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Imagination Bound: A Theoretical Imperative

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IMAGINATION BOUND: A THEORETICAL IMPERATIVE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Robert M. Guerin

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Daniel Breazeale, Professor of Philosophy

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2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

IMAGINATION BOUND: A THEORETICAL IMPERATIVE

Kant's theory of productive imagination falls at the center of the critical project. This is evident in the 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant claims that the productive imagination is a "fundamental faculty of the human soul" and indispensable for the construction of experience. And yet, in the second edition of 1787 Kant seemingly demotes this imagination as a mere "effect of the understanding on sensibility" and all but withdraws its place from the Transcendental Deduction.

In his 1929 *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Martin Heidegger provided an explanation for the revisions between 1781 and 1787. Heidegger suggested that the *Critique* was supposed to be a foundation for Kant's metaphysics of morals, which holds that practical reason is freely bound by a categorical imperative. Yet after 1781 Kant recognized that the *Critique* implicates the productive imagination as the "unknown root" of the faculties of understanding and sensibility. If the 1781 *Critique* reveals this imagination to be the source of theoretical rules and practical imperatives, then, according to Heidegger, Kant could not but "shrink back" from this shocking discovery. A faculty so intimately tied to sensibility, and hence contingency and particularity, is a poor progenitor of freedom and universal rules.

I think there is some truth to Heidegger's explanation. But I also think there is something more important to draw from the revisions between 1781 and 1787. In this dissertation, I assume that something about the productive imagination did frighten Kant. But, pace Heidegger, I do not think that Kant shrank back from his initial position. Rather, I argue that the revisions clarify a theory that was implicit in 1781 but made explicit by 1787. If the imagination is a power for representation, which is at times a dream and at times a veridical experience, then the difference lies in the rule according to which the construction of the representation is bound. Furthermore, I argue that Kant's revisions reveal a duty to bind the reproductive imagination according to a common concept, what Kant sometimes refers to as common sense. This is what I call the theoretical imperative.

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*TO MY PARENTS,
ROBERT AND THERESA.*

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES	IX
1, INTRODUCTION	1
1,1 The Problem.....	1
1,2 The Thesis in Two Parts	3
1,3 The Method.....	6
1,4 Caveat Lector	7
2, <i>PRODUKTIVE EINBILDUNGSKRAFT</i>	11
2,1 Problem and Task of the A-Deduction	11
2,2 Synthesis in General	18
2,3 The Threefold Synthesis	22
2,4 Heidegger’s Kant	33
3, PROMETHEUS BOUND: A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF IMAGINATION .	44
3,1 Introductory Remarks	44
3,2 The Hebraic <i>Yetser</i>	45
3,3 The Hellenic <i>Eikasia</i>	48
3,3,1 Plato	50
3,3,2 Aristotle.....	53
3,4 Early Conclusions	55
3,5 The Onto-Theological <i>Phantasie</i>	55
3,5,1 Bonaventure	56
3,5,2 Aquinas	58
3,6 Renaissance.....	61
3,6,1 The Image	61
3,6,2 The Occult <i>Vitus Imaginativa</i>	66
3,7 Modernity.....	67
3,7,1 Descartes.....	68
3,7,2 Hume.....	71
3,8 Concluding Remarks.....	78
4, <i>PHANTASIE UNBOUND: REVERSALS OF COGNITION</i>	79
4,1 1760s: Kant and the Philosophical Zeitgeist.....	79
4,2 Sympathy Sans Principle	84
4,3 Psychopathology	93
4,4 Fanatical Intuition	105
4,5 Concluding Remarks.....	119
5, FROM <i>PHANTASIE</i> TO <i>VERSTANDES-DICHTUNGSKRAFT</i>	121
5,1 The Transcendental Turn: Theoretical Implications.....	121
5,2 The Transcendental Turn: Moral Implications	128
5,3 Lectures on Logic	132
5,4 A Confluence of Impressions.....	138
5,4,1 Baumgarten	140
5,4,2 Tetens.....	147

5,5	Lectures on Metaphysics.....	154
5,5,1	<i>Reflexionen zur Anthropologie</i>	154
5,5,2	<i>Pölitz Lectures</i>	159
5,6	Concluding Remarks.....	167
6,	<i>PRODUKTIVE EINBILDUNGSKRAFT REDUX</i>	168
6,1	Strategy of the B-Deduction	168
6,2	Logical Functions of Judgment.....	169
6,3	<i>Synthesis Speciosa</i>	183
7,	A THEORETICAL IMPERATIVE.....	196
7,1	A Faculty of Rules	196
7,2	Freedom of Thought	200
7,3	A Case Study: <i>Dreams of a Spirit-Seer</i> Revisited	202
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	206
	CURRICULUM VITA	214

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List of Figures

Figure 4-1.....	158
Figure 4-2.....	166

1, Introduction

In contrast to the methods of historical philology, which has its own agenda, a thoughtful dialogue is bound by other laws—laws which are more easily violated. In a dialogue the possibility of going astray is more threatening, the shortcomings are more frequent.

—Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Preface to the Second Edition

1,1 The Problem

What is Kant’s theory of the power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*? It is not, I suggest, a theory of will-o’-the-wisp flights of fancy, anymore than it is a theory of memory, reproduction, and association. It is rather, and this will have to suffice for now, a faculty of original representation bound by *a priori* rules for the sake of a possible experience or, what is the same for Kant, empirical thinking. In this sense, *Einbildungskraft* plays a central role in Kant’s critical philosophy. One might even call it the keystone, without which the project would crumble under its own weight.

But then, if *Einbildungskraft* is the keystone to the critical project, a “fundamental faculty of the human soul that grounds all cognition *a priori*”¹ according to the first edition of the *Critique*, why does Kant seemingly back-peddle from this position in 1781? Why does he revise passages, claiming that *Einbildungskraft* is a “function of the understanding” or an “effect of the understanding on sensibility”? And why is

¹ Kant (1998), A124. Most citations of Kant are referenced first according to the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant and followed by the German Academy Edition, *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA)—*Kants gesammelte Schriften*. All paginations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are referenced according to the original paginations of the first edition (A-ed.) and second edition (B-ed.).

Einbildungskraft all but absent in the Transcendental Deduction of 1787, making its only appearance in section 24, more than halfway through the Deduction proper?

These are the questions Martin Heidegger raises in his 1929 *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In this seminal text, Heidegger claims that Kant's argument of 1781 implicates *Einbildungskraft* as the "unknown root" of the faculties of sensibility and understanding.² Given this, Heidegger asks,

How is the baser faculty of sensibility also to be able to constitute the essence of reason? Does not everything fall into confusion if the lowest takes the place of the highest? What is to happen with the venerable tradition, according to which Ratio and Logos have claimed the central function in the history of metaphysics? Can the primacy of Logic fall? Can the architectonic of the laying of the ground for metaphysics in general, the division into Transcendental Aesthetic and Logic, still be upheld if what it has for its theme is basically to be the transcendental power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*)?³

Heidegger's answer is that the venerable tradition ends, the primacy of logic falls, and Kant's beloved architectonic crumbles.

According to Heidegger, Kant's transcendental philosophy undermines traditional western metaphysics. But as Heidegger further notes, Kant did not take this entirely in stride: he "did not carry through with the more original interpretation of the transcendental power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*)."⁴ Rather, he "shrank back (*zurückgewichen*) from this unknown root."⁵ For he was not only "frightened" but also aware that his desire to repair the "indeterminate, empirical universality of popular

² Kant famously claims in the *Critique's* introduction that "all that seems necessary for an introduction or preliminary is that there are two stems of human cognition, *which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root*, namely sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought." See Kant (1998), A15/B29, my emphasis. See Heidegger (1997a), 97; 3: 138–9.

³ Heidegger (1997a), 117; 3: 167. All citations of Heidegger are referenced first according to the Indiana University Press edition and followed by the *Heidegger Gesamtausgabe* edited by Vittorio Klostermann.

⁴ Heidegger (1997a), 112; 3: 160.

⁵ Heidegger (1997a), 112; 3: 160.

philosophical doctrines concerning morals”⁶ was in jeopardy. As Heidegger sees it, Kant thus had no choice but to revise the *Critique*.

There are a few questions that arise from Heidegger’s interpretation. First, was Kant really frightened? Second, did Kant shrink back from his original position? Or does Heidegger misinterpret the relation of the faculties and the function of *Einbildungskraft*?

1,2 The Thesis in Two Parts

I think Kant recognized *Einbildungskraft* as indispensable for transcendental philosophy while also being influenced by, both directly and indirectly, a tradition that associates a wild, unbound imagination with irrationality and immorality. The awareness that irrationality could hinge upon the same mental power as rationality is perhaps what frightened Kant, for then the question is, at least in the first *Critique*, What right does rationality have to judge irrationality? What right does reason have to play both judge and party to its own dispute? As Montaigne says in the *Essays*:

Reason has taught me that to condemn a thing thus, dogmatically, as false and impossible, is to assume the advantage of knowing the bounds and limits of God’s will and of the power of our mother Nature; and that there is no more notable folly in the world than to reduce these things to the measure of our capacity and competence.⁷

In spite of Kant’s greatest efforts, perhaps he too harbored the thought that reason had no right to judge according to its own concepts; that it had “no clear legal ground for an entitlement to their use either from experience or from [itself].”⁸

Heidegger’s claim is that Kant was frightened by the implications of the 1781 *Critique* and therefore willfully obscured his original insight. I think Heidegger is right to

⁶ Heidegger (1997a), 118; 3: 168.

⁷ Montaigne (1957), 132.

⁸ Kant (1998), A84–5/B117.

charge *Einbildungskraft* as a source of fear for Kant. But I do not agree that this fear had the precise effect that Heidegger thinks it did. Fear did not cause Kant to turn away from his original position. Rather, fear caused Kant to clarify his central tenets and overall doctrine and to emphasize, in particular, an *a priori* act of the mind: the preconceptual synthesis of *Einbildungskraft* must be bound by universal and necessary rules. This claim is implicit in 1781, but it becomes explicit by 1787. The latter constitutes the first part of my thesis.

This condition for the possibility of objectivity, the *a priori* binding of *Einbildungskraft*, has an implication for empirical thinking, and this constitutes the second part of my thesis. I am going to argue in this dissertation that the transcendental condition for the possibility of objectivity implies an imperative to bind the reproductive imagination according to common concepts. For Kant, this is a further condition for objectivity, and it is what I call the theoretical imperative.

This thesis rests on a claim Kant makes in section 27 of the B-Deduction. In an example of what he means by necessity, he writes,

For, e.g., the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object (i.e., necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected.⁹

The concept of causation—or any concept as an objectively necessary rule of combination—is not *only* being so constituted that I cannot think otherwise. It rests on *speaking* as well. I must judge or “say” something. The implication is that I can always

⁹ Kant (1998), B168.

remain silent, but I ought not to. This is the theoretical imperative that I want to stress lies behind Kant's transcendental philosophy.

Kant's Transcendental Deduction shows us that there is purposiveness, a *telos*, behind the construction of experience. The mind is predisposed toward thinking.¹⁰ But I note here that from the natural standpoint or, as one of Kant's successors will put it, the standpoint of life, the construction of experience is unconscious. And it is not a matter of making this unconscious conscious. It is a fact, for Kant, that I cannot help perceiving objects in spatio-temporal relations. And yet, one implication to draw from Kant's project is that I *can* help perceiving empirical representations *as* something. That is, the critical analysis and employment of our concepts affect our perceptual experience, for these concepts necessitate subsequent associations of our imagination. It follows that we have a duty and responsibility, an imperative, to judge empirical representations according to clear and distinct concepts, lest we become dreamers in waking life. So, although we cannot control the *a priori* syntheses of *Einbildungskraft*, we ought to control our judgment, for this in turn affects subsequent *a posteriori* associations.

Thinking is not natural. It is not that I cannot but reflect representations under concepts. What is natural is the mere association of representations, an affect of the imagination that Hume so persuasively describes. For Kant, thinking is a further step. It is imaginative association according to common, shared concepts, which enable us to discourse. In what follows, I show many instances of the imagination haphazardly associating sensations and representations. These instances, so common in life, are what frightened Kant, for they not only indicate intellectual laziness but may also lead to the

¹⁰ I will discuss this below. See, for instance, chapter two, section three.

madhouse. And yet, despite these ominous consequences, Kant did not suppress or abandon *Einbildungskraft*. Pace Heidegger, I do not think Kant shrank back from this power. I think he tamed it.

1,3 The Method

Heidegger claims that Kant was frightened. But he offers no proof. Yet I think we can begin to substantiate this hypothesis by rearticulating arguments concerning the imagination in the western canon. The success of this rearticulation depends upon whether the story that unfolds is capable of providing a reason for Kant's otherwise erratic behavior between 1781 and 1787. If the imagination turns out to be a coconspirator in immoral and irrational behavior, exemplified through arguments and myths that both delineate and signify a rebellious, unlawful, and illegitimate nature, then that can provide a reason for Kant's partial maintenance and reproduction as well as reinterpretation and radical revision of *Einbildungskraft*. In other words, we can test Heidegger's hypothesis by looking back into the conceptual history of the imagination, thereby rationalizing Kant's seemingly irrational behavior.¹¹

But merely considering historical arguments, anecdotes, and myths surrounding the concept will not lend enough support to the claim that Kant was frightened. We need to consider Kant's own thoughts on the subject. This is why the precritical works from the 1760s and 1770s are so important. We can provide further support if these early works suggest apprehension and distrust toward *Einbildungskraft*.

¹¹ This is an interpretative strategy employed in both hermeneutics and psychoanalysis. This method can be found, for instance, in Robert A. Paul's *Moses and Civilization*. See Paul (1996).

To be sure, this method will only substantiate Heidegger's hypothesis. It will not prove that Kant shrank back from his original position in 1781. What it will suggest, however, is that Kant had good reasons to think that *Einbildungskraft* is indispensable for thinking *only if* it is bound by rules. For Kant's earliest publications describe human beings as naturally imaginative but unbound by rules, laws, maxims, and principles. These early texts describe human beings as often caught up in their own dreams, from which some never wake up. They offer, then, strong evidence for my claim that if *Einbildungskraft* is to be useful for thinking, it must be guided by rules.

I do not think the function of *Einbildungskraft* changes from 1781 to 1787. These revisions drive home the point that the mind is required to bind this power according to *a priori* rules of the understanding, which rules are derived from the nature of the understanding (and not, as Heidegger's conclusion would suggest, *Einbildungskraft*). If this is correct, what follows is the theoretical imperative of section 27 and its empirical implications, which Kant did not say but, as Heidegger would put it, "wanted to say." A successful historical and precritical exegesis should bear this out. *Einbildungskraft*, as we shall see, represents many things, both illusory and veridical. Such an unpredictable, protean power, if it is to be harnessed for the sake of thinking, must be *bound*.

1,4 Caveat Lector

I must make two final remarks before I end this introduction. First, I am aware that there are other reasons, which scholarship bears out, for Kant's revisions between 1781 and 1787. The so-called Göttingen Review of 1782, for instance, which appeared anonymously in the *Zugabe zu den Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen* but which we know was

composed partially by Christian Garve and partially by J. G. Feder, painted Kant's transcendental idealism as Berkeleyianism. The reviewers claimed that Kant reduced everything (the world and the subject) to mere representations. The charge was egoism, and there are thus numerous points in the second edition of 1787 that seek to distinguish Berkeley's dogmatic idealism from Kant's transcendental idealism.¹²

There is also the matter of Descartes's problematic idealism. In the second edition Kant adds a section titled "The Refutation of Idealism." He seems to think that his initial refutation of Cartesian skepticism was weak. For he initially thought that he simply needed to show that by having a representation of an object it is possible to prove the reality of that object. But as Kant comes to see after 1781, the Cartesian never doubted the representations of objects. Rather, he doubted the *correspondence* between the representation and the object-in-itself. In the second edition, Kant therefore emphasizes the criterion of truth as internal to the mind.¹³

Finally, with respect to the transcendental deductions themselves, there is the charge of psychologism against the 1781 Transcendental Deduction. This charge states that Kant's method is introspective. It observes the operations of the mind and determines facts about our mental operations—that there are three synthetic acts of the mind that yield empirical cognition or experience in the rich Kantian sense. But the problem here is

¹² See Kant's emendations to the Transcendental Aesthetic at B56–7 and B70–1. See also Kant's letter to Garve on 7 August 1783 in Kant (1967), 98–105; AA, 10: 336–43. In this letter, Kant admits to Garve that his presentation of the Transcendental Deduction is difficult for his readers. But he also claims that he sees no other way to present a deduction of the categories and challenges those who charge him of "impenetrable obscurity" to write a deduction in a more popular fashion. But most important, he reasserts his position that the deduction is of the highest importance and that he is certain that a deduction of the categories from any other source other than reason itself is impossible. What this suggests is that the Göttingen Review did not change Kant's fundamental premises concerning a transcendental deduction from 1781 to 1787.

¹³ For a fuller elucidation of these charges against Kant and his subsequent revisions, see, for instance, Beiser (2002), 88–127.

that Hume clearly shows in his *Treatise of Human Nature* how introspection is an empirical method and can only yield contingent premises. “Matters of fact” are not necessarily true. There may therefore be other explanations for the possibility of empirical cognition, an explanation other than the categories of the understanding. In the second edition of 1787, subsequently aware of his misstep, Kant therefore substantially revises his method and adopts a logical approach.

I do not doubt that the problems of problematic and dogmatic idealism motivate Kant to delete, revise, and supplement sections of the 1781 *Critique*. But I also do not think I have to contend with these interpretations in the course of this dissertation. In fact, the reasons that I offer here can be seen as consistent with previous scholarship, for what I offer is a probable reason for the revisions within the *Transcendental Deduction*, reasons which, as far as I can tell, are internally coherent with Berkeleyian, Cartesian, Lockean, or Leibnizian concerns.

With respect to psychologism, we might admit that Kant reconsiders the psychological method of Hume and Tetens and revises his deduction of the categories in order to preclude a conflation of his method with the latter’s’. But this seems uncharitable to Kant. Kant’s close reading of Tetens in the late 1770s made him acutely aware of the problems of psychological arguments. Kant knew that introspection and observation on the facts of consciousness could only yield empirical claims. So to think that he would employ such a method in the 1781 Deduction, the purpose of which is to prove the

necessity and universality of the categories of the understanding, is to think that Kant would, like the neurotic, employ the same method expecting different results.¹⁴

The second remark is not so much an interpretative concern as it is linguistic. This dissertation focuses on the imagination. “Imagination” is Latin in etymology, and some philosophers below employ this term, including Kant himself—for instance in his *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. But Kant also uses the German “*Phantasie*,” “*Dichtungsvermögen*,” “*Bildungsvermögen*,” “*bildende Kraft*,” “*Bildungskraft*,” and “*Einbildungskraft*,” among others, for the numerous operations of imagination—reproduction, production, foresight, memory, etc. In what follows, I employ “imagination” in the most general sense, but when I refer to a particular philosopher, I use the word in his language, in order to capture the rich meaning for him and his philosophical doctrine. When I turn to Kant in particular I treat *Bildungsvermögen* in the most general sense, unless otherwise specified. If Kant uses a different term for the imagination, I indicate this and provide an explanation as to Kant’s meaning in that context.¹⁵ Overall, I attempt throughout this dissertation to avoid the English term, since I think it conflates different meanings for different philosophers.

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¹⁴ What sets Kant’s method apart from his predecessors is that he thinks that knowledge must be grounded in an *a priori* synthesis. It is a matter of fact that the mind apprehends and reproduces representations, but the key premise of the 1781 deduction is that these facts presuppose an *a priori* rule that guides them. Kant seems to have this in mind when he wrote to J. S. Beck in 16 October 1792 that “in my judgment everything depends on the following: Since in the empirical concept of a *composite* the synthesis cannot be given or represented in intuition by means of the mere intuition and its apprehension but only through the spontaneous connection of the manifold—that is, it can be presented in a consciousness in general (which is not empirical)—this connection, and its functioning, must stand a priori in the mind, under rules that constitute pure thought of an object in general (the pure concept of the understanding).” See Kant (1967), 194; AA, 11: 376. See, for comparison, Paul Guyer’s essay on the charge of psychologism against the Transcendental Deduction in the collection of essays in Eckart Förster’s *Kant’s Transcendental Deductions*: Guyer (1989).

¹⁵ For a quick reference, see the figures listed above.

2, *Produktive Einbildungskraft*

Einbildungskraft is therefore also a faculty of a synthesis *a priori*, on account of which we give it the name of *produktiven Einbildungskraft*, and, insofar as its aim in regard to all the manifold of appearances is nothing further than the necessary unity in their synthesis, this can be called the transcendental function of the imagination.

—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A123

The transcendental *Einbildungskraft* is homeless.

—Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 3: 136

2,1 Problem and Task of the A-Deduction

In a letter to Marcus Herz of 21 February 1772 Kant notes the following shortcoming, which he has discovered through his musings over a treatise preliminarily titled “The Limits of Sense and Reason”:

As I thought through the theoretical part, considering its whole scope and the reciprocal relations of all its parts, I noticed that I still lacked something essential, something that in my long metaphysical studies I, as well as others, had failed to pay attention to and that, in fact, constitutes the key to the whole secret of hitherto still obscure metaphysics. I asked myself: What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call “representation” to the object?¹

Kant goes on to elaborate that it is easy to determine the ground “if a representation is only a way in which the subject is affected by the object.” For in this case, it is simply a matter of “an effect in accord with its cause.” Likewise, this ground is understood “if the object itself were created by the representation (as when divine cognitions are conceived

¹ Kant (1967), 71; AA, 10: 129–35.

as the archetypes of all things).”² In the case of both an *intellectus archetypi* and an *intellectus ectypi*, the relation between representations and objects is easily conceivable. So what is the problem? Why does Kant think he, as well as everyone else, has failed to comprehend the ground between representations and objects?

The real issue here concerns the *human* understanding and its categories. As Kant notes in the 1770 *Inaugural Dissertation* and as he repeats to Herz, our understanding contains a number of categories which are neither “the cause of the object... nor is the object the cause of the intellectual representations in the mind.”³ That is, the human understanding fits neither an *intellectus archetypi* nor an *intellectus ectypi*.

Therefore the pure concepts of the understanding must not be abstracted from sense perceptions, nor must they express the reception of representations through the senses; but though they must have their origin in the nature of the soul, they are neither caused by the object nor bring the object itself into being.⁴

The question before Kant, then, is the following: How do pure concepts of the understanding refer to or represent objects veridically?⁵

In 1781 Kant revisits the alternatives he mentioned to Herz in 1772, but now his language has changed.⁶ Here is Kant’s new formulation of the alternatives in section 14 of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in the *Critique*:

There are only two possible cases in which synthetic representation and its objects can come together, necessarily relate to each other, and, as it were, meet each other: either if

² Cf. Kant (1998), B135: “An understanding, in which through self-consciousness all of the manifold would at the same time be given, would intuit.” This is what Kant calls in the first *Critique* intellectual intuition.

³ Kant (1967), 71; AA, 10: 129–35.

⁴ Kant (1967), 72; AA, 10: 129–35.

⁵ Cf. Kant (1967), 72; AA, 10: 129–35: “If... *intellectual* representations depend on our inner activity, whence comes the agreement that they are supposed to have with objects—objects that are nevertheless not possibly produced thereby? And the axioms of pure reason concerning these objects—how do they agree with these objects, since the agreement has not been reached with the aid of experience?”

⁶ See Longuenesse (1998), 20–6. Norman Kemp Smith makes the same remark in his classic commentary to the first *Critique*. See Kemp Smith (1984), 222.

the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible [*Entweder wenn der Gegenstand die Vorstellung, oder diese den Gegenstand allein möglich macht*]. If it is the first, then this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*. And this is the case with appearances in respect of that in it which belongs to sensation. But if it is the second, then since representation in itself (for we are not here talking about its causality by means of the will) does not produce its object as far as its **existence** is concerned, the representation is still determinant of the object *a priori* if it is possible through it alone to **cognize something as an object**.⁷

There are two points to be made here. First, Kant has dropped talk of causality between objects and representations. He now tells us that either the object or the representation “makes possible” the other, which is to say that they function as necessary conditions for the possibility of the other. Second, Kant now makes a distinction not between objects and representations, but between objects, appearances, and cognized objects or, as he calls them in the *Dissertation*, phenomena. What, then, is the upshot to this new discrimination?

Kant now understands “object” in three different senses. First, an object is what makes possible a representation, as in the case of “appearances in respect of that in it which belongs to sensations.” This sense of object is reminiscent of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, where Kant defines sensation as “the effect of an object on the capacity for representation.”⁸ Here object is understood in the traditional sense of things in themselves or mind-independent entities, the correlate of sensations. But second, object is an appearance. For when Kant notes that “the representation is still determinant of the object *a priori*,” this also recalls a remark from the *Aesthetic*, where he writes that an appearance is an “undetermined object of an empirical intuition,” i.e., a preconceptual

⁷ Kant (1998), A92/B124–5.

⁸ Kant (1998), A19–20/B34. Cf. Kant (2002a), 384; AA, 2: 392: “*Sensibility* is the *receptivity* of a subject in virtue of which it is possible for the subject’s own representative state to be affected in a definite way by the presence of some object.”

object or intuition. As we will see from the *Dissertation*,⁹ and as Kant repeats in the *Aesthetic*, the conditions for the possibility of the object as appearance are the *a priori* forms of space and time. But if the object as appearance is preconceptual, the synthetic representation or concept is “determinant of the object [as appearance],” such that “it is possible through it alone to **cognize something as an object**.”¹⁰ This third sense, a conceptualized appearance, is the object as phenomenon. So it is not that synthetic representations create the *existence* of the object, like an act of will, but that the representation is necessary to *know* objects *as* objects.¹¹

Let us return to the question. In 1772 Kant wants to know the ground of the relation between a representation and an external object. The question is answered in the case of both an *intellectus archetypi* and an *intellectus ectypi*. The problem, however, is that the real use of the understanding and its pure categories fit neither of these species of intellect. The pure categories are neither abstracted from experience nor do they create objects.¹² Yet in 1781 the question looks different. Indeed, the question is now

⁹ See chapter five, section one.

¹⁰ Cf. Heidegger (1997), 22; 3: 31–2: “Kant uses the expression ‘appearance’ in a narrower and in a wider sense. Appearances in the wider sense (phenomena) are a kind of ‘object,’ namely, the being itself which finite knowing, as thinking intuition that takes things in stride, makes apparent. Appearances in the narrower sense means that which (in the appearance in the wider sense) is the exclusive correlate of the affection that is stripped of thinking (determining) and that belongs to finite intuition: the content of empirical intuition.”

¹¹ Kant (1998), A20/B34. Cf. Kant (2002a), 386; AA, 2: 394: “But in the case of sensible things and phenomena (*phaenomenis*), that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called *appearance* (*apparentia*), while the reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called *experience*. Thus, there is no way from appearance to experience except by reflection in accordance with the logical use of the understanding. The common concepts of experience are called *empirical*, and the objects of experience are called *phenomena* (*phaenomena*), while the laws both of experience and generally of all sensitive cognition are called the laws of phenomena.” Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 23–5.

¹² In the same 1772 letter to Herz, Kant writes, “In my *Dissertation* I was content to explain the nature of intellectual representations in a merely negative way, namely, to state that they were not modifications of the mind brought about by the object. However, I silently passed over the further question of how a

formulated as follows: What is the ground between *two species of representation*—intuitions and concepts?¹³ From this perspective, it is a matter of understanding the nature of these two representations, such that the representation as indeterminate is conditioned by (internal to) determinate representations. (The precise nature of this relation will be presented below, but we can already begin to see the isomorphism forming between empirical determination (empirical judgment) or the act of subsuming singular and immediate intuitions under concepts and *a priori* determination (*a priori* judgment), the act of subsuming pure intuitions (space and time) under pure concepts).

The solution to the relation between pure concepts (universal representations) and sensible intuitions (singular representations),¹⁴ and thereby the key to the problem of metaphysics, is the goal of the *Critique's* Transcendental Deduction. In section 14 or the “Transition to the transcendental deduction of the categories,” Kant describes this solution in the following manner:

The transcendental deduction of all *a priori* concepts therefore has a principle toward which the entire investigation must be directed, namely this: that they must be recognized as *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experiences (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, or of the thinking). Concepts that supply the objective ground of the possibility of experience are necessary just for that reason.¹⁵

The path to this solution takes two forms. On the one hand, the deduction focuses on the objects of the pure understanding, a proof of the objective validity of the concepts *a priori*. This is what Kant calls the Objective Deduction and notes that it “belongs

representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible,” see Kant (1967), 72; AA, 10: 129–35.

¹³ Cf. Allison (2004), 160.

¹⁴ Cf. Kant (1992), 589; AA, 9: 91: “All cognitions, that is, all representations related with consciousness to an object, are either *intuitions* or *concepts*. An intuition is a *singular* representation (*repraesentatio singularis*), a concept a universal (*repraesentatio per notas communes*) or *reflected* representation (*repraesentatio discursiva*).”

¹⁵ Kant (1998), A94/B126.

essentially to my ends.”¹⁶ I turn to this path in chapter six.¹⁷ On the other hand, the second form, what Kant calls the Subjective Deduction, concentrates on the pure understanding itself, “concerning its possibility and the powers of cognition on which it itself rests.”¹⁸ Its chief question is, “How is the **faculty of thinking** itself possible?”¹⁹

As we shall see in the course of this dissertation, perceptual experiences are similar to, if not indistinguishable from, thinking, which Kant makes explicit in the

¹⁶ Kant (1998), Axvi.

¹⁷ There is an old debate concerning which deduction is preferable, successful, or logically prior. On one side of the debate Cohen and his neo-Kantian followers of the Marburg school favor the Objective Deduction over the Subjective. See Cohen, (1885), 315–6. More recently in the 20th century Strawson and the analytic tradition have favored the Objective over the Subjective, given the latter’s, as Strawson put it, “imaginary subject of transcendental psychology.” See Strawson, (1966), 31–2. On the other side of the debate, Norman Kemp Smith, Heidegger, and Longuenesse see the Subjective Deduction as an indispensable supplement to the Objective. Kemp Smith writes, “In the definition above given of the objective deduction, I have intentionally indicated Kant’s unquestioning conviction that *a priori* originates independently of the objects to which it is applied. This independent origin is only describable in mental or psychological terms. The *a priori* originates from within; it is due to the specific conditions upon which human thinking rests. Now this interpretation of the *a priori* renders the teaching contained in the subjective deduction much more essential than Kant is himself willing to recognize. The conclusions arrived at may be highly schematic in conception, and extremely conjectural in detail; they are none the less required to supplement the results of the more purely logical analysis,” Kemp Smith (1984), 237. Cf. Heidegger (1997a), 116; 3: 166: “The Transcendental Deduction is in itself necessarily objective-subjective at the same time.” Cf. also Heidegger (1997a), 120; 3: 171: “The apparently superficial questions as to whether, in the interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the second edition deserves priority in principle over the first or the reverse, is merely the pale reflection of the decisive question for the Kantian laying of the ground for metaphysics and the interpretation thereof: Is the transcendental power of imagination, as a previously laid ground, solid enough to determine originally, i.e., cohesively and as a whole, precisely the finite essence of the subjectivity of the human subject?” Cf. also Longuenesse (1998), 9: “However, to acknowledge the superiority of the B Deduction argument is not to say that the argument in the A edition should be dismissed as superfluous. On the contrary, I think the latter is the indispensable prerequisite of the former. In particular, the exposition of the ‘threefold synthesis’ that opens the A Deduction is an indispensable *via negativa* by which Kant attempts to establish that a Humean empiricopsychological genesis of our perceptions and their combinations cannot provide an account of our capacity to subsume singular intuitions under general concepts.” Finally, even Kant himself suggests that the Subjective Deduction is a helpful supplement to the Objective Deduction. At A96–97, he writes, “Now these concepts, which contain *a priori* the pure thinking in every experience, we find in the categories, and it is already a sufficient deduction of them and justification of their objective validity if we can prove that by means of them alone an object can be thought. But since in such a thought there is more at work than the single faculty of thinking, namely the understanding, and the understanding itself, as a faculty of cognition that is to be related to objects, also requires an elucidation of the possibility of this relation, we must first assess not the empirical but the transcendental constitution of the subjective sources that comprise the *a priori* foundations for the possibility of experience.”

¹⁸ Kant (1998), Axvi.

¹⁹ Kant (1998), Axvii.

Dissertation: “Reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called *experience*.”²⁰ It follows that thinking presupposes, at the very least, a coordination of appearances prior to their reflection under concepts. I therefore understand the Subjective Deduction as revealing the mental acts that thinking presupposes, such as, for instance, a *Bildungsvermögen*.

Given this goal of the Subjective Deduction, it is no surprise that Kant expresses reservations concerning its success. In order to uncover the conditions for thinking, we have to postulate mental actions *outside the realm of representation*. This is why Kant says in the A Preface that “since the latter question [the possibility of the faculty of thinking] is something like the search for the cause of a given effect, and is therefore something like a hypothesis...it appears as if I am taking the liberty in this case of expressing an **opinion**, and that the reader might therefore be free to hold another **opinion**.”²¹ We may gesture toward or allude to this act, but it seems that each time we attempt to posit this act, represent it, it slips our grasp.

The problem with this method is that it is susceptible to gainsay.²² Moreover, and what is perhaps a more serious charge, the cause of these representations will look no different than a thing-in-itself, something we cannot know in principle according to

²⁰ Kant (2002a), 386; AA, 2: 394.

²¹ Kant (1998), Axvii.

²² It is not entirely fair to say that the method of the Subjective Deduction is hypothetical, at least as Kant sees it: “Since the latter question is something like the search for the cause of a given effect, and is therefore something like a hypothesis (*although, as I will elsewhere take the opportunity to show, this is not in fact how matters stand*), it appears as if I am taking the liberty in this case of expressing an **opinion**, and that the reader might therefore be free to hold another **opinion**,” Kant (1998), Axvii, my emphasis in italics. I think that if the B-Deduction is successful, it would vindicate the hypothesis of the A-Deduction, for the successful results of the B-Deduction, as a further deduction from the first principle as a postulate, would demonstrate the first principle’s consistency and thereby shore up the initial hypothesis. If this is correct, then Heidegger should have carried his analysis further than he did.

Kant's own strictures.²³ But there are a few reasons why the Subjective Deduction is important not just for the transcendental philosophy as a whole but also for our specific purposes here. First, the *a priori* categories, though immanent within experience, originate within the mind. This genesis calls for an explanation, which is why the Subjective Deduction appears all the more indispensable and indeed why commentators such as Heidegger, Kemp Smith, and Longuenesse argue that the B Deduction even presupposes it. Second, there is something particularly revealing about the results of the Subjective Deduction, that is, it points to a new, radical view of *Bildungsvermögen*, a power that does not simply associate representations but *constructs* them according to specific rules of the mind: an *Einbildungskraft bound*.

2,2 Synthesis in General

Let us begin with section 10. There Kant writes,

Now space and time contain a manifold of pure *a priori* intuition, but belong nevertheless among the conditions of the receptivity of our mind, under which alone it can receive representations of objects, and thus they must always also affect the concept of these objects. Only the spontaneity of our thought requires that this manifold first be gone through [*durchgegangen*], taken up [*aufgenommen*], and combined [*verbunden*] in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it. I call this action synthesis.²⁴

²³ cf. Kant (1998), A345–6/B404: “At the ground of this [transcendental] doctrine we can place nothing but the simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation **I**, of which one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept. *Through this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = X*, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept,” my emphasis in italics. In 1970, Wilfrid Sellars delivered the Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association titled “...this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks...” exploring the practical implications of this rather perplexing statement located in the Paralogisms of Pure Reason. See Sellars (1970–1971). Günter Zöller also has written an interesting article comparing the implications of this statement with similar observations in the writings of the Göttingen physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. See Zöller (1992).

²⁴ Kant (1998), A77/B102–3.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant argues that space and time are *a priori* conditions of the capacity to receive or be affected by objects. What he does not note in the Aesthetic, however, is that the manifold contained within space and time is a consequence of a synthetic act *required by the spontaneity of thinking*, an act which he now describes in section 10 as a “going through,” “taking up,” and “combining”.

Section 10 of the Analytic is not the first occurrence of “synthesis.” The term first arises in Kant’s 1764 *Preisschrift: Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality*.²⁵ There Kant argues that mathematics constructs its concepts by means of synthesis. And as we shall see, the term also arises time and again in the *Blomberg Logic* where Kant calls our attention to how we cognize concepts analytically *and* synthetically:

In *synthesis* we produce and create a concept, as it were, which simply was not there before, [one that is] completely new both *quoad materiam* and also *quoad formam* [;] and at the same time we make it distinct. All concepts of the mathematicians are of this kind, e.g., the concepts of triangle, square, circle, etc.²⁶

Kant’s point is that a synthetic procedure both adds predicates to a subject, adhering to logical consistency and thus demonstrating its logical possibility (the form of a concept) and constructs the concept into an object, demonstrating its real possibility (the matter of a concept).²⁷

So Kant is not speaking of synthesis for the first time in section 10. But he is discussing it in a different context, i.e., a transcendental one. Here Kant writes, “By this synthesis, however, I understand that which rests on a ground of synthetic unity *a*

²⁵ See Longuenesse (1998), 30.

²⁶ Kant (1992), 102; AA, 24: 130.

²⁷ Cf. Young (1994), 344–5. Cf. also Kant (1992), 569: AA, 9: 64: “To synthesis pertains the making distinct of *objects*, to analysis the making distinct of *concepts*.”

priori.”²⁸ Moreover, Kant is explicit for the first time in his published works about the faculty of this synthesis:

Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently see, the mere effect of the imagination (*die bloße Wirkung der Einbildungskraft*), of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious.²⁹

(But even with respect to the unpublished lectures on metaphysics and the reflections, Kant is breaking new ground. As we shall see in the *Pölitiz Lectures*, Kant does not there claim that *Einbildungskraft* is a faculty of synthesis *in general*. He concedes that *Einbildungskraft* is a power of synthesis, but only as a specific species. There is another species of synthesis in the late 1770s, namely, a *Verstandes-Dichtungsvermögen*. This inventive or creative power of understanding is the proper source of construction of appearances in accordance with laws of the mind, which, when reflected, yield *a priori* categories. But in 1781 Kant suggests that *Einbildungskraft*, a power to form one image, is the source of *all* synthesis.³⁰)

Now one might argue that imaginative syntheses, even those discussed in section 10, are not qualitatively different from the logic lectures, that they are merely unconscious and contingent associations or conjunctions between concepts. For the claim

²⁸ Kant (1998), A78/B104.

²⁹ Kant (1998), A78/B103.

