remains opaque.

I thus maintain that Kant himself did not believe that TA is a condition even of such ‘forever variable’ empirical self-consciousness as NER holds. If we put the difference between the two types of conscious apperception (empirical and transcendental) in terms of Kant’s terminology of ‘begleiten’, I believe we must take ‘begleiten’ in two ways: either (1) in relation to a propositional ‘I think’-accompaniment of representations, in which the ‘accompanying’ relation between the accompanied representations and the ‘I think’ is clear and distinct (at B131–2); this is the sense of ‘begleiten’ that is meant by the ‘I think’ proposition that we started out analyzing; or, (2) in ‘relation’ to discrete representations, in which the relation between the representations accompanied and ‘empirical consciousness’ remains obscure or opaque in Strawson’s sense, that is, cognitively indeterminate (B133). In the latter case, the accompaniment coalesces with the representation so accompanied (as Strawson notes, the *esse* and *percipi* collapse into one; no conceptual recognition occurs). In other words, in such a case consciousness does not differentiate itself from its representation.⁵⁵

5. The Necessary Possibility of Non-Apperceptive Consciousness

But how now to read the apperception principle in a way that accommodates non-apperceptive consciousness? If we look at the possible cases of satisfaction of Kant’s apperception principle, then we can learn by analysis that NER, and by implication SAR and ECR, cannot be true. It is

53 At A169=B210 Kant speaks of “instantaneous [*augenblickliche*] apprehension”, a “moment”.

54 Carl 1992, 64.

55 I expand on Kant’s distinction between the two kinds of ‘accompanying [*begleiten*]’ (an accompanying of “all my representations”, as Kant writes at B131, and an accompanying of “each representation” at B133; notice the important distinction of the determiner ‘all’ and ‘each’) in Schulting 2012.

not at all the case that all possible representations must be accompanied by an 'I think', nor that all representations (sic) necessarily entail the transcendental unity of apperception; nor do all of them (sic) effectively belong to the thoroughgoing identity of my self-consciousness, in the possessive sense (as on ECR). This can be shown in a breakdown of the 'I think' proposition into its possible logical modalities P. Assume the necessity of possibility P1.⁵⁶

de facto, 'I think' accompanies all my representations

If P1, then ex hypothesi it must also be possible that

P2: *de facto, 'I think' does not accompany all my representations*

and/or:

P3: *de facto, 'I think' does not accompany any representations that happen to occur and are so occurrent in the mind at any time t at which the 'I think' is not instantiated*

and/or:

P4: *de facto, 'I think' does not accompany any representations that happen to occur and are so occurrent in the mind at any time t at which the 'I think' is not instantiated, and that are also interminably barred from being able to be so accompanied, i. e., such representations that evanesce immediately after having been prompted and leave no significant traces for possible retention and 'taking up' by an act of apperception (some representations may simply not be able to be retained or retrieved)*

P2 is obviously spurious, for it is logically inconsistent for me, as the subject of thought, to assert that 'I' am thinking (effectively or de facto)—or to assent, whilst thinking, to the proposition 'I am thinking'—and yet not

⁵⁶ Notice that here an analysis, *ad oculos reflexionis*, of the possible cases of satisfaction of the 'I think'-proposition in terms of its necessary logical purport is concerned; it is not suggested that the existential necessity of the instantiation of the 'I think' or indeed the necessity of an actual occurrence of empirical consciousness is at issue. What is my concern here is to extract the logically necessary possibilities and impossibilities given that the 'I think' either is or is not existentially instantiated.

to accompany my representations that I am *thereby* thinking. In other words, P2 amounts to a contradiction. As Kant says in his early work the *Inquiry*, in accordance with the law of identity, “to no subject does there belong a predicate which contradicts it” (AA 2: 294). The possessive pronoun ‘my’ in the predicate ‘all my representations’ refers rigidly. Those representations are *my* representations that *I* accompany as such by *effectively* thinking them.⁵⁷ This is shown by P1. P1 is analytically true: the totality of *my* representations that are occurrent share the *same* common mark ‘I think’, just in case I am accompanying them (as *my* representations “all together [*insgesamt*]”, as Kant puts it at B132)⁵⁸, by means of the act of thinking, precisely *when* I am in the business of thinking (representing in a particular way).

P3 reflects the case of a representer R representing any arbitrary occurrent representation x,y,z. Whilst in this case P1 is not satisfied, R would nonetheless be the representer of x,y,z, even if not aware of being in the business of representing and *a fortiori* self-aware (stricto sensu) of doing so.⁵⁹ (R does not accompany his representations in the transcendental way, but merely in the empirical way by just *having* them in any arbitrary array peculiar to his actual physio-psychological stance at a particular time. Strictly speaking, R does not *think*.) Furthermore, P3 leaves open whether representations are in future apperceived; it might or might not happen.

57 NER and NER’ appear to argue that when P1 is satisfied P2 is still possible, namely when the possibility of reflective consciousness (an ‘I think’ reflecting on her states) is at any rate necessarily presupposed (which accounts for the ‘must’ in the proposition) but not actually instantiated (which ostensibly accounts for the ‘be able’). This would suggest that ‘I think’ is indeed some psychological reflection on one’s first-order states. But this construal shows a misunderstanding of the modality of the proposition.

58 The predeterminer ‘all’ in the predicate ‘all my representations’ creates an ambiguity, for Kant’s proposition could, at first sight, be construed such that it posits that the ‘I think’ does not effectively accompany all, but only some of my representations, which could lead one to presume that P2 is not strictly speaking false. This is indeed the route that NER takes. But this reading of ‘all’ misconstrues the quantitative aspect of apperception. I deal with this aspect in Schulting 2012.