³⁰ This is at least with respect to Kant’s published remarks. We have evidence that he was never quite sure of this claim even in 1781, for in his personal copy of the first edition, Kant replaces “a blind though indispensable function of the soul” with “of a function of the understanding,” thereby eliminating the imagination as a basic, autonomous faculty. See Kant (1900–), AA, 23: 45. Furthermore, he omits the following remark from the second edition of 1787: “There are, however, three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul), which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of the mind, namely **sense, imagination, and apperception**. On these are grounded 1) the **synopsis** of the manifold *a priori* through sense; 2) the **synthesis** of this manifold through the imagination; finally 3) the **unity** of this synthesis through original apperception,” Kant (1998), A94. This suggests again that he did not think, or was not certain whether, the imagination is an original power of the soul.

that *Einbildungskraft* is “blind” and “seldom even conscious” seems to suggest as much. After all, and as we shall see in the case of Hume and Baumgarten, one is hardly aware of the associations that an imagination makes between similar and repetitive perceptual experiences. What is more, we often employ empirical concepts, though we are not entirely conscious of the partial concepts contained therein.³¹ But that this is not what Kant has in mind is evident from a conclusion in the A-Deduction:

We therefore have a pure imagination [*reine Einbildungskraft*], as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, that grounds all cognition *a priori*. By its means we bring into combination the manifold of intuition on the one side and the condition of the necessary unity of apperception on the other. Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination [*transzendentalen Funktion der Einbildungskraft*], since otherwise the former would to be sure yield appearances but no objects of an empirical cognition, hence there would be no experience.³²

What this passage makes clear is that the empirical concepts we employ or the unconscious associations made by the empirical imagination are grounded in an *a priori* synthesis by the faculty of *Einbildungskraft*. Each empirical association presupposes an *a priori* construction.

³¹ See Young (1994), 339.

³² Kant (1998), 124. Cf. Kant (2007), 287; 7: 177: The word *affinity* (*affinitas*) in this passage recalls a process found in chemistry: intellectual combination is analogous to an interaction of two specifically different physical substances intimately acting upon each other and striving for unity, where this *union* brings about a third entity that has properties which can only be produced by the union of the two heterogeneous elements. Despite their dissimilarity, understanding and sensibility by themselves form a close union for bringing about our cognition, as if one had its origin in the other, or both originated from a common origin; but this cannot be, or at least we cannot conceive how dissimilar things could sprout forth from one and the same root.

2,3 The Threefold Synthesis

The Subjective Deduction is prefaced with the so-called “propaedeutic” or the “threefold synthesis.”³³ Here we find the beginning of an answer to the possibility of thinking, which is to say that we find the conditions for the possibility of phenomena.³⁴

In the first synthesis, “On the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition,” Kant notes the following:

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for **as contained in one moment** no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity.³⁵

A few paragraphs prior to this, Kant tells us that if he ascribes a “synopsis to sense, because it contains a manifold in its intuition, a synthesis must also correspond to this, and **receptivity** can make cognitions possible only if combined with **spontaneity**.”³⁶

Contrary to the British empiricists and German *Schulphilosophen* who think that a *manifold* of sensations and its representation are given,³⁷ Kant’s position is that the faculty of sensibility as “original receptivity” is the capacity to receive impressions solely

³³ Kant actually provides three separate discussions of the threefold synthesis in the A-Deduction. First as a “propaedeutic,” second as an exposition descending from the transcendental unity of apperception to the sensible intuition, and third as an exposition ascending from the sensible intuition to the transcendental unity of apperception.

³⁴ In their respective commentaries, Kemp Smith and Longuenesse seem to suggest differing goals of the Subjective Deduction. Kemp Smith tells us that it uncovers the psychological conditions for consciousness. Longuenesse argues that it demonstrates the conditions for the possibility of the representation of an object. Is this difference only nominal? I think so. It seems to me that there may be representations without consciousness (recall Baumgarten’s realm of darkness), but never consciousness without consciousness of a representation. As Kant notes in the *Stufenleiter*: “The genus is **representation** in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A **perception** that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a **sensation** (*sensatio*),” Kant (1998), A320/B376.

³⁵ Kant (1998), A99.

³⁶ Kant (1998), A97.

³⁷ See, for instance, Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in Locke (1975), 119–122 and Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature* in Hume (2000), 7–10; 1.1.1.1–2.1.1.1 (All citations to Hume are first according to the Oxford University Press and followed by the form 1.1.1.1, which is to the Oxford edition of the *Treatise*, to Book 1, Part 1, Sect. 1, para. 1). One notable exception here is J.N. Tetens who, in his 1777 *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and its Development*, argues that the representation of a manifold of sensations presupposes the reflection of these sensations as such. See Tetens (1777) 32–3.

as determinable sensations—an “absolute unity” or synopsis.³⁸ What is given is undifferentiated totality. In order to have a manifold, then, the mind must differentiate or “run through” the impressions.³⁹ The synthesis of apprehension thus creates a manifold as such. And yet, insofar as intuitions are *singular* representations,⁴⁰ the mind must also combine these impressions. Thus Kant writes, “Now in order for **unity** of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then to *take together* this manifoldness.”⁴¹

In the propaedeutic Kant does not tell us what faculty “runs through” and “takes together” the manifold. But later in his description of the threefold synthesis ascending from sensibility to the unity of apperception, he writes,

There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), and whose action exercised immediately upon perceptions I call apprehension. For the imagination is to bring the manifold of intuition into an **image** (*Bild*); it must therefore antecedently take up the impressions into its activity, i.e., apprehend them.⁴²

³⁸ With respect to the term “synopsis,” perhaps the only other place Kant ever mentions this term is at A94: “There are, however, three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul)...namely, **sense**, **imagination**, and **apperception**. On these are grounded 1) the **synopsis** of the manifold *a priori* through sense; 2) the **synthesis** of this manifold through the imagination; finally 3) the **unity** of this synthesis through original apperception.” The idea that transcendental reality affects the capacity of receptivity, yet yields no representational form, would, first, display Kant’s original insight that, contrary to the psychologists, imagination is a “necessary ingredient of perception itself.” But, second, it would be in keeping with his claim that Transcendental Idealism is a “formal” idealism, as opposed to the “material” idealism of Descartes and Berkeley. For a detailed elucidation of the term “synopsis” and a discussion of Kant’s idealism, see Waxman (1991), 218–25. Makkreel adopts a different interpretation. He takes a synopsis to be formal in nature. For Makkreel, a synoptic formation is the formation of an *Abbild*, combined with *Nachbilder* and *Vorbilder*. It is what allows for spatial orientation, among other things. This seems to me to accord too much activity or spontaneity to a power that is purely receptive, as I think the name suggests, “original receptivity.” For Makkreel’s interpretation, see Makkreel (1990), 15–9. Finally, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger divides the synthetic function into two aspects. Thus he writes, “Thus pure synthesis acts purely synoptically in pure intuition and at the same time purely reflectively in pure thinking,” Heidegger (1997), 45; 3: 63. He calls synopsis an “intuiting unifying.”

³⁹ See Kant (1998), A99.

⁴⁰ See Kant (1992), 589; AA, 9: 91

⁴¹ Kant (1998), A99, my emphasis.

⁴² Kant (1998), A120.

Kant's use of the term *Bild* and its emphasis are telling. It tips us off to the fact that Kant is referring to an empirical synthesis of apprehension. The point here is that the imagination, as it "takes up" different impressions, produces a rich, unified image (*Einbild*).

But Kant's deeper insight in the synthesis of apprehension is that behind this empirical synthesis, there also exists an *a priori* one:

Now this synthesis of apprehension must also be exercised *a priori*, i.e., in regard to representations that are not empirical. For without it we could have *a priori* neither the representations of space nor of time, since these can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides.⁴³

The pure forms of space and time are "generated" insofar as the imagination differentiates and unifies, i.e., insofar as the imagination runs through the synopsis and takes together the sensations, space and time are simultaneously constructed *as pure unified multiplicities* within which we intuit elements of sense.⁴⁴

Kant's second synthesis, "On the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination (*Einbildung*),"⁴⁵ like the synthesis of apprehension, has an empirical and transcendental

⁴³ Kant (1998), A99–100.

⁴⁴ The interpretive issues surrounding the synthesis of apprehension rest on the temporal mode generated by this *a priori* synthesis. Heidegger's position is that the *a priori* synthesis of apprehension generates the "present in general," which corresponds with the action of *Abbildung*. But as Makkreel points out, "Unlike the process of *Abbildung*, the synthesis of apprehension is not to be identified with the present, for this synthesis is necessary to assure the continuity of the different modalities of time." See Heidegger (1997a), 126; 3: 180 and Makkreel (1990) 23. To be sure, it is difficult to see how Kant could maintain that a pure form of intuition such as time contains a unity *in differentiation* were the *a priori* synthetic apprehension of time to generate simply the present as such. But as I see it, the problem with Makkreel's interpretation is that it renders the subsequent syntheses superfluous. If the *a priori* synthesis of apprehension "spans a time continuum," this would appear to be a sufficient explanation for the generation of temporality as a succession in which sensations are distinguished and combined in past, present, and futures modes, which the *threefold* synthesis is designed to explain. It is true that for Kant the modes of temporality must be open to each other, but the presentation of the propaedeutic calls for an abstraction, which would appear to warrant fixed modes of temporal analysis, as Heidegger reads it, independent from the empirically experienced flux of time.

⁴⁵ In the 1998 Cambridge edition of the first *Critique*, Paul Guyer and Allen Wood translate *Einbildung* as "imagination." But this is misleading. Kant's point is not that there is a synthesis in the power of

aspect. And again, like the first synthesis, Kant argues that an empirical reproduction presupposes a transcendental, *a priori* synthesis. Here is how he puts the point:

It is, to be sure, a merely empirical law in accordance with which representations that have often followed or accompanied one another are finally associated with each other and thereby placed in connection in accordance with which, even without the presence of the object, one of these representations brings about a transition of the mind to the other in accordance with a certain rule... There must therefore be something that itself makes possible this reproduction of the appearances by being the *a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them.⁴⁶

Now the thing to note from the above passage is that the conclusion does not follow from the facts. Given that objects that frequently succeed each other are finally associated with each other, it does not follow that there must be an “*a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity” that makes the latter possible. Indeed, as Hume shows, this experience can just as well be explained by the subjective disposition of the mind to synthesize arbitrarily successive events. According to Hume, reproduction can be explained by subjective “customs” or “habits” of the mind. So, if Kant is not entitled to draw such an inference, what do we make of the *a priori* reproductive synthesis in the propaedeutic?

One suggestion is that although Kant is not in a position to make any conclusions concerning a transcendental reproductive synthesis, he is in a position to make a “program for explaining these phenomenal regularities.”⁴⁷ That is, the reproductive synthesis could be shown to rest on *a priori* grounds if one could “find a ground for the

imagination (*Einbildungskraft*). Rather, his claim is that there is a synthesis in the image (*Einbildung*) produced by imagination (*Einbildungskraft*). Longuenesse notes that this conception of *Einbildung* is similar to Baumgarten’s *phantasmata* and Tetens’s use of *Einbildungen*. See Longuenesse (1998), 35n.

⁴⁶ Kant (1998), A100–1.

⁴⁷ As Longuenesse puts it, “The clause ‘there must then be’ should therefore read as meaning ‘let us then search if there is not,’ for—at least Kant is convinced of this—‘there *must* be.’” See Longuenesse (1998), 40.

phenomenal regularities that would relate them to ‘necessary synthetic unities.’⁴⁸ Kant’s attempt to locate such an *a priori* ground is evident in the following example.

Now it is obvious that if I draw a line in thought, or think of the time from one noon to the next, or even want to represent a certain number to myself, I must necessarily first grasp one of these manifold representations after another in my thoughts. But if I were always to lose the preceding representations (the first parts of the line, the preceding parts of time, or the successively represented units) from my thoughts and not reproduce them when I proceed to the following ones, then no whole representation and none of the previously mentioned thoughts, not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, could ever arise.⁴⁹

But in spite of this attempt at an explanation, the problem with Kant’s mathematical examples is that he provides as an *a priori* ground another reproduction, although a pure reproduction of units or parts of a line.⁵⁰ Moreover, and as Longuenesse suggests, a mathematical example of pure representations is an insufficient ground to explain the regularity of events in nature, such as the seasons of the year.⁵¹

The idea of reproduction and the examples Kant employs obscure his real intention in the second of the threefold synthesis.⁵² For he wants to show that an *a priori* “combination of the manifold” makes possible a “thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction.”⁵³ That is, he wants to show that in order to recall an image from the past (*Nachbild*) from the *Imagination (Vorrat der Vorstellungen)*, a second *a priori* synthesis

⁴⁸ Longuenesse (1998), 40.

⁴⁹ Kant (1998), A102.

⁵⁰ Heidegger raises the initial perplexity of searching for a *reproductive* productive imagination: “And yet, is not the pure power of imagination accepted as essentially productive? How is a reproductive synthesis to belong to it? Pure reproduction—does this not mean productive reproduction, hence a square circle?” See Heidegger (1997a), 127; 3: 182. See also Longuenesse (1998), 41.

⁵¹ Longuenesse (1998), 41.

⁵² Longuenesse’s interpretation of the mathematical examples presented in the second synthesis is that they are designed to illustrate a “totalizing project.” She writes, “The reproduction of past representations *represented as such*, and *represented as belonging to one and the same series of successively reproduced elements*, occurs only if it is called forth by such a [totalizing] goal,” Longuenesse (1998), 42. But as Longuenesse sees it, the problem is that these examples fail to ground the “empirically given *regularities* in the manifold,” Longuenesse (1998), 43. This failure points to the necessity of the synthesis of recognition, which is where Kant first presents a ground for the regularity and associability of appearances.

⁵³ Kant (1998), A101.

must be presupposed. Thus what he really wants to demonstrate is that the construction of an *Einbildung* by *Einbildungskraft* is the condition for the possibility of empirical reproduction *as* reproduction.⁵⁴ Here, then, is Kant's real intention. In order to recall past images from memory, and thereby make associations, the mind must generate the past as such. It must generate the specific temporal mode (construct the manifold of time) that makes this *reproduction* possible. As Heidegger puts it, "If empirical synthesis in the mode of reproduction is thereby to become possible, the no-longer-now *as such* must in advance and prior to all experience have been brought forth again and unified with the specific now."⁵⁵ Or, put slightly differently, "It opens up in general the horizon of the possible attending-to, the having-been-ness, and so it 'forms' this 'after' as such."⁵⁶

If this is all Kant can claim at this stage of the propaedeutic, it means he can account for conjunctions of pure representation, such as a line, in temporal succession, but he cannot account for the law of association that he thinks *Einbildung* grounds. That is, *Einbildung* cannot explain regularities or the constant conjunction of events in the course of nature. But there is something else to be drawn from these remarks. These mathematical examples point to a predisposition of the mind to complete representations and experience as a whole according to a specific goal or, as Kant would say, a rule.⁵⁷ This rule presupposes an end guiding the prior synthetic acts of apprehension and reproduction. If the construction of a representation or a complete experience is analogous to a mathematical construction, then a rule, occasioned by the affection of

⁵⁴ Just as he wanted to show that the apprehension of a manifold *as* manifold presupposed the running through and taking together of sensations.

⁵⁵ Heidegger (1997a), 127; 3: 181.

⁵⁶ Heidegger (1997a), 128; 3: 182.

⁵⁷ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 42–3.

sensations, can explain why the reproductive imagination regularly associates cinnabar with red, and not, say, black. But at this stage Kant has not provided a rule that guides this natural disposition to represent. All he has done is provided good reasons why there must be one.

The third and final synthesis Kant calls the “synthesis of recognition in the concept.” This synthesis, although it emerges last in the propaedeutic, is actually the condition for the possibility of the first two.⁵⁸

Kant begins with the following remark:

Without consciousness that that which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain. For it would be a new representation in our current state, which would not belong at all to the act through which it had been gradually generated, and its manifold would never constitute a whole, since it would lack the unity that only consciousness can obtain for it.⁵⁹

Kant’s intention here seems to be the following. First, consciousness is the condition of relations within the sensible intuition itself or across representations in experience.

Without consciousness I cannot know that what is being reproduced is the same as what was earlier apprehended, “for it would be a new representation in our current state.”

Second, relations in the sensible intuition and experience require self-reflexivity, an essential mark of consciousness. As Kant sees it, consciousness is the capacity to be aware of itself as numerically identical, one and the same act, through the running through of a synopsis of sensations or the apprehension and reproduction of

representations. Kant illustrates these two points with another mathematical example. He

⁵⁸ Heidegger says that the third mode of synthesis “exhibits a priority over the other two.” See Heidegger (1997a), 131; 3:187. And Longuenesse writes that “the ‘associability’ of the empirical given depends on a transcendental synthesis of the imagination considered not just as a *reproductive* synthesis whose pure form is the reproduction of pure spatiotemporal manifolds, but as a synthesis *whose act of reproduction, in its pure form, takes its rules a priori from the categories.*” See Longuenesse (1998), 44.

⁵⁹ Kant (1998), A103.

tells us that in counting, the units that were previously apprehended must be reproduced and successively added to new units in order to think of a number.⁶⁰ In the course of counting, the representation of a present unit is simultaneously combined with reproduced units, units which were earlier apprehended, each of which is consciously recognized as belonging to the same act, thereby generating and recognizing a whole (in this case, a number).⁶¹

This synthesis of recognition occurs *in the concept*, which Kant defines here as “**one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation.”⁶² Now *prima facie*, this is a very unusual use of the term “concept.” Those familiar with Kant’s lectures on logic would see that this use of “concept” is different from the “universal or reflected representation.”⁶³ But if we attend closely to the following passage we see that Kant is referring, on the one hand, to a discursive concept, that is, that which is “mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things,”⁶⁴ but also to a concept as “consciousness of this unity of the synthesis.”

The word “concept” itself could already lead us to this remark.⁶⁵ For it is this **one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation. This conscious [i.e., the concept as unity of the synthesis] may often only be weak, so that we connect it with the generation of the representation only in the effect, but not in the act itself, i.e., immediately; but regardless of these differences one consciousness must always be found, even if it lacks conspicuous

⁶⁰ Kant (1998), A103.

⁶¹ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 45. Cf. Makkreel (1990), 24.

⁶² Kant (1998), A103.

⁶³ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 46.

⁶⁴ Kant (1998), A320/B377. See also Kant (1992), 592–3; 9: 94.

⁶⁵ It is not clear in English why the word “concept” should lead us to the idea of consciousness as a unifying of a manifold. But it is clear in German, where *Begriff* carries the connotation of grasping or seizing. See Longuenesse (1998), 46.

clarity, and without that concepts [i.e., the concepts as universal or reflected representations], and with them cognition of objects, would be entirely impossible.⁶⁶

What is particular about the synthesis in the concept, as opposed to a synthesis in the intuition and imagination (*Einbildung*), is the mark of necessity and universality that accompanies the representation. We know that external objects cannot account for this necessity and universality, since sensibility, our sole access to the world, affords only a synopsis of sensations. Accordingly, Kant writes that the

unity that the object makes necessary can be nothing other than the formal unity of the consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of the representations. Hence we say that we cognize the object if we have effected synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition. But this is impossible if the intuition could not have been produced through a function of synthesis in accordance with a rule that makes the reproduction of the manifold necessary *a priori* and a concept in which this manifold is united possible.⁶⁷

True to the method of the threefold synthesis, Kant again provides a mathematical example. He notes that we think of a triangle as an object through consciousness of the composition of three straight lines in accordance with a rule. In all cases of mathematical composition, the product will be a singular intuition, but the rule that determines this composition will be *universal* (a rule for the construction of all triangles) and a *necessary* constraint on the act of synthesis.

The argument of the threefold synthesis hangs on the analogy between mathematical and representational construction. Since there is a natural disposition to represent and associate present images with past images, and since we find that these associations often carry with them the mark of necessity,⁶⁸ then like the construction of a triangle, there must be a rule that guides or constrains these associations, a rule that

⁶⁶ Longuenesse (1998), 47.

⁶⁷ Kant (1998), A105.

⁶⁸ I.e., if this is not a mere incommunicable play of the imagination such as we find in madness.

conditions the universality of the experience.⁶⁹ Kant's example here is the representation of a body: "Thus in the case of the perception of something outside of us the concept of body makes necessary the representation of extension, and with it that of impenetrability, of shape, etc."⁷⁰ If we receive an external impression, there is an inner force that fills in this impression with associations, and the rule acts to constrain these associations.

According to the rule, some associations are necessary, such as impenetrability and shape, some are contingent, such as blue, and some are contradictory, such as spirit.

But Kant's fundamental point here is that associations through rules only occur if it is *possible to be conscious of the unified act of synthesis*.⁷¹ The unified act according to the rule must be capable of being reflected into a concept, that is, recognized *as a universal representation*.⁷² Here then is Kant's ground of the regularity of empirical associations. Each successive apprehension and reproduction presupposes the possibility of the consciousness of the same act of synthesis according to a rule. Empirical association is therefore grounded in unified, self-reflexive consciousness, i.e., self-consciousness or the transcendental unity of apperception.⁷³

⁶⁹ Kant provides an example of the way in which concepts guide or orient experience in the *Jäsche Logic*. There he writes, "If a savage (*Wilder*) sees a house from a distance, for example, with whose use he is not acquainted, he admittedly has before him in his representation the very same object as someone else who is acquainted with it determinately as a dwelling established for men. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two. With the one it is *mere intuition*, with the other it is *intuition and concept* at the same time," Kant (1992), 544–5; AA, 9: 33.

⁷⁰ Kant (1998), A106.

⁷¹ We make associations all the time, whether we are aware of them or not (animals appear capable of associations). We are not, however, always conscious of the unified act of synthesis, and hence we do not always recognize what we see.

⁷² Cf. Strawson's notion of perception as being "soaked" with the concept. See chapter 5, section five.

⁷³ As Kant puts it at A107: "This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name **transcendental apperception**." And again at A108: "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, i.e., in accordance with rules that not only make them necessarily reproducible, but also thereby determine an object for their intuition, i.e., the concept of something in

Apprehension and reproduction presuppose the synthesis of recognition. For apprehension and reproduction, although presented in the propaedeutic as synthetic activities separate from the recognition in a concept, are nonetheless “*always already oriented toward this goal.*”⁷⁴ When Kant tells us that this consciousness “may often only be weak, so that we connect it with the generation of the representation only in the effect,” this suggests that the numerical identity is present from the beginning, although often unconscious. The concept as both rule for the synthesis of representations and numerical identity of consciousness must be a *telos*, such that each synthetic act is a manifestation of a striving toward thinking or empirical experience.⁷⁵

which they are necessarily connected; for the mind could not possibly think of the identity of itself in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this *a priori*, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its action, which subjects all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, and first makes possible their connection in accordance with *a priori* rules.”

⁷⁴ Longuenesse (1998), 51.

⁷⁵ Secondary scholarship is divided on the interpretation of the third synthesis. Heidegger takes the third synthesis to be primary. But he also understands it to be correlated with *Vorbildung*, and hence the condition for the possibility of the future as such: “Just as a pure reproduction forms the possibility of a bringing-forth-again, so correspondingly must pure recognition present the possibility for something like identifying. But if this pure synthesis reconnoiters [*rekognosziert*], then at the same time that says: it does not explore a being which it can hold before itself as selfsame. Rather, it explores the horizon of being-able-to-hold-something-before-us [*Vorhaltbarkeit*] in general. As pure, its exploring is the original forming of this preliminary attaching [*Vorhaften*], i.e., the future” Heidegger (1997a), 130; 3: 186. Yet as Makkreel sees it, the primacy of the third synthesis cannot rest on a “pre-formative” act or a “projecting of primordial time.” Rather, it rests on the discovery that the synthesis of recognition in the concept is an act of the transcendental understanding. Makkreel (1990), 25. Heidegger’s interpretation points to his ultimate conclusion concerning time and *Einbildungskraft*, which, he tells us, forms the “original unity and wholeness of the specific finitude of the human subject,” and from which sprouts the stems of sensibility and understanding. See Heidegger (1997a), 131; 3: 187. This brings us back to the task of the Subjective Deduction, since it seeks to establish the conditions for the possibility of thinking. It would seem, then, that Heidegger is pointing to a more original act, an act prior to and the condition of the power of understanding, directly in line with Kant’s intentions. But if that is the case, is there really a problem here? One might make the case that Heidegger is just carrying out the Kantian project; indeed, more clearly than Kant himself. Cf. Kant (1998), A314/B370: “I note only that when we compare the thoughts that an author expresses about a subject, in ordinary speech as well as in writings, it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him even better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concept sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention.” Heidegger, as has been noted, exploits this passage. Cf. Heidegger (1997a), 141; 3: 201–2: “Thus the fundamental intention of the present interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was to make visible in this way the decisive content of this work and thereby to bring out what Kant ‘had wanted to say.’ With this procedure, the laying-out creates a maxim of its own which Kant himself would have wanted to know had been applied to

2,4 Heidegger's Kant

Here is the opportunity to consider Heidegger's "interpretation" of the 1781 *Critique*.

This has garnered considerable criticism. Ernst Cassirer, for instance, wrote in his review of the *Kantbuch* that "Heidegger speaks no longer as a commentator, but as a usurper, who as it were enters with force of arms into the Kantian system in order to subjugate it and make it serve his own problematic."⁷⁶ And Karl Löwith wrote in his *Heidegger: Thinker in a Destitute Time* that

the self-interpretation in the text of another is explicitly accomplished in Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's ground-laying of metaphysics. This is indeed supposed to help itself to its own "more original possibility," but rather in fact Heidegger helps himself to the questioning of *Being and Time* in order to confirm historically what Kant perhaps had wanted to say, and to shove aside all previous understanding of Kant as not original.⁷⁷

But as others have noted, Heidegger is forthright in his intentions. He thinks that in order to understand a philosophical text, we must not simply describe and clarify it, but uncover the grounds of its philosophical insights, which, as in the case of the *Kantbuch*, may lead us beyond the letter.⁷⁸

the interpretation of philosophical investigations... Certainly, in order to wring from what the words say, what it is they want to say, every interpretation must necessarily use violence. Such violence, however, cannot be roving arbitrariness. The power of an idea which shines forth must drive and guide the laying-out. Only in the power of this idea can an interpretation risk what is always audacious, namely, entrusting itself to the concealed inner passion of a work in order to be able, through this, to place itself within the unsaid and force it into speech."

⁷⁶ Cassirer (1951), 17.

⁷⁷ Löwith (1960), 78n, translation by Martin Weatherston.

⁷⁸ In the preface to the second edition of the *Kantbuch*, Heidegger writes, "Readers have taken constant offense at the violence of my interpretations. Their allegations of violence can indeed be supported by this text. Philosophicohistorical research is always correctly subject to this charge whenever it is directed against attempts to set in motion a thoughtful dialogue between thinkers. In contrast to the methods of historical philology, which has its own agenda, a thoughtful dialogue is bound by other laws—laws which are more easily violated. In a dialogue the possibility of going astray is more threatening, the shortcomings are more violent." For a discussion of Heidegger and the idea of dialogue, see Weatherston (2002), 1–8.

It is not important for our purposes to provide a full interpretation of Heidegger's text and compare this with the letter of the *Critique*, thereby vindicating or refuting Heidegger once and for all. It should now be clear that I use Heidegger as a means to my own ends. His passing remarks suggest a specific concern behind Kant's theory of imagination (the first part of my thesis) and an implication (the second part of my thesis) from the revisions between 1781 and 1787. But for the sake of clarity and curiosity I here provide a brief exegesis of the *Kantbuch* and its central claim concerning *Einbildungskraft*.

In the *Kantbuch* Heidegger tells us that the *Critique* is a "laying of the ground for metaphysics" (*Grundlegung der Metaphysik*). If metaphysics is the study of being, which the medieval theologians divided according to the divine and created—hence into theology, cosmology, and psychology—and if the *Critique* is a *groundlaying* of metaphysics, then, according to Heidegger, it constitutes the foundation for these specific metaphysical investigations. The it investigates the being of beings and its *relation* to these beings. It is thus a fundamental ontology or *metaphysica generalis*. This ontology, Heidegger thinks, shows the *a priori* presuppositions of metaphysics (*metaphysica specialis*) and, by extension, the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of experience (science). But most important, as Heidegger sees it, the *Critique* anticipates the project of *Being and Time*. For Heidegger asks there how entities relate to being as such or how ontic knowledge rests on ontological knowledge.

If the *Critique* is a fundamental ontology that investigates being, Heidegger agrees with Kant's claim that the investigation constitute reason's investigation of itself: "The ground for the source (*Quellgrund*) for laying the ground for metaphysics is human

pure reason.”⁷⁹ The self-inquiry of pure reason should then disclose a set of grounds or *a priori* concepts, concepts by which we relate and know objects. And this, according to Heidegger, is what Kant means by transcendental philosophy.

For Kant, there are two modes of human relation to objects—intuitions and concepts—and, traditionally, concept usage constitutes knowledge. But Heidegger’s novel interpretation is to remark that intuition “has been appraised much too lightly.”⁸⁰ Pure reason should be emphasized as finite because intuition rests on the receptivity of sensation by sensibility. The centrality of finitude and intuition is evident from the first sentence of the Aesthetic, which Heidegger quotes in full: “In whatever way and through whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, that through which it relates immediately to them, and at which all thought as a means is directed as an end, is **intuition**.”⁸¹ If reason’s self-inquiry yields *a priori* concepts, it is imperative that it determines the relation of them to intuition, since the latter is essential to how we relate immediately to objects.

The combination of reason’s *a priori* concepts and intuitions or the determination of the latter by the former is, as we know, the core question of the *Critique*. This combination is what Kant calls a synthetic judgment *a priori*, the elucidation of which he suggests will make progress in the field of pure cognition secure and reliable and is the “real problem of pure reason.”⁸² The possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgments depends on an adequate explanation of the synthesis of *a priori* concepts and intuitions, which, in

⁷⁹ Heidegger (1997a), 15; 3: 21.

⁸⁰ Heidegger (1997a), 15; 3: 21.

⁸¹ Kant (1998), A19/B33.

⁸² See Kant (1998), A10 and B19.

their turn, form “first and foremost the that-upon-which (*das Worauf*) and the horizon within which the being in itself becomes experienceable in the empirical synthesis.”⁸³

The violence that is attributed to Heidegger’s interpretation does not arise from his interpretation of the *Critique*’s core question. Rather, Heidegger’s it concerns the move to posit a ground to explain the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgments, a ground which Kant himself did not appear to think was necessary:

This duality of sources, however, is no mere juxtaposition. Rather, only in the union of both of them as prescribed by their structure can finite knowledge be what its essence requires... *The unity of their unification is nevertheless not a subsequent result of the collision of these elements. Rather, what unites them, this “synthesis,” must let the elements in their belonging-together and their oneness spring forth.* If finite knowledge, however, has its essence precisely in the original synthesis of the basic sources (*Grundquellen*) and if the laying of the ground for metaphysics must push ahead into the essential ground of finite knowledge, then it is inescapable that the naming which indicates the “two basic sources” already suggests an allusion to the ground of their source (*ihren Quellgrund*), i.e., to an original unity.⁸⁴

For Heidegger, unity is not simply a *result* of synthesis, but a *ground* as well.⁸⁵ And he thinks he finds an allusion to this ground in the *Critique*’s introduction, where Kant writes:

All that seems necessary for an introduction or preliminary is that there are two stems (*zwei Stämme*) of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root (*Wurzel*), namely sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought.⁸⁶

⁸³ Heidegger (1997a), 10; 3: 15.

⁸⁴ Heidegger (1997a), 25; 3: 36, my emphasis.

⁸⁵ Cf. Heidegger (1997a), 41; 3: 58: “The finitude of knowledge directly demonstrates a peculiar inner dependency of thinking upon intuition, or conversely: a need for the determination of the latter by the former. The pull of the elements toward one another indicates that their unity cannot be ‘later’ than they are themselves, but rather that it must have applied to them ‘earlier’ and have laid the ground for them.”

⁸⁶ Kant (1998), A15/B29

Exploiting this botanical metaphor, Heidegger sees Kant in the *Critique* as a gardener cultivating a seed (*Keim*) from which sprouts (*aufkeimen*) a robust, healthy crop—finite pure reason.⁸⁷

The possibility of ontology rests on the original unity of intuition and *a priori* concepts, pure intuition and pure thinking. If Kant's *Critique* is successful, Heidegger thinks, this success must lie in a demonstration of the co-dependence between pure thinking and pure intuiting, which means that each element of an *a priori* synthetic judgment must display “seams (*Fugen*) which point in advance to a having-been-joined together (*Ineinandergefügt*).”⁸⁸ This co-dependence will point to the presupposition of an original unity, which constitutes, for Heidegger, the being from which objects can be encountered or the condition for the possibility of a “letting-stand-against” (*Gegenstehenlassen*)—a horizon of objectivity (*Horizont der Gegenständlichkeit*). The “more original” question for Heidegger is therefore the nature of this original unity, the root of the two stems of knowledge.

In the “Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding,” Kant tells us that the schemata are “mediating” representations between *a priori* concepts and intuitions.⁸⁹ If *a priori* concepts and intuitions are analogous to major and minor terms of a syllogism,

⁸⁷ This cultivation is how Heidegger understands the *Critique* as an “analytic.” Heidegger writes, “For all that, however, ‘analytic’ does not mean an unknitting and breaking up of finite pure reason into its elements, but rather the reverse: an ‘unknitting’ as a freeing which loosens the seeds (*Keime*) of ontology. It unveils those conditions from which an ontology as a whole is allowed to sprout (*aufkeimen*) according to its inner possibility. In Kant’s own words, such an analytic is a bringing of ‘itself to light through reason,’ it is ‘what reason brings forth entirely from out of itself.’ Analytic thus becomes a letting-be-seen (*Sehenlassen*) of the genesis of the essence of finite pure reason from its proper ground... This projecting freeing of the whole, which an ontology essentially makes possible, brings metaphysics to the ground and soil (*Grund und Boden*) in which it is rooted as a ‘haunting’ (*Heimsuchung*) of human nature,” Heidegger (1997a), 29; 3: 41–2.

⁸⁸ Heidegger (1997a), 43; 3: 61.

⁸⁹ See Kant (1998), A138/B177.

the schema functions as the middle term that licenses the inferential connection. It is thus central to the question concerning the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments. This is why Heidegger remarks in the preface to the fourth edition that in preparing for his lecture course on the *Critique* in the winter semester of 1927/28 his attention was drawn to the Schematism. It is also why in the main text of the *Kantbuch* he notes that “the problem of the Schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding is the question concerning the innermost essence of ontological knowledge.”⁹⁰

Now in the same chapter of the *Critique* Kant writes that “the schema is in itself always only a product of *Einbildungskraft*.”⁹¹ If, then, the schematism forms the innermost essence of ontological knowledge, and if *Einbildungskraft* produces this schematism, it is no surprise that Heidegger makes the bold claim that “the transcendental *Einbildungskraft* is hence the ground upon which the inner possibility of ontological knowledge, and with it that of *Metaphysica Generalis*, is built.”⁹² For Heidegger, the root of the two stems of knowledge—pure thinking and pure intuiting—is *Einbildungskraft*.

Heidegger is clear that if *Einbildungskraft* is a root, it must be such that it “lets the stems grow out of itself.” What this means for Heidegger is that an analysis of *Einbildungskraft* will display the possibility for intuiting and thinking; hence display the root as both receptivity *and* spontaneity:

As a faculty of intuition, it is formative (*bildend*) in the sense of providing the image (*Bild*) (or look). As a faculty which is not dependent upon the presence of the intuitable, it fulfills itself, i.e., it creates and forms the image. This “formative power” (*bildende Kraft*) is simultaneously a “forming” which takes things in stride (is receptive) and one which creates (is spontaneous).⁹³

⁹⁰ Heidegger (1997a), 78; 3: 111.

⁹¹ Kant (1998), A140/B179.

⁹² Heidegger (1997a), 90; 3: 127.

⁹³ Heidegger (1997a), 91; 3: 129.

This intrinsic ambiguity is crucial. It points to the fact that *Einbildungskraft* is the original ground of pure thinking and pure intuiting, what Kant called pure spontaneity and pure receptivity, respectively.

If pure intuition and pure thinking are rooted in and grow out of *Einbildungskraft*, Heidegger thinks we should see traces of this power in these mature stems. What we should find is a combination of receptivity and spontaneity *in each*. In the case of intuitions, Heidegger reminds us that the matter of an intuition is sensation, that which is received from the object. But according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, the order of the sensations, space and time, is formal. Space and time are subjective, *a priori* conditions for the possibility of an intuition. Accordingly, Heidegger calls the pure intuitions of space and time an “original, formative *giving*.”⁹⁴ His controversial claim is that space and time are the products of spontaneity; and hence the faculty of sensibility is not simply receptivity—as Kant said—but spontaneity as well.

If the essence of pure thinking is a “faculty of rules,” then Heidegger suggests that we consider pure thinking as an “anticipatory pro-posing” (*vorgreifenderes Vor-Stellen*) of unities (categories), which guide the unification of representations and experience. For Heidegger, this implies that pure thinking is a projection of how the representation ought to be unified. Hence, “if Kant calls the pure, self-orienting, self-relating-to..., ‘our thought,’ then ‘thinking’ this thought is no longer called judging, but is thinking in the sense of the free, forming, and projecting (although not arbitrary) ‘conceiving’

⁹⁴ Heidegger (1997a), 101; 3: 144, my emphasis.

(*Sichdenkens*) of something.”⁹⁵ Like sensibility, this free forming is a spontaneity. But it also resembles sensibility in that it manifests a particular receptivity as well:

The necessity, however, revealed in the standing-against of the horizon of objectivity, is only possible as encountered “compulsion” insofar as it happened in advance upon a Being-free for it. Freedom already lies in the essence of pure understanding, i.e., of pure theoretical reason, insofar as this means placing oneself under a self-given necessity.⁹⁶

Thinking is receptive insofar as it submits to a rule or is self-binding.

For Heidegger, the faculties of sensibility and understanding as receptivity and spontaneity presuppose *Einbildungskraft* as their common root. But as if this were not radical enough, Heidegger then draws our attention to the threefold synthesis, for what he thinks the propaedeutic to the A-Deduction shows is that each synthesis as an act of *Einbildungskraft* generates a mode of time, *including* the third synthesis, which, as we saw above, Kant argued was a product of the transcendental unity of apperception.

Heidegger readily admits in his *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* that by linking the transcendental apperception with time he goes

way beyond Kant, because now the problem of the common root of both stems of knowledge becomes more acute. We are concerned with understanding time and the I-think more radically and in the direction which is certainly visible in Kant, but which is not taken by him, i.e., in the direction of the synthesis of *Einbildungskraft*.⁹⁷

But by this link, Heidegger thinks he can demonstrate the unity of sensibility and understanding and present a more original ground for finite pure reason.

If Kant’s own premises presuppose a temporal transcendental unity of apperception, it is no surprise, according to Heidegger, that he shrank back from such a

⁹⁵ Heidegger (1997a), 106; 3: 151. Cf. Heidegger (1997a), 108; 3: 154–55: “As pure apperception, the understanding has the ‘ground for its possibility’ in a ‘faculty’ which ‘looks out in an infinity of self-made representations and concepts.’ The transcendental power of imagination projects, forming in advance the totality of possibilities in terms of which it ‘looks out,’ in order thereby to hold before itself the horizon within which the knowing self, but not just the knowing self, acts.”

⁹⁶ Heidegger (1997a), 109; 3: 155.

⁹⁷ Heidegger (1997b), 242–3; 358–9.

conclusion. For if the transcendental apperception is temporal, then the possibility of freedom, and thus practical reason, appears doomed from the beginning, since Kant held that spontaneity had to be divorced from time if freedom (and hence morality) was possible. It appears that Heidegger's interpretation discloses a more original ground, the subjectivity of the subject, at the expense of practical reason.

Heidegger thinks the key to a temporal transcendental unity of apperception lies in Kant's notion of self-affection. In the 1787 *Critique*, Kant is explicit that a part of the self affects itself. But Heidegger suggests that self-affection appears as early as 1781 in section 10:

Now space and time contain a manifold of pure *a priori* intuition, but belong nevertheless among the conditions of the receptivity of our mind, under which alone it can receive representations of objects, and thus *they must always also affect the concept of these objects*.⁹⁸

For Kant, the pure forms of intuition as mere receptivity must affect or occasion the acts of the mind—the “concept” or the transcendental unity of apperception. But what might it mean for space and time to *affect* the concept? Heidegger wants to begin with an original unity. How can an original unity affect itself? Does this not presuppose difference?

Heidegger's explanation of an affection of the concept is unfortunately obscure.

Without argument, he sets aside space and notes that time affects the concept:

The letting-stand-against as such, i.e., as pure turning-one's-attention-to..., pure affecting, means: to bring something like an “against it,” the Being-in-opposition, into opposition to it in general; “to it”—to the pure letting-stand-against of..., but that means to pure apperception, to the I itself. Time belongs to the inner possibility of this letting-stand-against of... As pure self-affection, it forms in an original way the finite selfhood, so that the self can be something like self-consciousness.”⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Kant (1998), A77/B102, my emphasis.

⁹⁹ Heidegger (1997a), 133; 3: 189–90.

The point seems to be that the concept *as* “the letting-stand-against of” is only possible by a prior affection, i.e., an original time as the projection of itself “from-out-of-itself-toward-there.” Hence if something is in opposition to itself, this is just to say that original time is the condition for the possibility of self-reflection, self-consciousness, or the “I itself.”

Kant’s remark that time affects the concept suggests, for Heidegger, that time is the ground of subjectivity: “As the ground for the possibility of selfhood, time already lies within pure apperception, and so it first makes the mind into a mind.”¹⁰⁰ What finite selfhood is, then, is, first, a transcendental self-affection by which the subject first takes itself as an object and hence forms the dyadic structure of self-consciousness. But second, insofar as original time is a spontaneous receptivity and *Einbildungskraft* is a receptive spontaneity, they are one and the same, the original unity:

If the transcendental power of imagination, as the pure, forming faculty, in itself forms time—i.e., allows time to spring forth—then we cannot avoid the thesis stated above: the transcendental power of imagination is original time.¹⁰¹

Heidegger’s idea is that the threefold synthesis explicates the genesis of time as a present, past, and future. But these modes must be unified if they constitute an experience.

According to Heidegger, they are only unified if *Einbildungskraft* is original time.

As some commentators have noted,¹⁰² there are a few problems with Heidegger’s interpretation. First, although Heidegger is correct to emphasize that the transcendental unity of apperception is an act, and, according to the letter of the *Critique*, a self-affection, it is not clear that Heidegger is entitled to posit *Einbildungskraft* as an original

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger (1997a), 134; 3: 191.

¹⁰¹ Heidegger (1997a), 131; 3: 187.

¹⁰² See Weatherston (2002), 147–51. I summarize here some of Weatherston’s criticisms.

unity (original time). For self-affection seems to presuppose an original *duality*. Kant of course starts from duality, and this starting point lends itself to his subsequent claim that one stem of knowledge affects another stem. Second, Heidegger's claim that the transcendental apperception is temporal not only goes beyond Kant's own strictures, but also does not seem necessary to unify the sequences of nows generated in the threefold synthesis. As Kant shows, the transcendental unity of apperception is an archetypal act of conceptualizing, a numerically identical and *timeless* act through its threefold synthesis. This timeless identity is all Kant needs for the unity of sequential time. Why Heidegger thinks the transcendental unity must be temporal is rather vague in the *Kantbuch*.

This is not to suggest that Kant had nothing to fear concerning *Einbildungskraft*. Indeed, in what follows I show that Kant had good reason to fear this mental power. A look at its conceptual history suggests a need to tame it, bind it according to the rules of the understanding.

3, Prometheus Bound: A Conceptual History of Imagination

–Mimetic art, then, is an inferior thing cohabitating with an inferior and engendering inferior offspring.
–It seems so.

— Plato, *Republic*, 603b

We drip with sweat, we tremble, we turn pale and turn red at the blows of our *imaginations*.

—Michel de Montaigne, *Of the Power of Imagination*, 1:21

Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chace our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appeared in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produc'd.

—David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1.2.6.8

3,1 Introductory Remarks

We do not have to agree with Heidegger's ultimate conclusion in the *Kantbuch* in order to explore his claim that Kant shrank back from *Einbildungskraft*. I think we can substantiate the claim that Kant was frightened without committing to the conclusion that *Einbildungskraft* is the "unknown root" of human cognition. If there is something frightening about this power, if it reveals aspects of humanity inconsistent with rational thinking and moral behavior, then all the more reason to revise the *Critique*, emphasizing the *a priori* binding of this power according to transcendental rules. The substantiation of this fear constitutes the argument for the first part of my thesis. It will require brief ventures into the Hebraic and Greek conceptions of imagination, as well as medieval and modern paradigms. The point is to uncover particular arguments that recur throughout the

philosophical and theological traditions, such that we can then pinpoint Kant's own repetitions and bold beginnings.

From this historical exegesis I wish to draw out two conclusions that I believe underlie Heidegger's claim that Kant shrank back from *Einbildungskraft*. First, it will become clear that the imagination is seen as often inimical to knowledge. Plato, for instance, develops a highly sophisticated and relentless attack against the image and the imagination, particularly in his *Republic*, from which his followers will continue to develop well into the Middle Ages. Second, a close look at the western tradition reveals an imagination as a coconspirator in immoral and blasphemous behavior. The imagination appears time and again as a window into the darker aspects of the human being and mirror of his lust, greed, and desire for excessive power. Once we present these historical interpretations of imagination, we can better appreciate the fear that Heidegger attributes to Kant after 1781.

The upshot to this starting point is twofold. First, wading through various interpretations of and attitudes toward the imagination should prepare us to see Kant's own indebtedness and radical reinterpretation. Second, we begin to get a sense of the common arguments that I think help situate and explain Kant's transition from the first to the second edition of the *Critique*. We therefore throw light on the imagination from the common concerns of influential historical paradigms.

3,2 The Hebraic *Yetser*

If in the beginning was creation, then the power of imagination quickly followed. This is clear, at least etymologically. For the Hebraic tradition derives "imagination" (*yetser*)

from “creation” (*yetsirah*), “creator” (*yotser*), and “create” (*yatsar*). It is therefore no accident that the terms used in the Torah to describe God’s creation of the world and the human being’s first transgressive capacity to imitate this act (to imagine) form an allusive interplay, since “when God ‘created (*yatsar*) Adam in his own image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demuth*),’ He risked allowing man to emulate Him, to set himself up as His rival, to supplant Him in the order of creation.”¹ From its first appearance in the Torah, then, the *yotser* is understood as a natural impulse to imitate divine creation, an impulse realized when Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge. As an inheritance of that first transgression, the *yotser* is thus linked from the beginning with ethics—good and evil, guilt and shame.

A close look at the passages surrounding the primal misdeed reveals a “fallen imagination,” which enables Adam and Eve to think in terms of opposites—good and evil, past and future, God and the human being: “Thus bringing about the consciousness of sin and of time, the fallen imagination exposes man to the experience of division, discord and contradiction... The First Man feels torn inside, out of joint with himself.”² The myth, and the *yotser* contained therein, helps to explain the human experience after the fall as divided between the present and future, as well as the feeling of shame and shortcoming: a dissatisfaction with what we are now and a longing for what we might be or become.³ If the myth tells us we are expelled from the Garden, the rabbinical teachings

¹ Kearney (1988), 39. My interpretation of these historical figures follows the works of M. W. Bundy’s classic *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought* and Richard Kearney’s *The Wake of Imagination*.

² Kearney (1988), 40–1.

³ Cf. Kearney (1988), 42: “The freedom to choose between good and evil, and to construct one’s story accordingly, is thus intimately related to the *yotser* as a passion for the possible: the human impulse to transcend what exists in the direction of what might exist.”

suggest that we are expelled from the present moment (divine reality) and must imagine a horizon of possibilities. It is precisely in this projection of the future that evil and vice become possible. The *yetser* is “fallen” insofar as it projects a plan inconsistent with God’s way and worships its own idolatrous creations.⁴

But the imagination is not absolutely evil in the Hebraic tradition. True, the *yetser* is frequently termed the *yetser hara* or evil imagination in rabbinical literature, and some scholars have noted that it is identified with corporeal nature and, in particular, sexual desire.⁵ And associated with the practices of idolatry, the *yetser* presents a temptation to “reduce God to our own ‘graven images.’”⁶ For these reasons rabbinical teachings often encourage repression of the *yetser* as an immoral drive or impulse.⁷ And yet, the *yetser* is also termed the *yetser hatov* or good imagination:

Once re-directed towards the fulfillment of the Divine purpose (*yetser*), the human *yetser* might indeed become an accomplice in the task of historical re-creation: a task which man now undertakes in dialogue with God.⁸

The *yetser hatov* projects the divine plan in accordance with which human beings attain the goal of creation: the Messianic Kingdom of justice and peace.

There are two concepts that the *yetser* of the Torah makes possible. First, it creates a temporal experience. By means of imaginative projection, a future becomes possible. Outside of Eden, we imagine a horizon of possibilities because a gap opens between who we are and who we ought to be. And it introduces the past, since the *yetser* stands as a painful reminder of a transgression, without which there would be no *yetser* in

⁴ Cf. Kearney (1988), 43.

⁵ Cf. Kearney (1988), 44: “Bodily lust was seen as a symptom of the *yetser* on account of its origin in Eve’s temptation and the subsequent fall into the historical order of sexual procreation and shame.”

⁶ Kearney (1988), 45.

⁷ See, for instance, Num. 6:18.

⁸ Kearney (1988), 47.

the first place. It therefore functions as a storehouse of what happened, the primal misdeed, while also functioning as an indispensable tool to make amends. Second, the *yetser* is the condition for ethics. It introduces the dichotomy of good and evil, the two paths from which we must choose. We can either create idols, according to which we determine our own way, wandering in the desert, or we can direct our imaginative ideals in accordance with God's plan (*Torah*, meaning literally the direction of God). Time and ethics are inextricably linked in the Hebraic tradition, since the free choice of action, the projection of the *yetser hatov* and *yetser hara*, opens up the experience of time.

3,3 The Hellenic *Eikasía*

We find striking parallels in the stories of the Hellenic tradition. In the story of Prometheus, a myth remarkably similar to its Adamic predecessor, Prometheus steals fire from the gods and gives it to humans. This Promethean gift allows humans to create a culture out of nature:

With the use of this stolen fire man was able to invent his own world, creating the various arts which transmuted the order of *nature* (the cosmos of blind necessity ordered by Zeus) into the order of *culture* (a realm of relative freedom where man could plan and control his own existence). The stigma of theft was thus attached to imagination, understood broadly as that Promethean foresight which enabled man to imitate the gods.⁹

This gift of imagination was experienced as both liberation and curse for the Greeks. It was the precondition for culture wherein human beings create art and supplement the

⁹ Kearney (1988), 80. Cf. Denis Donoghue (1973), 61: "The fire which Prometheus stole was the means by which men demanded a new destiny, and took on the guilt of achieving it. Fire enabled them to move from nature to culture, but it made culture a dangerous possession: it made tragedy probable. The Promethean fire was not originally intended for man, it was part of a divine order of things and it has always retained, in its stolen history, traces of an outraged origin. It is not fanciful to think that man by receiving the stolen fire made himself an 'abomination,' a freak of nature, to be added to the list of freaks execrated in Leviticus. We have found the stolen fire identified with reason and knowledge, but it is probably better to identify it with the symbolic imagination."

human experience but also a painful reminder of human limitation—recreation, mimesis, reproduction. Human art is not original like nature but artifice.

That the Greek understanding of the power of imagination connotes limitation is evident from its etymology. According to M. W. Bundy, “The nearest Greek equivalent of ‘imagination,’ *eikasía*, is derived from *eikô*, ‘to be like,’ or ‘capable of being compared.’”¹⁰ And another close equivalent, *phantasía*, “derives from *phainô*, ‘to appear,’ ‘to be apparent,’ ‘to come to light.’”¹¹ Bundy suggests that the terms were unlikely treated as psychological in their earliest uses (it is more likely that they were used as ‘imagine’ is used today in common parlance, with perhaps even less sophistication). Rather, each lends itself to the mature notion that phantasies or imaginings are internal states, derivative to or copies of an external cause. For from the use of *eikô* and especially *phainô* (as the later indicates no explicit reference to an original), it is a short step to questions concerning the correspondence of that which is “capable of being compared” or “that which appears” to its original or cause and hence to philosophical skepticism concerning truth and falsity, ethics, and aesthetics. Here *phantasía* easily leads to the notion of belief (*dóxa*).¹²

This movement from the comparison of “that which appears” to the original, what is a question of truth and correspondence, suggests not only the transition toward questions of epistemology, but also the close connection between the latter and ethics. What we see is that questions of recreation and mimesis (imaginative activity), questions intimately tied with epistemological concerns, also suggest blasphemous activity. The

¹⁰ Bundy (1927), 11.

¹¹ Bundy (1927), 12.

¹² For a discussion of Presocratic notions of imagination, see Bundy (1927), 11–8. See also Bundy (1927), 29–30, for a discussion on the difference in Platonism between phantasies and images.

myth tells us that fire was *stolen* from the gods, after all. To create, even in its mimetic form, is to play god. As long as there is a distance between human beings and the gods, culture and nature, imaginative activity is both epistemological and ethical. Perhaps this intimate connection is no better displayed than in Plato's Form of the Good, an ethical concept that is the source of truth.

3,3,1 Plato

It is Plato who arguably provides the first systematic account of *eikasía*, an account that places the imagination firmly at odds with knowledge and ethics. In his *Republic*, for instance, echoing the Hebraic tradition, Plato explains the power of images by virtue of their appeal to our erotic impulses and brute desires. There he condemns *eikasía* as a terrible power to corrupt even the best characters, for it leads us into imitating the faults it represents.¹³ This helps to explain Plato's deep concern for the children of the city as they listen to the stories of Achilles and Odysseus. To empathize with Achilles, Plato seems to be saying, is to imaginatively reconstruct his immoral pathos in ourselves, feeding our worst appetites and thereby "Achillizing" our souls, so to speak.¹⁴ This also helps to explain Plato's apprehension toward poetry in its pedagogical role in the development of character, since

in regard to the emotions of sex and anger, and all the appetites and pains and pleasures of the soul which we say accompany all our actions, the effect of poetic imitation is the same. For it waters and fosters these feelings when what we ought to do is to dry them up, and it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled.¹⁵

¹³ Plato (1961), 830–1; 605a–d. All citations to Plato are first according to *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* and followed by the Stephanus numbers of the Renaissance edition of Plato's works.

¹⁴ For a full account of the power of myth and images to shape the psyche, see Lear (2006).

¹⁵ Plato (1961), 832; 606d.

What is particularly novel about the Greek conception of *eikasía* is its association with epistemology and ontology. If the Hebraic *yetser* is explicitly and solely tied to ethical life, the Greek *eikasía* was part and parcel of theories of knowledge and being. Once again, Plato is perhaps the first to provide a full-scale elucidation of *eikasía* as linked to inferior accounts of knowledge. In *Republic VI*, for example, Plato draws his famous Divided Line where he places knowledge (*epistêmê*) and reason (*noêsis*) in the highest, intellectual portion and *dóxa* and *eikasía* in the lowest, sensible portion. Plato's point here is to draw our attention to the power of *noêsis* to intuit Ideas (image-less paradigms for intelligibility) and the inferior quality of *eikasía* to do no more than imitate the objects of nature without really knowing what these objects are. This charge against *eikasía* becomes clear in Plato's attack against the artists in *Republic X*. There he writes,

Then the mimetic art is far removed from truth, and this, it seems, is the reason why it can produce everything, because it touches or pays hold of only a small part of the object and that a phantom, as, for example, a painter, we say, will paint us a cobbler, a carpenter, and other craftsmen, though he himself has no expertness in any of these arts, but nevertheless if he were a good painter, by exhibiting at a distance his picture of a carpenter he would deceive children and foolish men, and make them believe it to be a real carpenter.¹⁶

The problem with the artist and his images (*eikónes*) seems to be their power to persuade us to take the image as original, to tarry with an illusion (*eikasía*), as opposed to the images of nature which point beyond themselves to transcendent Ideas.¹⁷ The artist is a charlatan and, in the final analysis, a liar.

In line with this epistemological attack against *eikasía*, we find Plato advancing the argument that *eikasía* flouts the central principles of western metaphysics—the

¹⁶ Plato (1961), 823; 598b–c. To be fair, Plato provides an expanded treatment of the use of images in his Divided Line analogy. He tells us that some images are constructed for the sake of pointing toward the image-less forms, such as the mathematical image of a triangle. These images are distinguished from the images of nature and the images of the artist.

¹⁷ Cf. Kearney's description as well as his analysis of the Cave Allegory in Kearney (1988), 91.

principles of identity and contradiction. It introduces conflict and contradiction into our visions and opinions, he writes in the *Republic*,¹⁸ which is itself a direct transgression against reason or speech (*lógos*). In his *Dissemination*, Derrida suggests that what is so damning about *eikasía* is its tendency to displace the *lógos* and thereby threaten the Good-Sun-Father as absolute origin, as a self-sufficient identity and unity. According to Derrida, *eikasía* is a threat to the Father and his bequeathed *lógos*, since it replaces each with its own language—images. Commenting on Derrida, Richard Kearney writes,

The imagination is thus seen by Plato as a disobedient son who threatens to subvert the patriarchal law of the metaphysical system—a law which safeguards the rights of inheritance by outlawing the counterfeit claims of imitators, pretenders and imposters. The imagination is the alien body in the system, the fault-line in the edifice of being, the Trojan horse in the City of *logos*.¹⁹

On this line of interpretation, Plato's remark that the mimetic image is a "poor child of foster parents" suggests that because only the demiurge, the rightful heir of the Father according to the *Timaeus*, is sanctioned to create nature, the image must be a bastard, since it is created by an illegitimate son, *eikasía*. It follows that if the images of *eikasía* are taken for the Ideas themselves, worshipped as originals, this constitutes an act of subversion, transgression, i.e., patricide. If the distinguishing mark of the image is, as Derrida puts it, "Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes...neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of *joker*, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play,"²⁰ this is the precise indeterminacy and contradictoriness that threatens to displace the paternal *lógos* of self-identity: "The mimetic activity of imagination

¹⁸ Plato (1961), 828; 603c.

¹⁹ Kearney (1988), 95.

²⁰ Derrida (1981), 93. Though Derrida is referring here to the practice of writing, the principles accorded to writing are the same as those accorded to the image. See Kearney (1988), 96.

unleashes an endless *play of substitution*,—one where artificial *re-presentations* imitate and eventually seek to replace the original *presence* of divine bring to itself.”²¹

There is an obvious paradox in Plato’s presentation of *eikasía*. And he himself bears this out in his use of the drug (*phármakon*) in the *Phaedrus*. The *phármakon* is an ambiguous term, meaning both medicine and poison. Thus on Derrida’s reading, the image, as a species of writing, can be understood as both maleficent, as it deceives us into mistaking the imitation for the original, and beneficial, as it can be used to create pedagogical allegories such as the famous cave allegory in *Republic VII*. As Kearney asks, “Does he [Plato] not employ the figures of myth, simile, metaphor and analogy to convince us of the very unreliability of these modes of imaginative representation?”²² But this paradox should come as no surprise, for we have seen it in play in both the Adamic myth and its Promethean successor. Each myth expresses an ambiguous role of the power of imagination—its indispensability and roguery.

3,3,2 Aristotle

Aristotle, in contrast to Plato, harbors less suspicion toward images and the power of imagination (*phantasía*) due to his advanced psychology. Here *phantasía* functions not as an imitator and imposter but as a mediator between the power of sensation and intellect: it is a type of motion resulting from sense-impressions.²³ *Phantasía* transfers the image of the impression to the intellect for contemplation. Hence in *De Anima*, he writes, “No one

²¹ Kearney (1988), 96.

²² Kearney (1988), 97.

²³ Aristotle (1984), 681–2; 428b. All citations to Aristotle are first according to *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, followed by the Bekker numbers of the nineteenth-century edition of Aristotle’s works.

can learn or understanding anything in the absence of sense, and when the mind is actively aware of anything it is necessarily aware of it along with an image.”²⁴ And from

De Memoria,

The subject of *phantasia* has been already considered in our work *On the Soul*. Without an image thinking is impossible. For there is in such activity an affection identical with one in geometrical demonstrations. For in the latter case, though we do not make any use of the fact that the quantity in the triangle is determinate, we nevertheless draw it determinate in quantity. So likewise when one thinks, although the object may not be quantitative, one envisages it as quantitative.²⁵

The images, whether they are internal representations of sensory impressions or geometric shapes, are formed or drawn by *phantasia*, an internal function of presentation or imaging as a precondition for thinking.

For Aristotle, *phantasia* is also operative in ethics. If *phantasia* is a type of motion, then it is linked to the appetites, the lower, brute component of the soul. As he puts it in *De Anima*, “When imagination (*phantasia*) originates movement, it necessarily involves appetite.”²⁶ Accordingly, there may be cases where phantasy is so strong that it moves us to override our better judgments: “Appetite can originate movement *contrary* to calculation, for desire is a form of appetite. Now thought is always right, but appetite and imagination (*phantasia*) may be either right or wrong. That is why, though in any case it is the object of appetite which originates movement, this object may be either real or the apparent good.”²⁷ Something similar can be said for the higher part of the soul, the practical intellect (*phronêsis*). If thinking requires images, *phronêsis* too, in deliberation, uses images (*phantasmata*), insofar as it projects possibilities of action: “To the thinking

²⁴ Aristotle (1984), 687; 432a7–8.

²⁵ Aristotle (1984), 714–15; 449b30–50a5.

²⁶ Aristotle (1984), 688; 433a20–1.

²⁷ Aristotle (1984), 688–89; 433a25–8.

soul images (*phantasmata*) serve as if they were contents of perception (and when it asserts or denies them to be good or bad it avoids or pursues them).”²⁸

3,4 Early Conclusions

There are a few important points to take away from these ancient views of imagination. First, the imagination introduces ethical considerations. With the imagination, we begin to project possibilities for the future, some of which are sanctioned by the divine plan or rational deliberation and some of which are clear aberrations from it. Second, the imagination introduces epistemological and ontological questions. With the arrival of Greek philosophy, the imagination becomes either a peddler of false idols (Plato) or an indispensable mediator between sensation and intellect (Aristotle). But in both cases, the ethical and the epistemological/ontological, the imagination is on a short leash, since it has proved deceptive in the past and is linked with transgression and mimetic activity. Finally, it should be noted that for both the authors of the Torah and the Greeks, imagination remains largely a *reproductive* rather than a *productive* activity, a servant rather than a master of meaning, imitation rather than origin.²⁹

3,5 The Onto-Theological *Phantasie*

The theories of imagination we have looked at thus far may be seen as two sources from which medieval thinking inherits and develops the concept of imagination. For when we consider medieval conceptions of imagination, there are two features that are prominent.

²⁸ Aristotle (1984), 685; 431a15–6.

²⁹ Cf. Kearney (1988), 113. For a fuller elucidation of Aristotle’s conception of imagination, see Bundy (1927).

On the one hand, medieval thinking tends to treat the imagination with condemnation consistent with the Torah's interpretation of the *yetser hara* as a "transgression of the divine order of Creation (i.e., as *ethical* disorder)." On the other, medieval philosophers distrust the imagination on the same grounds as Plato, namely, as a "metaphysical critique of imagination as a counterfeit of the original truth of Being (i.e., as *epistemological* disorder)." ³⁰ This synthesis of an ethical and epistemological denigration of imagination, a synthesis of the Hebraic and Greek traditions, is a perfect example of onto-theological thought. There are a few paradigmatic thinkers who promote these features of imagination. In what follows, I look at two who are representative of the medieval mystics and the descriptive psychologists—St. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, respectively. ³¹

3,5,1 Bonaventure

Bonaventure employs two metaphors to describe the imagination (*imagination* or *phantasia*). His principal metaphor is the mirror. He derives the term *imago* from *imitando*, that is, to imitate or reflect, and argues that all images are a *similitude* or *simulacrum* of the divine creator: "Since we must ascend Jacob's ladder before we descend it, let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, presenting to ourselves the whole material world as a mirror through which we may pass over to God, the supreme Craftsman." ³² This emphasis on the mirror places *phantasia* in a pedagogical

³⁰ Kearney (1988), 117.

³¹ For a fuller account of the medieval imagination, see Bundy (1927).

³² Bonaventure (1978), 63. Cf. Kearney (1988), 124: "All finite images are, accordingly, merely copies of the Divine Image of Christ which is the perfect reflection of the *Exemplar Aeternum*. By extension, human imagining is but a mirroring of the Divine act of creation (primary imaging)."

role. Located halfway between nature and the intellect, the image may either imitate God, and hence lead the spectator upward toward truth, or not, plunging us downward toward the way of idols. Much like Plato before him, Bonaventure argues that if images have a sanctioned purpose at all, they must lead beyond themselves, ideally summoning us to higher truths.

The second metaphor Bonaventure employs is the ladder.³³ What this suggests is a power hovering between lower sensations and higher faculties like intellect, conveying messages from one to the other.³⁴ But the metaphor of a ladder, like a Delphic oracle, is inherently ambiguous: “Mindful of the cautionary implications of this biblical story [Jacob’s struggle with the Angel at Bethel left him crippled], Bonaventure declares that Christ is the only legitimate model for the ladder analogy; and he warns that more often than not *phantasia* serves as a hindrance to truth, ‘obscuring the intellect,’ ‘impending the freedom of the will,’ and thereby leaving us vulnerable to ‘demonic possession.’”³⁵ Indeed, Bonaventure goes so far as to cite Pseudo-Dionysius who warns, “What is evil in [demons]? It is unreasoning anger, mindless desire, headlong fancy (*phantasia protervas*).”³⁶ What we really have here is therefore an auxiliary to truth and goodness but a potentially dangerous one at that, an unreliable power all too easily inclined to deception, immorality, and demonic possession.

³³ Cf. Bonaventure (1978), 60: “In relation to our position in creation, the universe itself is a ladder by which we can ascend into God.”

³⁴ Bonaventure presents a short exegesis of the soul’s reception of sensations and their subsequent retention through memory and contemplation by the intellectual faculty and the power of choice. In his introduction to this exegesis he writes, “Consider, therefore, the operations and relationships of these three powers, and you will be able to see God through yourself as through an image, which is to see *through a mirror in an obscure manner*.” See Bonaventure (1978), 79–83.

³⁵ Kearney (1988), 127–8. See, for instance, Bonaventure (1978), 61: “Christ, who is our ladder.”

³⁶ Pseudo-Dionysius (1987), 91. See Bonaventure (1882–1902), 2: 189.

In a final instance of the ambiguous function of imagination, Bonaventure conceives of both a good use of *phantasia*, an aid in the ascent of the human being toward God, and a bad use of *phantasia* as a perverter of rational judgment and participant in the descent of the mind down the image chain toward evil.³⁷ Given such a duplicitous power, Bonaventure warns that *phantasia* must be reigned in or scrutinized by reason. Through this scrutiny, images become true imitators or a simulacrum of God and not simply ends in themselves, peddlers of idols:

Idols arise when imagination ceases to recognize images as similitudes which mirror a higher being and becomes engulfed in images which mirror themselves in an empty play of non-being.³⁸

3,5,2 Aquinas

When we turn to Thomas Aquinas, what we see is not a grand departure from the work of Bonaventure. To the contrary, like Bonaventure Thomas suggests that *phantasia* is a mimetic faculty of image-making, and its function is to mediate between sensations and intellect, as well as to store representations in memory. In terms of this intermediary role of *phantasia* Thomas combines the Platonic notion of Ideas with the Aristotelian claim that human beings cannot think without the image. He writes,

Incorporeal things of which there are no phantasms are known to us by comparison with sensible bodies of which there are phantasms. Therefore when we understand something about these things, we need to turn to phantasms of bodies, although there are no phantasms of the things themselves.³⁹

Insofar as the things themselves or the Ideas are incorporeal, *phantasia* is useless. But since human beings are finite, we depend on images as analogies between sensible and

³⁷ Cf. Kearney (1988), 126.

³⁸ Kearney (1988), 126.

³⁹ Aquinas (1914–42), 4: 179. Cf. Aquinas (1914–42), 5: 112.

intellectual reality. As we might expect from Thomas, we have here an example of a synthesis of various strands of the Greek tradition.

Although Thomas synthesizes his interpretation of *phantasia* from Platonic and Aristotelian sources, he also clearly diminishes the role of *phantasia* in keeping with Medieval Scholasticism. Thus he writes in the *Summa Theologiae* that *phantasia* is simply a “storehouse” of forms:

For the reception of sensible forms the proper and common sense is appointed; but for the retention and preservation of these forms, the phantasy or imagination (*phantasia sive imaginatio*) is appointed, which are the same, for phantasy or imagination is, as it were, a *storehouse* of forms received through the senses.⁴⁰

This metaphor of the storehouse is “perhaps *the* paradigmatic figure of imagination in Thomistic philosophy,” and it suggests that Thomas is willing to downplay the artistic function of *phantasia* than his predecessors recognize and accept.⁴¹ Indeed, for Thomas, art seems easily dispensable.

This diminished role of *phantasia* can perhaps be seen as a defense against its powers, for, like Bonaventure, Thomas is clearly anxious of *phantasia*’s dangerous potential. For he tells us that

There are intellectual habits by which a man is prompted rightly to judge of the presentation of imagination (*imaginatio*). When he ceases from the use of the intellectual habit, extraneous imaginations arise, and occasionally some even of a contradictory tendency, so that unless by the use of the intellectual habit these are cut down or repressed the man is rendered less fit to form a right judgment.⁴²

Left to its own wanderings, *phantasia* conjures up images witnessed in dreams, the images associated with madness and sexuality. Hence Thomas’s exhortation that the

⁴⁰ Aquinas (1914–42), 1: 78.

⁴¹ Kearney (1988), 129.

⁴² Aquinas (1914–42), 2: 53.

intellectual habits be present, lest the imagination be left to its own free play, opening the way not only to immoral and false images, but demonic possession as well:

Demons can work on man's imagination and even on his corporeal senses, so that something seems otherwise than it is, as explained above (Q. CXI., AA. 3,4)... In the same way he can clothe any corporeal thing with any corporeal form, so as to appear therein. This is what Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* XVII., *loc. cit.*): *Man's imagination, which, whether thinking or dreaming, takes the forms of an innumerable number of things, appears to other men's senses, as it were embodied in the semblance of some animal.* This is not to be understood as though the imagination itself or the images formed therein were identified with that which appears embodied to the senses of another man: but that the demon, who forms an image in man's imagination, can offer the same picture to another man's senses.⁴³

Kearney comments on the foregoing passage: "The medieval suspicion of imagination could hardly be more clearly stated. As a mimetic faculty of representation and storage, imagination has its place. But it must be kept in its place. Any departure from its mandatory subordination to reason and reality, can only lead to error—and, at worst, satanic pride."⁴⁴

What the medieval view of *phantasia* shares with its Hebraic and Greek predecessors is the view that *phantasia* is essentially mimetic. Whether it is a storehouse of forms or a mediator between sensible appearances and intellectual ideas, *phantasia* constructs an image that copies or imitates an original, that is, an Idea or God. But there is also a suspicion toward *phantasia* that the medievals inherit. For on the one hand, *phantasia* is an indispensable mediator but also the cause of error, falsity, and immorality, on the other:

For the official thinking of the Middle Ages, truth remained the privileged possession of a transcendent Other: God or Being. And, this self-identical Other was the unique and exclusive Origin of all reality. No exceptions were to be admitted. In so far as imagination was prepared to enter the humble service of this higher Origin and honour it as the one and only Father of all things, it could be granted probation under the

⁴³ Aquinas (1914–42), 1: 114.

⁴⁴ Kearney (1988), 130.

jurisdiction of reason. But as soon as imagination sought to surpass this limited role as a ward of court, it was to be harshly penalized. Leniency in such a case could only lead to idolatry, blasphemy or demonic possession.⁴⁵

This apprehension toward *phantasia* was the official stance of medieval philosophy, but to place too much focus on this onto-theological position is to overlook the position of folk culture and early Renaissance philosophy.

3,6 Renaissance

The values, symbols, and metaphors associated with imagination in the ancient and medieval philosophical traditions are not so evident, if at all, in the world of folk culture and art and among the gnostic and mystical thinkers in the early Renaissance. The imagination there seems to play a different role, one divorced from ethical condemnation and epistemological skepticism. It is a power celebrated and hence a focus of fascination and attraction, which, from the standpoint of mainstream onto-theological thinking, had to be excluded, contained, and confined. If the folk scene of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance unleashed the imagination, we can begin see just what this power looks like left to its own devices. We can see just what was so frightening and had to be kept at bay.

3,6,1 The Image

In his *History of Madness*, Michel Foucault does not directly address the power of imagination. But what Foucault does discuss with great care and insight is the rise of a particular attraction toward and fascination with the autonomy of the image.

Traditionally, as we saw above, the image referred or pointed beyond itself. In this

⁴⁵ Kearney (1988), 131.

capacity, it functioned like language, illustrating what words describe. But beginning in the fifteenth century, the image became “freed from the wisdom and morality it was intended to transmit...began to gravitate around its own madness.”⁴⁶

As Foucault explains, before the fifteenth century the image and language “constantly answer each other and swap roles, now as commentary, now as illustration.”⁴⁷ The *Narrentanz*, for example, was a theme of many popular balls and theatrical performances of the early Middle Ages, and Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly* was structured according to a dance “where the professions and orders file past and form the eternal round of unreason.” Similarly, Bosch’s *Ship of Fools* was a correspondence and illustration of Brant’s *Narrenschiff*.⁴⁸ But a century later, painting and the symbolic image no longer functioned in the same way as, let alone corresponded to, language. They no longer had the same unique signification, a reference beyond themselves to a higher truth or moral lesson. Rather, the image became liberated and infused with its own complex meaning:

Meaning was no longer read in an immediate perception, and accordingly objects ceased to speak directly: between the knowledge that animated the figures of objects and the forms they were transformed into, a divide began to appear, opening the way for a symbolism more often associated with the world of dreams.⁴⁹

The result is an overinvestment and overdetermination in the image, where images are associated with more images, and “dreams, senselessness and unreason could slip all too easily into this excess of meaning.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Foucault (2006), 17.

⁴⁷ Foucault (2006), 16.

⁴⁸ See Foucault (2006), 16.

⁴⁹ Foucault (2006), 16.

⁵⁰ Foucault (2006), 17. Cf. Foucault (2006), 17: “Objects became so weighed down with attributes, connections and associations that they lost their own original face.”

This world of images, pointing no longer beyond itself to an imageless reality, becomes an infinitely enigmatic world, a world of fascination rather than instruction.⁵¹ As an example of this transformation, Foucault describes the gryllos:

[The gryllos] originally taught how in men ruled by their desires the soul became a prisoner of the beast. These grotesque faces found on the bellies of monsters belonged to the world of the grand platonic metaphor, denouncing the abasement of the spirit in the madness of sin. But in the fifteenth century, the gryllos, a symbol of human madness, became a preponderant figure in the innumerable *Temptations*. The hermit's tranquility is assailed not by objects of desire but by demented forms locked into their own secrets, who have risen up from dream and sit on the surface of a world, silent and furtive. In the Lisbon *Temptation* facing Saint Anthony sits one such figure born of madness, its solicitude, its penitence, and its deprivation: a thin smile spreads across its disembodied face, the pure presence of worry in the guise of an agile grimace. This nightmarish silhouette is both the subject and the object of the temptation, captivating the hermit's glance: both of them are prisoners of a mirroring interrogative process, where response is indefinitely suspended, in a silence broken only by the restive growl of the monsters that surround them. The gryllos no longer recalls, even in a satirical mode, the spiritual vocation of man forgotten in the madness of desire. The gryllos is madness made Temptation: all that there is in him of the impossible, fantastical and inhuman, all that indicates that which goes against nature or the seething mass of a senseless presence immanent in the earth is the source of his strange power. For men of the fifteenth century, the fearsome freedom of dreams and the fantasies born of madness held a power of attraction stronger than the pull of the desires of mortal flesh.⁵²

What Foucault is pointing to is a fascination with the image itself. The image attracts the attention of the spectator because it reveals something devoid of moral and epistemological instruction. What is so fascinating about the image, what makes us tarry with it, is its allusion to senselessness or, as Foucault puts it, "the seething mass of a senseless presence immanent in the earth."

This attraction to and fascination with the image is an attraction to madness itself, which Foucault explains from two directions. "First of all, men seemed to discover in these fantastical figures one of the secret vocations of their nature."⁵³ What had been

⁵¹ See Foucault (2006), 18.

⁵² Foucault (2006), 18.

⁵³ Foucault (2006), 18.

symbols and signs pointing to moral instruction and purified natures, “took on a fantastical life of their own.” In the images of the Last Judgment, “man appears in the hideous nudity of his fallen state [and] has taken on the monstrous face of a delirious animal.” Foucault writes,

Screech owls with toad-like bodies mingle with the naked bodies of the damned in Thierry Bouts’ *Hell*, the work of Stefan Lochner pullulates with winged insects, cat-headed butterflies and sphinxes with mayfly wingcases, and birds with handed wings that instill panic, while in Grünewald’s *Temptation* there prowls a beast of prey with gnarled, knotty claws. The animal realm has moved out of range of all domesticating human symbolism, and while it fascinates mankind with its disorder, its fury and its plethora of monstrous possibilities, it also serves to reveal the dark rage and sterile folly that lurks in the heart of mankind.⁵⁴

But from the other direction, the image and its representation of madness is an attraction of a particular kind of knowledge. Not knowledge in the Platonic or Thomistic sense, to be sure, but a knowledge that “predicts both the reign of Satan and the end of the world, ultimate happiness and supreme punishment, omnipotence on earth and the descent into hell. The *Ship of Fools* passes through a landscape of delights where all is offered to desire, a paradise regained of sorts, as men once more become strangers to necessity and want, yet without a return to a state of innocence.”⁵⁵ This is a forbidden knowledge, a knowledge that unlocked secrets about a grand disorder and a mad, senseless universe, as well as the depravity of human nature and its lowest desires.