59 Take the example of Kant’s brute in the Jäsche Logic (AA 9: 33) and in ÜE, AA 8: 217n.

P4 is a real Lockean possibility.⁶⁰ Although Kant does not explicitly, at least not in the *Critique*,⁶¹ venture an opinion on the possibilities P3 and P4, of which it is further open to question if they are anything more than merely formally distinguishable, these are surely logically inferable from the ‘I think’-proposition. This is confirmed by some of Kant’s assertions in the text of the Deduction. P3/4-representations are representations, which, as Kant puts it, are “nothing for me” (B132), which is consistent with the rigid reference of the possessive determiner ‘my’ of P1-representations.⁶²

If, in conformity with B132 (AA 3: 108.29–30), where Kant indicates that ‘I think’ designates transcendental *self-consciousness*⁶³, we substitute the predicate ‘all my (episodes of) consciousness’ for ‘all my representations’, an analogous account can be given of the putative entailment relation between consciousness and self-consciousness (as NER and NER’ suppose), so that the necessary possibility P1 reads as:

P1’: *de facto, the ‘I think’ accompanies all my (episodes of) consciousness*

If P1’, then it must also be possible that:

P2’: *de facto, the ‘I think’ does not accompany all my (episodes of) consciousness*

and/or:

60 See Locke, *Essay*, Book II, Ch. XXVII, §20, where he considers the following objection: “Suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my Life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again.” (cf. §14)

61 Cf. *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, AA 29: 908/LM: 274.

62 Notice that, significantly, at A116 Kant speaks of “all possible representations” without the pronominal determiner ‘my’. See also A111, where Kant speaks of “all possible appearances”, which stand in a relation to apperception; also at A113 Kant says that “all possible appearances belong, as representations, to the whole possible self-consciousness”. Kant might be taken to suggest ECR, or at least NER, in these passages.

63 See also B68: “Das Bewußtsein seiner selbst (Apperzeption) ist die einfache Vorstellung des Ich.” The English translation of Guyer/Wood is not precise here; by translating ‘das Bewußtsein seiner selbst’ as ‘consciousness of itself’ it is suggested that Kant speaks of consciousness tout court, rather than self-consciousness. Moreover, the reflexive sense of the German is lost in translation. Kemp Smith is more exact here.

P3': *de facto*, the 'I think' does not accompany any (episode of) consciousness that happens to occur and is so occurrent in the mind at any time *t* at which the 'I think' is not instantiated

and/or:

P4': *de facto*, 'I think' does not accompany any (episode of) consciousness that happens to occur and is so occurrent in the mind at any time *t* at which the 'I think' is not instantiated, and that is also interminably barred from being able to be so accompanied, i.e. because such an episode of consciousness decreases until zero before it can even be retrieved for apperception

P3'- and P4'-consciousness signal the failure of satisfaction of P1'.⁶⁴ P3' allows of possible satisfaction of P1', but P4' does not. Again, since P1' indicates a necessary possibility, it seems that P4' is not allowed for. But P4' is a real possibility, and P1' only concerns episodes of 'all my consciousness', not just any consciousness; there is "complete identity" between the 'I think' and 'my consciousness of 'all my representations'', but not between the 'I think' and any arbitrary consciousness (cf. A362-A363).

Notice that it is necessarily possible that P3'. However, P2' is spurious, because it is contradictory for me to state that 'I am not self-aware of all my consciousness', because 'I-consciousness' is analytic to 'my consciousness'. The possibilities of P3' and P4', which are episodes of non-apperceptive consciousness, are inferred necessary possibilities. As was the case with P3 and P4, P3' and P4'-episodes of consciousness are not reportably dissociable episodes of consciousness for they are psychologically opaque, or, in language that Kant was familiar with, obscure.⁶⁵

From this it follows that the 'I think' does not indicate a capacity for either representation (NER) or psychological consciousness as such. The 'I think'-proposition, or pure apperception, does not engender conscious-

64 Cf. André de Muralt 1958, 55–56 ("Le sujet peut bien avoir conscience de ses représentations, mais l'une lui échappe au moment de l'apprehension de l'autre. Il se produit ainsi un flot continu d'impressions sensible qui apparaissent tour à tour dans la conscience pour disparaître ensuite aussi vite qu'elles étaient venues. [...] le sujet n'est pas capable de prendre conscience de son intégrité [...] le sujet n'est pas capable par lui-même de retenir ses différentes représentations et de lutter contre l'anéantissement des diverses consciences empiriques dans le temps fuyant.")

65 Cf. Kant's letter to Herz of May 26, 1789, in AA 11: 52.10–15.

ness nor is it necessarily coextensive with empirical consciousness, even though it is true that transcendental consciousness or self-consciousness is contingent on psychological, first-order, consciousness.

P3⁻ or P4⁻-consciousness does not play any significant role in Kant's argument for synthesis and pure apperception. These types of consciousness are not synthesized in the purely apperceptive sense; they are not a subspecies of self-consciousness, nor do they necessarily entail transcendental self-consciousness; this then disproves NER, NER', ECR but also SAR, which I haven't discussed. Also Pippin's controversial thesis that all consciousness is 'ineliminably reflexive' (1997: 39) must be dismissed on these grounds. P3⁻ or P4⁻-consciousness is what could be called non-apperceptive consciousness and the ground for it is, as I have argued, provided by the apperception principle itself.

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Kant on Unconscious Mental Activity

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It is tempting but false to think that the unconscious was discovered at a given point in time when we suddenly became conscious of it. It is more accurate to say that long before that point, whenever it may be, it was not absent but present. Though we were unconscious of the unconscious as it were, it, however, understood in different ways, played a variable role in a large number of theories. Long before Freud focused on the unconscious in a way that has never ceased to capture the attention of the public, others, including philosophers, were interested directly and indirectly in the unconscious.¹

Kant, who thinks of human beings as rational, emphasizes conscious activity. He believes that the Enlightenment culminates in the challenge to dare to know (*sapere aude*) in thinking independently of authority. He further believes that a moral individual must act autonomously, that is, according to principles that must without exception govern the actions of all rational beings. These are forms of conscious activity. But what if Kant's theory of knowledge were based on unconscious activity? This paper will examine Kant's epistemology in arguing that at the heart of the critical philosophy we find a conception of unconscious activity pointing to an anti-Cartesian theory of the subject as a conscious but also an unconscious actor.

I. Kant's Theory on Consciousness, Self-consciousness and the Unconscious

We can begin to discuss the unconscious in the critical philosophy by addressing the triple distinction, familiar in the post-Freudian period, between consciousness, self-consciousness and the unconscious. It is well

1 It has been known for some time that the unconscious was not invented by Freud. See L. L. Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, New York: Basic Books, 1960 and Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Tradition of Dynamic Psychiatry*, New York: Basic Books, 1970.

known that the Greeks were concerned with the problem of non-being (*to mei on*). In the *Sophist*, Plato responds to Parmenides' claim that non-being is impossible in claiming that, since in a sense it is, hence it is possible. Non-being, which is not intelligible by itself, points toward and is only intelligible on the basis of being. For this reason, Hegel begins both his *Logics* with being and not with non-being. In the same way, self-consciousness and consciousness point toward the unconscious.

Kant discusses consciousness and self-consciousness in the transcendental deduction. He explicitly claims, against Hume's bundle theory of perception, that the unity of consciousness is a necessary condition for cognition.² He also mentions "self-consciousness" several times. Though he has the term, it is unclear that he in fact has a theory of self-consciousness,³ which arguably only comes into the German idealist tradition with the self-described orthodox Kantian, Fichte. Kant famously claims to know Plato better than he knows himself.⁴ To Kant's dismay, while Kant was still alive Fichte made the same claim about Kant. Though Kant rejected Fichte's position as impossible, Fichte interpreted this claim as meaning that he was even more Kantian than Kant.

In the deduction of the categories, Kant twice mentions in rapid succession that "a synthesis of the representations" is possible only "through consciousness of this synthesis ("consciousness of their synthesis").⁵ Yet this point is dubious. Since consciousness is a condition of self-consciousness, there must be consciousness of a perceptual object, which is the result of the synthesis of representations, prior to and as a condition of self-consciousness. In that case, self-consciousness cannot be a condition of synthesizing representations. Indeed, Kant seems ambivalent about this claim. For he earlier indicates that combination of the manifold takes place whether or not we are conscious of it.⁶

Some observers believe Kant's theory of consciousness implies or even entails a theory of self-consciousness.⁷ We detect what might be

2 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 133, p. 247.

3 According to Broad, "it is doubtful whether a single consistent doctrine [of self-consciousness—T. R.] can be extracted from his various utterances." C. D. Broad, *Kant: An Introduction*, C. Lewy, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 234.

4 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 370, p. 396.

5 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 133, p. 247.

6 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 130, p. 245.

7 Stephen Priest, "Kant, Descartes and Self-consciousness," in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 125 (Oct., 1981), pp. 348–351. He examines i. A. the view

called a minimal theory of self-consciousness, with arguably Cartesian resonances, in the “Refutation of idealism.” The aim of this argument is to resolve the scandal of the existence of the external world, the same problem, which G. E. Moore later raised against idealism in general.⁸ Kant seems to be claiming that, if we are aware of ourselves as having ideas, there must be a mind-independent external world, which causes this awareness, and which, hence, exists. The presupposition is that, as Sartre later says, all consciousness is consciousness of something. Hence, if there is consciousness, then it is caused by the world, which must exist.

The view Kant outlines in the “Refutation of idealism” is consistent with Kant’s generally anti-Cartesian conception of the subject. Descartes argues that the existence of the subject, which cannot be denied, is the unshakeable basis for a theory of knowledge constructed on that foundation. According to Descartes’ the subject is self-conscious, thus certain of its existence, prior to and apart from knowing anything else. Descartes claim for the cogito, namely, that if the subject thinks, it must exist, is based on self-consciousness, not on consciousness of anything different from the self. Since Descartes understands self-consciousness as immediate, not as mediated by consciousness of anything different from the self, he does not argue that the subject is conscious of the world, hence conscious of itself as conscious of the world. Kant’s restatement of the Cartesian argument is intended to prove the existence of the external world without claiming anything about the subject beyond self-consciousness. Since he denies intellectual intuition, he further denies direct access to oneself. Hence, he cannot argue from his own existence to the existence of the world. Rather, he presupposes his own existence in arguing for a proof of the existence of the external world. This can be formulated as the claim that I am not conscious of myself as I am but only that I am.⁹ In other words: Descartes argues from self-consciousness to knowledge of the world, but Kant argues from self-consciousness to knowledge of the existence of the world.

The Kantian argument from self-consciousness to the world is weaker than the Cartesian model. On the one hand, the basic distinction between

that consciousness entails self-consciousness, which he attributes to Strawson and Bennett.

8 See G. E. Moore, “The Refutation of Idealism,” in *Mind*, n. s. 12, no. 48, October 1903, pp. 433–453.

9 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 157, p. 259.

appearance and reality, or phenomenon and noumenon, puts knowledge of the mind-independent world as it is beyond appearance out of conceptual bounds. According to Kant, all knowledge begins with experience, but there is and cannot be experience of the noumenon. Since the latter can only be thought without contradiction,¹⁰ but cannot be given in experience, it is arguably inconsistent even to assert its existence. If that is correct, the effort to demonstrate the existence of the external world arguably either fails or at least requires further argument to buttress its claims.

On the other hand, Kant, unlike Descartes, does not address the problem of skepticism with respect to the contents of consciousness, or ideas. It is unnecessary to invoke the fiction of an evil genius to imagine that the subject is aware of nothing more than what it itself dreams up. In this case as well, the proof of the external world would fail. Further, it is arguably problematic in the critical philosophy even to speak of self-consciousness, which implies an immediate grasp of oneself. Since Kant denies intellectual intuition, he concedes no more than that we can represent ourselves but not that we can grasp ourselves as we are. Yet it seems odd to attribute self-consciousness to a subject, which is a mere appearance, and which is conscious of no more than the appearance of the external world.

II. On Kant's Theory of the Unconscious

In studying Kant's view of the unconscious, we will be testing the limits of what, from a Kantian or indeed any other perspective, can be known. In an obvious sense, what is unconscious cannot become unconscious without in the process being destroyed.

A possible difficulty in attributing a theory of the unconscious to Kant derives from his attitude toward psychology. In both the A and B editions Kant analyzes four paralogisms, which derive from a rational psychology, and which can only falsely be taken for a science of pure reason.¹¹ Kant's attitude toward psychology is ambivalent. He is suspicious of the possibility of a future science of empirical psychology on at least two grounds: as concerns what later came at the time of the early Husserl to be known as psychologism, and with respect to the possibility, consistent with his denial that the subject has privileged access to itself, for instance

10 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 566, p. 535.

11 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 404, p. 414.

in a grasp of what we might call unconscious activity. His rejection of what later, through the intervention of the early Husserl, came to be called psychologism explains his repeated references to Locke's so-called physiology¹² as well as the assertion that the latter "sensitized the concepts of the understanding."¹³ Today we would say that, from Kant's perspective, Locke substitutes a psychological for a rational account of knowledge. Yet Kant's critical philosophy sketches a faculty psychology on the transcendental plane. His transcendental theory of the mind includes at a minimum a view of the subject as the transcendental unity of apperception, of categories or rules of synthesis, and of the synthetic activity through which perceptions as well as objects of experience and knowledge are constructed.