If these two temptations of madness are borne by the image, then we can sympathize with the apprehension and anxiety behind the Hebrew, Greek, and Medieval traditions. At the same time, we can begin to appreciate the boldness of the late

⁵⁴ Foucault (2006), 19.

⁵⁵ Foucault (2006), 20.

Medieval and Renaissance art as they unleashed and focused their attention upon the image, a temerity evident in the works of Grünewald and Dürer, Bosch and Brueghel:

For madness unleashes its fury in the space of pure vision. Fantasies and threats, the fleeting fragments of dreams and the secret destiny of the world, where madness has a primitive, prophetic force, revealing that the dream-like is real and that a thin surface of illusion opens onto bottomless depths, and that the glittering surface of images opens the way to worrying figures that shine forever in the darkness. The inverse revelation, no less painful, is that the reality of the world will one day be absorbed in the fantastic Image, at that delirious moment between being and nothingness which is pure destruction.⁵⁶

The fears we have seen expressed by Bonaventure and Thomas, a nightmare of the image, seem realized in these artists' works. What these works confirm is that the image is capable of revealing the human being's animality and the disorder and nonsense in the world.

If the acts of Adam and Prometheus stood for theft and explained a perduring feeling of guilt in the Ancient and Medieval world, then the Renaissance marked a turning point from guilt toward celebration and revelry. What these artists suggest is that there is a source of meaning independent from an imageless, transcendent reality, i.e., God or Idea. And if that leads to the gods' abandonment, then so be it. These artists seemed prepared to live with the consequences: a world bound by its own standards, which, as we know, must have been frightening to Plato or Thomas and thereby had to be internalized, contained, and tamed:

In Brant, Erasmus and the whole humanist tradition, madness is confined to the universe of discourse. There it becomes ever more refined, more subtle, and is slowly disarmed. It changes scale: born in the hearts of men, it rules and disrupts their conduct... It may hold every man in its control, but its reign is narrow and relative as its mediocre truth is constantly unmasked by the penetrating gaze of the savant. For such men of science, it becomes a mere object of ridicule: they tamed it by the act of praising it.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Foucault (2006), 26.

⁵⁷ Foucault (2006), 27.

Recall here Derrida's psychoanalytic reading of western metaphysics. Along this Derridean interpretation, this taming of the imagination and its image could be interpreted as respect for the Good-Sun-Father, that image-less figure of western metaphysics inaugurated and powerfully illustrated by Plato. For according to the symbols and myths that we have seen up to this point, Derrida might say that what Brant and Erasmus feared was retaliation and retribution on the part of the father. Killing the father demands retribution, after all: a killing of a son.

3,6,2 The Occult *Vitus Imaginativa*

What artists such as Breughel and Bosch suggested in their work is a force existing outside the subject, impinging from outside. But there were also Renaissance thinkers who looked to the imagination and the image not as a force external to the human subject, immanent "in the earth," but as a source of human creativity—thinkers such as Paracelsus, Bruno, and Marsilio Ficino, for example. These were marginal thinkers, to be sure, though German Romantics such as Friedrich Schelling would give them wider circulation. Nonetheless, what these Renaissance thinkers introduce to the history of imagination, what they often called a *vitus imaginativa* or *spiritus phantasticus*, was a transformative imagination that expresses "man's desire to be the sun, that is, to be absolutely everything he desires to be." "What else is imagination," Paracelsus asks, "if not the inner sun which moves in its own sphere."⁵⁸ Commenting on this passage, Kearney writes, "The imagination was now hailed as a divine flame within man. The stigma of the Promethean theft was removed. And this discovery of the human

⁵⁸ Cited from Kearney (1988), 159. See Claude-Gilbert Dubois (1985).

imagination as the source of universal light and power, marks one of the earliest attempts to affirm the primacy of subjectivity.”⁵⁹

The modern era inherited the Renaissance conception of imagination. For the moderns, as we shall see, meaning is not derived from a transcendent being, but it is likewise not out there in the world, unintelligible and uncontrollable, as it was for Bosch and Breughel. Students of Brant and Erasmus, the moderns confine the imagination under the constraints of the understanding and its rules. But influenced by the artists and mystics of the Renaissance, if only indirectly, these moderns see subjectivity as a source of meaning.⁶⁰ Analogous to what Freud would call a compromise-formation, the imagination was allowed greater freedom, an indispensable role in meaning-making, and yet still a ward of reason’s court.

3,7 Modernity

Let us now consider the transition from the Renaissance conception of imagination and the madness attached to the image to the uptake and transformation of imagination in Kant’s transcendental idealism. The transition is not seamless. And it seems Foucault is right when he notes that the tragic experience attached to the image was forced to go underground after its brief foray in the 15th century.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Kearney (1988), 159.

⁶⁰ See Kearney (1988), 160–1.

⁶¹ See Foucault (2006), 27.

3,7,1 Descartes

The father of modernity, Descartes famously moves the source of meaning from a transcendent being to the human mind. His *cogito* is an expression of the insight that thinking has the power to disclose objective reality solely through its reflection upon its own clear and distinct ideas. Here thinking is prior to being; hence the central claim “I think *therefore* I am.” But what Descartes fails to appreciate is the power of imagination as a necessary condition for objectivity. Indeed, he fails to shake off the old prejudices of his predecessors and continues to adhere to the old Platonic and Scholastic stock phrases and metaphors for imagination. Here imagination (*imagination*) is still a mediator between sensations and understanding, a mimetic faculty, and a corporeal entity; and thus it, “along with the ideas existing within it,” is “nothing but a real body with a real extension and shape.”⁶²

For Descartes, *imaginatio* exemplifies a few key powers, namely, reminiscence and the imaging of sensory ideas. In the first respect, it possesses the capacity to fix past figures, forms, or images received from sensation. In this way it is indistinguishable from memory, a vessel, so to speak, that holds images in place as they wait to be plucked by higher functions of the mind.⁶³ Here Descartes is clearly indebted to Thomas’s “storehouse” metaphor. But the power of reminiscence is also essential, *inter alia*, to an aesthetic experience. As Descartes puts it in *Compendium of Music* of 1618, “Our *imaginatio* proceeds to the end, where it eventually conceives the entire song as a single

⁶² Descartes (1985), 58; 10: 441. All citations to Descartes are first according to the *Philosophical Writings of Descartes* and followed by the *Oevre de Descartes*.

⁶³ As Descartes puts it rather unambiguously, “But memory is no different from imagination—at least the memory which is corporeal and similar to the one which animals possess,” Descartes (1985), 42; 10: 416.

thing that is constituted from many equal parts.”⁶⁴ The suggestion here is that *imaginatio* is the power by which discreet inputs (in this case, notes), received by the sensory organs, are reiterated consecutively and form a harmonious whole.

But even though Descartes conceives of *imaginatio* as a mediator between sensation and understanding, he, like Plato, seems more than happy to dispense with it at particular stages of inquiry. Consider these passages, the first of which comes from the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, the second, the *Meditations*:

So we can conclude with certainty that when the intellect is concerned with matters in which there is nothing corporeal or similar to the corporeal, it cannot receive any help from those faculties; on the contrary, if it is not to be hampered by them, the senses must be kept back and the imagination (*imaginationem*) must, as far as possible, be divested of every distinct impression. *If, however, the intellect proposes to examine something which can be referred to the body, the idea of that thing must be formed as distinctly as possible in the imagination (imaginatione).*⁶⁵

When I imagine (*imaginor*) a triangle, for example, I do not merely understand that it is a figure bounded by three lines, but at the same time I also see the three lines with my mind’s eye as if they were present before me; and this is what I call imagining (*imaginari*). But if I want to think of a chiliagon, although I understand that it is a figure consisting of a thousand sides just as well as I understand the triangle to be a three-sided figure, I do not in the same way imagine (*imaginor*) the thousand sides or see them as if they were present before me... And in doing this I notice quite clearly that imagination (*imaginandum*) requires a peculiar effort of mind which is not required for understanding; this additional effort of mind clearly shows the difference between imagination (*imaginationem*) and pure understanding.⁶⁶

Here *imaginatio* is described as at best an assistant to pure understanding but a limited and, at times, dispensable one at that.⁶⁷ These passages explain why *imaginatio*, which

⁶⁴ Descartes (1964–76), 10: 94, translation by Desmond Clarke. See Clarke (2003), 85.

⁶⁵ Descartes (1985), 43; 10: 416, my emphasis. Cf. Descartes (1984), 51; 7: 73: “When the mind understands, it in some way turns towards itself and inspects one of the ideas which are within it; but when it imagines, it turns toward the body and looks at something in the body which conforms to an idea understood by the mind or perceived by the senses.”

⁶⁶ Descartes (1984), 50–1; 7: 72–3.

⁶⁷ Cf. this passage in a letter to Mersenne of July 1641: “As our imagination (*imagination*) is tightly and narrowly limited, while our mind has hardly any limits, there are very few things, even corporeal things, which we can imagine (*imaginer*), even though we are capable of conceiving them,” Descartes (1991), 186;

plays such a crucial role in the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, all but disappears in the *Meditations*. Since the *Meditations* is a metaphysical treatise, dealing with the concepts of God and the soul, both of which lack corresponding corporeal images, to harness *imaginatio* there would be an impediment to abstract thought. On the contrary, the *Rules* focuses more on mathematical and natural inquiry, and so *imaginatio* shines as an indispensable faculty.

It would be misleading to infer from these remarks that Descartes restricts his comments on *imaginatio* completely within his epistemological work. He too suspects *imaginatio* as a medium of both ethical and unethical behavior. It is, after all, for Descartes a matter of *will* to accept his former beliefs:

I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or sense, but as falsely believing that I have all these things. I shall stubbornly and firmly persist in this meditation; and, even if it is not in my power to know any truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, that is, resolutely guard against assenting to any falsehoods.⁶⁸

Descartes resists error as a matter of will. Suspension of judgment is a choice. And Foucault notes that madness and illusion are refuted on the very same basis: “Reason is perpetually threatened by the temptation to fall asleep or to give in to illusions, and the solution is to reiterate constantly the need to fix one’s eyes on the truth.”⁶⁹ The upshot to Descartes’s meditations is, among other things, a resolute will against excessive *imaginatio*: “The result is that I now have no difficulty in turning my mind away from imaginable things (*rebus imaginabilibus*) and towards things which are objects of the

3: 395. The point seems to be that the mind, as pure understanding, is capable of conceiving many more ideas *abstractly*.

⁶⁸ Descartes (1984), 15; 7: 23.

⁶⁹ Foucault (2006), 139.

intellect alone and are totally separate from matter.”⁷⁰ Thus we might say that to indulge in *imaginatio* is the sign of a weak will, a poor character. Put contrarily, a tame *imaginatio* is a sign of virtue and resoluteness.

For all of Descartes’s novelties, *imaginatio* barely makes any progress from his scholastic predecessors. It is ultimately mimetic, and it is as if his rationalist agenda precludes a robust power of creativity:

The French philosopher abhorred imagination, the outcome, according to him, of the agitation of the animal spirits; and though not utterly condemning poetry, he allowed it to exist only in so far as it was guided by intellect, that being the sole faculty able to save men from all the caprices of the *folle du logis*. He tolerated it, but that was all; and went so far as not to deny it anything ‘*qu’un philosophe lui puisse permettre sans offenser sa conscience*’ ... the mathematical spirit fostered by Descartes forbade all possibility of a serious consideration of poetry and art.⁷¹

This Cartesian hostility toward *imaginatio* sets the tone for modernity. Even Kant will approach the imagination cautiously, all too aware of the biases attached to it.

3,7,2 Hume

David Hume sets himself the task to explore human nature. He wants to establish a secure course for science, what he thought was in a deplorable state and in desperate need of an overhaul. His method, of course, is the experimental, where every claim or universal principle is assessed and measured against the tribunal of experience. And yet, what started out as a promising course soon lead Hume to skepticism and melancholia. For he came to realize that the imagination was not simply the medium of sensory images but

⁷⁰ Descartes (1984), 37; 7: 53.

⁷¹ Croce (1972), 185

the medium of ideas in general and the source of meaning in the world. In this way, Hume “pushed the ‘mimetic model’ of imagination to its final and unjustifiable limits.”⁷²

Let us begin with an overview of Hume’s conception of the mind. Here is how James Engell elegantly describes it:

In Hume’s view, the mind is a whole unit with few internal barriers or bridges. Emotions mingle with ideas and change their intensity or force. A tide of passions, sometimes “calm” and sometimes “violent,” pounds the shore of reason. This tide both erodes and builds; it sculpts the entire coastline. Sense impressions, like constant winds, set up more motion in the area. The breakwater of the understanding partly calms and orders, but not completely. Real activity of the mind occurs at exactly that spot where the waves break and all elements converge, a slurry where reason mixes so thoroughly with passion that it is no longer possible to distinguish the two. Now this slurry forms an undercurrent which mixes together all the effects of sense impression, reason, understanding, and passion. This undercurrent flows incessantly and gives one common direction to all these combined activities of the mind. It is responsible for “the vivacity of our ideas” and diminishes or augments their hold on the mind. It can either propel thought shoreward or create an undertow. This shifting, mixing force in the psyche is imagination. It is the active undercurrent of the mind.⁷³

This description is helpful for the following reason: it emphasizes the fact that for Hume the imagination is the *hegemonikon* of the mind. We make *faulty* inferences on the basis of imagination, to be sure. For it indiscriminately mixes reason, understanding, desire, and passion. And yet, this mixture is the life-breath of concepts. Ideas have a powerful sway over us because the imagination infuses them with passion and desire. Thus we *only* make inferences and, more broadly, think on the basis of imagination. If Engell is correct, if, indeed, for Hume, thinking is a slurry of passions and beliefs, it is not surprising that, by the end of the first *Enquiry*, Hume stands at the precipice ready to cast clean, abstract metaphysical treatises to the flames.⁷⁴

⁷² Kearney (1988), 164.

⁷³ Engell (1981), 52–3.

⁷⁴ See Hume (1993), 114. Cf. Hume (2000), 175; 1.4.7.10: “Here then I find myself absolutely and necessarily determin’d to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. But notwithstanding that my natural propensity, and the course of my animal spirits and passions reduce me to

For Hume, cognition starts with impressions, on the one hand, which “strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness.”⁷⁵ These sensations are unreflective, as it were, for we take their impressions as accurate representations of the world, indeed *the* world, given their “force and violence.”⁷⁶ Ideas, on the other hand, arise out of impressions. They are reflections, reproductions, copies, or *images*, fainter or less vivid, and by this difference of degree in force and vivacity we distinguish the former from the latter.⁷⁷

The imagination is that power to arrange, organize, fuse, and divide these ideas, as well as the power to unite the latter with the passions. Noting the latter’s independence, Hume distinguishes it from memory:

There is another difference betwixt these two kinds of ideas, which is no less evident, namely that though neither the ideas of the memory nor imagination, neither the lively nor the faint ideas can make their appearance in the mind, unless their correspondent impressions have gone before to prepare the way for them, yet *the imagination is not restrain’d to the same order and form with the original impressions*; while memory is in a manner ty’d down in that respect, without any power of variation.⁷⁸

Hume calls this unrestrained force the “*liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas.*”⁷⁹ Unbound, it is as if, from behind the back of consciousness, the imagination warps and wefts, creating a fabric according to its own design.

In the *Treatise* Hume tells us that the imagination is also a completing power:

this indolent belief in the general maxims of the world, I still feel such remains of my former disposition, that I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy.”

⁷⁵ Hume (2000), 7; 1.1.1.1.

⁷⁶ Hume (2000), 7; 1.1.1.1.

⁷⁷ Though Hume notes that the distinction is quite obvious and requires little elucidation, he also points out that in certain cases, such as sleep, fever, and madness, the ideas become indistinguishable from their impressions. See Hume (2000), 7; 1.1.1.1.

⁷⁸ Hume (2000), 12; 1.1.3.2, my emphasis.

⁷⁹ Hume (2000), 12; 1.1.3.4.

'Tis certain nothing more powerfully animates any affection, than to conceal some part of its object by throwing it into a kind of shade, which at the same time that it shows enough to pre-possess us in favour of the object, leaves still some work on the imagination. Besides that obscurity is always attended with a kind of uncertainty; the effort, which the fancy makes to compleat the idea, rouzes the spirits, and gives an additional force to the passion.⁸⁰

Commenting on this passage, Engell writes, “Hume believes absence magnifies strong passions and kills weak ones in the way that wind fans fire but blows out a match. The passion suggested may bring hope or fear, pleasure or grief. And, the ‘completing’ inference does not have to be true. When Joseph’s brothers show the bloody coat of many colors to their father, Jacob imagines that his favorite son has been torn apart by a beast.”⁸¹ The implication being that the imagination is predisposed to deceptive activity and leads the understanding to false conclusions.

If the imagination is prone to deception, it would make sense to check its associations against reality, but the problem here, as far as Hume sees it, is that we cannot get beyond our imagination:

Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chace our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appeared in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produc'd.⁸²

If thinking is dependent upon imagination, as well as memory and suggestion, it is no wonder that Hume, at the end of the first book of the *Treatise*, remarks, “The memory, senses, and understanding are, therefore, all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas.”⁸³

⁸⁰ Hume (2000), 270; 2.3.4.9.

⁸¹ Engell (1981), 54.

⁸² Hume (2000), 49; 1.2.6.8.

⁸³ Hume (2000), 173; 1.4.7.3.

Hume is indebted to Descartes. For he takes subjectivity to be logically prior to reality. But at the same time he takes the Cartesian notion of subjectivity and wrenches from it all certainty and security. All ideas are images and all supposed metaphysical laws are nothing but psychological regularities of resemblance, contiguity, and causality. The self consequently loses its identity, and the external world is robbed of its independence. What we are left with is nothing but the imagination and the mimetic image, which points to nothing beyond itself. “The only truth we can know,” writes Kearney, “is that of our image-representations. And this means no truth at all.”⁸⁴

Hume leaves us in a strange predicament. On the one hand, he seems to pull the wool from our eyes. He exposes the central concepts of western metaphysics as what they are—nothing more than images—and hence fraudulent illusions and fictions. But on the other hand, he does not replace these fictions of imagination with anything real. Rather, Hume’s conclusion seems to be that these illusions are all that we have. And so we must “cling to these fictions *as if* they were real.”⁸⁵ The implication is startling:

If the populace at large were to be apprised of the fact that the king wears no clothes, that the principles guiding all our social systems of authority from law and education to morality, religion and government, have no *objective* validity, life would become unlivable. The rational sceptic thus feels himself to be, in Hume’s poignant words, a ‘strange and uncouth monster’... Alienated from the fellowship of ordinary men and women, and carrying within his breast the intolerable realization that the world is but a mess of mimetic shadows manipulated by imagination, the philosopher observes a self-imposed silence. To speak out is to endanger the possibility of peaceful coexistence between mortals.⁸⁶

Much like Plato, Hume suggests that the world of fictions, “the universe of imagination,” is consoling and comforting but essentially false. But unlike Plato, Hume leaves no room

⁸⁴ Kearney (1988), 165.

⁸⁵ Kearney (1988), 165.

⁸⁶ Kearney (1988), 166.

for an ascent out of the cave to the Father-Sun-Good. Having cast out the father, Hume leaves the philosopher with no direction home, wandering in the desert.

Having found himself in a universe populated solely by images, Hume tells us that he is about to “launch out into those immense depths of philosophy.” But he suspects he is

like a man, who having been struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escap’d shipwreck in passing a small firth, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances.⁸⁷

And yet, he cannot remain among his contemporaries, for he feels himself a “strange uncouth monster” who has been “expell’d all human commerce.”⁸⁸ The imagery of water, ships, and monsters is a reminiscent and repetitive theme. We have seen it in the work of Renaissance artists such as Bosch and Breughel (recall the *Ship of Fools*), and what it suggests according to Foucault is a feeling of senselessness. If Hume has discovered that what western metaphysics has taken for truth is nothing but a fiction, this cannot prevent him, from the perspective of his contemporaries, from appearing like a senseless madman. But of course, from his perspective, they too are mad. Thus has he unleashed the imagination only to find himself in forlorn isolation and bound for the seas.

Hume’s description of his emotional experience parallels a theme Foucault discusses in the context of madness in the Middle Ages:

Water brought its own dark symbolic charge, carrying away, but purifying too. Navigation brought man face to face with the uncertainty of destiny, where each is left to himself and every departure might always be the last. The madman on his crazy boat sets sail for the other world, and it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Hume (2000), 171–2; 1.4.7.1.

⁸⁸ Hume (2000), 172; 1.4.7.2.

⁸⁹ Foucault (2006), 11.

In the Middle Ages water and navigation were representative of purification and exclusion, and it should not be surprising to see Hume reemploying the same imagery to capture his experience toward the end of the first book of the *Treatise*.⁹⁰ Hume is an outcast, a monster subsumed by the imagination and its image. He cannot seek asylum among anyone, for each “keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm, which beats upon me from every side.”⁹¹ He must either set sail into uncharted waters or remain among the “sane,” with their fictions and lies.

Hume ends his first book of the *Treatise* with this fateful dilemma:

This deficiency in our ideas is not, indeed, perceiv'd in common life, nor are we sensible, that in the most usual conjunctions of cause and effect we are as ignorant of the ultimate principle, which binds them together, as in the most unusual and extraordinary. But this proceeds merely from an illusion of the imagination; and the question is, how far we ought to yield to these illusions. This question is very difficult, and reduces us to a very dangerous dilemma, which-ever way we answer it. For if we assent to every trivial suggestion of the fancy... they lead us into such errors, absurdities, and obscurities, that we must at last become asham'd of our credulity... But on the other hand, if the consideration of these instances makes us take a resolution to reject all the trivial suggestions of the fancy, and adhere to the understanding... even this resolution, if steadily executed, wou'd be dangerous, and attended with the most fatal consequences. For I have already shown, that the understanding... entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life.⁹²

Hume's solution is to simply let nature take its course, allowing the mind to relax from its serious, depressing, philosophical speculations. He dines, plays a game of backgammon, and converses merrily with friends. In other words, he forgets all about it.

⁹⁰ Hume of course had first-hand experience with stormy seas. His “Adventures on the Coast of France” as secretary of the British expedition of 1746, which began as an expedition to Canada but was redirected to Brittany, describes violent winds that constantly delayed battle plans, dispersed ships, and drowned British soldiers. I would like to thank my director, Daniel Breazeale, for pointing this out to me. For a full description of the military campaign, see Mossner (1980), 187–204.

⁹¹ Hume (2000), 172; 1.4.7.2.

⁹² Hume (2000), 174; 1.4.7.6–7.

3,8 Concluding Remarks

The foregoing interpretation of imagination, from the Hebraic tradition to Hume, was designed to show us just what might have frightened Kant after 1781. As we have seen, the concept of imagination has a history closely tied to transgression, rebellion, greed, lust, irrationality, fiction, and madness. For these reasons, it appears plausible that Kant, according to Heidegger, felt the need to suppress the role of *Einbildungskraft*. A robust imagination, conceived as the keystone to the construction of an objective experience, could only raise suspicion and skepticism among Kant's contemporaries. And if morality is sanctioned by a categorical imperative, how could the human being, as intrinsically *imaginative*, ground such a universal and necessary law?

4, *Phantasie* Unbound: Reversals of Cognition

I do not find it strange that [*l'imagination*] brings fevers and death to those who give it a free hand and encourage it.

—Michel de Montaigne, *Of the Power of Imagination*, 1: 21

Imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint, has always endeavored to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the inclosures of regularity.

—Samuel Johnson, *Rambler*, 28 May 1751

To this classical way of thinking there was a whole region where morality and mechanics, freedom and the body, passion and pathology found both their unity and their measure. It is *l'imagination*, which is prey to errors, illusions and presumptions, but in which are equally summed up all the mechanisms of the body.

—Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, 198

4,1 1760s: Kant and the Philosophical Zeitgeist

The last chapter was designed to support Heidegger's claim that *Einbildungskraft* frightened Kant. If Kant's goal is to ground rational thinking and moral action in *a priori* laws sanctioned by (pure and practical) reason, but if Kant's *Critique* discloses reason itself as grounded in *Einbildungskraft*, a coconspirator to irrationality and immorality, then perhaps Heidegger is right that Kant could not but shrink back from such a discovery.

What we now know is that the western canon offers ample evidence to support Heidegger's claim. But, to be sure, I make no claim that Kant was directly influenced by any particular work, that he read Plato's thoughts on *eikasía* closely, say, or that Bonaventure's comments on *phantasia* moved Kant to suppress *Einbildungskraft* in the

second edition of the *Critique*. If anything else, these conceptions of imagination, this leitmotif, are implicit presuppositions that affect Kant both consciously and unconsciously.

In this chapter I turn to some of Kant's direct influences¹ and his theoretical position prior to 1781; specifically, I turn to his early thoughts on *Bildungsvermögen* in the early anthropological writings. For if Heidegger is correct, if Kant shrank back from *Einbildungskraft* as he developed his mature theoretical and practical philosophy, we should expect early descriptions of an unbound, lawless *Bildungsvermögen*.²

Manfred Kuehn reminds us in his biography of Kant that 1764 marked a significant event in Kant's life. He turned forty.³ In his *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Kant notes that in the fortieth year one acquires prudence, i.e., "using other human beings for one's purposes."⁴ Moreover, and more importantly, the fortieth year also marks the acquisition of character:

The human being who is conscious of having character in his way of thinking does not have it by nature; he must always have *acquired* it. One may also assume that the grounding of character is like a kind of rebirth, a certain solemnity of making a vow to oneself; which makes the resolution and the moment when this transformation took place unforgettable to him, like the beginning of a new epoch. — Education, examples, and teaching generally cannot bring about this firmness and persistence in principles *gradually*, but only, as it were, by an explosion which happens one time as a result of weariness at the unstable condition of instinct. Perhaps there are only a few who have attempted this revolution before the age of thirty, and fewer still who have firmly established it before they are forty.⁵

¹ Here I look at the British empiricists in some detail. In the next chapter, I turn to Baugarten and Tetens.

² There is no evidence that Kant first turned his attention to *Bildungsvermögen* between 1781 and 1787. Rather, Kant's study of this power began in the 1760s and 1770s. What Heidegger's claim suggests, then, is that Kant knew about the unbound nature of *Bildungsvermögen* prior to 1781: it was only after he discovered *Einbildungskraft* as the unknown root of cognition that he then shrank back. This does not explain Kant's position of 1781, of course. As I show in chapter five, the position of the first edition of the *Critique* derives from Kant's lectures on Baumgarten and his close reading of Tetens in the late 1770s.

³ Kuehn (2001), 144.

⁴ Kant (2007), 308; AA, 7: 201.

⁵ Kant (2007), 392; AA, 7: 294.

Character is not an innate gift, but an acquisition. It is a creation, and in that sense it falls into Kant's definition of *pragmatic* anthropology: "The investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself."⁶

In conjunction with his personal life, the 1760s show Kant interested in the "situation of ethics,"⁷ as particularly construed by the British empiricists.⁸ Kant thus took a philosophical, as well as a personal, interest in ethical theory. But what exactly was his position during these precritical years?

Kant did not so much have a position (either in metaphysics or in ethics) as much as he was searching for one. As he put it in his personal copy of the 1764 *Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime*,

Everything goes past like a river and the changing taste and the various shapes of men make the whole game uncertain and delusive. Where do I find fixed points in nature, which cannot be moved by man, and where I can indicate the markers by the shore to which I ought to adhere?⁹

Kant was looking for an Archimedean point. And yet, that he uses the word "nature" suggests that at this time he thought such a point would be found there, not in reason.¹⁰

Kant confirms this in his description of his method in the "Announcement of the programme of his lectures for the winter semester of 1765–1766": "In the doctrine of

⁶ Kant (2007), 231; AA, 7: 119.

⁷ Henrich (1994), 55–88.

⁸ This is due to two reasons. First, there is the fact that British works were extensively reviewed in German journals and for the most part quickly translated. See Kuehn (2001), 183. Second, around the summer of 1766 Kant met Joseph Green, an English merchant and close reader of Hume, interests of which quickly rubbed off on Kant due to his close friendship with the English merchant. See Kuehn (2001), 154–58. The British are thus a link between antiquity and Kant's mature position on *Einbildungskraft*. For we know that the Cambridge Platonists and Shaftsbury revived interests in ancient philosophy, combining empirical psychology with a Platonic strain and a cult of the natural. They brought the imagination back to the moral realm, noting its indispensability in moral sentiments. See Engell's brief introduction in Engell (1981), 11–2.

⁹ Cited from Kuehn (2001), 175.

¹⁰ See Kuehn (2001), 175.

virtue I shall always begin by considering historically and philosophically what *happens* before specifying what *ought to happen*. In doing so, I shall make clear what method ought to be adopted in the study of *man*.”¹¹ Kant did not have a definitive position by 1764, but he did have a method and an idea for where to look.¹²

Kant’s appeal to nature as the criterion of truth in the winter semester of 1765–1766 corresponds with what Erich Adickes has labeled Kant’s “empiricist period.”¹³ But this labeling on Adickes’s part is controversial, not least because the term “empiricism” is vague. As Kuehn remarks, somewhat rhetorically, “Was Berkeley a ‘British empiricist’ or, as has been argued, an ‘Irish Cartesian’? In what sense was Locke an ‘empiricist’?”¹⁴ Furthermore, Kant’s students of the 1760s are clear that Kant was not a “follower” in any sense of the term, neither a follower of empiricist doctrine nor a follow of rationalist theory. Johann Herder, for instance, notes that he was “indifferent to nothing worth knowing.”¹⁵

Kant was not a Leibnizian or Wolffian or Hutchesonian, but he was sympathetic to rationalism and empiricism, broadly construed. They were not complete, infallible systems, but they were amenable to supplementation. This was particularly true of the

¹¹ Kant (2002a), 298; AA, 2: 311.

¹² In his letter to J. H. Lambert of 31 December 1765, Kant reaffirms his confidence that he has a proper method of metaphysics, and thereby the whole of philosophy, which he promises to demonstrate in a “few little essays” called the “Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science” and the “Metaphysical Foundations of Practical Philosophy.” In this same letter, Kant famously assures Lambert that trifles of punsters and the weary chatter of reputed writers is the “euthanasia of false philosophy.” He writes, “Before true philosophy can come to life, the old must destroy itself; and just as putrefaction signifies the total dissolution that always precedes the start of a new creation, so the current crisis in learning magnifies my hopes that the great, long-awaited revolution in the sciences is not too far off. For there is no shortage of good minds.” See Kant (1967), 49; AA, 10: 54–7.

¹³ Adickes (1895), 99. Adickes claims that though Kant was still a rationalist in the early 1760s (till 1762); after 1762 he was on his way toward empiricism and by 1766 had become a full-fledged empiricist. See also Kuehn (2001), 177.

¹⁴ Kuehn (2001), 178.

¹⁵ Cited from Kuehn (2001), 183.

British contributions to ethics, as Kant saw it at this time. As he puts it in the “Announcement,” “The attempts of *Shaftsbury*, *Hutcheson*, and *Hume*, although incomplete and defective, have nonetheless penetrated furthest in the search for the fundamental principles of all morality.”¹⁶ In this regard, Kant did not think that the third earl of Shaftsbury, for example, was correct, but he did think that his position on the moral sentiments was worth further scrutiny and development. And with respect to rationalism, Kant was willing to admit that the Wolffian account of metaphysics was incomplete because it neglected the phenomenon of sensation.¹⁷

A remark from Moses Mendelssohn’s review of Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* captures this German zeitgeist:

The theory of human sensations and passions has in more recent times made the greatest progress, since the other parts of philosophy no longer seem to advance very much. Our neighbors, and especially the English, precede us with philosophical observations of nature, and we follow them with our rational inferences; and if it were to go on like this, namely that our neighbors observe and we explain, we may hope that we will achieve in time a complete theory of sensation.¹⁸

Mendelssohn’s remarks point to a widely held position in the 1760s: moral sentiments were reducible to rational principles. Reason and sensation were expressions of one and the same mental power. Kuehn writes, “Some emphasized the sensitive part of this continuum as basic, though most opted for the intellectual one; but, and this is most important to remember, all accepted what may be called the ‘continuity thesis’ concerning sensation and cognition.”¹⁹ Kant was no exception.

¹⁶ Kant (2002), 298; AA, 2: 311.

¹⁷ See Kuehn (2001), 183.

¹⁸ Cited from Kuehn (2001), 184.

¹⁹ Kuehn, (2001), 185.

4,2 Sympathy Sans Principle

Kant's 1764 *Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime* falls squarely into this philosophical zeitgeist. At the beginning of this treatise, Kant notes that the sentiments of gratification and vexation aroused by external objects rest not with objects but with feelings. He then suggests that "the field of observation of these peculiarities of human nature is very extensive and still conceals a rich lode for discoveries,"²⁰ a remark that foreshadows the "Announcement" concerning the observations of Shaftsbury, Hutcheson, and Hume. As the title suggests, Kant's method in the *Observations* is to provide an empirical account of moral sentiments, which he will then argue are reducible, at least in theory, to rational principles.²¹

The principal feeling under investigation here is a "finer feeling" (*feinere Gefühl*), what Kant calls the feeling of the sublime and the beautiful, and which he says "presupposes, so to speak, a susceptibility of the soul which at the same time makes it fit for virtuous impulses."²² The idea that there are finer feelings suggests, of course, that there are less fine feelings, presupposing susceptibilities of the soul to supererogatory or vicious impulses. Given this distinction in degree, the feeling of the sublime and the beautiful is of the same kind as these lesser, more base feelings. As Kant himself notes,

²⁰ Kant (2007), 23; AA, 2: 207.

²¹ Kant does not actually provide a single supreme moral principle in the *Observations*. But he does suggest that the principle of justice, for instance, outweighs the principle of beneficence. See Kant (2007), 30; AA, 2: 216.

²² Kant (2007), 24; AA, 2: 208.

“In human nature there are never to be found praiseworthy qualities that do not at the same time degenerate through endless gradations into the most extreme imperfection.”²³

In the second section of the *Observations*, “On the Qualities of the Sublime and the Beautiful in Human Beings in General,” Kant tells us that “among moral qualities, true virtue alone is sublime,” although, he says, “there are nevertheless good moral qualities that are lovable and beautiful and, to the extent that they harmonize with virtue, may also be regarded as noble, even though they cannot genuinely be counted as part of the virtuous disposition.”²⁴ For example, he notes that tenderheartedness and a feeling of sympathy is a beautiful and lovely feeling but not sublime and virtuous. For although sympathy often leads to virtuous deeds, it is often by coincidence and luck, since the tenderhearted character does not weigh conflicting duties and hence often flouts higher duties according to the universal principle of justice:

For suppose that this sentiment moves you to help someone in need with your expenditure, but you are indebted to someone else and by this means you make it impossible for yourself to fulfill the strict duty of justice.²⁵

In contrast, if general affection towards humankind becomes a universal principle, under which all actions are subsumed, Kant notes that “your love towards the one in need remains, but it is now, from a higher standpoint, placed in its proper relationship to your duty as a whole. This universal affection is a ground for participating in his ill-fortune, but at the same time it is also a ground of justice, in accordance with whose precept you must now forbear this action.” That is to say, from principle we pity the indigent but at the same time act in accordance with greater obligations.

²³ Kant (2007), 28; AA, 2: 213.

²⁴ Kant (2007), 29; AA, 2: 215.

²⁵ Kant (2007), 30; AA, 2: 216.

It is no accident that Kant broaches the topic of sympathy in this early work. For a prominent theme of mid and late eighteenth-century thought, both in morality and aesthetics, is the power of sympathy.²⁶ Shaftsbury, in his response to Hobbes, and whom Leibniz introduced to the German Enlightenment, was perhaps the first to introduce sympathy to moral philosophy through his 1699 *Investigation Concerning Virtue and Merit*. He famously wrote in *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody* that “all things are united” through sympathy. Forty years later, Hume said in the 1739–40 *Treatise* that “we naturally sympathize with others in the sentiments they entertain of us.”²⁷ And in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* of 1756, Burke noted that in observing others, “we are moved as they are moved,” and our “sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution.”²⁸ Finally, in the 1759 *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith placed sympathy at the base of moral thought and action, the constitution of moral sense, the possibility of which, he argued, is grounded in imagination:

Though our brother is upon the rack... it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation... we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him.²⁹

²⁶ See Engell (1981), 143.

²⁷ Hume (2000), 320; 3.2.2.24.

²⁸ Burke (1998), 91.

²⁹ Smith (2002), 11–2.

Sympathy allows us to identify with others, reach a fellow-feeling. It recreates and heightens our sentiments in such a way that we copy the other's experience as though it were our own.³⁰

The British concluded by the 1750s that sympathy is essential to, if not indistinguishable from, moral sentiment. And yet, sympathy was not irreducible as a mental faculty. It was an expression of a fundamental power—the imagination. It was James Arbuckle in his *Collection of Letters and Essays* of 1728 (first published as *Hibernicus's Letters* in 1722) who, thirty years prior to Burke and Smith, made the “astonishingly original thought that the imagination is responsible not only for artistic and aesthetic pleasure but also for the ability to put oneself in the place of others.”³¹ The imagination, not sympathy, became a direct response to proponents of egoism, for by the power of imagination the human being emerges from his subjective shell. Moral sentiment, for the British, was grounded in the power of imagination.

It is no surprise, then, that Kant recognizes sympathy as a source for praiseworthy action. As he says in the *Observations*, “Sympathy and complaisance are grounds for beautiful actions that would perhaps all be suffocated by the preponderance of a cruder self-interest.”³² Yet Kant ultimately rejects sympathy as the first principle of moral judgment. According to the *Observations*, sympathy is “nevertheless weak and is always blind.”³³ Kant calls it an “adopted virtue,” a beautiful disposition of the soul common to those human beings with a “good heart.”

³⁰ For a fuller account of Hume, Burke, and Smith on sympathy, see Engell (1981), 147–51.

³¹ See Engell (1981) 145.

³² Kant (2007), 31; AA, 2: 217.

³³ Kant (2007), 30; AA, 2: 216.