Kant further argues at several places that the unconscious activity of the mind lies beyond the limits of what can be known. In a passage in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* that sounds as if it came from later psychoanalytic discussion, Kant straightforwardly claims that our secret motivations are beyond our knowledge. According to Kant, "we can never, even by the most strenuous self-examination, get entirely behind our covert incentives; for when moral worth is at issue, what counts is not actions, which one sees, but those inner principles of actions that one does not see..."¹⁴ This passage, which conflicts with Kant's theory of autonomy as the criterion of morality, suggests it is never possible to determine if a given act is moral. In the schematism chapter in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he suggests in famously describing the activity through which the schemata are produced as "a hidden art in the depth of man's soul" that it is simply situated beyond the reach of human knowledge.¹⁵ These and other passages suggest Kant has at least a minimal theory of the unconscious, but not that he has a conception of the unconscious in the more extended modern sense.¹⁶

The modern science of empirical psychology did not yet exist when Kant was writing and Kant was skeptical that it could even be formulated. Kant, who thinks chemistry, which is empirical, is, for that reason, merely

12 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, e.g. A ix, p. 100.

13 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 327, p. 372.

14 See *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 61–62.

15 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 181, p. 273.

16 See, e.g., Steven Sverdlik, "Unconscious Evil Principles," in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 1, March 2002, pp. 13–14.

an art, further believes that psychology is even less scientific. In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* he states that the “the empirical doctrine of the soul ... must remain even further removed than chemistry from the rank of what may be called a natural science proper.”¹⁷ Paradoxically, though Kant contends we cannot have knowledge in the full sense of the term of the unconscious, he also thinks, like Leibniz, that human beings know themselves through pure apperception,¹⁸ that there are representations of which I am not conscious.¹⁹

Kant’s view of the unconscious appears inconsistent. He seems to hold that, since there cannot be a science of psychology, or at least not a science in the full sense of the term, and there cannot be experience of unconscious activity, we also cannot do without it as an explanatory concept. This suggests that, if we cannot study the unconscious empirically, the correct way to study the unconscious activity of the mind is transcendently, that is indirectly through analysis of the so-called necessary conditions of knowledge.

III. The Unconscious and Causal Theory of Explanation

Observers sometimes note Kant’s use of the unconscious. Heidegger famously emphasizes the role of the imagination in the first *Critique*.²⁰ In a study of the *Critique of Judgment*, following Heidegger, Makkreel claims that in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant left much of the work of judgment to the unconscious imagination.²¹ Kant’s attitude toward the unconscious is similar to his conception of the thing in itself. Kant, who claims the thing in itself can neither be experienced nor known, appeal to it constantly. He takes a similar attitude toward the unconscious. Though he seems to be clear that it cannot be grasped, he appeals to appeal to it in numerous contexts. His approach to the unconscious makes

17 Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Principles of Natural Science*, translated and edited by Michael Friedman, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 7.

18 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 574, p. 540.

19 See letter of May 26, 1789 to Marcus Herz, in Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, translated and edited by Arnulf Zweig, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 314.

20 See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, translated with an introduction by James S. Churchill, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1962.

21 See Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990

use of variations on the theme of a causal form of explanation. This means that the unconscious functions in the critical philosophy in causal situations, more precisely that in its causal role the unconscious is a necessary condition of consciousness, which is its effect.

In the critical philosophy, Kant stresses the central function and limits of our possible knowledge of the understanding. In a famous passage, Kant further sets limits to the reach of the understanding itself:

We have now not only traveled through the land of pure understanding, and carefully inspected each part of it, but we have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it. This land, however, is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries by nature itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the seat of illusion, where many a fog bank and rapidly melting iceberg pretend to be new lands and, ceaselessly deceiving with empty hopes the voyager looking around for new discoveries, entwine him in adventures from which he can never escape and yet also never bring to an end.²²

Two points follow immediately. First, Kant thinks that the understanding has natural limits, which cannot be transgressed without falling into illusions. In other words, there are limits to what we can legitimately claim to know. This suggestion is consistent with a main thrust of the critical philosophy, which consists in pointing to the limits of reason. Second, Kant links the proper use of the understanding to thinking about its sources since otherwise one cannot determine the boundaries of its legitimate use.²³ The link between the sources of the understanding and its so-called legitimate use remains obscure, difficult to grasp. Kant reminds us that one can only legitimately use principles empirically, that is, with respect to appearances that are objects of possible experience. Yet there are different ways to explain possible experience, such as on the basis of conscious or unconscious activity.

Kant's effort to grasp the function of the understanding can be grasped through his relation to Newton and Leibniz. Kant is a critical philosopher, and philosophy differs from natural science. Yet there is an analogy between his theory of knowledge, and the general scientific approach to the explanation of phenomena through causal explanation. Kant, who came to philosophy from natural science, was also interested in the history and philosophy of science. Copernicus advances a descriptive approach to astronomy, which is superseded in Newton's dynamic approach. New-

22 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 295, p. 354.

23 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 297, p. 355.

ton relies on gravitation, the invisible force whose origin he cannot explain, and whose existence can only be inferred, to account for the motions of the heavenly bodies. The aims are clearly different since Newton is concerned with knowledge of nature, and Kant is concerned with knowledge of human nature. But, perhaps unsurprisingly, since Kant is a Newtonian, the approach each employs is similar. Kant, like Newton, appeals to the unconscious, whose origin he also cannot explain, and whose existence he only infers, to explain the possibility of knowledge in general.

Both appeal to the unconscious as an explanatory principle in a causal framework. For Newton and for Kant, causal explanation, which employs a kinetic approach, supersedes the merely descriptive approach of Copernican astronomy. Kant's claim that through the discovery of gravitation Newton proved what Copernicus only conjectured²⁴ supposes the validity of causal explanation within the framework of Newtonian mechanics. Causality is a historical variable, which goes back to the beginnings of Western philosophy in ancient Greece. Ancient Greek cosmology records early efforts to explain the origin or functioning of the cosmos by invoking explanatory factors such as water (Thales), reason (Anaxagoras) and so on. Aristotle thinks that causes are beginnings²⁵ and that scientific knowledge requires knowledge of causes.²⁶

Kant rejects the familiar view that our knowledge must conform to objects. In his Copernican revolution, he stresses that objects must conform to our cognition. In his approach to explanation of knowledge, Kant works out a theory of unconscious activity based i. A. on his reading of Descartes, Leibniz, Baumgarten and others as well. From Descartes, he takes the general dualistic approach to mind and body while rejecting the idea that a soul is a substance. It follows that the soul is not part of the causal framework, and, since it is not causally determined, wholly free. In our post-Freudian world and post-Marxian world, this view of the subject might now appear simplistic, but it is central to the critical philosophy.