Kant's criticism of sympathy foreshadows his later remark in the first *Critique* that intuitions without concepts are "blind," suggesting the following. First, Kant thinks that sympathy leads to arbitrary, inconsistent action because it focuses on the particulars. It is too myopic in its moral scope, for which reason the sympathetic person will forget his debts, for instance, in rectifying the ill fortune of others. Hence Kant writes,

True virtue can only be grafted upon principles, and it will become the more sublime and noble the more general they are. These principles are not speculative rules, but the consciousness of a feeling that lives in every human breast and that extends much further than to the special grounds of sympathy and complaisance.³⁴

Second, if sympathy is a blind passion, arbitrarily identifying with the ill-fortunes of others and moving us to aid all those in need, and if sympathy is grounded in imagination, Kant is stating, albeit indirectly, that the imagination is a naturally blind, myopic faculty. The feeling of the beautiful may be grounded in imagination. But if the feeling of the sublime is a universal affection and universal respect for human beings, the imagination can only achieve such an expansive, encompassing affection, a feeling for the universal, with the aid of principles.³⁵ In other words, the imagination must be bound, tamed, cultivated, and uplifted through normative rules.

Kant's discussion of the temperaments follows his description of the feelings of the beautiful and the sublime in the *Observations*. At least since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the domination of one temperament was linked to a species of vice, such as pride, lust, or greed. In the eighteenth century the Germans continued and developed research on the temperaments, known as *Die Kunst, der Menschen Gemüther zu Lesen*. Contributions, for instance, arose from the *Popularphilosophen*, Lavatar's physiognomy

³⁴ Kant (2007), 31; AA, 2: 217.

³⁵ Cf. Kant (1900–), AA, 7: 253.

or the *Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, Christian Crusius in his *Anweisung, vernünftig zu leben*, and Ernst Platner's *Anthropologie*. So Kant's contribution to this "art of reading people" in the *Observations* falls directly into this lineage. And it is fitting for an anthropological work, given the fact that knowledge of the temperaments and their behavioral motivations could be valuable in prudential affairs, i.e., making something of oneself as a free being and "using other human beings for one's purposes."³⁶

Kant first correlates genuine virtue with melancholy, "a gentle and noble sentiment, to the extent that it is grounded in that dread which a restricted soul feels if, full of a great project, it sees the dangers that it has to withstand and has before its eyes the difficult but great triumph of self-overcoming."³⁷ He then connects adopted virtue with the sanguine:

Good heartedness, a beauty and fine susceptibility of the heart to be moved by sympathy or benevolence in individual cases as occasion demands, is very much subject to the change of circumstances; and since the movement of the soul does not rest upon a general principle, it readily takes on different shapes as the objects display one aspect or another.³⁸

Finally, he suggests that the choleric temperament has a close kinship with a simulacrum of virtue, since it is often interested in the appearance of virtue for the sake of honor:

He whom one means by the **choleric** constitution of mind has a dominant feeling for that sort of the sublime which one can call the **magnificent**. It is really only the gloss of sublimity (*der Schimmer der Erhabenheit*) and a strikingly contrasting coloration, which hides the inner content of the thing or the person, who is perhaps only bad and common, and which deceives and moves through its appearance (*Schein*).³⁹

³⁶ Kant (2007), 308; AA, 7: 201. I have benefitted in this context from Mark Larrimore's "Substitutes for Wisdom: Kant's Practical Thought and the Tradition of the Temperaments." For a full discussion of the temperaments with respect to Kant's practical thought, see Larrimore (2001).

³⁷ Kant (2007), 33; AA, 2: 219.

³⁸ Kant (2007), 33; AA, 2: 219.

³⁹ Kant (2007), 35; AA, 2: 222–3.

These three temperaments correlated with the three types of virtue point to Kant's teleological speculation (some have even called it Kant's theodicy)⁴⁰ that these temperamental groups unite in nature, unbeknownst to themselves, "in a painting of a magnificent expression, where in the midst of great variety unity shines forth, and the whole of moral nature displays beauty and dignity."⁴¹

Kant's praise of the melancholic as an expression of genuine virtue is peculiar for a standard commentary on the temperaments in the 1760s, the height of the German Enlightenment. For as one scholar notes, "Pietism's appropriation of melancholy was one reason why... melancholy was the 'other' of the *Aufklärung*, which defined itself against especially religious enthusiasm, fanaticism and superstition."⁴² But Kant's appropriation of melancholy is decisively anti-fanatic. Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl note that Kant's description of the melancholic as the polar opposite of the Renaissance depiction as the conduit of rapturous inspiration and madness, the precondition for art, prophecy, and philosophy, suggests a more autobiographical interpretation:

Kant was not untouched, perhaps, by the Renaissance view, but it was rather, in all probability, a deep feeling of sympathy which led him to endow the melancholy character, limited though its traits were by tradition, with the stamp of the "sublime", and, point by point, to interpret every trait of melancholy as the expression of a great moral consciousness... The "sadness without cause" was based on his possession of a moral scale which destroyed personal happiness by the merciless revelation of his own and others' worthlessness.⁴³

⁴⁰ See Larrimore (2001).

⁴¹ Kant (2007), 39; AA, 2: 227. Kant dismisses the phlegmatic outright in the *Observations*. But this is not surprising, since Kant, in this earlier treatise, is a moral sentiment thinker and the fact that the phlegmatic lacks feeling entails that Kant could not correlate the phlegmatic with a feeling for virtue. See Kant (2007), 33; AA, 2: 220.

⁴² Larrimore (2001), 265.

⁴³ Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl (1964), 122.

Kant's self-diagnosis of melancholy and its predisposition for moral action run parallel, as we shall see, to his remarks on hypochondria and its disposition for theoretical inquiry.

Kant's statement that the melancholic has a "feeling for the sublime," beyond its seeming self-conceit, points to the importance of rules and the taming of imagination.

Consider his description of the principled melancholic:

The person of a melancholic frame of mind troubles himself little about how others judge, what they hold to be good or true, and in that regard he relies solely on his own insight. Since his motivations take on the nature of principles, he is not easily brought to other conceptions.... Friendship is sublime and hence he has a feeling for it. He can perhaps lose an inconstant friend, but the latter does not lose him equally quickly. Even the memory of an extinguished friendship is still worthy of honor for him.⁴⁴

The principled melancholic maintains a measured restraint in his commerce with others, i.e., he tames his imaginative power for sympathy.⁴⁵ For he holds a persistent indifference toward petty judgments and fleeting fashions but nevertheless recognizes according to principle how to respect the inner dignity and worth of human beings. Lacking a principle, however, the melancholic degenerates: "Seriousness inclines to dejection, piety to zealotry, the fervor for freedom to enthusiasm," all characteristics of which will be marks of a wild imagination in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.⁴⁶

The sanguine and choleric temperaments are, by definition, unprincipled. But Kant's teleological assumption in the *Observations* suggests that these temperaments can be prerequisites for a noble heart, he who has a feeling for the sublime. The sanguine temperament has a natural predisposition to sympathize with the plight (and pleasure) of others. He has a powerful imagination for reconstructing the emotions of other human

⁴⁴ Kant (2007), 34; AA, 2: 221.

⁴⁵ As Kant notes, "Now as soon as this feeling is raised to its proper universality, it is sublime, but also colder," Kant (2007), 30; AA, 2: 216.

⁴⁶ Kant (2007), 35; AA, 2: 221–2.

beings. With the correct normative restraint of the imagination, the adopted virtue of the sanguine is capable of becoming the genuine virtue of the melancholic. Likewise, we witness a choleric character naturally predisposed to imaginatively reconstruct the other's perceptions of it. In contrast to the sanguine, who imagines everyone in himself, the choleric imagines himself in everyone else.⁴⁷ Yet it seems plausible that with the proper cultivation of the choleric's imagination, this temperament can begin to develop a feeling for the beautiful and, ultimately, the sublime.⁴⁸

Although the *Observations* makes no explicit reference to *Bildungsvermögen*, it would be wrong to cast it aside as an unimportant clue to Kant's developing standpoint on *Einbildungskraft*. As Paul Guyer notes in his introduction to this work, although the *Observations* is disappointing insofar as one might expect an early aesthetic theory anticipating the mature position in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, it nonetheless succeeds as an early anthropological treatise, since it lays out Kant's early views on human psychology and its affects on moral action.⁴⁹ What we see is Kant's early position on "knowledge of the world" (*Weltkenntnis*). And thus I think we may infer from what he says here what his early thoughts on *Bildungsvermögen* might have been: a blind and myopic faculty, naturally unprincipled, and predisposed toward enthusiasm and zealotry.

⁴⁷ Cf. the Greek Narcissus and the modern narcissist.

⁴⁸ Kant suggests that human nature has a predisposition to moral action: "Even a person of the crudest and most vulgar sentiment [pure self-interest] will be able to perceive that the charms and attractions of life which seem to be the most dispensable attract our greatest care, and that we would have few incentives left for such manifold efforts if they were to be excluded. At the same time, practically no one is so crude not to be sensitive that a moral action is all the more moving, at least to another, the further it is from self-interest and the more those nobler impulses stand out in it," Kant (2007), 38–9; AA, 2: 226.

⁴⁹ Kant (2007), 19.

4,3 Psychopathology

The 1764 “Essay on the maladies of the head,” which Kant published in the *Königsbergische Gelehrte und Politische Zeitungen*, is written according to the same method as the *Observations*. Here again Kant is more concerned to observe and to present a taxonomy of phenomena—“onomastic of the frailties of the head”—than to draw any metaphysical conclusions. It is, in this sense, another early anthropological work. But in another sense, and quite unlike the *Observations*, the “Essay” describes mental processes, not, to be sure, transcendental cognition according to the *Critique*, but a “deficiency” or “reversal” of empirical cognition. For this reason, the “Essay” is important as a contrast to the *Critique*. Moreover, his descriptions of psychopathology are cloaked in language that allude to, if not directly implicate, the *Bildungsvermögen*.

Robert Loudon tells us in his introduction to the “Essay” that in late 1763 and early 1764 a Polish religious fanatic by the name of Jan Pawlikowicz Zdomożyskich Komarnicki, who traveled with a little boy and a herd of cows, sheep, and goats, took his sojourn outside of Königsberg and attracted a great deal of attention. After a serious stomach illness and a visionary experience provoked by twenty days of fasting, the “goat prophet” revealed his vow to undertake a seven-year pilgrimage, of which two years remained to be served at the time. Johann Georg Hamann published a report in 1764 about Komarnicki, in which he referred to the goat prophet as an “adventurer” (*Abenteurer*) and gave a critical portrayal of the man’s religious behavior. Hamann’s report was followed by an anonymous assessment:

According to the judgment of a local scholar, the most remarkable thing in the above note about the inspired faun and his lad, for such eyes as gladly spy out raw nature, which commonly becomes very unrecognizable under the discipline to which human beings are subjected, is—the *little wild one*, who grew up in the woods, has learned to bid defiance to all hardships of weather with a joyful liveliness and whose face displays no vulgar

frankness and has nothing about it of the stupid embarrassment which is an effect result of servitude or of the forced attentiveness of finer education; and, to be brief, who seems to be (when one takes away that in which a few people have already corrupted him, by teaching him to ask for money and to enjoy sweets), a *perfect child* in that understanding in which an experimental moralist could wish it, one who would be reasonable enough not to count the words of Herr *Rousseau* among the beautiful phantoms until he had tested them.⁵⁰

As Louden notes, on the basis of Ludwig Ernst Borowski's early biography of Kant, this assessment can be attributed to Kant.⁵¹ What is interesting about the assessment is Kant's focus not on the goat prophet and religious fanaticism but the anthropological and pedagogical significance of the "perfect child."⁵²

The anonymous assessment helps to situate the theme of the "Essay." In spite of expectations to the contrary, the "Essay" begins not with a list of psychopathologies but with a discussion of the simplicity of nature: "The simplicity and frugality of nature demands and forms only common concepts and a clumsy sincerity in human beings."⁵³ Nature is simple, innocent like the perfect child. But culture, by contrast, is complex and deceptive: "Artificial constraint and the luxury of a civil constitution hatches punsters and subtle reasoners, occasionally, however, also fools and swindlers, and gives birth to the wise or decent semblance by means of which one can dispense with understanding as well as integrity, if only the beautiful veil which decency spreads over the secret frailties of the head or the heart is woven close enough."⁵⁴ Culture creates a dissembling cloak, a

⁵⁰ Cited from Kant (2007), 63.

⁵¹ Borowski, Jachmann, and Wasianski (1974), 31.

⁵² See Louden's introduction to the "Essay" in Kant (2007), 63–4.

⁵³ Kant (2007), 65; AA, 2: 259.

⁵⁴ Kant (2007), 65; AA, 2: 259.

complex artwork or image. As culture and the image grow, genuine virtue and moral principles diminish in importance.⁵⁵

In the conclusion of the “Essay” Kant returns to the distinction between nature and culture. He writes,

The human being in the state of nature can only be subject to a few follies and hardly any foolishness. His needs always keep him close to experience and provide his sound understanding with such easy occupation that he hardly notices that he needs understanding for his actions... The means of leavening for all these corruptions can properly be found in the civil constitution, which, even if it does not produce them, nevertheless serves to entertain and aggravate them.⁵⁶

Maladies of the head are, at least in part, social constructions. If not born in society, they are at least sustained and nurtured therein. Now we saw in chapter three the way the imagination inaugurated the concept and concretization of culture. This process was described through the myths of Adam and Prometheus. For his part, Kant is not presenting a myth, but he is suggesting that culture is a fabrication, a product, at least in part, of imagination. Although he rarely broaches the topic of *Bildungsvermögen* in this early anthropological work, reducing his focus to a few off-handed remarks, might we be warranted to read *Bildungsvermögen* as central to this essay? I think so. For Kant, *Bildungsvermögen* helps inaugurate culture, as well as frailties of the head.

Kant begins his onomastic by indicating the milder degrees of the maladies of the head, namely, a “dull head” (*der stumpfe Kopf*), an “idiot” (*der Dummkopf*), and a “simpleton” (*Einfaltspinsel*). Each malady represents a paralysis of theoretical or practical understanding. A dull head, for example, lacks the wit to dress up “the thought

⁵⁵ Kant’s remarks here are reminiscent of the *Observations*, where a simulacrum of virtue is most common among humanity: “The **love of honor** is distributed **among all** human hearts, although in unequal measure, which must give the whole a beauty that charms to the point of admiration.” See Kant (2007), 39; AA, 2: 227.

⁵⁶ Kant (2007), 75; AA, 2: 269.

with all kinds of signs of which several fit it most aptly.”⁵⁷ He grasps and remembers concepts, but he cannot express them in poetic form or beautiful prose. The idiot, for his part, is deficient in theoretical concepts. He cannot judge rightly his experiences. And the simpleton lacks the practical craftiness in the “techniques with which human beings deal with one another.”⁵⁸ He naively assumes everyone to be a good person like himself and is thus tricked by swindlers and rogues.

“Folly” (*Torheit*) is the manifestation of the Greek *akrasia*. The passions, often love, ambition, and greed, deemphasize reasons against good action. He knows that these pursuits are against his better judgment, but he cannot help himself. “Foolishness” (*Narrheit*) is “reversed reason” “if the predominant passion is odious in itself and at the same time insipid enough to take for the satisfaction of the passion precisely that which is contrary to the natural intention of the passion.” The fool (*Narr*) is so blinded that he takes the satisfaction of the desire to be achieved at the moment that he deprives himself of it. Kant cites Nero as an example: “*Nero* exposes himself to public mockery by reciting wretched verses to obtain the poet’s prize and still says at the end of his life: *quantus artifex morior!*”⁵⁹

At the beginning of the “Essay,” Kant writes, “If everything in general depends on art, fine cleverness (*Schlaueigkeit*) cannot be dispensed with, but sincerity, which in such relations is only obstructive, can well be done without.”⁶⁰ What this suggests is that propriety and social norms are realized through a crafty, clever imagination. And hence

⁵⁷ Kant (2007), 66; AA, 2: 260.

⁵⁸ Kant (2007), 66; AA, 2: 260.

⁵⁹ Kant (2007), 68; AA, 2: 262. Translation: “What an artist dies with me!”

⁶⁰ Kant (2007), 65; AA, 2: 259.

what ties together the latter frailties, which Kant says are “despised” and “scoffed at,” is an uncreative, inartistic imagination. Each frailty points to a failure to navigate culture successfully by playing the game of artful dissemblance. The pretense that each displays is seen for what it is, namely, pretense. The images that the dull head projects are unconvincing or fall short of social expectations and norms. As Kant remarks about the simpleton,

Since intrigue and false devices have gradually become customary maxims in civil society and have very much complicated the play of human actions, it is no wonder when an otherwise sensible and sincere man for whom all this cunning is either too contemptible to occupy himself with it or who cannot move his honest and benevolent heart to make himself such a hated concept of human nature were to get caught everywhere by swindlers and give them much to laugh about.⁶¹

In the case of folly, the implication is that strong passions attach themselves to our practical deliberations. The fool knows his best interests, all things considered, but passion, attached to an image of a future self-interested satisfaction, overrides moral action. And the fool is so overwhelmed by the passions of greed and arrogance that his image of himself blinds him to the judgment of others.

There is a question whether treatment is available for the foregoing maladies of the head. In the case of a dull head, Kant suggests that a cure may be unnecessary, for it is not a mark of idiocy. He who is deficient in rhetoric may be a brilliant mathematician, for instance. His imagination is simply directed toward other ends. The simpleton lacks the craft of manipulating others for his purposes. Kant’s lectures on pragmatic anthropology would serve him well.⁶² And in the case of the folly, Kant notes that he

⁶¹ Kant (2007), 67; AA, 2: 261.

⁶² Cf. Kant (2007), 408; AA, 7: 312: “In an anthropology from a pragmatic point of view, however, the only thing that matters to us is to present the character of both [i.e., French and English characters], as they

could still be made a shrewd man (*gescheuter Mann*). He at least has insight into his unreasonable passions. But the fool is helpless, for “a silly phantom reigns that reverses reason’s principles.”⁶³ The fool resembles a “disturbed mind,” marked by a reversal of cognitive processes, which Kant suggests are incurable and pitied.⁶⁴

The “reversals” (*Verkehrtheiten*) are maladies that “one generally looks upon with pity,”⁶⁵ since the patient experiences uncontrollable illusions and lacks insight into his illness. Kant divides these according to the three mental powers. He notes that the pathology of “derangement” (*Verrückung*) is a “reversal of the concepts of experience,” “dementia” (*Wahnsinn*) a reversal of the power of judgment, and “insanity” (*Wahnwitz*) a reversal of reason.⁶⁶ “All remaining appearances of the sick brain can be viewed,” Kant writes, “either as different degrees of the cases mentioned or as an unfortunate coalition of these ills among one another, or, finally, as the engrafting of these ills on powerful passions, and can be subordinated under the classes cited.”⁶⁷

As we saw in chapter two, the *Critique* argues that intuition is a synthetic act of imagination. The “Essay” presents a similar position, albeit without the sophisticated terminology employed by Kant almost twenty years later. In his explanation of derangement, he writes,

are now, in some examples, and, as far as possible, systematically; which makes it possible to judge what each can expect from the other and how each could use the other to its own advantage.”

⁶³ Kant (2007), 69; AA, 2: 263.

⁶⁴ *Narrheit* is exemplified by what Kant calls in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* a “fanatical intuition.” It is a sickness of sensation, which Kant tells us lacks a cure. The diagnosis of *Narrheit* and its etiology will be important when we consider Kant’s discussion of *Schwärmerei* and the Swedish mystic Swedenborg. Swedenborg suffers from a fanatical intuition. And thus unlike other psychopathologies, such as hypochondria, the *Narr*, under which the *Schwärmer* falls, is incurable.

⁶⁵ Kant (2007), 69; AA, 2: 263.

⁶⁶ Kant (2007), 70; AA, 2: 264.

⁶⁷ Kant (2007), 70; AA, 2: 264.

The soul of every human being is occupied even in the healthiest state with painting all kinds of images of things that are not present, or with completing some imperfect resemblance in the representation of present things through one or another chimerical trait which the creative poetic capacity (*schöpferische Dichtungsfähigkeit*) draws into the sensation.⁶⁸

The creative poetic capacity represents (“draws”) images that resemble past images and fills in aspects that are presented partially or perspectively.⁶⁹

Kant goes on in his description of the healthy soul:

One has no cause at all to believe that in the state of being awake our mind follows other laws than in sleep. Rather it is to be conjectured that in the former case the lively sensible impressions only obscure and render unrecognizable the more fragile chimerical images, while they possess their whole strength in sleep, in which the access to the soul is closed to all outer impressions. It is therefore no wonder that dreams are held for truthful experiences of actual things, as long as they last. Since they are then the strongest representations in the soul, they are in this state exactly what the sensations are in being awake.⁷⁰

The act of imagination follows the same laws in both sleep and waking life. In waking life, the force and liveliness of outer impressions “obscure” or “render unrecognizable” the false images arising from, presumably, inner impressions, impressions which, during the dream-state, have full affect on the mind. For Kant, in both the anthropological writings and the *Critique*, every experience is constituted partially by imaginative chimera, even the veridical ones. Everyone lives, to some extent, in his own fantastical world.

⁶⁸ Kant (2007), 70; AA, 2: 264.

⁶⁹ For a contemporary interpretation of Kant’s theory of imagination and perception, which draws on the idea of imagination as interpretation, see Strawson (1982), Young (1988), and Sellars (2002). See also chapter five, section 5.

⁷⁰ Kant (2007), 70; AA, 2: 264.

Kant's presupposition is that the creative poetic capacity is always active,⁷¹ its chimera constantly permeating our experiences. In this regard, Monique David-Ménard writes,

The interesting aspect of all these fantasts, these daydreamers who let their dreams markedly color their grasp on reality, is to make us understand that madness is the inversion, of relative weight, of our perceptions and dreams. For we all have imaginary and slightly delirious worlds.⁷²

The mad and sane both fill their perception with chimerical images. The distinction rests on the proper weight given to the internal and external impression.

Kant lists various degrees of the reversals of the concepts of experience. There are manifestations of reversals in which we can check the fantasy:

When after waking up we lie in an idle and gentle distraction, our imagination (*Einbildung*) draws the irregular figures such as those of the bedroom curtains or of certain spots on a near wall, into human shapes, and this with a seeming correctness that entertains us in not an unpleasant manner but the illusion (*Blendwerk*) of which we dispel the moment we want to.⁷³

In contrast, those who suffer from a greater degree of pathology lose this capacity of comparison and the power to dispel false images: "If something similar happens in a higher degree without the attention of the waking person being able to detach the illusion in the misleading imagination (*täuschenden Einbildung*), then this reversal lets us

⁷¹ In the 1798 *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Kant tells us that the imagination is a vital function. It is a principle of life; hence it must always be active: "Dreaming seems to belong so necessarily to sleeping that sleeping and dying would be one and the same thing, if the dream were not added as a natural, although involuntary, agitation of the inner vital organs by means of the power of imagination. Thus I can remember well how, as a boy tired because of playing, I went to sleep and, at the moment of falling asleep, quickly awoke due to a dream that I had fallen into water and was being turned around in circles, coming close to drowning, only soon to fall asleep again more peacefully. Presumably this was because the activity of the chest muscles in breathing, which depends completely on choice, had slackened, and with the failure of breathing the movement of the heart was impeded, and thus the power of imagination had to be set into action again by means of the dream," Kant (2007), 297–8; AA, 7: 190, my emphasis.

⁷² David-Ménard (2000), 85.

⁷³ Kant (2007), 71; AA, 2: 265.

conjecture a fantast (*Phantast*).”⁷⁴ The difference between the daydreamer and the fantast is subtle but important, for Kant seems to think that the former leads to the latter if we fail to correct the misleading imagination.

In the 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant writes:

The hypochondriac is a melancholic (visionary) of the most pitiful sort: obstinate, unable to be talked out of his imaginings, and always running headlong to the physician, who has no end of trouble with him, and who can calm him only by treating him like a child (with pills containing bread crumbs instead of medicine). And when this patient, who despite his perpetual sickliness can never be sick, consults medical books, he becomes completely unbearable because he believes he feels all the ailments in his body that he reads about in books.⁷⁵

Kant warns that attending to or abstracting from “local impressions” has the power to strengthen or weaken the illusions. If the act of abstraction becomes habitual, the illusion stays away completely.⁷⁶ But if the hypochondriac continually focuses on the illusion, he slips deeper into a world of fantastic visions, no longer able to distinguish the real from the illusory.⁷⁷

This failure to check the illusions against reality is the mark of the visionary (*Visionär*) or fantast (*Schwärmer*) whose “ruleless fantasy approaches madness, where fantasy plays completely with the human being and the unfortunate victim has no control

⁷⁴ Kant (2007), 71; AA, 2: 265. Kant notes that this “self-deception in sensation is very common, and as long as it is only moderate it will be spared with such an appellation, although, if a passion is added to it, this same mental weakness can degenerate into actual fantastic mania.” See Kant (2007), 71; AA, 2: 265.

⁷⁵ Kant (2007), 318; AA, 7: 213. Cf. Kant (2007), 72; AA, 2: 266.

⁷⁶ Kant (2007), 318; AA, 7: 212.

⁷⁷ In one of his autobiographical moments, Kant writes, “The hypochondriac is a melancholic (visionary) of the most pitiful sort: obstinate, unable to be talked out of his imaginings, and always running headlong to the physician, who has no end of trouble with him, and who can calm him only by treating him like a child (with pills containing bread crumbs instead of medicine). And when this patient, who despite his perpetual sickliness can never be sick, consults medical books, he becomes completely unbearable because he believes he feels all the ailments in his body that he reads about in books,” Kant (2007), 318; AA, 7: 213.

at all over the course of his representations.”⁷⁸ In the “Essay” Kant calls the fantast a “deranged person with presumed immediate inspiration and a great familiarity with the powers of the heavens.”⁷⁹ And in the 1766 *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, he notes that the visions of the fantast arise from a “fanatical intuition” (*fanatischem Anschauen*).⁸⁰ He suffers from “sensory delusion” (*Wahnsinn*). Hence, Kant writes, “since the malady of the fantastical visionary does not really affect the understanding but rather involves the deception of the senses, the wretched victim cannot banish his illusions by means of subtle reasoning.”⁸¹ A sheer resolution of the mind toward abstraction cannot save the fantast. He is simply to be pitied.

If we juxtapose the day-dreamer, hypochondriac, and fantast, we see a progression from a “playful,” “unintentionally mediating” imagination to a progressively pathological power of intuition. Kant could not have recognized this in the 1760s, but by the 1798 *Anthropology* he must have suspected that a “diseased imagination” could affect—and perhaps permanently damage—intuition, producing a fanatical intuition like Swedenborg’s.

In derangement sensibility, not understanding, is ill. This is different, however, in the care of dementia,⁸² which, Kant says, is an attack on the understanding and “consists in judging in a completely reversed manner from otherwise correct experience.”⁸³ Cases of dementia include faulty inferences of intention from behavior: one “ordinarily explains

⁷⁸ Kant (2007), 290–1; AA, 7: 181. Cf. Kant (2007), 72; AA, 2: 266: “His state bears a strong resemblance to the deranged person, except that it is not that serious.”

⁷⁹ Kant (2007), 73; AA, 2: 267.

⁸⁰ Kant (2002a), 347; AA, 2: 360.

⁸¹ Kant (2002a), 335; AA, 2: 347.

⁸² It is odd that Kant would choose *Wahnsinn* as a term for an attack of understanding, since the literal translation would be a sensory delusion, as seen in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.

⁸³ Kant (2007), 74; AA, 2: 268.

the behavior of other human beings through an absurd delusion as referring to himself and believes that he is able to read out of it who knows what suspicious intentions, which they never have in mind. Hearing him, one would believe that the whole town is occupied with him.”⁸⁴ Thinking back to the *Observations*, we recall in this context the feeling for honor, the obsession with the other’s perception of ourselves. Taken to extremes, this feeling manifests itself as dementia: “An arrogant person is to a certain measure a demented person who concludes from the conduct of others staring at him in scorn that they admire him.”⁸⁵

In insanity, “reason [is] brought into disorder, insofar as it errs in a nonsensical manner in imagined more subtle judgments concerning universal concepts.”⁸⁶ Examples here include “the contrived length of the ocean,” “the interpretation of prophecies,” and the case in which “there are many underlying correct judgments of experience, except that, due to the novelty and number of consequences presented to him by his wit, his sensation is so intoxicated that he no longer pays attention to the correctness of the connection of these judgments.”⁸⁷ Insanity is an error of inference. The mind races from one judgment to the next, failing to note spurious connections. It thus sees syntheses that do not exist, imagining systematicity and universal and unconditioned grounds.

Kant’s “Essay” appears to be a naïve forerunner of nineteenth-century psychiatry, and Kant himself playfully invites us to make such an interpretation. But upon closer inspection, the essay alludes to Kant’s concerns regarding *Bildungsvermögen* or, as he

⁸⁴ Kant (2007), 74; AA, 2: 268.

⁸⁵ Kant (2007), 74; AA, 2: 268.

⁸⁶ Kant (2007), 74; AA, 2: 268.

⁸⁷ Kant (2007), 74; AA, 2: 268.

often calls it in the case of madness, *Phantasie*. Given that we cannot return to a state of nature, like the goat prophet and his perfect child, the question is how to tame citizens' imagination. If sensation, ideas, and inferences are all infused with imagination, then the line drawn between sanity and madness is subtle. If Kant thought his own bout of hypochondria and melancholia or Rousseau's moral enthusiasm lay on the brink of insanity or fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*), it is no surprise that he would emphasize the taming of *Einbildungskraft* in transcendental philosophy, binding it, as we saw in chapter two, according to universal and necessary rules of the understanding.

Kant's life testifies to his conviction regarding the power of principles. As Kuehn notes in his biography, Kant was acutely aware of his hypochondria during this time, and "felt that to escape hypochondriacal states we should go about our 'daily business' (*Tagesordnung*) and concentrate on the things we must do. Our maxim should be to focus on other matters and especially on philosophical problems, and this, Kant is sure, will enable us to overcome the states of anxiety to which we might otherwise fall victim."⁸⁸ Kant felt that life in accordance with maxims is not simply a source of virtue and a good character but source of mental health as well.⁸⁹ If maxims are rules by which we live, if they structure character, then it is safe to say that Kant thought at this time that maxims should regulate *Bildungsvermögen*; they ought to reign in excessive theoretical

⁸⁸ Kuehn (2001), 151.

⁸⁹ Kuehn tells us that James Boswell and Samuel Johnson were also afflicted with hypochondria and that Johnson's advice to Boswell was quite compatible with Kant's advice to himself: "Constant occupation of the mind, to take a great deal of exercise, and to live moderately, especially to shun drinking at night," see Kuehn (2001), 152.

speculation that leads beyond the *Hypochondrist* (Kant) to the *Schwärmer* (Swedenborg).⁹⁰

4,4 Fanatical Intuition

The 1766 *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* is a strange treatise. A polemic against mysticism and Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish theologian and mystic, it is also a polemic against metaphysicians. And thus some have suggested that, title to the contrary, the treatise really exposes the dreams of metaphysics through the dreams of a spirit-seer.⁹¹ But what is particularly odd about the work is Kant's tone. It is at times mocking, at times satirical. Kant came close to apologizing for this to Mendelssohn, who found nothing funny about metaphysics.⁹² On April 6, 1766, Kant wrote to Mendelssohn:

The estrangement you express about the tone of my little work proves to me that you have formed a good opinion of the sincerity of my character, and your very reluctance to see that character ambiguously expressed is both precious and pleasing to me. In fact, you will never have to change this opinion. For, though there may be flaws that even the most steadfast determination cannot eradicate completely, I shall certainly never become a fickle or fraudulent person, having, during what must have been the largest part of my life, learned to do without as well as to scorn most of the things that tend to corrupt one's character. The loss of self-respect, which originates from the consciousness of an

⁹⁰ As we have seen, Kant admits that some manifestations of mental illness are beyond cure: "Since in those of the second kind, the demented and insane persons, the understanding itself is attacked, it is not only foolish to reason with them (because they would not be demented if they could grasp these rational arguments), but it is also extremely detrimental. For one thus gives their reversed head only new material for concocting absurdities; contradiction does not better them, rather it excites them, and it is entirely necessary in dealing with them to assume an indifferent and kind demeanor, as though one did not notice at all that their understanding was lacking something" See Kant (2007), 76; AA, 2: 270.

⁹¹ See Kuehn (2001), 173.

⁹² The following is an excerpt from Mendelssohn's review of *Dreams of a spirit-seer*: "A certain Herr Schredenber[*sic*] of Stockholm, who in our incredulous time has accomplished most incredible marvels and who has written eight quarto volumes full of nonsense called the *Arcana Coelestia*, is the spirit-seer whose dreams Herr Kant tries to illustrate through metaphysical hypotheses, themselves called dreams. The joking pensiveness with which this little work is written leaves the reader sometimes in doubt as to whether Herr Kant intends to make metaphysics laughable or spirit-seeing credible," cited from Johnson ed. (2002), 123.

undisguised way of thinking, would thus be the greatest evil that could befall me, but which most certainly never will befall me. Although I am personally convinced with the greatest clarity and satisfaction of many things which I will never have the courage to say, I will never say anything that I do not mean.⁹³

Kant was not rescinding his remarks in *Dreams*, as much as indirectly apologizing for his uncouth humor. But Kant, for his part, seemed to anticipate Mendelssohn's reaction. As he wrote in the Preamble, "Given its subject-matter, it ought, so the author fondly hopes, to leave the reader completely satisfied: for the bulk of it he will not understand, parts of it he will not believe, and as for the rest—he will dismiss it with scornful laughter."⁹⁴

Dreams testifies to Kant's growing concern with religious fanaticism and metaphysical flights of fancy. Yet it also testifies to his continued commitment to nature as the ultimate criterion of knowledge, a commitment we saw for the first time in his remarks in his personal copy of the *Observations* and then again in the "Announcement." For this treatise offers refutations from materialist grounds to mysticism and metaphysics, to the immateriality and existence of spirits to influences from so-called spirit-impressions from a spirit-world. Here, I think, we have convincing evidence that Kant knew of the dangers inherent to an unbound *Bildungsvermögen* by 1766, since Kant traces illusion, psychopathology, fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*), and the metaphysical claims of rational psychology to a rogue *Phantasie*.

This is not to overlook that *Dreams* is also a treatise on morality. As Kant brushes aside and mocks his opponents, he slips in hypotheses on the relation between nature and

⁹³ Cited from Kuehn (2001), 172.

⁹⁴ Kant (2002a), 306; AA, 2: 318. Not every review of *Dreams of a spirit-seer* was entirely negative. Herder seems to have had a different reaction to the treatise. He writes in his review of 1766 that "in sum: if the best moral book is the one that leaves the strongest impressions on my feelings, so without a doubt is the best philosophical book the one that gives rise to a train of thought, and the present book has a great claim to that," cited from Johnson ed. (2002), 118.

morality, facts and obligations, moral and ignoble sentiments, and individual wills and the general will. These remarks bring us closer to why Kant revised the Transcendental Deduction from the first to the second edition of the *Critique*. For if moral impulses arise from a “spirit-world” of rational beings, and if pseudo-divine messages emerge from a spirit-world according to the fantast, and if, finally, *Bildungsvermögen* is the common conduit in both occurrences, we begin to see the concern that what constitutes a medium for morality also constitutes a medium for fanaticism. *Bildungsvermögen* looks like a purveyor of morality and madness.⁹⁵

Although it is unnecessary to delve into the details of Kant’s opening analysis of the concept of spirit (*Geist*), there are two remarks of interest, both in footnotes, which I mention here. In the first case, detailing the method of investigation of a concept, Kant writes, “By noticing with which cases my concept is compatible and with which it is inconsistent, I hope to unfold the concealed sense of the concept.”⁹⁶ He then provides a footnote, noting that the problem with the concept of spirit is that it is doubtful whether a spirit actually exists and therefore doubtful whether the concept is derived by abstraction from experience. The question, then, is how such a concept could arise. Kant writes,

There are many concepts which are the product of covert and obscure inferences made in the course of experience; these concepts then proceed to propagate themselves by attaching themselves to other concepts, without there being any awareness of the experience itself on which they were originally based or of the inference which formed the concept on the basis of that experience. Such concepts may be called *surreptitious concepts*. There is a great number of such concepts; some of them are nothing but delusions of the imagination (*ein Wahn der Einbildung*).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ As I hope is becoming clear, Kant employs different terms for imagination to designate different actions of the mind. In the context of *Dreams* where imagination is unbound, Kant calls the imagination *Phantasie*. But in the *Critique* where the imagination is bound by rules, he calls it *Einbildungskraft*.

⁹⁶ Kant (2002a), 308; AA, 2: 320.

⁹⁷ Kant (2002a), 308; AA, 2: 320n.

This psychological explanation of the formation of surreptitious concepts is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it points to the fact that the activities of *Einbildung* are often unconscious. As we know from Hume, there are many concepts formed on the basis of unconscious associations of imagination, concepts that lack verification. Kant's point is that the concept of spirit may be a surreptitious concept of *Einbildung*. Second, unchecked inferences of *Einbildung* are reminiscent of Kant's description of insanity in the "Essay," where reason, unbound and "intoxicated," no longer checks the validity of the connections of its judgments. An intoxicated reason is therefore an unbound *Einbildung*.

The second remark occurs in footnote a few pages later. Kant writes,

The current opinion of the soul which assigns it to a place in the brain, would seem to have originated chiefly from the fact that, when one engages in deep thought, one has the distinct feeling that the nerves in the brain are being strained... The reason which has persuaded people to think that they feel the *reflective* soul particularly in the brain is, perhaps, this: all reflection requires the mediation of *signs* for the ideas which are to be awakened, if the ideas, accompanied and supported by the signs, are to attain the required degree of clarity... Now, if the excitation of these signs, which Descartes called *ideas materiales*, is really a stimulation of the nerves producing a motion which is similar to the motion produced by sensation, then it follows that in reflection the tissue of the brain will, in particular, be forced to vibrate in harmony with the earlier impression, and, as a result, to grow fatigued.⁹⁸

Kant does not here mention *Einbildung*. But the productions of signs that represent the ideas of reflection implicate *Einbildung* as their cause. For no other power of the mind mimics or imitates the stimulation of the senses in order to reproduce a previous sense-impression. This passage, like the previous footnote above, calls to mind the "Essay." For here again Kant is alluding to the creative poetic capacity (*schöpferische Dichtungsfähigkeit*), which imitates the force or vivacity of the sense-impressions.

⁹⁸ Kant (2002a), 313; AA, 2: 325n.

These two footnotes, seemingly different in intent, converge on *Einbildung* with the following implication. If signs are stimulations of nerves that replicate stimulations of sense-impressions, then signs that are produced with a force and liveliness equal to or greater than sense-impressions will be treated as derivative from experience. And if these signs are the product of spurious inferences, then *Einbildung* will infuse experience with “hypochondriacal exhalations, old wives’ tales and monastery miracles.”⁹⁹

Bildungsvermögen thus appears, according to Kant’s oft-repeated expression of the critical period, as a condition for the possibility of veridical *and* fanatic experiences.

In the first of part of *Dreams*, which Kant calls “Dogmatic,” the questions concern the concept of spirit; what it is; the communication between matter and life, whether this communication is possible; and an explanation for the visions of the spirit-seer, whether it is a mental power or psychopathology. The second and third chapter of part one are particularly important, for Kant there shows that the immaterial spirit-world is unintuitable for a human being, endowed as he is with sense organs, and that, correlatively, the spirit-world is incapable of receiving impressions or influences from material natures. There may be two worlds, Kant admits, a material and intelligible world, composed of material and spiritual natures, but they are separate communities. Here is how Kant puts the matter in relation to the seemingly dual nature of the human soul:

For the representation which the human soul, using an immaterial intuition, has of itself as a spirit, in so far as it regards itself as standing in relation to beings of a similar nature, is quite different from the representations it has when the soul’s consciousness represents itself as a *human being* by means of an image drawn from the impression made on the organs of the body and which can only be represented in relation to material things.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Kant (2002a), 305; AA, 2: 317.

¹⁰⁰ Kant (2002a), 325; AA, 2: 337.

Foreshadowing central claims of the transcendental philosophy, Kant speculates that although the subject is one, its membership in two communities entails that it is dualistic in nature.

The question, however, is how we become aware of this spirit-world, given the arguments against any direct influence between spirit and material natures. Kant's answer is *Phantasie*: "For these influences can enter the personal consciousness of man, not, it is true, directly, but, nonetheless, in such a fashion that they, in accordance with the law of association of ideas, excite those images which are related to them, and awaken representations which bear an analogy with our senses. They are not, it is true, the spirit-concept itself, but they are symbols of it."¹⁰¹ *Phantasie* associates or links spiritual ideas with symbolic images, analogously, Kant writes, to the "way in which concepts of reason, which are fairly close to the spirit-concepts, normally assume, so to speak, a corporeal cloak."¹⁰² The symbolic representations of *Phantasie* are the mediating link between the spirit-world and the material-world:

It is not improbable that spirit-sensations may enter consciousness, if they arouse images in our imagination (*Phantasien*) which are akin to them. In this way, ideas which are communicated by means of spirit-influence would clothe themselves in signs of that *language*, which the human being normally uses: the sensed presence of a spirit would be clothed in the images of a *human figure*; the order and beauty of the immaterial world would be clothed in the images of our imagination (*Phantasien*) which normally delight our senses in life, and so forth.¹⁰³

Human beings gifted with the power to associate spiritual influences with symbolic representations are so-called spirit-seers. They are persons "whose organs are endowed with an exceptionally high degree of sensitivity for intensifying the images of

¹⁰¹ Kant (2002a), 326; AA, 2: 338–9.

¹⁰² Kant (2002a), 326; AA, 2: 339.

¹⁰³ Kant (2002a), 326–7; AA, 2: 339.

the imagination (*Bilder der Phantasie*), according to the inner state of the soul, and by means of harmonious movement, and do so to a greater degree than usually happens, or, indeed, ought to happen with people of sound constitution.”¹⁰⁴ These spirit-seers experience visions caused by spiritual influences, which Swedenborg claims we are in touch with although often insensitive to, which influences are revealed to consciousness analogously by the *Bilder der Phantasie*.¹⁰⁵

There are three problems here as Kant sees it. The first problem with these visions of the spirit-seer is that the “spirit-impression is of necessity so intimately interwoven with the illusion of imagination (*Hirngespinnst der Einbildung*), that it cannot be possible to distinguish the element of truth in such an experience from the crude illusions (*grobem Blendwerk*) which surround it.”¹⁰⁶ Second, “such a state would indicate a genuine malady, for it presupposes a modification in the balance of the nerves which are set in unnatural motion even by the merely spiritually sensing soul.”¹⁰⁷ And third, “it would not be at all surprising if the spirit-seer were at the same time a fantastical visionary, at least in respect of the images accompanying these aspirations of his... for representations well up and burst forth which are by nature alien and incompatible with the representations which human beings have in the bodily state.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, the spirit-seer is a propagator of false prophecies, a raving madman.

¹⁰⁴ Kant (2002a), 327; AA, 2: 339–40.

¹⁰⁵ Kant’s explanation of the visions of the spirit-seer is remarkably similar to his description of aesthetic ideas and the genius in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. The key difference, however, is that the genius presents an aesthetic idea that is communicable, whereas the visions of the spirit-seer are not. I will discuss the connection between communication and art in my discussion of Baumgarten in chapter five.

¹⁰⁶ Kant (2002a), 327; AA, 2: 340.

¹⁰⁷ Kant (2002a), 327–8; AA, 2: 340.

¹⁰⁸ Kant (2002a), 328; AA, 2: 340.

Reminiscent of the “Essay,” Kant returns in *Dreams* to the distinction between the “waking dreamer” and the fantast, or, as he calls him here, the spirit-seer. The difference here, however, is that Kant no longer claims that the two are different in degree, the difference being the vivacity of the chimerical images and the capacity to compare these to veridical outer impressions. In *Dreams* Kant now states that “spirit-seers... differ entirely from waking-dreamers, and they differ not merely in degree but in kind. For spirit-seers, when they are fully awake and often when their other sensations possess the highest degree of vividness, refer certain objects to external positions among the other things which they really perceive around them.”¹⁰⁹ As Kant sees it, the unconscious transference of images of *Phantasie* outside oneself, the movement of inner-images to outer-objects, is the mark of a fantast.

According to *Dreams*, the use of outer-sensation has two necessary conditions, clarity and place. Place, Kant claims, may not always be exact, but it is necessary in order to represent things as external to ourselves.

This being the case, it is highly probable that our soul, in its representation, transposes the object of sensation, locating it at the point at which the various lines, which are caused by the object and which indicate the direction of the impression, converge, when they are extended.¹¹⁰

In the case of vision, if we take the lines that indicate the direction of light-rays entering the eye and extend these backwards, then we call their point of intersection the optical point or the point of divergence. With respect to the representation, we call the lines indicating the direction in which the sensation is transmitted when it makes an impression the point of convergence or the *focus imaginarius*. This, Kant notes, is the capacity to

¹⁰⁹ Kant (2002a), 330–1; AA, 2: 344.

¹¹⁰ Kant (2002a), 331; AA, 2: 344.

determine place in outer sensations, the capacity to extend vibrations of nerves outward to the point of convergence or the point of imagination (*focus imaginarius*).

This reference to Newtonian optics helps to explain the illusory experiences of the spirit-seer. But it is not sufficient. Kant also refers to Descartes' *ideas materiales*:

I refer, namely, to the view that all the representations of the faculty of imagination are simultaneously accompanied by certain movements in the nerve-tissue or nerve-spirit of the brain. These movements are called *ideas materiales*. I am referring, in other words, to the view that all the representations of the faculty of imagination are, perhaps, accompanied by the concussion or vibration of the subtle element, which is secreted by the nerve-tissue or nerve-spirit. This concussion or vibration is similar to the movement which the sensible impression may make and of which it is the copy.¹¹¹

The implication here is that the point of convergence between *ideas materiales* or images of the imagination from inner impressions and veridical representations from outer impressions differ. In the former case, the point of convergence is inside the subject and, in the latter case, outside. Kant writes, "In the case of the clear sensations of waking life, the *focus imaginarius*, at which the object is represented, is placed outside me, whereas, in the case of the images of imagination, which I may entertain at the same time as the clear sensations of my waking life, the *focus imaginarius* is located within me."¹¹² This distinction, the place of the *focus imaginarius*, is the touchstone for distinguishing phantasy from reality.

This, Kant thinks, offers an explanation for disturbances of the mind, from which the spirit-seer suffers. For if the distinctive feature of this malady is the placing of mere figments of *Phantasie* outside oneself, thereby taking these chimeras as real, and if

as a result of some accident or malady, certain organs of the brain are so distorted and their natural balance so disturbed that the motion of the nerves, which harmoniously vibrate with certain images of the imagination, moves along the lines indicating the

¹¹¹ Kant (2002a), 333; AA, 2: 345.

¹¹² Kant (2002a), 333; AA, 2: 345.

direction which, if extended, would intersect outside the brain—if all this is supposed, then the *focus imaginarius* is located outside the thinking subject, and the image which is the product of the mere imagination, is represented as an object present to the outer senses.¹¹³

What the spirit-seer really suffers from is a misdirection of nerve-spirits and a reversed *focus imaginarius*.¹¹⁴ And hence no matter the degree of vivacity that accompanies the internal sensation, the spirit-seer is convinced of its presence outside himself.

Kant's explanation of the visions of the spirit-seer is a diseased *Phantasie*. These impressions from a spirit-world, supposedly translated through *Phantasie*, are in fact the result of damaged nerve-tissue or sensory organs. Hence Kant writes that “since the malady of the fantastical visionary does not really affect the understanding but rather involves the deception of the senses, the wretched victim cannot banish his illusions by means of subtle reasoning.”¹¹⁵ A sheer resolution of the mind cannot save the spirit-seer, like the hypochondriac of the “Essay.” He is to be pitied, for he suffers from a “fevered brain.” Kant writes, “I do not, therefore, blame the reader at all if, instead of regarding the spirit-seers as semi-citizens of the other world, he simply dismisses them without further ado as candidates for the asylum.”¹¹⁶

I noted above that *Dreams* is not simply a skeptical treatise but a moral one as well. In chapter two of part one, there is a break in the text, just before which Kant notes that it would be a fine thing if the systematic constitution of the spirit-world could be inferred necessarily or even probably from some real, generally accepted observation. He then writes, “If the reader will bear with me, I shall venture such an attempt here. It will,

¹¹³ Kant (2002a), 333–4; AA, 2: 347.

¹¹⁴ Here I think we have a better sense of what Kant means by “reversal” (*Verkehrtheit*) than was given in the “Essay.”

¹¹⁵ Kant (2002a), 335; 2: 347.

¹¹⁶ Kant (2002a), 335; 2: 348.

admittedly, take me some distance from my path; it will also be far enough removed from self-evidence. But, in spite of this, it seems to give rise to conjectures of a kind which are not disagreeable.”¹¹⁷ What follows is an inchoate moral theory on the relation between the soul as spiritual and benevolent and the soul as human and self-interested.

Kant’s description of the constitution of a moral spirit-world begins with the observation that there are two powerful forces that move the human heart, forces which lie outside and inside the human being. On the one hand, the human being often observes self-interest as the motive of his actions. His actions are instrumental to the satisfaction of his private ends. But on the other hand, he is sometimes moved by forces outside of himself, an altruistic force (*Gemeinnützigkeit*). These altruistic forces “cause the tendencies of our impulses to shift the focal point of their union *outside ourselves* and to locate it in other rational beings.”¹¹⁸ What we observe, in other words, are two separate and conflicting points of convergence (*focus imaginarius*) of practical action.

He continues with his observation: “When we relate external things to our need, we cannot do so without at the same time feeling ourselves bound and limited by a certain sensation; this sensation draws our attention to the fact that an alien will, so to speak, is operative within ourselves, and that our own inclination needs external assent as its condition.”¹¹⁹ This sensation, according to Kant, is a “secret power” that forces us to direct our will towards the well-being of others or regulate our will in accordance with the will of another. Consequently,

the focal point at which the lines which indicate the direction of our drives converge, is therefore not merely to be found within us; there are, in addition, other forces which

¹¹⁷ Kant (2002a), 321; AA, 2: 333–4.

¹¹⁸ Kant (2002a), 321; AA, 2: 334.

¹¹⁹ Kant (2002a), 322; AA, 2: 334.

move us and which are to be found in the will of others outside ourselves. This is the source from which the moral impulses take their rise... As a result, we recognize that, in our most secret motives, we are dependent upon the *rule of the general will*. It is this rule which confers upon the world of all thinking beings its *moral unity* and invests it with a systematic constitution, drawn up in accordance with purely spiritual laws.”¹²⁰

As moral beings we are constrained by the will of others or a general will, whether we act according to this feeling or not. That is to say, we feel in ourselves a moral sentiment as part of a moral community, a will harmonizing with other wills under “purely spiritual laws.”

Now on the basis of this observation and the inference that the private will exists in a spirit-world, a moral community regulated by spiritual law, Kant thinks he has an answer to old anomalies and contradictions between the moral and physical circumstances of human beings: “All the morality of actions, while never having its full effect in the corporeal life of man according to the order of nature, may well do so in the spirit-world.” Furthermore,

Since the moral character of the deed concerns the inner state of the spirit, it follows that it can only naturally produce an effect, which is consonant with the whole of morality, in the immediate community of spirits. As a result, it would now happen that man’s soul would already in this life and according to its moral state have to occupy its place among the spirit-substances of the universe, just as, in accordance with the laws of motion, the various types of matter in space adopt an order, consonant with their corporeal powers, relatively to each other.¹²¹

Kant concludes that if the community of the soul in the corporeal world is dissolved by death, life in the spirit-world is a natural continuation of the connection in which it already exists. And thus the consequences of moral actions practiced in the corporeal world would re-appear in the spirit-world as effects. “The present and the future would,

¹²⁰ Kant (2002a), 322; AA, 2: 335.

¹²¹ Kant (2002a), 323–4; AA, 2: 337.

therefore, be of one piece, so to speak, and constitute a continuous whole, even according to the *order of nature*.”¹²²

The latter emendation on the communication between a moral, spirit-world and the corporeal world is, upon first glance, odd. But in the theoretical conclusion of part one of *Dreams* Kant provides his explanation for the power of so-called ghost stories, which, he says, provides the same explanation for his emendation on the nature of a moral, spiritual community. He writes,

The scales of the understanding are not, after all, wholly impartial. One of the arms, which bears the inscription: *Hope for the future*, has a mechanical advantage; and that advantage has the effect that even weak reasons, when placed on the appropriate side of the scales, cause speculations, which are in themselves of greater weight, to rise on the other side. This is the only defect, and it is one which I cannot easily eliminate. Indeed, it is a defect which I cannot even wish to eliminate.¹²³

The pronouncements by the fantasts and metaphysicians could not have convincing force if these pronouncements did not harmonize or lend support to wishes or hopes, such as the hope for life after death and the hope for a morally perfect world. What drives both Kant’s and the fantast’s wild inferences are the fundamental notion of hope.

Kant’s practical conclusion at the end of the treatise parallels the theoretical conclusion before it. But here he draws a greater distinction between his position and the fantast. He first notes that there perhaps has never been a human being who thought that after life everything comes to an end and who has not hoped for immortality, but he tells us that “it seems more consonant with human nature and moral purity to base the expectation of a future world on the sentiments of a nobly constituted soul than,

¹²² Kant (2002a), 324; AA, 2: 336–7.

¹²³ Kant (2002a), 337; AA, 2: 349–50.

conversely, to base its noble conduct on the hope of another world.”¹²⁴ This naturalistic foundation of morality, Kant writes, is “moral faith.” And its maxim is the following, which Kant quotes from Voltaire’s *Candide*, “*Let us attend to our happiness, and go into the garden and work!*”¹²⁵

Kant’s concluding remarks on hope and his practical maxim for work in this life for the sake of a perfect moral community recalls the Hebraic notion of the *yetser*, a creative capacity tied to the notions of good and evil and time. What Kant does in this precritical work is tie *Bildungsvermögen* to morality and temporality. If hope functions as the satisfaction of a need or desire to transcend present circumstances, Kant’s suggestion is that this satisfaction be grounded in character or the moral state of the soul. Since the proof of the existence of an after-life transcends the limits of human understanding, which Kant thinks he has demonstrated in the first part of *Dreams*, rational faith would be to hope for a future moral community based on present deeds. Even if one’s actions produce no immediate change, one can reasonably hope for positive consequences in the future, so long as it remains possible to observe this change in the order of nature.

Like the “Essay,” *Dreams* comes close to identifying the moral enthusiast with the religious fantast. In *Dreams* both the enthusiast and fantast are subject to a great degree of sensitivity from spiritual influences. Both rely on the medium of *Bildungsvermögen* to translate these spiritual influences into symbols. But if this is the

¹²⁴ Kant (2002a), 359; AA, 2: 373.

¹²⁵ Kant (2002a), 359; AA, 2: 373. In the theoretical conclusion, Kant’s theoretical maxim is the following: “In thus reducing the scope of my enquiry and ridding myself of a number of completely futile investigations, I hope to be able to invest the modest abilities of my understanding in a more profitable fashion in the objects which are left. The wish to extend the tiny measure of one’s energy to cover all kinds of windy projects is in most cases a futile wish. In this, as in other cases, prudence demands that one cut the coat of one’s projects to the cloth of one’s powers. If great things are beyond one’s power, one must rest satisfied with what is moderate,” Kant (2002a), 339; AA, 2: 352.

case, then the objections Kant raises against the fantast ought equally to apply to the sensitive feelings of the moral enthusiast. What, then, is to prevent us from sending the man of moral sentiments to the asylum? Are the words of Hudibras not equally pertinent here?—“*If a hypochondriacal wind should rage in the guts, what matters is the direction it takes: if downwards, then the result is a f—; if upwards, an apparition or an heavenly inspiration.*”¹²⁶

4,5 Concluding Remarks

I noted that Kant did not so much have a position during the 1760s as much as he was searching for one. Yet there are a few conclusions concerning *Bildungsvermögen* that we may draw from these three precritical works. First, it is clear that Kant did not hold *Bildungsvermögen* in the highest regard during the 1760s. It is a faculty naturally unbound by principle; it moves us to act arbitrarily, like the good-hearted soul of the *Observations* who means well but lacks a firm, steadfast character.¹²⁷ Second, of all the faculties, Kant pegs *Bildungsvermögen* as the medium between nature and spirit. This is evident from Kant’s treatment of the temperaments in the *Observations*. What is traditionally understood to be a mixture and balance of phlegm, yellow and black bile, and blood, Kant adopts and correlates with behaviors of *Bildungsvermögen*. Thus the melancholic, for instance, expands his moral imagination with the help of principles beyond the particular (beneficence toward the human being) to the universal (beneficence

¹²⁶ Kant (2002a), 336; AA, 2: 348.

¹²⁷ Cf. Kant (2007), 35; AA, 2: 222: “The person of a **sanguine** frame of mind has a dominant **feeling for the beautiful**. His joys are therefore laughing and lively. When he is not jolly, he is discontent and he has little acquaintance with contented silence. *Variety is beautiful, and he loves change*. He seeks joy in himself and around himself, amuses others, and is good company. He has much moral sympathy,” my emphasis.

for humanity). And in the “Essay” and *Dreams* Kant locates the cause of a wild *Bildungsvermögen* (*Phantasie*) in nerve imbalances and damaged sensory organs but also suggests that *Bildungsvermögen* is the link of communication between nature and a spiritual (moral) community.

The link between spirit and nature and its inherent lawlessness is one explanation for the *zurückweichen* between 1781 and 1787. But then the question is, What explains his position in the first edition of the *Critique*? What moves Kant to place *Einbildungskraft* in such a prominent role in the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction? This is the question to which I turn now.

5, From *Phantasie* to *Verstandes-Dichtungskraft*

A greater faculty of invention can be called FERTILE (fecund); one inclined to chimeras can be called EXORBITANT (extravagant, rhapsodic); one which avoids these can be called ARCHITECTONIC.

—Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §592

These operations belong to *Dichtungsvermögen*; a creative power that, as it is generally acknowledged, appears to have a large sphere of efficacy. It is the self-active *Phantasie*. And according to the explanation of Herr Girard, without doubt an essential ingredient of genius (in the larger meaning of the word).

—J. N. Tetens, *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and its Development*, 107

5,1 The Transcendental Turn: Theoretical Implications

Looking at Kant's work from the 1760s, we might find it hard to believe that he could grant a prominent place to *Einbildungskraft* in the 1781 *Critique*. But from the advantage of hindsight, not to mention the exegesis of chapter two, we know better. We know Kant situates *Einbildungskraft* not only within the critical project but also at the center of the 1781 Transcendental Deduction. So the question is, Why? What caused Kant to ignore the warning signs of the 1760s?

In 1770 Kant submitted and publicly defended his *Inaugural Dissertation* for the position of Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Königsberg, the position he had coveted since at least 1755. Although drafted hastily to satisfy academic requirements, the *Dissertation* marks a watershed moment in Kant's thinking, the movement from the precritical to the critical philosophy. Kant himself noted this when, in a letter of 13 October 1797 to Johann Heinrich Tieftrunk, he wrote: "I agree to your

proposal to publish a collection of my minor writings, but I would not want you to start the collection with anything before 1770, that is, my dissertation on the sensible world and the intelligible world, and so on.”¹ What, then, distinguishes the *Dissertation* from prior writings?

Here for the first time Kant makes a clear distinction between the faculty of intellect and the faculty of sensibility. No longer holding the continuity thesis between sensations and concepts, Kant now claims that “*sensibility* is the *receptivity* of a subject in virtue of which it is possible for the subject’s own representative state to be affected in a definite way by the presence of some object. *Intelligence* (rationality) is the *faculty* of a subject in virtue of which it has the power to represent things which cannot by their own quality come before the senses of that subject.”² According to the *Dissertation*, sensibility is a passive function of the mind, the capacity to receive sensations from objects, but intellect is an active, spontaneous faculty, a power to represent concepts *a priori*. The implication is that things represented sensitively are things represented as they appear, and things represented intellectually are represented as they are. Kant calls the former phenomena and the latter noumena.

If we compare the 1770 *Dissertation* to the 1781 *Critique*, we note that much of what Kant says about sensibility does not change. Indeed, his commentary on the elements of sensibility (*sensualitas*) is repeated verbatim in the Transcendental Aesthetic. But if *Einbildungskraft* is intimately connected to the formation of appearances, according to the *Critique*, then this suggests that as early as 1770 Kant thought that

¹ Kant (1967), 239; AA, 13: 463; AA, 12: 207–8.

² Kant (2002a), 384; AA, 2: 392.

Einbildungskraft was a necessary activity for the construction of experience. The problem, however, is that Kant never explicitly mentions *Einbildungskraft* in the *Dissertation*.

Foreshadowing the *Critique*, Kant notes that “in a representation of sense there is, first of all, something which you might call the *matter*, namely, the *sensation*, and there is also something which may be called the *form*, the *aspect (species)* namely of sensible things which arises according as the various things which affect the senses are coordinated by a certain natural law of the mind.”³ Yet if sensibility is the receptivity of matter, the question is what operates according to this innate law, which supposedly coordinates the matter into form. Kant emphasizes the law, that is, an “internal principle of the mind,”⁴ by which the sensations coalesce into a representational whole. And he says that in the case of sensible things and phenomena, “that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called *appearance (apparentia)*, while the reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called *experience*.”⁵ But this still leaves undetermined the precise faculty behind the form of appearances.

We might argue that Kant considered the understanding to be the formative faculty of appearances. But there are a few problems here. In the *Dissertation* there are two uses of the understanding, a logical use and a real use. Kant writes,

In so far as that which belongs to the understanding is concerned, it must above all be carefully noted that the use of the understanding, or the superior faculty of the soul, is two-fold. By the first of these uses, the concepts themselves, whether of things or

³ Kant (2002a), 384; AA, 2: 392–3. Cf. Kant (2002a), 385; AA, 2: 393: “The *form*... is not an outline or any kind of schema of the object, but only a certain law, which is inherent in the mind.”

⁴ Kant (2002a), 385; AA, 2: 393.

⁵ Kant (2002a), 386; AA, 2: 394.

relations, *are given*, and this is the REAL USE. By the second use, the concepts, no matter whence they are given, are merely subordinated to each other, the lower, namely, to the higher (common characteristic marks), and compared with one another in accordance with the principle of contradiction, and this is called the LOGICAL USE.⁶

What is novel here is not the logical use of the understanding, the power to analyze the intention of concepts or explicate their extension, rendering clarity and distinctness as Christian Wolff, for instance, understood it.⁷ Rather, it is the real use, the claim that there are concepts “given by the very nature of the pure understanding.”⁸ Are these given concepts, then, rules by which the understanding coordinates sensations?

In paragraph eight of section two, Kant distinguishes between a propaedeutic to metaphysics and metaphysics proper. The *Dissertation*, he notes, is a propaedeutic, which teaches the distinction between sensitive cognition and intellectual cognition. He then writes,

Since, then, empirical principles are not found in metaphysics, the concepts met with in metaphysics are not to be sought in the senses but in the very nature of the pure understanding, and that not as *innate* concepts but as concepts abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending to its actions on the occasion of experience), and therefore as *acquired* concepts. To this genus belong possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause *etc.*, together with their opposites or correlates.⁹

Now we could argue that understanding follows the “laws inherent in the mind.” But the problem is that understanding seems to be a derivative activity, an *abstraction from the laws*. Appearances thus have form prior to conceptual recognition. As Kant puts it, “But things which, since they do not touch the senses, contain only the singular form of

⁶ Kant (2002a), 385; AA, 2: 393.

⁷ In the *Dissertation*, Kant calls out Wolff for failing to recognize more than a logical distinction between sensible cognition and intelligible cognition, namely, the distinction between phenomena and noumena: “From this one can see that the sensitive is poorly defined as that which is *more confusedly* cognized, and that which belongs to the understanding as that which there is a *distinct* cognition. These are only logical distinctions which *do not touch* at all the things *given*, which underlie every logical comparison.” See Kant (2002a), 387; AA, 2: 394–5.

⁸ Kant (2002a), 387; AA, 2: 395.

⁹ Kant (2002a), 387–88; AA, 2: 395.

sensibility, belong to pure intuition (that is to say, *an intuition devoid of sensation but not for that reason deriving from the understanding*).”¹⁰

In order to account for the form of an appearance or a pure intuition, Kant needs a spontaneous power that is nonetheless independent from the understanding, a power that coordinates sensations according to innate laws, which laws are preconceptual and coordinate the sensations such that that they are amenable to reflective cognition (provide the license according to which *a priori* concepts are applied to appearances). As readers of the first *Critique* know, this is precisely the role of *Einbildungskraft* by 1781. But perhaps we can excuse Kant’s omission of *Einbildungskraft* from the *Dissertation*. After all, and as we saw in the last chapter, this power was associated with irrationality and immorality. It was the wild *Phantasie* of Swedenborg that was the mark of fanaticism and sensory delusion (*Wahnsinn*).

And yet, and perhaps unbeknownst to Kant, those same passages from *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* that denounce *Phantasie* contain the answer to the problem of the *Dissertation*. For in *Dreams* Kant speculated that “two kinds of representation [namely, spirit-representation and corporeal-representation] belong to the same subject and they are linked with each other. The possibility of this being the case can, to a certain extent, be rendered intelligible if we consider the way in which the higher concepts of reason, which are fairly close to the spirit-concepts, normally assume, so to speak, a corporeal cloak in order to represent themselves in a clear light.”¹¹ In 1766 Kant described *Bildungsvermögen* as a power to bridge intellectual representations and sensible

¹⁰ Kant (2002a), 390; AA, 2: 397, my emphasis.

¹¹ Kant (2002a), 326; AA, 2: 339.

representations. But perhaps because of its negative associations or, at the very least, its hasty composition, he left this power out of the *Dissertation*.

Let us compare *Dreams* to the *Dissertation*. In *Dreams*, Kant suggested an analogy between the translation of concepts of reason into sensible representations, on the one hand, and spiritual influences into divinations of the spirit-seer, on the other, both of which, he said, are possible through *Bildungsvermögen*.¹² In the *Dissertation*, Kant is no longer concerned with influences from the spirit-world revealed to the spirit-seer, but he is suggesting that inherent (spiritual) laws of the mind are revealed in sensible representations, i.e., *a priori* forms of sensibility (pure intuition) and *a priori* concepts of the understanding. In a sense, he is suggesting that there *are* spirit-influences, namely, internal activities of the mind occasioned by the receptivity of sensations. This becomes clear by the Corollary of part three, “On the principles of the form of the sensible world,” where he writes,

Finally, the question arises for everyone, as though of its own accord, whether each of the two *concepts* [space and time] is *innate* or *acquired*. The latter view, indeed, already seems to have been refuted by what has been demonstrated. The former view, however, ought not to be rashly admitted, for it paves the way for a philosophy of the lazy, a philosophy which, by appealing to a first cause, declares any further enquiry futile. But *each of the concepts has*, without any doubt, *been acquired*, not, indeed, by abstracting from the sensing of objects (for sensation gives the matter and not the form of human cognition), but from the very action of the mind, which coordinates what is sensed by it, doing so in accordance with permanent laws. Each of the concepts is like an immutable image (*typus*), and, thus, each is to be cognized intuitively. For sensations, while exciting this action of the mind, do not enter into and become part of the intuition. Nor is there anything innate here except the law of the mind, according to which it joins together in a fixed manner the sense-impressions made by the presence of the object.¹³

¹² Cf. Kant (2002a), 326; AA, 2: 338–9: “This heterogeneity between spirit-representations and those which belong to bodily life of man need not, however, be regarded as an impediment serious enough to prevent all possibility of our becoming aware, from time to time, even during this present life, of the influences which emanate from the spirit-world. For these influences can enter the personal consciousness of man, not, it is true, directly, but, nonetheless, in such a fashion that they, in accordance with the laws of association of ideas, excite those images which are related to them, and awaken representations which bear an analogy with our senses. They are not, it is true, the spirit-concept itself, but they are symbols of it.”

¹³ Kant (2002a), 400; AA, 2: 406.

Space and time, the forms of sensation, are “acquired concepts” similar to the concepts of possibility, necessity, causation, etc., which are abstracted from the action of the mind occasioned by sensation. Given the affection from outside, there is an affection from inside, a spirit-influence, so to speak, which produces an “immutable image” or pure intuition.

Now in his elucidation of the concepts of space and time, Kant writes that they are “pure intuitions,” “originary intuitions,” and the “imaginary.” With respect to time in particular, he notes, “Now, although *time*, posited in itself and absolutely, would be an imaginary being, yet, in so far as it belongs to the immutable law of the sensible things as such, it is in the highest degree true.”¹⁴ In one respect, then, space and time, posited independent from the sensations they coordinate, are nothing but original products of *Einbildungskraft* (though Kant does not say as much here). They are, in this sense, no different from the sensory delusions of *Dreams*. And yet, in another respect, space and time are sensible forms according to inherent laws of the mind, which Kant thinks are intrinsic to the nature of the human being, and hence in the “highest degree true.” We might say that they are sensory delusions that everyone shares, madness in numbers.

One final point: Kant told us in *Dreams* that we distinguish objects of the senses from objects of *Bildungsvermögen* by the place of the *focus imaginarius*. He there suggested that the distinctive feature of derangement was that “the victim of the confusion places mere objects of his own *Einbildung* outside himself, taking them to be

¹⁴ Kant (2002a), 395; AA, 2: 402.

things which are actually present before him.”¹⁵ Now, in the *Dissertation*, the implication is that space and time are objects of *Bildungsvermögen*, which the human mind places outside itself. The question, then, is why the mind places space and time, imaginary beings, as outside the subject. Kant does not answer this question in the *Dissertation*. But in *Dreams* he offers a material explanation: acute damage to the brain causes the motion of the nerves of an internal influence to imitate the motion of an external impression. Perhaps something similar is happening in the construction of appearances. The influence of *Bildungsvermögen* on the reception of sensations imitates the force and vivacity of external impressions, thereby projecting space and time as external to the subject in the course of experience (a transfer of ideality to reality). If this is correct, the only difference between madness and the construction of experience is the inherent laws or, more to the point, the *source* of these laws.¹⁶

5,2 The Transcendental Turn: Moral Implications

If Kant presupposes *Bildungsvermögen* for the construction of experience in 1770 but was hesitant to say as much, the same can be said with respect to the metaphysics of morals, the first principle of morality, and its application. The *Dissertation* tells us that the dogmatic end of the pure understanding is the positing of a paradigm, measure, or “noumenal perfection.” This perfection, Kant says, has two senses:

The theoretical sense or in the practical sense. In the former sense, it is the Supreme Being, GOD; in the latter sense, it is MORAL PERFECTION. *Moral philosophy*,

¹⁵ Kant (2002a), 333; AA, 2: 346.

¹⁶ This interpretation is consistent with Kant’s repetitive reference in the *Critique* to “birth certificates” and similar metaphors for the source of the pure categories. For an interesting interpretation of Kant’s use of birth certificates and the pedigree of the categories in the Metaphysical Deduction, see Proops (2003).

therefore, in so far as it furnishes the first *principles of judgment*, is only cognized by the pure understanding and itself belongs to pure philosophy.¹⁷

Theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy have parallel ends, perfections as standards of measure. Given this *a priori* perfection of practical philosophy, Kant criticizes Epicurus and Shaftsbury in this same section for reducing moral principles to the sensation of pleasure and pain. Kant's point is that there is, like theoretical metaphysics, a strict dichotomy of *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgment in the metaphysics of morals.

We saw in the last chapter that Kant was a moral sentiment thinker during the 1760s. But I noted there that even as he held this position, he found it untenable, at least without further supplement, since it grounded moral feeling in the capacity for sympathy and, ultimately, the imagination—an erratic, unprincipled, and myopic faculty. Kant's *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie* of the early 1770s testify to his growing dissatisfaction with moral feeling. For by 1770, he completely jettisons moral feeling as the ground of moral action. In the *Reflexionen*, he writes,

The moral feeling is not an original feeling. It rests on a necessary inner law, which itself is observed and felt from an outer standpoint. Likewise in the personhood of reason: there one feels universally and feels his individuality as an accidental subject, like looking at an accident of the universal.¹⁸

Moral feeling is now grounded in a necessary inner law, itself independent from sensation. Moral philosophy is thus based on law or *a priori* principles.¹⁹

Shaftsbury and Smith found morality in a universal feeling of sympathy or benevolence. According to this system, we might ask how to cultivate this feeling in

¹⁷ Kant (2002a), 388; AA, 2: 396.

¹⁸ Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 103.

¹⁹ Cf. Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 108: “*Alle moralitaet beruht auf ideen.*”

ourselves in order to acquire the right dispositions. But this is not where Kant wants to begin. To the contrary,

The first investigation is: which are the first principles of moral judgment (theoretical rules of judgment), that is, which are the highest maxims of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), and which is the highest law.²⁰

Kant's move now is first and foremost to find the supreme law of morality, and only *then* to bind sympathy (and hence *Bildungsvermögen*) by this supreme principle:

2. Which is the rule of application (practical application of judgments) toward an object of judgment. (sympathy toward another and an impartial observer.)²¹

Bildungsvermögen comes into play in the second step of morality, namely, application.

It is unclear from the *Dissertation* how the inherent laws of the mind guide *Bildungsvermögen*. All we are told there is that space and time are forms of sensibility, though also imaginary beings. We have to read between the lines and infer that *Bildungsvermögen* is the original producer of space and time. The *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie* is no different. It throws no direct light on the guidance of *Bildungsvermögen*. Consider the following passage.

The *a priori* concept alone has universal truth and is the principle of rules. In the case of virtue, a judgment is therefore only possible according to *a priori* concepts. The empirical judgment according to intuitions in images or according to experience yields no laws (which laws call for a concept *a priori* for the sake of judgment), but rather merely examples.²²

Accordingly,

The highest principles of moral judgment are therefore rational, and yet only formal principles. They determine no purpose, rather only the moral form of each purpose; thus according to this form there appears, *in concreto*, material first principles.²³

²⁰ Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 117.

²¹ Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 117.

²² Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 108.

²³ Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 120.

On one hand, the supreme principle is universal, formal. It does not determine an action or purpose but is the form of purpose as such. On the other, empirical intuitions fail to provide necessary laws but only examples or cases.

But if practical philosophy parallels theoretical philosophy, we should expect Kant to offer an explanation how the *a priori* principle of morality becomes concretized. There ought to be a bridge between the supreme principle of morality and particular cases. Sure enough, in the *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie*, Kant alludes to this concretization:

All morality rests on ideas, and its image that rests on the human being is always imperfect. In the divine understanding, the images are self-intuitions and therefore original images (*Urbilder*).

The ideal is the representation of the object of the senses that conforms to ideas and the intellectual perfection in God. Ideals conform only to objects of the understanding and are only for human beings (and others of the same) fictions. It is a fiction (*Erdichtung*), in order to posit as concrete the ideas in intuition.²⁴

For Kant, an ideal is a concretized representation of intellectual perfection (*intellektuellen Vollkommenheit*). Of course, since the ideal is not real (empirically verifiable), Kant calls it a fiction (*Erdichtung*). Yet this fiction is a powerful motivation for moral action:

The powerful medium, toward which human beings are driven for the sake of the moral good, is thus the representation of pure virtue (*reinen Tugend*), in order that they may highly esteem and clearly see this medium (only such that the human being himself can); and in so far as one is guided by this medium and can also point to it, this is the only medium from which others become esteemed and loved.²⁵

If there is a gulf between sensibility and intellect in the *Dissertation*, which only *Bildungsvermögen* could fill, there is a similar gap between ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) and the metaphysics of morals (*Moralität*), a gap that calls for *Bildungsvermögen*. In the case of practical philosophy, Kant is pointing to *Bildungsvermögen* as the power to project an

²⁴ Kant (1900–), AA, 19: 108.

²⁵ Kant (1900–), AA, 113.

image of pure virtue, the perfect human being, a powerful medium (*kräftiges Mittel*), as Kant puts it, which motivates human beings to act in accordance with the supreme principle of morality. Hence, although Kant does not say so here explicitly, it follows that *Bildungsvermögen* is the bridge between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*.

I think we can understand why Kant would be hesitant to point directly to *Bildungsvermögen*, given his remarks of the 1760s. But the implications from the *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie* seem as clear as those of the *Dissertation*. What we are starting to see is a peculiar power, a power that is constitutive to being human, in its activities of both rationality and madness and virtue and vice.

5,3 Lectures on Logic

But the new activities of *Bildungsvermögen* in the early 1770s extend beyond the construction of experience and ethical life. Kant also found a place for it in logic. The so-called *Blomberg Logic*, based, as all Kant's logic lectures were, on Georg Friedrich Meier's 1752 *Excerpts from the Doctrine of Reason*, contains numerous passages on aesthetic distinctness or the extensive clarity of a concrete whole, the result of which depends on *Bildungsvermögen*.²⁶

²⁶ In his introduction to Kant's *Lectures on Logic*, J. Michael Young claims that the *Blomberg Logic* is likely dated from the early 1770s, although certainly not before 1770, given a quotation from the *Inaugural Dissertation* as well as references to other works published as late as 1770. The text itself refers to Heinrich Ulrich Freiherr von Blomberg who completed his studies in Königsberg by 1764. It is therefore clear that he himself could not have written the manuscript. Its author is unknown, likely a copy of a copy. Transcripts of Kant's lectures received wide circulation. At best, we have fair copies, since poorer students who attended Kant's lectures often composed the transcripts, made copies, and then sold them to the wealthier students who made emendations and further copies. See Kant (1992), xxiii–vii.