In Kant's account of knowledge from the perspective of the subject, the subject is the source of spontaneous but unconscious activity, which is a necessary condition for experience and knowledge of objects. There

24 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxii, p. 113.

25 See *Metaphysics*, V, ch. 1, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, 2 vols., , vol. II, pp. 1599–1600.

26 See *Posterior Analytics*, II, chapter 11, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. I, pp. 155–157.

is a difference between activity, which is spontaneous and activity, which is unconscious. All unconscious activity is presumably spontaneous, but only some spontaneous activity is unconscious. Reflexes take place in spontaneous but not necessarily unconscious ways. A cough or a sneeze is spontaneous but neither is unconscious. Consciousness and unconsciousness are antithetical. Activity that is a condition for consciousness cannot itself be conscious.

Leibniz and Baumgarten both influence Kant's view of the activity of the understanding as spontaneous and unconscious. Kant criticizes Leibniz on a number of grounds, such as his relational view of space, his view of pre-established harmony, for conflating phenomena and noumena, and so on. Yet he is indebted to Leibniz for the conception of the subject as the source of spontaneous but also unconscious activity.

Spontaneity or spontaneous activity is theoretical, not practical. Theoretical activity is analogous to free practical activity, which is assumed as the basis of the claim to determine oneself to act according to a moral rule.²⁷ Leibniz's influence on Kant's conception of spontaneity is sometimes discussed.²⁸ In the *Monadologie*, Leibniz claims, apparently for the first time, that a monad, which has no windows, cannot be influenced, hence cannot change because of an external causal influence. In denying external causality, Leibniz opts for the so-called spontaneous activity of simple substances. Baumgarten follows Leibniz on this point in his *Metaphysica*, which Kant used in his lectures over many years. Baumgarten defines spontaneity as the particular activity of the monad as "vis repraesentativa pro positu corporis humani" in contending that cognition is based on it.²⁹

Moral autonomy, which is two-fold, includes freedom from external causal determination and freedom to self-legislate, or so-called freedom from and freedom to, the two kinds of freedom famously discussed by

27 See, for an account of Kant's theory of spontaneity, Marco Sgarbi, "The Spontaneity of Mind in Kant's Transcendental Logic," in *Fenomenologia e Società*, no. 2, 2009, XXXXII, pp. 19–28. Sgarbi argues very convincingly that the spontaneity of the understanding is Kant's transcendental condition for all knowledge.

28 In his detailed study of the theme of spontaneity in Kant, Pippin, who does not detect the Leibnizian connection, links Kant's view to contemporary Wittgensteinian themes. See Robert Pippin, "Kant on the Spontaneity of Mind," in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 17, no. 2, June 1987, pp. 449–476.

29 See A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, Halle: Hemmerde, 1757, pp. 176–177. Cited in Sgarbi, "The Spontaneity of Mind in Kant's Transcendental Logic," p. 21.

Berlin.³⁰ Theoretical autonomy is invoked to explain experience and knowledge through “combination of the manifold in general” which is “an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation” ... that takes place “as an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title synthesis.”³¹ It is, however, difficult to get clear about how Kant understands theoretical spontaneity, since he describes it as both necessary but also as lying beyond the limits of human cognition. I will come back to this point below.

It is perhaps less well known that Leibniz also influences Kant’s view of spontaneous theoretical activity as unconscious. Descartes advances a theory of knowledge based on consciousness, which excludes the unconscious. According to Descartes, all thought is conscious thought. There is no unconscious thought.³² He depicts the human subject as a thing, which thinks, understands thinking as including doubting, affirming, understanding, denying, willing, imagining and feeling.³³

In reacting against Descartes, Leibniz holds that there are some perceptions—he calls them “petites perceptions”—of which we are not conscious. According to Leibniz, the mind contains perceptions, or representations, and appetitions, that is tendencies, inclinations or strivings. Appetition, or the internal principle of activity and change, provide the transition between perceptions.³⁴ He distinguishes between perception and apperception, which is consciousness of the former, more precisely “*consciousness*, or the reflective knowledge of this internal state,” which, as he specifies, is “something not given to all souls, nor at all times to a given soul.”³⁵ Today we might describe such perceptions as subliminal. Leibniz is clear that an appeal to unconscious perception is central to philosophy of mind. “In short, *insensible perceptions* have as much use in philosophy of mind [Pneumatique] as corpuscles do in physics; and it is

30 See “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in Isaiah Berlin, edited by Henry Hardy, *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 166–217.

31 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 130, p. 245.

32 See René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, principle IX, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1970, 2 vols., I, p. 222.

33 See Meditation II, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, I, p. 153.

34 See “Monadology,” in Leibniz, *Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays*, Indianapolis: LLA, 1965, translated by Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker, p. 150.

35 See *Principles of Nature and Grace*, section 4, in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989, p. 208.

equally unreasonable to reject the one as the other under the pretext that they are beyond the reach of the senses.”³⁶

Kant closely follows Leibniz in claiming that the mind (*Gemüt*) acts spontaneously and unconsciously. He depicts the subject as both passive and active, and passivity and activity as both conscious and unconscious. The subject is passive in that it is affected, or acted upon, by the mind independent external world, which lies beyond the possibility of cognition. In Kant’s theory of knowledge the subject passively receives the contents of the sensory manifold, or sensation, which it actively transforms into objects of experience and knowledge. The activity through which the subject constructs cognitive objects is unconscious and spontaneous, hence involuntary, not under the control of the subject.

IV. Spontaneity, Synthesis and the Understanding

Kant, who acknowledges the limits of the understanding, also limits what he can say about it. His theory points to a relation between the unconscious, spontaneity and synthesis in the understanding, a relation, which he infers but cannot claim to know through experience.

At the beginning of the “Transcendental Logic,” he claims cognition arises from intuition and concepts.³⁷ He defines sensibility as “the *receptivity* of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way” in distinguishing it from the understanding, which he describes as “the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the *spontaneity* of cognition”³⁸ The reception of sensation is passive, not active, and also unconscious. With respect to sensation, the subject is passive and unconscious. We do not perceive that we are affected. Rather we infer that this is necessary as a condition for consciousness and self-consciousness. Knowledge requires both receptivity and spontaneity.³⁹ Spontaneity combines or synthesizes the manifold in an action of the understanding known as synthesis.⁴⁰ This synthesis cannot be given by the objects by is

36 See Preface to the *New Essays*, in Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, p. 297.

37 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 74, p. 193.

38 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 75, p. 193.

39 See Kant *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 97, p. 228.

40 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 130, p. 245.

carried out by the subject itself in what Kant unclearly describes as “an act of its self-activity.”⁴¹

Spontaneity and synthesis are related, since synthesis occurs spontaneously in the unconscious activity of the subject as a condition of knowledge. Both spontaneity and synthesis remain unclear. The account of spontaneity is further complicated by differences between the deductions advanced in the A and B editions. In the A edition, spontaneity is described in a footnote in which Kant refers to imagination as a necessary ingredient in perception in suggesting that “the senses do not merely afford us impressions but also put them together, and produce images of objects, for which without doubt something more than the receptivity of impressions is required, namely a function of synthesis of them.”⁴² This reads in part like a concession to Hume, who features an explanation of causal relations through the spontaneous association by the mind of unassociated sensory perceptions. Kant similarly holds that on the a posteriori level the senses combine contents of mind. His account of the way the mind spontaneously puts together sensations together on the a priori level is more elaborate than Hume’s a posteriori account. For Kant, under the influence of Tetens,⁴³ spontaneity functions as the “ground of a threefold synthesis” of apprehension of representations as intuition, reproduction in imagination, and recognition in a concept.⁴⁴

Kant further describes synthesis in three numbered sections. In section 1, he stresses that the synthesis of apprehension in intuition is a priori, not empirical, and that, as inner sense, it is limited by time. In the account of synthesis of reproduction in the imagination he brings out that the synthesis of apprehension is combined with the synthesis of reproduction, which he also calls the transcendental faculty of the imagination, since otherwise no whole representations would be possible. This is a version of the important point he urges in the B deduction in insisting against Hume’s bundle theory of the subject that the subject must endure from moment or, as he also says, as “one consciousness.”⁴⁵

In both the A and B deductions Kant curiously insists on consciousness as necessary to show that “that which we think is the very same as

41 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 130, p. 245.

42 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 120, p. 239.

43 See J. N. Tetens, *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung*, Leipzig: Weidmann, 1777, pp. 104–107.

44 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 97, p. 228.

45 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, § 16, B 133, p. 247.

what we thought a moment before” since otherwise, according to Kant, “all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain.”⁴⁶ Yet it does not follow that, if the subject endures through time, it is also conscious. Kant appears here to conflate the unconscious activity through which the synthesis of reproduction occurs with the problem of conscious memory. In the B deduction, where Kant is moving increasingly from a representational to a constructivist approach to knowledge, he identifies synthesis with the productive imagination in introducing a distinction, in an exceedingly complicated passage, between reproductive imagination, which is subject to empirical laws, such as association⁴⁷ and which is similar to Hume’s analysis of causality, and productive imagination, which is spontaneous. In the account of synthesis of recognition in a concept, where Kant distinguishes clearly between appearances or representations of an object, which can be thought of as something in general, he further seems to conflate the necessary unity of the subject, or transcendental unity of apperception, with consciousness of the conditions of knowledge. According to Kant, “this unity of consciousness would be impossible if in the cognition of the manifold the mind could not become conscious of the identity of the function by means of which this manifold is synthetically combined in one cognition.”⁴⁸ There is an equivocation here, since, though it is arguably possible to elucidate the conditions of consciousness of objects of experience and knowledge, we are not and cannot become conscious of what Kant calls “the identity of the function.” Kant writes: “Thus the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances in accordance with concepts”⁴⁹ Yet ordinary self-consciousness does not yield this result, which follows, if it follows at all, from a transcendental deduction only.

Kant’s account of synthesis in the B deduction is very similar. Synthesis, which can be either pure or applied, is the “action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition.”⁵⁰ According to Kant, transcendental logic relies on synthesis as a necessary prerequisite “to bring under concepts not

46 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 103, p. 230.

47 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 152, p. 257.

48 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 108, p. 233.

49 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 108, p. 233.

50 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 103, p. 210.

the representations but the *pure synthesis* of representations.”⁵¹ In anticipating the later passage on the limit of the understanding, Kant declares that synthesis, which is “blind,”⁵² includes in order “the *manifold* of pure intuition,” then “the synthesis of this *manifold* by means of the imagination” and finally “the concepts that give this pure synthesis *unity*....”⁵³ Absent here is the difficult claim, which is apparently inconsistent with the view that synthetic activity is spontaneous, hence not consciously brought about, that the subject is conscious of this process.

V. Unconscious Activity, Subjective Perception and Objective Knowledge

Knowledge claims are always claims for objective knowledge, hence for knowledge of the real or reality however understood. What one means by “knowledge” and by “real” depends on the particular theory. But in general, cognitive theories must acknowledge the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. This problem is traditionally addressed through adducing a claim for realism. The ancient claim to know the mind-independent world as it is beyond mere appearance, not only that it is, but also as it is, is often called metaphysical realism or sometime Platonic realism. This claim, which goes back in the tradition at least until Parmenides, is often later identified with Platonism. The invention of the modern subject changes the theory of knowledge. But it does not change the commitment to realism as a central element in cognitive claims that remains roughly the same as before after the invention of the modern subject.

The invention of the modern subject does not simplify but rather complicates the epistemological problem in that after this invention, if not before, access to objectivity necessarily runs through subjectivity. The need to approach objectivity through subjectivity introduces a complication in explaining the possibility of knowledge. At stake is a distinction between different levels and types of the general claim to know. Kant, who is aware of this difficulty, responds in introducing a triple distinction between sensation, perception, and experience and knowledge of objects. In the critical philosophy, sensation is not conscious but rather a necessary condition for consciousness of all kinds. Perception, which lies

51 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 104, p. 211.

52 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 103, p. 211.

53 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 104, p. 211.

between sensation on the one hand and experience and knowledge on the other, is always conscious, hence cannot occur without a prior sensation. A perception is at most a precondition for experience and knowledge.