The logic lectures repeat time and again that there are particular ways that we cognize concepts, namely, clearly or obscurely and distinctly or indistinctly. Kant opens the first part of the *Blomberg Logic* by saying,

Distinctness can occur

1st *in intuiting*, when we can distinguish well the mark of that which we intuit. That is distinctness in intuition

2nd *in thinking*, when we combine clear concepts and representations with intuiting. Often one can intuit something distinctly without thereby thinking of something distinctly.²⁷

Kant then elaborates:

Distinctness, furthermore, is a perfection of cognition, and it has the peculiarity of belonging to logical as well as to aesthetic perfection as a necessary property. An extensive distinctness, which one encounters in the beautiful understanding, is an aesthetically pure one [;] intensive distinctness, however, which one finds in the deep understanding, belongs to logical perfection... Beauty of the understanding rests on the fact that one has many marks of a thing. Depth of the understanding, however, requires only that some marks be known clearly, and at the same time distinctly, and that it is easy to have insight into them.²⁸

The notion of distinctness (*Deutlichkeit*) extends to both concepts *and* intuitions. On the one hand, a clear (conscious) and distinct concept is a representation that “also extends to the parts.” In accordance with traditional (Wolffian) logic, Kant’s claim is that distinctness is a result of conceptual analysis.²⁹ That is, distinct representations reveal the intention of the concept, the partial concepts (*Teilbegriffe*) or marks (*Merkmale*) that are contained therein. To perform and complete such an analysis is to achieve logical perfection.³⁰ But on the other hand, a clear and distinct intuition is an extension, addition, or synthesis of marks. Kant calls this an aesthetic perfection. But since this is a perfection

²⁷ Kant (1992), 29; AA, 24: 42.

²⁸ Kant (1992), 41; AA, 24: 56–7.

²⁹ Cf. Kant (1992), 44; AA, 24: 60: “One finds logical perfections in Wolff and in other writings, but no aesthetic perfections.”

³⁰ Kant (1992), 31; AA, 24: 44. Take, for example, the concept ‘human being.’ The intention of the concept would contain the concepts ‘animal,’ ‘animate,’ ‘matter,’ etc.

of an intuition, what Kant calls a singular representation, we might also call it a “complete determination of the singular.”³¹

Lecturing on the fifth section of Meier’s *Excerpts*, “Of the Clarity of Learned Cognition,” Kant provides further commentary on the notions of intensivity and extensivity but this time with respect to immediate and mediate marks: “If a thing can be cognized through a certain mark without the mediation of a mark different from this mark, then such a mark is *immediate*. A *mediate* mark, on the other hand, is a mark of a mark.”³² Immediate marks are grasped intuitively, through what we might call an instantaneous apprehension.³³ But mediate marks are grasped conceptually. Kant’s example is that perishability is a mediate mark of the concept man. It is a more general mark under which another mark falls.

Now what is important here is the relation between mediate marks and the relation between immediate marks. Mediate marks, Kant tells us, are related by subordination. Through analysis, we structure our concepts into a subordination of species and genus relations, relative universality and particularity. But immediate marks are related through coordination, i.e., placed next to one another. Furthermore,

In a series of subordinate marks, i.e., of marks ordered beneath one another, there is always a *first* [,] i.e., the concepts are restricted. In coordination, however, there is no restriction. There are uncountably many marks that belong to a thing immediately, *and our understanding is not in a position to have insight into all properties and to determine them exactly.*³⁴

³¹ Gregor (1983), 364.

³² Kant (1992), 83; AA, 24: 108.

³³ Below I discuss the action of *Abbildung*, which is pertinent here.

³⁴ Kant (1992), 84; AA, 24: 108–9, my emphasis.

A series of subordinated marks is limited or finite. It is composed of an immediate mark or *nota infima* and a series of grounding relations ending in an unground ground or *nota summa*. A coordination of marks, however, is unlimited or infinite.³⁵

In both a coordination and subordination of marks, Kant prescribes measure or perfection. Aesthetic perfection is perfect according to the laws of sensibility, just as logical perfection is perfect according to the laws of the understanding. Perfection in the latter sense is expressed by a subordination of marks in a finite series of grounding relations (a result of reflective analysis according to the laws of non-contradiction and identity). Kant's point is that constructing these relations is how the understanding *ought* to function.³⁶ But what is perfection in the former sense, according to the laws of sensibility? We saw in the *Dissertation* that the laws of sensibility (those inherent laws of the mind) are represented in experience in spatial and temporal relations. Aesthetic perfection, then, appears to be a coordination of marks intuitively grasped, at the very least, in spatial and temporal relations. The coordination must therefore be circumscribed because an infinite intuition is antithetical to spatiality and temporality, relations constitutive to human *finitude*. The poet therefore knows precisely how many descriptions and characteristics to use in his poem without overwhelming sensible intuition.³⁷

³⁵ As we shall see, these differences between subordination and coordination will be crucial arguments in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the first *Critique* for distinguishing concepts from the *a priori* forms of space and time.

³⁶ At least in the understanding's logical use, which is precisely what these lectures are designed to explain and promote. They are *lectures*, after all. Kant is teaching his students how to think *properly*.

³⁷ We shall see below, in our consideration of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* and *Aesthetics*, that there are far more criteria to aesthetic perfection than spatial and temporal restrictions.

(This dissertation will not address Kant's claims in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. But I note here that the characteristics Kant uses in these lectures to distinguish an aesthetic perfection from a logical perfection anticipate claims in the third *Critique*:

No one had yet been able accurately to combine, to determine, and to discover the correct measure of aesthetic perfection with logical perfection. That involves much delicacy. What promotes life, i.e., what brings our activity into play, as it were, pleases... The greater art of taste consists in now making sensible what I first expounded dryly, in clothing it in objects of sensibility, but in such a way that the understanding loses nothing thereby.³⁸

Aesthetic perfections are lively, stirring, moving, whereas logical perfections seem dry and dead. Aesthetic perfections are beautiful, whereas logical perfections are devoid of any aesthetic feeling. Aesthetic perfections are concrete, whereas logical perfections are abstract. The point is that there is something intrinsically valuable and desirable in an aesthetic perfection even if we cannot discover the way in which these perfections are combined, even if, indeed, they often seem mutually exclusive:

When the poet has made for me the best, most stirring, most lively representations of spring, when he has spoken of lowing, grazing herds, of tenderly rustling zephyrs, of fragrant meadows, etc., etc., then my cognition is aesthetically perfect. It is beautiful, but not distinct. I have not thereby attained any distinct insight concerning the ground and causes of spring.³⁹

In the *Blomberg Logic*, Kant recognizes and appreciates the separate autonomy of aesthetic and logical perfection, but he does not know how they come together in a “free play” of *Einbildungskraft*, although he also suggests that they must since moral perfection “rests on *logical* and *aesthetic* perfection taken together.”⁴⁰)

³⁸ Kant (1992), 31–2; AA, 24: 45.

³⁹ Kant (1992), 37; AA, 24: 51.

⁴⁰ Kant (1992), 42; AA, 24: 58.

Kant extends his treatment of the coordination of marks beyond art and aesthetics. The mathematician too acts synthetically, a fact Kant will exploit as an analogy to the transcendental philosophy in the first *Critique*. But in contradistinction to the artist, who Kant finds disposed to excess, which we often sanction, the mathematician employs “precision” (*Abgemeßenheit*) in coordination. Kant writes: “A cognition is precise, then, when it has not too many marks and not too few.”⁴¹ “*Precision* is thus nothing other than a rule of economy, which just for that reason has a certain internal beauty; it is to be found especially in mathematics, geometry, and mechanics.”⁴²

We can see precision in mathematics at work in the consideration of constructing concepts, that is, when we consider the coordination of mathematical properties through synthesis:

In *synthesis* we produce and create a concept, as it were, which simply was not there before, [one that is] completely new both *quoad materiam* and also *quoad formam* [;] and at the same time we make it distinct. All concepts of the mathematicians are of this kind, e.g., the concepts of triangle, square, circle, etc.⁴³

Synthesis is the procedure by which we extend our concepts both formally and materially. A synthetic procedure both adds predicates to a concept, adhering to logical consistency and thus demonstrating its logical possibility (the form of a concept) *and* constitutes the concept into an object, demonstrating its real possibility (the matter of a concept).⁴⁴ A paradigm example of such a synthesis can be seen from geometry. The concept of a triangle is, as Kant puts it in the first *Critique*, “the composition of three

⁴¹ Kant (1992), 109; AA, 24: 139.

⁴² Kant (1992), 110; AA, 24: 140.

⁴³ Kant (1992), 102; AA, 24: 130.

⁴⁴ Cf. Young (1994), 344–5. Cf. also Kant (1900–), 9: 64: “To synthesis pertains the making distinct of *objects*, to analysis the making distinct of *concepts*.”

straight lines in accordance with a rule.”⁴⁵ The definition of a triangle expresses both its logical properties (logical possibility) and how it should be materially constructed in accordance with a rule (real possibility). The rule, Kant seems to think, will act as a constraint on the act of synthesis (the coordination of marks), thereby assuring precision and perfection in the construction and intuition of the triangle.

Like the *Dissertation* and the *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie*, the question here is, What mental capacity acts according to the rules of mathematics and aesthetics? What power of the mind *forms* material according to mental laws? We know from the *Dissertation* that sensibility is merely a passive capacity of the mind to receive sensations. We also know that the understanding is a faculty of rules. There must, then, be an active power that shapes or forms, coordinates or synthesizes the material according to formal rules. This is, of course, *Bildungsvermögen*, a capacity reaching out to the infinite in its coordination of marks and yet reined in by the laws of sensibility and understanding.⁴⁶ It follows that *Bildungsvermögen* constructs these mathematical concepts, as well as poems and orations, in accordance with rules.

5,4 A Confluence of Impressions

These remarks from the foregoing works offer evidence of Kant’s growing reliance on *Bildungsvermögen*. Given this new dualism between the intelligible (ideas) and the sensible (sensations), Kant had to recognize its indispensability: an original power to create both sensible forms (space and time) according to inherent laws of the mind *and*

⁴⁵ Kant (1998), A105. For a fuller elucidation, see Young (1994), 344–8.

⁴⁶ Already in the early 1770s can we anticipate much of what Fichte will say in the early Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*, according to which *Einbildungskraft* hovers (*schweben*) between the finite and the infinite. See Fichte (1982), 193–5 and Fichte (1988), 284–91.

maxims according to the supreme principle of morality, not to mention the power to construct aesthetic and mathematical perfections. *Bildungsvermögen* is bridging a gap, as another scholar has put it, between the intelligible realm and the sensible realm.⁴⁷

Admittedly, though, Kant's recognition is gradual. The necessity of *Bildungsvermögen* is an implication, for Kant does not publicly endorse it until 1781. And yet, by the time he delivers his lectures on metaphysics in 1777–1780, the so-called *Pölitiz Lectures*, *Bildungsvermögen* receives extensive commentary, specifically in the context of empirical psychology.⁴⁸ So, what accounts for this newfound interest?

Kant's interest had two sources. First, it was Alexander Baumgarten's 1739 *Metaphysics*, which Kant used repeatedly for his lectures.⁴⁹ In this important text Baumgarten devotes considerable time to empirical psychology, itself a division of metaphysics, where he discusses the lower cognitive faculties and the perfection of sensory knowledge. As we shall see, Kant interprets Baumgarten's lower cognitive faculties as aspects or manifestations of one all-encompassing formative power—*Bildungsvermögen*. Second, we know that Kant read Johann Nicolaus Tetens's 1777 *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and its Development*. In this work Tetens devotes the entire first volume to the “power of representation” (*Vorstellungskraft*), a

⁴⁷ See Sarah Gibbons (1994).

⁴⁸ As Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon point out in their introduction to Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics*, the *Pölitiz Lectures* do not have a determinate date. Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitiz, who studied and taught at Leipzig, purchased several manuscripts from Friedrich Theodor Rink, one of Kant's early biographers. Some of these manuscripts included student notes from Kant's metaphysics lectures. Pölitiz considered the *L*₁ lectures (what I refer to as the *Pölitiz Lectures*) to be older than the *L*₂ lectures, which he dated at 1788. Recently, Wolfgang Carl proposed a date not before 1777–78 (arguing that the notes are dependent on Tetens's theory of *Dichtungsvermögen* from the *Philosophical Essays*, written in 1777) and not later than 1779–80. See the translators' introduction in Kant (1997), xxx–iii.

⁴⁹ Eric Watkins writes that with the exception of the winter semester of 1756–1757 and possibly the summer semester of 1757, when he appears to have used Baumeister's *Institutiones metaphysicae*, Kant used Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* his entire career. See Watkins (2009), 85.

power which he considers synonymous with the power of imagination. These sources were the sufficient force to turn Kant's attention away from the concerns surrounding *Bildungsvermögen* in the 1760s. They pushed Kant to see how intellectual concepts were connected to sensible objects, the insight Kant lacked in 1770.

5,4,1 Baumgarten

Baumgarten established his reputation primarily in aesthetics.⁵⁰ Indeed, we have him to thank for the name of this new discipline. But it was his *Metaphysics* that Kant continually used for his lectures on metaphysics, dividing these lectures according to the text: ontology, cosmology, psychology, and rational theology.⁵¹ In the text's section on psychology, and empirical psychology in particular, Baumgarten separates himself from his predecessors through his development of sensory knowledge. Like Kant in his lectures on logic,⁵² Baumgarten distinguishes intensive clarity (*claritas intensiva*) from extensive clarity (*claritas extensiva*). The notion of intensive clarity, the distinguishing of marks or grounding relations within a concept, is the proper subject of logic, what

⁵⁰ Eric Watkins writes in his introduction to the *Metaphysics* that Baumgarten played a crucial role in the development of aesthetics by synthesizing Gottsched's classicist and more Wolffian views with Bodmer's and Breitingen's less *a prioristic*, English-based approach. See Watkins (2009), 85n. In what follows, I closely follow Mary Gregor's interpretation of Baumgarten's *Aesthetics* in her "Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*," although my reading of the *Metaphysics* is my own.

⁵¹ Though Kant grants psychology a place in metaphysics in the 1770s, it is clear that by 1781 rational psychology is too problematic to defend as a component of metaphysics and the empirical sort, although useful, is "banned from metaphysics." But Kant goes on: "Nevertheless, in accord with the customary scholastic usage one must still concede it [empirical psychology] a little place (although only as an episode) in metaphysics, and indeed from economic motives, since it is not yet rich enough to comprise a subject on its own and yet it is too important for one to expel it entirely or attach it somewhere else where it may well have even less affinity than in metaphysics. It is thus merely a long-accepted foreigner, to whom one grants refuge for a while until it can establish its own domicile in a complete anthropology (the pendant to the doctrine of nature)," Kant (1998), A848–9/B876–7.

⁵² It is no surprise to see repetitions between Kant's lectures on logic and Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*. As I noted above, Kant used Meier's *Excerpts*, and Meier was Baumgarten's student at Halle.

Leibniz and Wolff had been stressing for years. But the notion of extensive clarity, notes Baumgarten, is the subject of aesthetics, a new science of the beautiful.⁵³

Baumgarten's interest and development of sensory knowledge is original when we consider the tradition he inherited. Leibniz and Wolff considered the extension of our concepts to be intrinsically *confused* knowledge. In his "Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas," Leibniz described ideas as clear or obscure, clear ideas as confused or distinct, and distinct ideas as adequate or inadequate. According to the "Meditations," clear ideas are distinct when we analyze or enumerate the intrinsic marks (*nota*) of the idea, and the distinct idea is adequate when we analyze these marks themselves. To have a clear, distinct, and adequate idea, then, is to present a complete enumeration of the grounding relations of the idea, ending, ultimately, in a tautology. In the case of sensory percepts, however, the extension of the percept yields simple marks from the perspective of sensation but are, from the perspective of the intellect, infinitely complex (infinitely extendable), and hence they are always confused. Leibniz called the latter truths of fact and the former truths of reason. This distinction between these truths is what leads Baumgarten to argue that analytic truth is bought at a steep price. As we analyze, we abstract away the richness of our perceptual experience. As Baumgarten puts it, "What is it to abstract, if not to throw away?" This is precisely why Baumgarten calls intellectual knowledge dry and perceptual knowledge vivid.⁵⁴

As Baumgarten sees it, logic is perfection of the intellect, but there is a completely separate aspect of human nature. The human being is not merely intellect but

⁵³ Given this close relation of logic and aesthetics, Baumgarten tells us in the *Aesthetics* that logic is the elder sister of aesthetics. See Baumgarten (1970), §13.

⁵⁴ See Leibniz (1989), 23–5. See Baumgarten (1970), §560.

a sentient being as well. This fact calls for a new science, a science of aesthetics, the end of which is the perfection of sensory knowledge *as such*, independent from logic traditionally understood.⁵⁵ Like the science of logic, which teaches us to develop our innate propensity for inference by, say, the “law of the third term,” the science of aesthetics will teach us how to develop our innate propensity for, say, the associations of ideas, the law of imagination.⁵⁶ What we will receive from this science is a set of rules to develop our capacity for sensory knowledge and, in the case of the artist, the construction of aesthetic perfections. Baumgarten recognizes that we have a natural logic and a natural aesthetic, both of which will be developed in relation to our environment under favorable conditions, regardless of formal training. But he also acknowledges the dangers of chance and the practicality behind the inculcation of logical rules that prevent us from making faulty inferences and aesthetic rules that prevent us from creating “empty images” (*vana phantasmata*), phantasms incommunicable to others through signs.⁵⁷

Wolff called memory and imagination the “analogues of reason,” attributing these natural capacities to animals. Following Wolff, Baumgarten calls memory and imagination the native equipment of the “spirit that is by nature charming and elegant (*ingenium venustum et elegans connatum*).”⁵⁸ But guided by rules of intellect, combined with an “aesthetic temperament,” these natural dispositions transform into a cultivation

⁵⁵ Cf. Baumgarten (1779), §622. Cf. Gregor (1983), 360. As Mary Gregor notes, Baumgarten’s science of aesthetics was not designed merely to supplement logic, though it would certainly do this. This new science was conceived to be also autonomous, having an end in itself.

⁵⁶ Baumgarten (1779), §462.

⁵⁷ Baumgarten (1779), §571. In this respect, Baumgarten and Kant share the dictum that the function of aesthetic rules is to “clip the wings of genius,” Baumgarten (1779), §555.

⁵⁸ Baumgarten (1770), §29. See Gregor (1983), 373.

and appreciation of beauty, a second nature, so to speak.⁵⁹ In this respect, Baumgarten lists nine natural dispositions of sensory knowledge that ought to be cultivated according to an intellectual law: (1) acute sense (*acute sentiendi*), the power to perceive present states (*sensationes, apparitiones*) of the soul or the world, the law of which is to be sensitively aware of the states of the body and the soul, (2) imagination (*phantasia*), the power to reproduce past images (*phantasmata*). Here Baumgarten presents the law of imagination as the association of ideas (*associatio idearum*). The perfection of sensory knowledge also includes (3) perspicacity (*perspicacia*), the ability to cognize agreements and differences between things. Baumgarten tells us that this is also called wit (*ingenium strictius dictum*), and its law is the law of identity and difference. Furthermore, sensory knowledge includes (4) memory (*memoria*), the power to recognize (*recognosco, recorder*) past representations. Its law is to connect present perceptions with perceptions previously experienced. There is the (5) The poetic faculty (*facultas poëtica, facultas fingendi*), which dissolves and combines images, i.e., invents, the law of which is to construct various parts of a phantasm into a whole (one),⁶⁰ and there is (6) foresight (*praevisio*), the power to imagine a future representation if the sensation and the phantasm share similarities. Finally, Baumgarten lists (7) judgement (*judicium*), the power to cognize perceptions as perfect or imperfect through the cognition of agreement (*consentientibus*) or disagreement (*dissentientibus*), what he calls taste (*formandi gustum*), (8) premonition (*praesagitio*), the law of which is to predict the future through similarities of the present and the past, and (9) the faculty of characteristics (*facultas*

⁵⁹ Baumgarten (1970), §44.

⁶⁰ In this context Baumgarten discusses cases of delirium and fanaticism. Both take fictions of the imagination as sensations, the delirious more generally, the fanatic, locally. See Baumgarten (1779), §594.

characteristic, facultas signatrix), the capacity to represent (denote) things through signs or symbols, the law of which is to make these mediums communicable (*cognoscendae*).⁶¹

The cultivation of the foregoing capacities for the perfection of sensory knowledge are the conditions for aesthetic perfection (beauty), in which we perceive the distinct qualities of things, measured by their degree of abundance (*ubertas, copia, extensio*), magnitude (*dignitas, nobilitas, magnitudo*), exactitude (*exacta, exasciata*), and methodical order (*acroamaticum, disciplinale*), the universal conditions of beauty.⁶² Now as I noted above, from a finite perspective there is no end to an extensive series of marks (in contrast to an intensive series of grounding relations). Were sensory knowledge to be aesthetically perfect, this would imply an instantaneous perception of an infinitude of marks. Leibniz called this divine intuition. But if Baumgarten is suggesting that aesthetics concerns divine intuition as a normative end, it would be inconsistent with his contention that aesthetics is a human (sentient) science.

What Baumgarten means by sensory knowledge as aesthetic perfection is not a “luxuriant rhapsody of notes,” but the apprehension of a multiplicity *in* unity or a rich abundance of marks that form a whole.⁶³ A sheer abundance of marks in a representation

⁶¹ For the full commentary, see Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics* (1779), §540–619. The capacity for memory and imagination, as well as foresight and premonition appear repetitive. Indeed, Baumgarten concedes as much and notes that memory contributes aid to imagination and foresight to premonition. See Baumgarten (1779), §611. Cf. Makkreel (1990), 11.

⁶² Cf. Baumgarten’s *Aesthetics* (1970), §22, where he expands the topics of aesthetic perfection, which there consists in abundance (*ubertas*), magnitude (*magnitudo*), truth (*veritas*), clarity (*lux*), certitude (*certitudo*), and liveliness (*vita*). In the *Metaphysics* Baumgarten seems to conflate abundance and liveliness at times. See also Makkreel (1990), 11n. Makkreel cites a passage from Ernst Cassirer’s *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. It is worth quoting again here, insofar as Cassirer takes liveliness to be the fundamental feature of Baumgarten’s sensory knowledge: “The power and greatness of the artist consists in his ability to endow the ‘cold symbols’ of the language of daily life and of the language of science with the breath of life, with the ‘life of knowledge’ (*vita cognitionis*),” Cassirer (1951), 350.

⁶³ Gregor (1983), 370.

is merely “pregnant” (*perceptio pregnans*), i.e., potentially perfect.⁶⁴ It is actualized through a combination of the nine cultivated natural capacities outlined above. Sensory knowledge will then consist of an acute sensitivity to the marks of the perception, enriched by memory, wit, and foresight. Moreover, the perception will contain a combination of clear and obscure marks, an alliance between a “realm of darkness” (*regnum tenebrarum*) and a “realm of light” (*regnum lucis*).⁶⁵ Since the sensations we receive occasion the association of further *phantasmata* according to the law of imagination, and since we could not intuit an infinitude of marks, the *phantasmata* in many cases are intentionally left obscure (unconscious)—left in the “realm of darkness.” Nevertheless, and precisely by way of their obscurity, these obscure ideas illuminate and vivify the perception as a whole. They bind the clear ideas together from below the level of consciousness—for Baumgarten, this dark realm is the “base of the soul” (*fundus animae*).⁶⁶ Lastly, in order to produce *unity* out of the abundance of marks and their communication through signs, the *facultas fingendi* and *facultas signatrix* are employed. Only then may the art critic cast his judgment.

There is an important question as to what type of truth an aesthetic perfection expresses. What is aesthetic, subjective truth? The artist creates fictions, to be sure, but his creation is an imitation of natural creation. According to Baumgarten, art is mimetic

⁶⁴ Baumgarten (1779), §517. In the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, a commentary on Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics*, Kant writes, “*Dunkle Vorstellungen sind praegnant von klaren.*” See Kant (1900–), no. 177; 15: 65.

⁶⁵ Meier’s translation states, “*Vorstellungen, welche mit andern Theile einer ganzen Vorstellung sind, sind vergestellschaftet (perceptiones fociae), und die stärkste unter ihnen ist die herrschende (perceptio regnans, dominans). Der Zustand der Seele, in welchem die herrschenden Vorstellungen dunkel sind, ist das Reich der Finsterniß (regnum tenebrarum), in welchem dieselben aber klar sind, das Reich des Lichts (regnum lucis).*” See Baumgarten (1755–1759), §516–8. See Baumgarten (1779), §516–8.

⁶⁶ Baumgarten (1739), §511. Cf. Gregor (1983), 367–9.

insofar as it creates a possible world in accordance with the principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason. The artist creates a universe with internal laws of coherence, amplified by the abundance of characteristics in accordance with unity. These possible worlds are communicable, unlike those other artistic fictions that are internally inconsistent or self-contradictory, which Baumgarten calls “chimeras.” Here is how Mary Gregor puts the point:

If the risk the artist takes in producing a heterocosmic fiction pays off, he will “create” a new world that is aesthetically perfect and *therefore* pre-eminently true, by virtue of its conformity with the principles of a most perfect universe. For the sake of his public, he will embed these heterocosmic fictions in a context of historical fictions; but his introduction of heterocosmic fictions—which are not compossible with the actual world—makes it a new world in which aesthetically rewarding but factually impossible objects and events are possible. Its truth is the verisimilitude achieved through the compossibility—the *ordo plurimum in uno*—of the wealth of presentations that is the artist’s first concern.⁶⁷

There are a few key points to take away from Baumgarten’s aesthetics. First, the fundamental claim is that perception is not confused knowledge, as Leibniz and Wolff had argued. A science of aesthetics can teach us how to develop sense-knowledge. Second, the fundamental capacity of sensibility is the inventive faculty (*facultas fingendi*), the power to dissolve and combine images. All nine capacities of sense-knowledge coalesce around this inventive faculty. Third, binding the *facultas fingendi* to rules is what separates madness from genius, a chimera from an aesthetic perfection. From what we have seen in the last chapter, it is no surprise that in the same section in which Baumgarten discusses the *facultas fingendi* he warns us of delusion, delirium, and fanaticism. The rules for aesthetics are designed specifically for communication. The

⁶⁷ Gregor (1983), 381.

genius must produce an artwork with internal consistency, unity, and felicitous signs. Otherwise, he looks like a madman.

5,4,2 Tetens

On 12 October 1777, Hamann, Kant's close friend, told Herder, Kant's former student, that Kant was "said to be very full of...Tetens." And again, two years later, he writes to Herder that Kant was working on his *Critique* and that "Tetens lies open constantly before him." Hamann loved literary gossip, not to mention spreading it. Here he informs Kant's former student of what his old teacher is up to, while making a quick jab at Kant's originality. Perhaps Hamann was being mischievous, although on 15 October 1780, Kant himself writes to his publisher Johann Hartknoch that he would prefer the typeset of the *Critique* to be different from that of Tetens's *Philosophical Essays*, since the latter is "really tiring" to his eyes.⁶⁸ Hamann, then, was likely pointing out a fact wrapped in good humor: Kant was deeply interested in and influenced by Tetens's work.⁶⁹

Tetens's 1777 *Philosophical Essays* is an empirical examination of the relationship between the soul and world. Distinguishing himself from his predecessors (primarily Leibniz and Wolff, "*die systematische Seelenlehrer*"), Tetens argues that there is not one fundamental power of the soul (*Grundthätigkeit*), but rather three separate,

⁶⁸ Kant writes, "*Der Druck im Teten ermüdet wirklich das Auge beim Lesen.*" See Kant (1900–), 10: 262. See also Kuehn (1989), 366.

⁶⁹ Kant continued to praise Tetens after the publication of the first *Critique* in a series of letters to Marcus Herz, Moses Mendelssohn, and Christian Garve. For example, in a letter to Christian Garve of 7 August 1783, Kant writes, "*Garve, Mendelssohn, and Tetens are the only men I know through whose co-operation this subject could have been brought to a successful conclusion before too long, even though centuries before this one have not seen it done.*" See Kant (1967), 103; AA, 10: 336–43. Kant lamented Tetens's later exit from philosophy. In the 1780s Tetens shifted his focus to actuarial practices and, after 1789, left academia all together for a position in Copenhagen as a high government finance officer in charge of Danish insurance plans he created for widows and retirees.

irreducible powers: a power to receive sensations, form representations, and think.⁷⁰ It is to the intermediate power of the soul, the power to form sensations into representations, that Tetens devotes the first 165 pages of the 1500 page work. He calls this intermediate power “the power of representation” (*Vorstellungskraft*) and divides it into three sub-powers: *Perceptionsvermögen* or *Fassungskraft*, *Phantasie* or *Einbildungskraft*, and *Dichtungsvermögen* or *Dichtkraft*. Although we have seen that imagination is often translated from the German *Einbildungskraft*, Tetens treats *Einbildungskraft* as only one manifestation of *Vorstellungskraft*, which is “imagination in the broadest and most encompassing sense of the word.”⁷¹

Tetens begins his examination with the claim that the soul is active and passive. The soul suffers, insofar as it receives impressions from objects foreign to itself. But it is also active “if it expresses itself in its self-determination, that is, if it exerts its unique applicative power or activity.”⁷² There are, then, two sources of affection. On the one hand, outer objects affect the soul, producing sensations (*Empfindungen*). On the other, an internal power affects these internal sensations, creating changes therein (*eine Empfindungsvorstellung oder eine ursprüngliche Vorstellung*). For Tetens, what follows from this fundamental relationship between soul and world is that perceptions are, strictly speaking, analogies (*Analogien*) of the behavior and relationships of things in the world: “The analogical things correspond with one another like signs and images of the denoted

⁷⁰ See Tetens (1777), 1: “The soul feels, it has representations of the characteristics and relations of things, and it thinks... Each of these expressions or powers shows itself in a unique way, with a unique character, and with particular effects, from which remaining effects they are different.”

⁷¹ Engell (1981), 119.

⁷² Tetens (1777), 13.

and illustrated objects.”⁷³ Accordingly, the *Perceptionsvermögen* (*facultas percipiendi*), insofar as it takes up or catches representations in the soul (*aufnehmen oder fassen den ursprünglichen Vorstellungen*), represents a likeness.

Tetens recognizes that we also reproduce or reconstruct images that are no longer present. He calls these *Einbildungen* or *Phantasmata*:

If the first modifications, from which such traces in the soul are left behind, are no longer there, then the soul can produce in itself an accurate after-image, in which it again produces the remaining impressions and its first subjective states, although in a weaker and often indiscernible grade, but out of which it nonetheless again remembers and can present these impressions and states presently.⁷⁴

This *Wiedervorstellungskraft* or what Tetens also calls *Phantasie* and *Einbildungskraft* is a power to reproduce or reconstruct former impressions, though in a weaker or often indeterminate form from their original *Empfindungsvorstellung*.⁷⁵

But *Phantasie* is not simply a function of memory. It also operates according to the law of association of ideas. Tetens cites Locke and tells us that “*Phantasie* would therefore run through again the coexistence of sensations by the mere reproduction of representations if not still through another ground, which would determine this direction, namely this: *Similar representations follow one another*, connecting into one, as it were.”⁷⁶ *Phantasie* reproduces a series (*Reihe*) of representations that were formerly connected in the original series of *Empfindungsvorstellungen*. Moreover, *Phantasie* combines simple representations that were not formerly combined in an original, sensible representation. Tetens uses the example of Pegasus: “The representation of Pegasus is an image of a winged horse. We have the image of a horse from sensation and the wings

⁷³ Tetens (1777), 14.

⁷⁴ Tetens (1777), 14.

⁷⁵ See Tetens (1777), 24.

⁷⁶ Tetens (1777), 106.

also. Both are pure phantasms, which are separated from other representations and are here, in the image of Pegasus, combined with one another.”⁷⁷

Tetens’s account of *Empfindungsvorstellungen* as simple representations and *Phantasmata* or *Einbildungen* as complex is reminiscent of Locke’s simple and complex ideas. But Tetens distinguishes himself from Locke when he writes, “The creative power (*Schaffungskraft*) of the soul goes further. It can make representations, which are simple for our consciousness but nonetheless different from those which we meet in our simplest *Empfindungsvorstellungen*.”⁷⁸ This particular *Vorstellungskraft* does not reproduce simple, sensible representations nor does it split (*zertheilen*) and recombine (*wiederaneinandersetzen*) but *produces* from itself (*selbstmachen*) simple representations: “The soul can not only place and order our representations, like the director of a gallery of images. Rather, it is itself a painter and invents and produces a new gallery.”⁷⁹ Tetens calls this power of the soul *Dichtungsvermögen*.

Dichtungsvermögen fuses or blends images so thoroughly that they appear natural, not artificial or contrived like a Pegasus or other creatures of mythology.⁸⁰ In fact, the products of this power do not resemble images at all. Here is how Tetens describes the limits and possibilities of *Dichtungsvermögen*:

Dichtkraft can produce no elements or basic material—out of nothing is nothing made—, and it is thereby no creative power. It can only separate, dissolve, combine, mix, and yet

⁷⁷ Tetens (1777), 116–7.

⁷⁸ Tetens (1777), 25.

⁷⁹ Tetens (1777), 107.

⁸⁰ Tetens’s notion of *Dichtungsvermögen* recalls the exegesis of chapter two, where the Hebraic and Greek authors contrasted divine creation as original and natural from human creation as imitative and artificial. Tetens’s *Dichtungsvermögen* resembles a divine act insofar as its product appears natural. Cf. Engell (1981), 120–1.

just by this means can it produce new images, which in regard to our capacity of differentiation are simple representations.⁸¹

He then suggests that this power is the power of genius:

One compares the strongest expression of the soul with *Dichtkraft* in Milton and Klopstock, who, with inner intensity, hews, dissolves and mixes, separates and connects *Einbildungen*, as well as creates new shapes and appearances.⁸²

This power to separate and dissolve, bind and mix, with *intensity* is what differentiates the act of *Dichtungsvermögen* from *Phantasie*, which separates and recombines but in such a way that the product looks artificial, as if one could see the seams or stitching.⁸³

Tetens tells us that there are three laws of *Dichtkraft*. The first is that “more simple representations, which are similar or indifferent... are united as one through an activity of the representative power.”⁸⁴ *Dichtkraft* produces or shapes into a unity a simple representation (*Ein-Bildung*), which itself cannot be analyzed like a complex concept. In this respect Tetens provides the examples of Swift’s Brobdingnagians and Lilliputians.⁸⁵ The second law of *Dichtkraft* states that simple sensible representations (*nicht völlig einerlei, aber doch Aehnlichkeiten haben*) are capable, through *Dichtungsvermögen*, of being united into one confused representation (*verwirrte Vorstellung*), which to our feeling is nonetheless simple (*einfach*).⁸⁶ Finally, the third law according to Tetens states that closely attached ideas in one consciousness (*anklebende*

⁸¹ Tetens (1777), 139.

⁸² Tetens (1777), 159–60.

⁸³ One might compare the idea of propaganda in this case. Propaganda only works insofar as witnesses take it *as fact*. Poorly constructed propaganda taken *as propaganda* is self-defeating. Likewise, *Dichtungsvermögen* presents a representation *as real*, whereas *Phantasie* presents a representation *as representation*.

⁸⁴ Tetens (1777), 136.

⁸⁵ Engell notes that Tetens read closely Alexander Gerard’s 1774 *Essay on Genius*. Like Tetens, Gerard cites literary examples of genius; in Gerard’s case, Shakespeare. See Engell (1981), 122.

⁸⁶ Tetens (1777), 136–7.

verschiedene Nebenideen) are dissolvable (*auflösbar*) through *Dichtungsvermögen* into simple representations.⁸⁷

For Tetens, *Dichtungsvermögen* fuses or shapes images and ideas more tightly than a mere reorganization or association of *Phantasie*.⁸⁸ Moreover, it infuses this construction with feeling, a characteristic that Tetens suggests is absent in *Phantasie*. Other characteristics that Tetens uses to describe the product of the highest power of representation are “original” (*Von ihr kommt alles Originelle*),⁸⁹ “lively” (*lebhaft*), and “self-active” (*selbsthätig*). In this latter respect in particular, Tetens is clear that the self-activity of *Dichtungsvermögen* is what distinguishes it from *Phantasie*:

Let *Phantasie* magnify in proportionality, diminish, be made livelier and stronger. Hereby alone stands no such self-creator of the sensible *Vorstellungskraft* (as fictions are). In this perspective are both modes of activity incomparable.⁹⁰

For Tetens, what sets *Dichtungsvermögen* apart from other manifestations of *Vorstellungskraft* is its self-generating, self-activating power. It is internally *purposive*, and in this sense one scholar has suggested that it be characterized as will: it “combines deliberate planning and effort with spontaneous and free force.”⁹¹

Tetens was familiar with Kant, primarily the *Dissertation*, which Tetens cites in his 1775 *On General Speculative Philosophy*. Now we saw in the *Dissertation* that Kant indicates, albeit indirectly, that *Einbildungskraft* operates according to rules of the mind, thereby constructing *a priori* sensible forms, a transfer of ideality to reality. It would be a stretch to suggest that Tetens follows Kant’s lead in the *Philosophical Essays*. Tetens

⁸⁷ Tetens (1777), 137.

⁸⁸ According to *Langenscheidt’s Großwörterbuch: Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, *dichten* can mean to make something tight or thick, as well as to compose a literary work.

⁸⁹ Tetens (1777), 138.

⁹⁰ Tetens (1777), 159.

⁹¹ See Engell (1981), 124–5.

likely has in mind Leibniz's remarks in the *New Essays*.⁹² Nevertheless, in the *Essays*,

Tetens describes the formation of geometric shapes, a transition from the ideal to the real:

Geometric representations of points, lines, circles, spheres, etc. are, in their geometric determination, strictly speaking, as well as from other grounds, effects of *Dichtkraft*. I observe merely the *imaginary (Bildliche)* in it... We have in our power the representation of extension, and we can modify this ideal extension as we want. *Phantasie* therefore directs the image of the circular line in such a way that each point stands equidistant from the middle point, around which nothing is the least further removed or brought nearer. The last state in the sensible image is a state of *Dichtkraft*, just as there is in all our ideals.⁹³

Here *Dichtkraft* is the capacity to concretize ideas or construct formal ideas into the imaginary (*das Bildliche*). And it is *Dichtkraft*, not *Phantasie*, since it operates according to a law: in this case, that each point on the circular line be equidistant from the middle point. This is self-activity with purposiveness.

I noted above that by 1770 Kant implicates *Einbildungskraft* as the bridge between the sensible and the intellectual. For all of Tetens groundbreaking insight into *Dichtungsvermögen*, he remains pessimistic whether *Dichtkraft* can truly bridge these realms:

Between the sensible and the transcendental, between metaphysics and physics, and even between metaphysics and psychology is a gap, over which nothing is to get away.⁹⁴

Perhaps this pessimism is due to Tetens's empiricist commitments. In any case, it would have to be Kant who would bridge this gap.

⁹² See Engell (1981), 126.

⁹³ Tetens (1777), 135.

⁹⁴ Tetens (1777), 128.

5,5 Lectures on Metaphysics

Kant's notes on Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* and his lectures during the late 1770s are evidence of his new stance toward *Bildungsvermögen*. It appears now not simply as a coconspirator of irrationality but a necessary condition for the construction of a veridical experience.