The triple distinction between sensation, perception, and experience and knowledge, which is intended to overcome the difficulty, which arises if objective knowledge depends on the subject, objectivity on subjectivity, leads to two further questions. How is it possible to go from sensations to perceptions? How is it possible to go from perceptions to experience and knowledge of objects.

Kant's account of the transition from sensations to perceptions and experience and knowledge of objects is given in the complex deductions in both the A and B editions. It remains unclear how perception differs from experience and knowledge of objects, and how, if one acknowledges this crucial difference, the transition from one to the other can be understood.

Perceptions, which are individual reports, are not knowledge claims. The former are subjective and the latter, which are general or universal, are objective. In a perception, an individual reports on a person-centered individual claim for experience. In other words, a perception records no more than a subjective impression, which can and in fact routinely does differ from observer to observer. Such a claim is personal, not general or universal. In the case of knowledge, an individual or group makes a claim, which not only records what the individual or the group experiences, but, since it is based on a general rule, for instance a so-called universal law of nature, such as Newton's second law, is in principle binding on all individuals in all times and places. At least in theory in normal conditions all observers have the same experience and knowledge of objects, whose movements are casually determined by general laws. There is an obvious difference between saying that I observe that water freezes at 0 C. and the claim that it is a law of nature that water freezes at 0 C. The former is an individual observation, hence, subjective and cannot count as an objective knowledge claim. The latter is in principle an illustration of a law of nature, which presumably justifies the observation, which, if it is in fact based on a universal law of nature, is in fact always the case, hence can be made in an identical way by any individual.

Kant uses these terms in different ways in his various writings and often in different ways within each of them. Merely in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he refers to perception i. A. as appearances "combined

with consciousness,”⁵⁴ as “that which is immediately represented, through sensation, is immediately represented as real in space and time,”⁵⁵ as “representations accompanied by sensation,”⁵⁶ as “empirical consciousness,”⁵⁷ that is, consciousness “in which there is at the same time sensation”⁵⁸ as “merely subjective representation, by which one can only be conscious that the subject is affected, and by which one relates to an object in general,”⁵⁹ and as “sensation of which one is conscious.”⁶⁰

Kant’s remarks about experience are similarly confusing. In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, where he defines experience as “reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding,” he writes that “there is no way from appearance to experience except by reflection in accordance with the logical use of the understanding.”⁶¹ He seems to be suggesting that in comparing appearances, or perceptions, we reach experience. His suggestion that the transition from perception to knowledge and experience occurs through what he designates as logical use of the understanding is presumably the basis of Sellars’ influential but obscure conception of the space of reasons⁶² leading to his preference for science over folk psychology.⁶³ In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant presents an account in which there is a so-called mutual adaptation of concept and intuition. The most basic claim seems to be that “all synthesis, through which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories; and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience.”⁶⁴ Yet if sensations are already brought under the categories at the level of percep-

54 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 120, p. 238.

55 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 147, p. 254.

56 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 147, p. 254.

57 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 207, p. 290.

58 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 207, p. 290.

59 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 207, p. 290.

60 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 272, p. 325.

61 Immanuel Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, translated and edited by David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, §5, p. 386.

62 See “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” in Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, Atascadero: Ridgeview, 1991, p. 169.

63 See “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man,” in Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, pp. 1–40.

64 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 161, p. 262.

tion, then the relation between perceptions, which do not qualify as experience, and knowledge, which presupposes experience, is unclear.

Kant focuses this distinction better in the *Prolegomena*, where he defines experience as “the synthetic connections of appearances (perceptions) in a consciousness, insofar as this connection is necessary.”⁶⁵ He gives an example in the text with respect to the expansion of air and another example in an important footnote.

If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm. This judgment is a mere judgment of perception and contains no necessity however often I and others also have perceived this; the perceptions are only usually found so conjoined. But if I say: the sun *warms* the stone, then beyond the perception is added the understanding’s concept of cause, which connects necessarily the concept of sunshine with that of heat, and the synthetic judgment becomes necessarily universally valid, hence objective, and changes from a perception into experience.⁶⁶

Understood in this way, a perception is subjective, but experience and knowledge is based on the identification of a causal relationship. But it is unclear how to go from mere perception to experience and knowledge.

Suffice it to say that even the main outlines of Kant’s response remain unclear for two reasons. First, there is an ambiguity about whether the conceptual machinery invoked to grasp the contributions from the side of sensory intuition as well as from the side of various types of synthesis is intended to account for the possibility of perception, for the possibility of experience and knowledge of objects, or both simultaneously. This remains unclear in Kant’s exposition of his position.

Second, if Kant admits the distinction between perception on the one hand and experience and objects of knowledge on the other, then it is further unclear how to account for the transition from perception to knowledge. An “ordinary” account would presumably talk about the historical development of scientific research. Perhaps this is implied in the reference in the *Inaugural Dissertation* cited above in which Kant mentions comparison of different perceptions in the understanding. From a historical perspective, in the scientific process individual perceptions are transformed, through the study of causal relationships, into general laws. For instance, as noted above, according to Kant further developments in physics after Copernicus led to advances in astronomical theory culminat-

65 Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics*, translated by Gary Hatfield, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, § 22, p. 56.

66 Kant, *Prolegomena*, § 20, p. 53.

ing Newtonian mechanics, which Kant regards as the definitive solution of the astronomical problem. Yet Kant, who claims that knowledge is a priori, does not have that option available with respect to his own theory in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This work advances an a-historical account from the transcendental perspective, which is different from and incompatible with a historical analysis. Hence it remains unclear how on the basis of the critical philosophy the distinction between subjective perception and objective experience and knowledge can be explained.

VI. Kant and the Subject

So far I have brought out some of the ways that Kant relies on unconscious activity in his theory of cognition. Unconscious activity is a type of activity. Now I want to call attention to the link between the theory of activity, including unconscious activity, and Kant's theory of the subject. In pointing to four questions, Kant famously contends that the theory of human being is the central question in the critical philosophy.⁶⁷ His theory of the philosophical subject, which, in virtue of his basic anti-psychologism, differs from his theory of human being, but whose precise relation to finite human being remains unclear, is also central to his critical philosophy.

Kant was one of the first to teach the emerging science of anthropology. His theory of human being is described in his book on the topic. His theory of the subject, or perhaps more precisely his theory of the philosophical subject is expounded in his three *Critiques*. The common thread in all three *Critiques* is that in each case a form of human experience is explained in a regressive argument through a form of activity. He explains theoretical knowledge through the complex, but unconscious activity in which the cognitive subject "constructs" the cognitive object. He describes morality in terms of conscious activity in which the moral subject must freely determine the principle of its action on the level of pure practical reason and in fact so act on the level of practical reason. And he describes aesthetics in which human beings render aesthetic reflective judgements based on generalizing an individual's personal reaction when confronted with an aesthetic object to all possible observers.

67 *Kant's Introduction to Logic*, translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, 1885, reprint edition New York: Philosophical Library, 1963, p. 15.

Kant's approach to explaining different forms of human experience through different forms of activity suggests the possibility of formulating a unitary theory of the subject of experience by relating the different forms of activity. He points toward but never carries out this task, which is inscribed as it were in the general approach of the critical philosophy. Yet he makes two attempts to subordinate theoretical to practical reason, hence epistemology to ethics in the *Critique of Judgment*. In the Introduction to the first edition, he introduces judgment as a third faculty in an unsatisfactory attempt to create unity out of diversity.⁶⁸ In the second edition, he makes use of reflective judgment to unify pure and practical reason. Judgment, in bringing the particular under the universal, subordinates pure reason, or the capacity to deduce the particular from the universal, to practical reason, or the capacity to form rules. Yet this further effort also fails since it presupposes the indemonstrable possibility of a harmony between the moral decision and its performance, which can only be thought but cannot be known.⁶⁹

Kant's approach to understanding the subject in terms of conscious and unconscious activity is arguably more successful in explicating different forms of experience in terms of different forms of activity than in formulating a general theory of the subject as active or activity. Kant's approach to the subject through its activity goes back in the tradition at least until Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle sketches a theory of life as activity, and in the *Poetics* he describes artistic mimesis as the imitation of life. An approach to human being as basically active is further developed in modern times by a number of important thinkers, including Descartes, Fichte and Marx.

Descartes is widely believed to hold a spectator theory of the subject, which he apparently formulates, but never directly states, in the interval between the *Discourse* and the *Meditations*. An anticipation of this theory goes back to Descartes' earliest writings. His approach to knowledge in the *Rules* already implies an as yet still unformulated theory of the cognitive subject. The first rule concerns correct judgments.⁷⁰ In the *Discourse*, in to the best of my knowledge one of only two passages in his cor-

68 See Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Introduction, III, pp. 64–66.

69 See Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Introduction, IX, pp. 83–86.

70 See "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, I, p. 1.

pus that directly refer to the theory, he cautiously remarks about “trying to be a spectator rather than an actor in all the comedies the world displays.”⁷¹ For various reasons, the spectator theory is routinely taken as Descartes’ central theoretical commitment when his position is discussed. Yet, as the passage cited suggests, he also has an actor theory of the subject. The little-known actor view, which Descartes never develops, and which remains implicit in his writings, is worked out by his successors. The actor view follows by denying the main principles of the spectator view. For a human actor there is no bifurcation between mind and body, since the complex object called a human being is directly situated in the world, which we can know, and we have at best only indirect access to the mind.

In replying to Hume’s attack on causality, Kant formulates a theory of the subject largely inspired by the Cartesian view of the subject, especially the more familiar spectator theory. Though Kant denies we have direct access to the contents of mind, his conception of the subject shares with the spectator view the bifurcation of mind and body according to which the mind is wholly free, whereas the body belongs to the causal framework, and the depiction of the problem of knowledge as knowing a mind-independent real external world. One way to understand the relation is to say that Kant brings together within a single theory a view of the subject as both passive, like the Cartesian spectator, but active like the Cartesian actor. Yet unlike the Cartesian subject, for which consciousness unites thinking and being, the Kantian subject is both conscious and unconscious. For Descartes consciousness, or conscious activity is the condition of knowledge. But for Kant, it is not conscious but rather unconscious activity, which makes consciousness, experience and knowledge of objects possible.

VII. Conclusion: Kant and the Cognitive Unconscious

Views of unconscious spontaneous mental activity precede Kant, who gives it a powerful new focus in countering Hume. In his attack on causality, Hume invokes the spontaneous unconscious activity of the mind as the cause of the false perception of a causal relation among external objects. In effect, Kant responds to Hume in advancing a different view of unconscious spontaneous mental activity, hence a different view of

71 “Discourse on Method,” in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, I, p. 99.

the cognitive subject. Unconscious mental activity or mental action, which is rarely studied directly, is arguably central for any theory of the mind.⁷² Kant's theory of unconscious spontaneous mental activity, which has also not often been studied, is central for his own position as well as for the philosophy of mind.

Kant thinks that reason⁷³ and the understanding are both spontaneous. In this paper I have focused mainly on the unconscious. The unconscious is fundamental to Kant's theory of knowledge in two ways: concerning the passive reception of sensation as the contents of the sensory manifold, and with respect to the unconscious spontaneous activity through which it works up the sensory contents into objects of experience and knowledge.

Kant's theory of unconscious activity is intrinsic to the so-called Copernican revolution, which can be paraphrased as the insight that the epistemological subject does not find, uncover or discover but rather "constructs," makes or produces what it knows. Epistemological construction is not conscious but unconscious. Kant's view of the subject's cognitive activity as unconscious is central to the critical philosophy and to the later post-Kantian German idealist debate. His approach to cognition through unconscious but spontaneous mental activity is a central theme in post-Kantian German idealism.

Kant's theory of unconscious spontaneous mental activity belongs to his claim to provide the only possible analysis of the general conditions of knowledge. He says that if one were to change anything at all, reason itself would be destroyed.⁷⁴ He further divides the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding into the objects of the pure understanding and the pure understanding itself. He says that the latter considers a subjective relation, which is important, but not the chief question, which concerns what understanding and reason can know a priori.⁷⁵ But in relying on unconscious spontaneous activity, hence in surpassing the limits of experience, the only limit he sets himself in the critical philosophy, Kant seems to go beyond the limits of the understanding, beyond what can pos-

72 See, e.g., *Mental Actions*, edited by Lucy O'Brien and Matthew Soteriou, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

73 In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, he describes "reason" as "pure self-activity." See Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 99.

74 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxxviii, p. 120.

75 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A xvii, p. 103.

sibly be known, in a theory that, since it cannot be verified through experience, remains largely speculative.

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