5,5,1 *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*

In the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*,⁹⁵ in a section titled “*Von der Einbildungskraft*,” Kant opens by discussing various illnesses and illusions of *Einbildungskraft*, as if a cautionary warning is in order, and then proceeds to lay out Baumgarten's capacities of sensory-knowledge:

Abzubilden: informandi, direct image formation
Einzubilden: fingendi, imaginative formation
Nachzubilden: imaginandi, refingendi, reproductive image formation
Vorzubilden: praefingendi, praevidenti, anticipatory image formation
Auszubilden: perficiendi, completing image formation
Gegenzubilden: symbolum, symbolic image formation⁹⁶

Kant here places each of these imaginative powers under the general term *Bildungsvermögen*.

In these *Reflexionen* Kant is careful to distinguish three species of *Bildungsvermögen*. He calls the first species *Bildungskraft*, the synthetic power employed in the coordination of given representations. This synthetic formative power is itself either natural (*unwillkürlich*) or intellectual (*freie Handlung*). In the first, natural sense, *Bildungskraft* forms a representation by the law of association. It is an unconscious act

⁹⁵ Erich Adickes places the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* in the late 1770s. See Kant (1900–), 15: vi. Rudolf Makkreel places it between 1776–1778. See Makkreel (1990), 12n.

⁹⁶ See Kant (1900–), no. 313a; 15: 123.

that apprehends a present object and infuses it with memories and expectations. Kant breaks this down into *Abbildung*, *Nachbildung*, and *Vorbildung*, each corresponding roughly to Baumgarten's notion of acute sensation, phantasy, and foresight.⁹⁷ Describing the act of *Bildungskraft*, Kant says it is a running through (*durchlaufen*) of the manifold of sensations and calls its product an appearance (*Erscheinung*):

That *Abbildungsvermögen* belongs to the sensible appearance, and radiates through this connection, pleases us and brightens our perspective. This is because the mind, in which there are actions (*Handlungen*), is moved to make images out of impressions as it runs through the manifold.⁹⁸

Now in the other, intellectual sense, Kant notes that we reflect upon (*mit Bewußtsein*) and compare (*vergleichen*) representations, noting the representations' similarities and differences. He refers to this as wit (*Witz*) and perspicacity (*Scharfsinnigkeit*), and suggests that through the latter we clarify and distinguish perceptions.⁹⁹

In both its natural and intellectual manifestations, *Bildungskraft* is dependent upon given representations. But *Einbildungskraft*, the second species of *Bildungsvermögen*, "makes an image without the presence of an object (admittedly with the materials of sense), either by invention (*figendo*) or by abstraction (*abstrahendo*)."¹⁰⁰ *Einbildungskraft* is an original, productive faculty (*Ursache der Vorstellungen*).¹⁰¹ And it creates both subjective and objective representations, that is, the form, but not the matter: "The actions are never concerned with materiality but rather with form; either from comparison, through which no representations are produced, or of

⁹⁷ See Makkreel (1990), 13.

⁹⁸ Kant (1900–), no. 327; 15: 129.

⁹⁹ Cf. Baumgarten's *perspicacia*.

¹⁰⁰ Kant (1900–), no. 325; 15: 128. See also Kant (1900–), no. 330; 15: 130.

¹⁰¹ See Makkreel (1990), 13. Cf. Kant (1900–), no. 330; 15: 130: "*Die Einbildung unterscheidet sich darin von der Bildungskraft, daß sie ohne Gegenwart des Gegenstandes ein Bild macht.*"

the objective genesis or subjective fiction.”¹⁰² Like Baumgarten’s *facultas fingendi*, Kant notes that through dissolution (*Auflösung*) and combination (*Verknüpfung*), *Einbildungskraft* as *Dichtungskraft* produces subjective fictions (*Erdichtungen*) or symbols (*Gegenbilder*). But *Einbildungskraft* as *Ausbildungskraft* also produces original representations, i.e., standards of measure or ideas. He writes, “We must bring something to the end. Therefore we have certain standards, for example, a dozen... some are ideas, e.g. the hero, friendship, wisdom.”¹⁰³

For Kant, *Einbildungskraft* is a free act. We play with the images, as he puts it. But he is also careful to warn us that images often play with us. This second species of *Einbildungskraft* Kant calls *Phantasie*:

No state is more dangerous, as when we play around in the world of *Einbildungen*, until we confuse ourselves therein and cannot find the way out. Paradise of the mad (*Narren*).¹⁰⁴

Picking from the *Imagination*, the storehouse of representations (*Vorrath der Vorstellungen*), *Phantasie* creates its own mad paradise, a solitary, lonely world. The mad travel in a field of images (*im Felde der Einbildungen*), speak with themselves (*mit sich selbst*), and play the roll of protagonist (*Rolle als Hauptperson*).¹⁰⁵

The problem with the madman is not that he creates a world of lawlessness.¹⁰⁶ It is that his world is incommunicable. What Kant seems to be suggesting here, and what

¹⁰² Kant (1900–), no. 314; 15: 124.

¹⁰³ Kant (1900–), no. 332; 15: 131.

¹⁰⁴ Kant (1900–), no. 335; 15: 132.

¹⁰⁵ Kant (1900–), no. 337a; 15: 133. We saw in the last chapter how imagination was the ground of sympathy. On the other side of this spectrum, it is also a cause of egoism or solipsism.

¹⁰⁶ In the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Kant tells us that the madman’s world has rules, laws, systematicity. In the context of *vesania* (*Aberwitz*), Kant writes, “For in this last kind of mental derangement there is not merely disorder and deviation from the rule of the use of reason, but also *positive unreason*; that is, *another* rule, a totally different standpoint into which the soul is transferred, so to speak, and from which it sees all objects differently. And from the *Sensorio communi* that is required for the unity

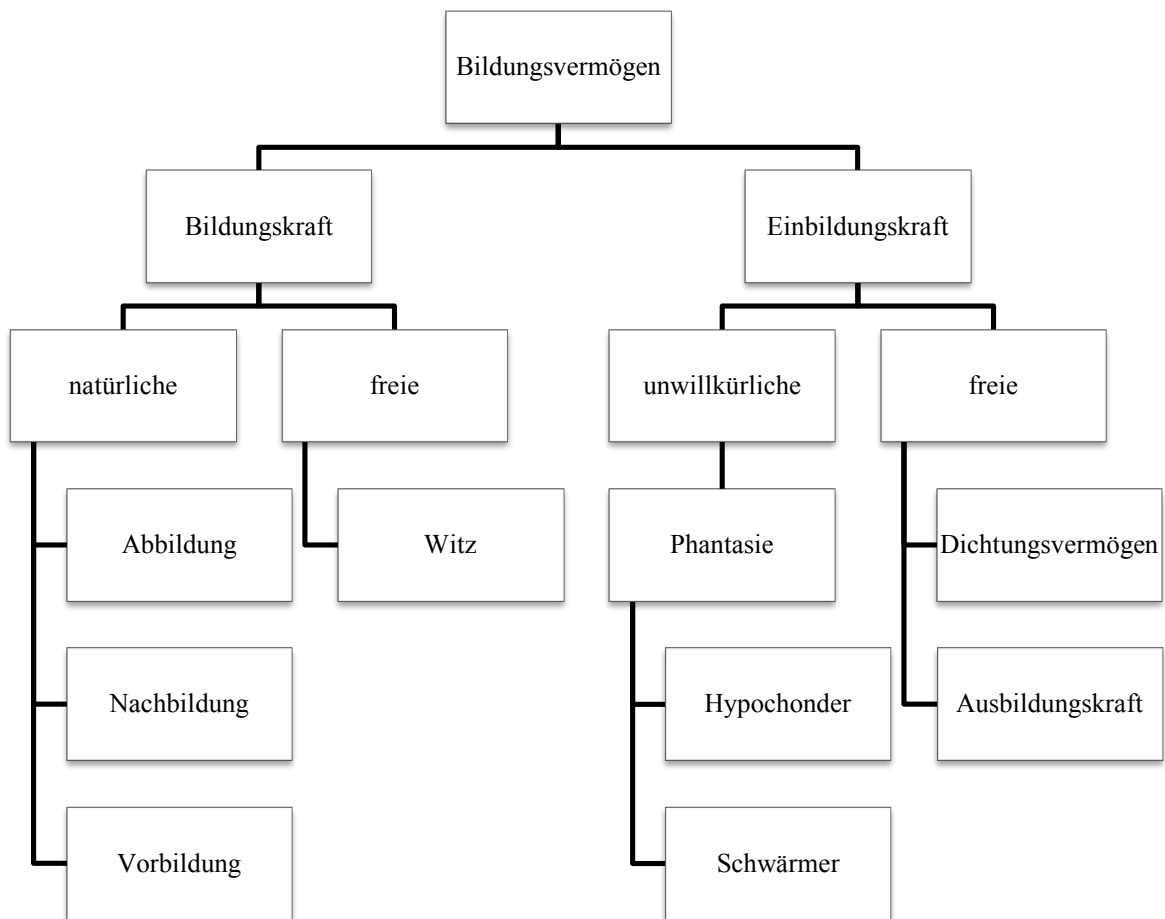
we have already seen from the “Essay on the maladies of the head,” is that *Einbildungskraft* must be bound by shared concepts, shared rules for artistic creativity and natural science. This was Baumgarten’s point in the *Metaphysics* and *Aesthetics*. In aesthetics, the artist must create a representation that is communicable through signs. Its truth must be shared. Otherwise, it is poor art. Kant’s point is the same. The artist must create a world that everyone can understand and participate in. If he does not, he appears mad—a lonely, solipsistic dreamer. Not surprisingly, in the *Reflexionen* Kant refers in this context to the fantast (*Schwärmer*).¹⁰⁷

(Kant’s division of *Bildungsvermögen* in the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* is represented in figure 4-1 below).

of *life* (of the animal), it finds itself transferred to a faraway place... It is astonishing, however, that the powers of the unhinged mind still arrange themselves in a system, and that nature even strives to bring a principle of unity into unreason, so that the faculty of thought does not remain idle. Although it is not working objectively toward true cognition of things, it is still at work subjectively, for the purpose of animal life,” Kant (2007), 321; 7: 216.

¹⁰⁷ See Kant (1900–), no. 335; 15: 132.

Figure 4-1



5,5,2 Pölitz Lectures

Kant's further treatment of *Bildungsvermögen* occurs in his lectures on metaphysics, particularly in the *Pölitz Lectures* delivered between 1777–1780. Although these lectures follow the format of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, the section on empirical psychology shows Kant's recent reading of Tetens's *Philosophical Essays*. Like Tetens, Kant here notes that we feel ourselves both active and passive with respect to our higher and lower faculties, respectively, and then proceeds to describe what belongs to these faculties: representation (cognition), desire, and the feeling of pleasure and displeasure.

With respect to the faculty of representations (*Vermögen der Vorstellungen*) or cognition (*Erkenntnißvermögen*), Kant repeats his division in the *Dissertation* and writes, "The *lower* faculty of cognition is a power to have representations so far as we are affected by objects (*von Gegenständen afficirt werden*). The *higher* faculty of cognition is a power to have representations from ourselves (*Vorstellungen aus uns selbst zu haben*)."¹⁰⁸ And although the lower faculty or sensibility is grounded in experience, Kant writes,

We differentiate the sensible faculty of cognition into: the faculty of the senses themselves, and the imitated cognition of the senses... Such sensible cognitions which arise from the spontaneity of the mind are called: *cognitions of the formative power* (*Erkenntnisse der bildenden Kraft*); and the cognition which arise through the impressions of the object are called: *representations of the senses themselves*.¹⁰⁹

The senses are purely receptive. They represent what is impressed upon them or given.

But the *bildende Kraft* makes representations. As we have seen from the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, here again Kant lays out the divisions of the *bildende Kraft*: there is the temporally formative power (*Bildung*), itself divided into the faculty of direct image

¹⁰⁸ Kant (1997), 48; AA, 28: 228.

¹⁰⁹ Kant (1997), 49; AA, 28: 230.

formation (*Abbildungskraft*), imitation or reproduction (*Nachbildungskraft*), and anticipation (*Vorbildungskraft*), and the faculties of completing (*Ausbildung*) and signifying (*Gegenbildung*).¹¹⁰

Moving beyond the notes of the *Reflexionen*, the *Pölitz Lectures* provide an explanation of the production of a representation. In this context, Kant writes, “My mind is always busy with forming the image of the manifold while it goes through it (*durchgeht*). E.g., when I see a city, the mind then forms an image of the object which it has before it while it runs through (*durchläuft*) the manifold.”¹¹¹ Here is how he describes this *durchlaufen*:

Therefore if a human being comes into a room which is piled high with pictures and decorations, then he can make no image of it, because his mind cannot run through the manifold. It does not know from which end it should begin in order to illustrate the object (*um sich den Gegenstand abzubilden*). So it is reported that when a stranger enters St. Peter’s church in Rome, he is wholly disconcerted on account of the manifold splendor. The cause is: his soul cannot go through the manifold in order to illustrate it. This illustrative faculty (*abbildende Vermögen*) is the formative faculty of intuition (*bildende Vermögen der Anschauung*). The mind must undertake many observations in order to illustrate an object so that it illustrates the object differently from each side. E.g., a city appears differently from the east (*Morgenseite*) than from the west (*Abendseite*). There are thus many appearances of a matter according to the various sides and points of view. The mind must make an illustration from all these appearances by taking them all together (*sie alle zusammen nimmt, sich eine Abbildung machen*).¹¹²

If we consider this passage carefully, Kant’s use of *durchlaufen* appears incompatible with the notion of *Abbildungskraft*. For an *Abbild* implies a direct apprehension and not a running through of any sort. So what does Kant have in mind here?

If we enter a room that is piled high with pictures and decorations or enter St. Peter’s church in Rome and fail to run through the manifold, the implication is that we are confused due to a novel experience. Kant seems to be suggesting that we cannot run

¹¹⁰ Kant (1997), 49; AA, 28: 230–1.

¹¹¹ Kant (1997), 54; AA, 28: 235.

¹¹² Kant (1997), 54; AA, 28: 235–6.

through the manifold because we do not have a past experience of the present situation. Thus he says, “The mind must undertake many observations in order to illustrate an object so that it illustrates the object differently from each side.” An *Abbild*, then, presupposes *Nachbilder*. But if we require past experiences to properly intuit a room, say, then we must have expectations as well. We must always be ahead of ourselves, so to speak. So an *Abbild* also presupposes a *Vorbild*.

When Kant says that the *bildende Vermögen der Anschauung* is a running through of the manifold, this means that this faculty ought to be guided by empirical schema or rule. This running through is not haphazard or arbitrary but purposive. Put differently, we might say that the impressions occasion the mind to reproduce images (*Nachbilder*) according to the law of association. But these associations of marks are bound by a general rule, which itself guides the *bildende Vermögen*. The rule functions as a guide for the construction of the perceptual experience. This motion back and forth, a hovering as Kant’s successors will put it, is the *durchlaufen* of the formative faculty. In this way, *Abbilder* are thus infused with *Nachbilder* and *Vorbilder*. As Kant puts it, “A present appearance *has* representations of the past and the following time.”¹¹³

This theory of perception and a *bildende Vermögen* is represented in the work of Wilfrid Sellars. Like Kant, he notes that perception is an activity, a synthesizing of various perspectives. This is because perspectives are “point-of-viewish.”¹¹⁴ And yet, we interpret our limited perspective *as* something which we do not entirely *see*. Accordingly,

¹¹³ Kant (1997), 54; AA, 28: 236, my emphasis. Kant also discusses in these lectures *Gegenbildung* and *Ausbildung*. I will not discuss them here. There are not significant differences between his remarks here and the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*. For Kant’s discussion in the *Pölitz Lectures*, see Kant (1997), 55–6; AA, 28: 237–8.

¹¹⁴ Sellars (2002), 414.

aspects of objects (what we have been calling *Nachbilder* and *Vorbilder*) that are not seen are nonetheless experienced as *actually present* for the perceiver. The synthesis of a *bildende Vermögen* unites various possible perspectives together with the immediate sensible apprehension (*Abbild*). Sellars writes, “Perceptual consciousness involves the *constructing of sense-image-models of external objects*. This construction is the work of the imagination.”¹¹⁵

J. Michael Young and P. F. Strawson present a similar thesis. When Kant tells us in the first *Critique* that the “*imagination (Einbildungskraft)* is the faculty for representing an object even **without its presence** in intuition,”¹¹⁶ Young suggests that Kant’s idea is that “one ‘sees more than meets the eye,’ taking or treating or construing what is sensibly present as something other, or something more, than what immediately appears.”¹¹⁷ The claim is that *Einbildungskraft* is essentially an interpretative faculty. Here is how Strawson makes the point: “When I naively report what I see at a moment (say, as a tree or a dog), my mind or my report certainly ‘looks further’ than *something* – not, usually, than ‘what immediately appears to me’ (tree or dog), but certainly further than the merely subjective side of the event of its immediately appearing to me.”¹¹⁸ As

¹¹⁵ Sellars (2002), 23.

¹¹⁶ Kant (1998), B151. N.B.: The bold type-face is a stylistic mark of the Cambridge Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

¹¹⁷ Young (1988), 141. Allison adopts a similar stance in his *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*. See Allison (2004), 189–93. Cf. Hanna (2005), 266–7: “The imagination belongs to sensibility, and is a cognitive function of intuition: ‘imagination... [is a power] of intuiting even when the object is *not* present’ (Kant (1900–), 7: 153). Superficially this formulation is inconsistent with Kant’s definition of intuition, since intuition includes object-dependence as a necessary condition. So it could legitimately be read as a case of Kant nodding. But more charitably, I think that the best overall construal of what he is saying is that imagination is essentially intuition *minus* object-dependence: so imagination is an immediate, sense-related, singular, and nonconceptual cognitive capacity that can represent either existing or non-existing objects. Or otherwise put, imagination is *quasi-intuition*.”

¹¹⁸ Strawson (1982), 87. Cf. Strawson (1982), 89: “It seems, then, not too much to say that the actual occurrent perception of an enduring object as an object of a certain kind, or as a particular object of that

Strawson sees it, reports of perceptual experiences are of distinct objects, not of partial or limited perspectives. I report that I see a dog, in most cases. Not hindquarters.

Here we see a line of interpretation of *bildende Kraft* that is consistent with the *Pölitz Lectures*. Sellars's "constructing of sense-image-models of external objects" and Kant's synthetic procedure pertaining to the "making distinct of objects" describes a logical operation whereby objects are constructed and thereby conceptually recognized. Strawson is more metaphorical. He describes perceptual experiences as "*irradiated*" "*infused*" or "*soaked*" with the concept.¹¹⁹ But his point, nonetheless, is that concepts "*link or combine*" different perspectives as perceptions of the same external object.¹²⁰

But the *Pölitz Lectures* go beyond perception according to empirical rules. For here Kant returns to his distinction between empirical and intellectual concepts:

Thus there are sensuous and intellectual concepts. We can therefore say: there is nothing in the understanding with respect to matter that was not in the senses; but with respect to form there are cognitions, intellectual ones, which are not an object of the senses at all.

He then asks,

But how do they [intellectual concepts] come into the understanding? One must not assume them as innate and inborn, for that brings all investigation to a close, and is very unphilosophical... But concepts have arisen through the understanding, according to its nature, on the occasion of experience; for on the occasion of experience and the senses the understanding forms concepts which are not from the senses but rather drawn from reflection on the senses.¹²¹

Given what we have said above, that empirical rules guide *bildende Kraft* in the construction of perception, which we know can then be reflected *as* empirical concepts, is it reasonable to assume that intellectual rules also guide *bildende Kraft* in the

kind, is, as it were, soaked with or animated by, or infused with – the metaphors are *à choix* – the thought of other past or possible perceptions of the same object.”

¹¹⁹ See Strawson (1982), 93.

¹²⁰ See Strawson (1982), 87.

¹²¹ Kant (1997), 51–2; AA, 28: 233.

construction of experience, which are then reflected *as* intellectual concepts or, as Kant will put it a few years later, *a priori* categories of experience?

Kant's answer to the question here is as follows:

We have cognitions of objects of intuition by virtue of the formative power (*bildende Kraft*), which is between the understanding and sensibility. If this formative power is in the abstract *<in abstracto>*, then it is the understanding. The conditions and actions of the formative power, taken in the abstract *<in abstracto>*, are pure concepts of the understanding and categories of the understanding. E.g., the pure concept of the understanding of substance and accident comes from the formative power in the following manner: the formative power must have something permanent underlying it, besides the manifold that alters, for were there nothing at the foundation of the formative power, then it also could change nothing. Now the permanent is the pure concept of substance, and the manifold of accident. All highest principles of the understanding *a priori* are general rules which express the conditions of the formative power in all appearances with which we can determine how appearances are connected among themselves; for that which makes cognition possible, which is its condition, that is also the condition of things.¹²²

We saw in the *Dissertation* a gap appear between the sensible and the intellectual. Kant's position was that a gap had to emerge, for the continuity thesis could not account for *a priori* principles of morality and metaphysics. But the problem arose as to how this gap could be bridged. Now, however, we have *bildende Kraft*, "which is between the understanding and sensibility." Kant's new position is that there are acts of *bildende Kraft*, conditioned by rules of the understanding, from which we reflect categories of the understanding or pure concepts, "abstractions" of these acts. Thus the category of substance, as Kant says, is an abstraction from the permanence underlying the act of *bildende Kraft*, the argument presumably being that in the act of running through the manifold *bildende Kraft* is numerically identical through change, which we reflect as the

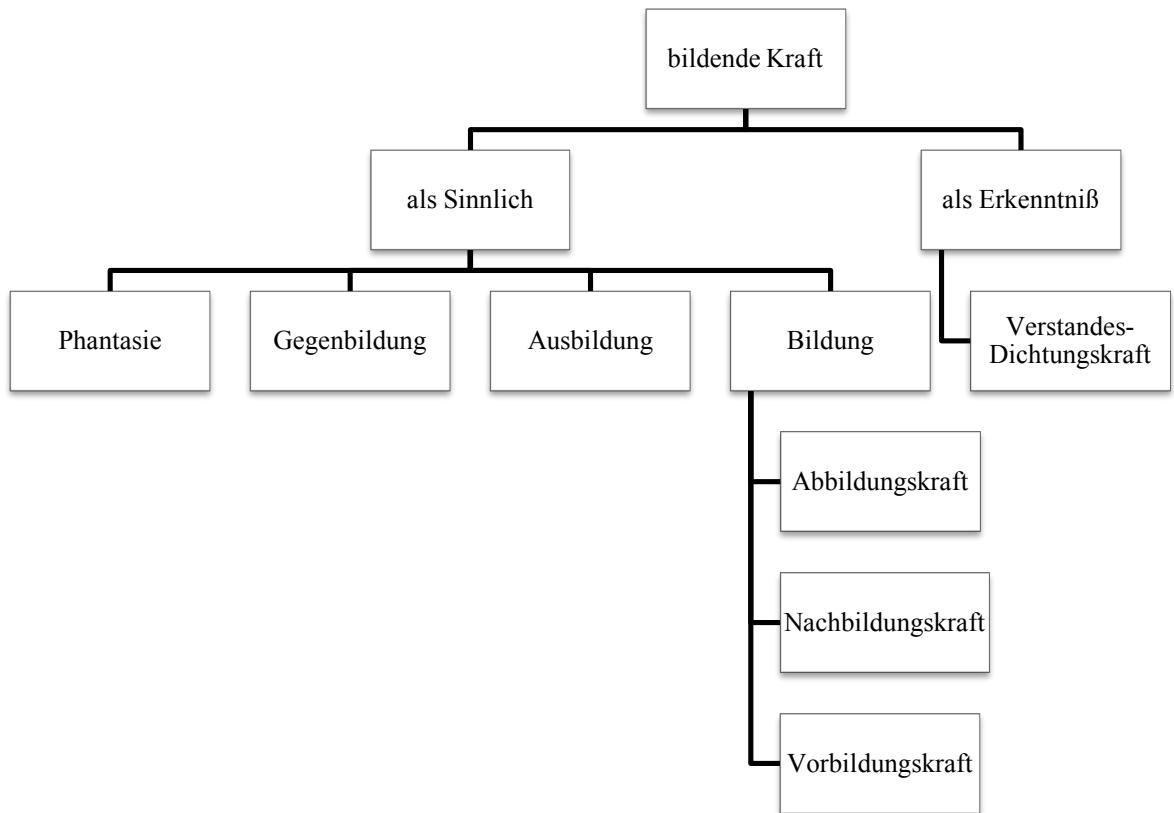
¹²² Kant (1997), 57; AA, 28: 240.

pure concept of substance. In the *Pölitiz Lectures*, Kant calls this the poetic power of the understanding (*Verstandes-Dichtungskraft*).¹²³

(Kant's division of *bildende Kraft* from the *Pölitiz Lectures* is represented in figure 4-2 below).

¹²³ Kant (1997), 55: AA, 28: 237.

Figure 4-2



5,6 Concluding Remarks

A fuller picture of this process will emerge in the next chapter when we move to the 1787 *Critique*. But we should recall at this stage the route we have taken to get here. In the 1760s Kant described a *Bildungsvermögen* unbound, a sick mind. It appeared that *Bildungsvermögen* was active in a medley of mental illnesses, not to mention fanaticism and immorality. But by the 1770s, *Bildungsvermögen* is tasked with an indispensable role. It must now produce not simply art but also virtuous action and veridical experience. The implication, then, is that *Bildungsvermögen* is operative in madness *and* rationality, the difference lying in whether it follows normative rules or not; whether it is, in other words, bound.

6, *Produktive Einbildungskraft* Redux

With the appearance of the second edition of the critique of reason, the promises Kant gave [in 1781] he fulfilled in 1787. Through a more precise definition of judgment, in which the relation of synthesis to apperception becomes clear, he deduced a new development for the objective validity of the categories and therefore came to a more precise determination of the concept and function of self-consciousness.

—Hermann Cohen, *Kant's Theory of Experience*, 316

In the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the transcendental *Einbildungskraft* as it came to light in the impassioned course of its first projection was thrust aside and given a new interpretation—one favoring the understanding.

—Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 3: 161

6,1 Strategy of the B-Deduction

The question of the Subjective Deduction is, “How is the faculty of thinking itself possible?” The Objective Deduction, however, “refers to the objects of the pure understanding, and is supposed to demonstrate and make comprehensible the objective validity of its concepts *a priori*.”¹ Kant had already alluded to the method of the Objective Deduction in his 1773 *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik*, in which he said that “the concepts of the understanding express all the *actus* of the powers of the mind, insofar as representations are possible in accordance with their universal laws, and indeed their possibility *a priori*.”² Here he connected the rules for logical subordination (the logical use of the understanding) with the originally acquired *a priori* concepts of the understanding (the real use of the understanding), since the rules for the formation of a judgment operated simultaneously with the construction of the objects of experience. As

¹ Kant (1998), Axvi.

² Kant (1900–), 17: 622.

he puts this in the first *Critique*, “The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgment** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**.”³

If the strategy of the Objective Deduction is to show that the real use of the understanding operates simultaneously with the logical use of the understanding, this strategy begins in section 19, which Kant titles “The logical form of all judgments consists in the objective unity of apperception of the concepts contained therein.”⁴ Prior to this section, Kant reiterates the Subjective Deduction, although in this iteration he says that the understanding, not *Einbildungskraft*, is the source of all combination. As should soon become clear, this is not change in doctrine (à la Heidegger) but a clarification (à la Cohen).

6,2 Logical Functions of Judgment

In section 19 Kant presents his new definition of judgment: “I find that a judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognition to the **objective** unity of apperception.”⁵ Kant has now explicitly identified the transcendental unity of

³ Kant (1998), A79/B104–5.

⁴ I follow Longuenesse here who argues that sections 15–8 are an introduction (review of the Subjective Deduction) to the Transcendental Deduction proper, beginning at section 19. See Longuenesse (1998), 59–70. But I note that we can see Kant already alluding to the transcendental unity of apperception as the source of both logical and real combination in section 15: “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. This unity, which precedes all concepts of combination *a priori*, is not the former category of unity (§10); for all categories are grounded on logical functions in judgments, but in these combination, thus the unity of given concepts, is already thought. The category therefore already presupposes combination. We must therefore seek this unity (as qualitative, §12), someplace higher, namely in that which itself contains the ground of the unity of different concepts in judgments, and hence of the possibility of the understanding, even in its logical use.”

⁵ Kant (1998), B141.

apperception with the logical functions of judgment, the functions that he laid out in the Metaphysical Deduction of sections 9–10. In the threefold synthesis, to be sure, he alluded to this identity between formal logic and transcendental logic. His use of the term “concept” (*Begriff*) evoked a logical act *and* a synthesis of sensible intuition by a numerically identical function of unity. But here in section 19 of the B-Deduction this identity is now made explicit and becomes the keystone to the validity of the categories. Hence in contrast to the “logicians,” who claim that judgment is merely a relation between two concepts, Kant claims that to judge is also to reflect the *appearances* under concepts, regardless of whether these representations belong together necessarily or contingently. The reflection of appearances under concepts is to bring them under the objective unity of apperception.

Longuenesse has suggested that section 19 presupposes familiarity with the lectures on logic, a presupposition that Kant held for his readers.⁶ For as it stands alone, section 19 does not show how logical (discursive) unity of judgment is related to the transcendental unity of apperception. It simply reiterates the point of the threefold synthesis: the reflection of synthesized appearances under a concept constitutes experience. So what is the nature of discursive unity that links it with the transcendental unity of apperception?

I discussed in chapter five Kant’s notion of logical perfection in the *Lectures on Logic*. Recall Kant’s remark from the *Jäsche Logic*:

Every concept, *as partial concept*, is contained in the representation of things; *as ground of cognition, i.e., as mark*, these things are contained *under* it. In the former respect every concept has a *content*, in the other an *extension*.⁷

⁶ Longuenesse (1998), 84–5.

⁷ Kant (1992), 593; AA, 9: 95.

Here we see logical perfection at work in the *Critique*. Judgment, from the standpoint of the logical use of the understanding, is the act of subordinating concepts under more universal concepts. But what is notably different in the *Critique* is that the concepts are related to a particular object, an appearance.⁸ As Kant will later note, these constitute the sense (*Sinn*) of the concept.⁹ Judgment thus consists in the consciousness of various particular objects (appearances) subsumed under common (universal) representations, the former of which provide the sense (*Sinn*), the latter of which the ground (*Grund*) of cognition.

In section 19 Kant tells us that

Only in this way does there arise from this relation **a judgment**, i.e., a relation that is **objectively valid**, and that is sufficiently distinguished from the relation of these same representations in which there would be only subjective validity, e.g., in accordance with laws of association. In accordance with the latter I could only say “If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight.”¹⁰

The important difference between an objectively valid relation of representations and a subjectively valid relation is that the former consists of the *subordination* of particular objects under concepts, which is valid for every empirical consciousness. Subjective validity, to the contrary, is only valid for a particular consciousness, since it is a *coordination* of private sensations—carrying a body and feeling weight. In the latter case, the imagination runs through the impressions and associates them, which one perceives

⁸ In the passage cited from the “Logical use of the understanding in general,” Kant writes that the concept is related to many concepts, and here, in particular, a body, which is in turn related to an appearance.

⁹ Kant makes this point clear in the third chapter of the Transcendental Power of Judgment, “On the ground of the distinction of all objects in general into *phenomena* and *noumena*.” There he writes, “Hence it is also requisite for one **to make** an abstract concept **sensible**, i.e., to display the object (*object*) that corresponds to it in intuition, since without this the concept would remain (as one says) without **sense**, i.e., without significance.” See Kant (1998), A240/B299.

¹⁰ Kant (1998), B142.

as an association of sensations (due to repetitive, constant conjunctions, as Hume would say) *without conceptual recognition (endorsement)*.¹¹

Setting aside the *a priori* categories of understanding for the moment, we can see that when Kant writes that judgment is bringing cognitions to the objective unity of apperception he is implying that there is a normative imperative behind judgment, a theoretical duty. Judgments of the empirical sort must be subordinations of appearances under concepts, whereby they can be tested.¹² To merely allow *Einbildung* to associate impressions by habit, thereby creating associations of sensations or feelings is to refuse to enter into communication with others, to uncritically accept private perceptions of sensation as objective truth. Perhaps there are others who share my imaginative associations, but I will never know.

For Kant, judgments are not only reflections but also inferential. In this respect, Longuenesse has drawn attention to the *Reflexionen*, where Kant writes, “A concept, thanks to its general validity, has the function of a judgment. It applies to other concepts *potentialiter*. The actual relation of a concept to others, as a means of cognition, is a judgment.”¹³ Since judgments function as subordinations of particular objects or concepts under concepts of greater universality, judgments are also potential major premises of a syllogism, in which the premises attribute a genus (predicate-concept) to a species

¹¹ In this context, Longuenesse directs our attention to the 1776–1783 *Reflexion* 3051, Kant (1900–), 16: 633: “The representation of the manner in which various concepts (as such)* belong to a consciousness** (in general, not only my own) is judgment.” The asterisks refer to the end of the *Reflexion*, where Kant states the following: for “concepts (as such),” he specifies “*in a universally necessary manner (empirically or *a priori*).” For “belong to a consciousness,” he says that “**concepts belong to a consciousness only insofar as they are thought as subordinated, and not as coordinated with one another (like sensations).”

¹² Kant contrasts this with “logical egoism.” See Kant (2007), 240–1; AA, 7:128–9.

¹³ Kant (1900–) 16: 630. See Longuenesse (1998), 90.

(subject-concept), and thus potentially attributes the genus to all individuals within the species's sphere.

In the introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant defines the syllogism as follows:

In every syllogism I think first a **rule** (the *major*) through the understanding. Second, I **subsume** a cognition under the condition of the rule (the *minor*) by means of the **power of judgment**. Finally, I determine my cognition through the predicate of the rule (the *conclusio*), hence *a priori* through **reason**.¹⁴

This definition indicates the way in which judgments function as potential major premises in syllogistic reasoning. Every judgment may function as a rule for the predication of the major term to the minor term of a syllogism.

If judgments are potential major premises, they reveal rules. But what the foregoing passage from the Dialectic also tells us is that we are licensed to apply the predicate of the conclusion only if we are in possession of a *condition* of the rule, that is, a middle term that recognizes the particular as an instance of the universal. The condition of the rule is the reason or license for the inferential connection. It functions as the possibility for subsumption, a relation between concepts and appearances. Kant's example of a condition in the Dialectic is "Caius":

I can draw the proposition "Caius is mortal" from experience merely through the understanding. But I seek a concept containing the condition under which the predicate (the assertion in general) of this judgment is given (i.e., here, the concept "human"), and after I have subsumed [the predicate] under this condition, taken in its whole domain ("all humans are mortal"), I determine the cognition of my object according to it ("Caius is mortal").¹⁵

¹⁴ Kant (1998), A304/B360–1.

¹⁵ Kant (1998), A322/B378.

Here “human” functions as a condition because it can be subsumed under a concept of greater generality, i.e., “mortal.” It thus links or provides the possibility for the claim, “Caius is mortal.”¹⁶

A condition pertains not simply to a categorical judgment but a hypothetical judgment as well. In the case of a categorical judgment, as we just saw, the condition is an essential mark of the subject of the conclusion (minor term). In a hypothetical judgment, however, the condition is separate from, and not necessarily contained in, the subject. Kant’s example is “If there is perfect justice, then obstinate evil will be punished.”¹⁷ Here the condition or the antecedent is expressed problematically, that is, it is possible that there is perfect justice. Nonetheless, from the standpoint of the logical use of the understanding, I could express this condition assertorically (actually), as an added condition (minor premise) and thereby assert that “Obstinate evil will be punished.” The difference between this hypothetical judgment and the categorical is that I add a condition from outside the content of the subject-concept (there is nothing intrinsic to the concept of our world from which the existence of perfect justice follows, at least nothing intrinsic that I recognize from my finite perspective).¹⁸

We can now understand more precisely the function of rules for Kant. From the empirical standpoint, rules are derived like concepts, from the comparison of particular

¹⁶ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 94–5.

¹⁷ Kant (1998), A73/B98.

¹⁸ In the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant presents the following example: “There is an essential difference between the two propositions, All bodies are divisible, and, If all bodies are composite, then they are divisible. In the former proposition I maintain the thing directly, in the latter only under a condition expressed problematically,” Kant (1992), 602; AA, 9: 106. See Longuenesse (1998), 101–4. I leave out here the case of disjunctive judgment, since for Kant such a judgment pertains to already formed concepts and an entire field of cognition. It thus plays a major role in forming systematic unity, a universal subordination of genera and species toward which the propensity of reason tends. See Kant (1900–), 9: 106–7. See also Longuenesse (1998), 104–5.

objects—spruces, willows, lindens—and their reflection and abstraction. These rules, then, when prompted by external impressions or a manifold of sensations (green, brown, hard, cylindrical), function as a means of recognition. For if the recognition of a concept is the same act that unifies sensations in an intuition—if recognition is the reflection of this synthesis that emphasizes certain sensations, abstracts away from others, and even fills in sensations that may be absent—then, thinking back to the threefold synthesis, the concept is a reflection of a synthesis of apprehension and reproduction according to a rule, a privileging of particular sensations over others (in the case of a linden, I may abstract away from the knotty outgrowth unique to this particular object and fill in a back-side that is invisible but that I assume to exist). In other words, the concept is a reflection of a rule necessitating the synthesis of particular marks. It is the act that produces appearances *as* phenomena (according to the *Dissertation*) or *as* empirical objects of representation (according to the *Critique*).¹⁹

In the *Jäsche Logic* Kant presents the distinction between an appearance reflected under a concept and an appearance as an undetermined object of an empirical intuition:

If a savage sees a house from a distance, for example, with whose use he is not acquainted, he admittedly has before him in his representation the very same object as someone else who is acquainted with it determinately as a dwelling established for men. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two. With the one it is *mere intuition*, with the other it is *intuition* and *concept* at the same time.²⁰

This example draws out the function of rules in constructing experiences. What distinguishes the so-called savage from the civilized is not the sensible intuition. Indeed, we have seen Kant's indebtedness to Baumgarten for the position that sensible perceptions are distinct in kind—entirely heterogeneous and autonomous—from the use

¹⁹ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 116–22.

²⁰ Kant (1992), 544–5; AA, 9: 33.

of the understanding. The difference is that the savage lacks a rule to privilege particular sensations and deemphasize others. His associations are not bound by a rule, which would necessitate the apprehension and reproduction of particular sensations in the manifold. Such a rule immanent to the appearance could then be reflected as such, i.e., as a concept—house.²¹

Rules are reflected as concepts. They are what we recognize in the appearance if and only if the appearance is constructed for the sake of judgment. Now this is not only the case in empirical cognition, but *a priori* cognition as well. Kant makes this clear in the case of mathematics in the Doctrine of Method, specifically in the chapter titled “The Discipline of Pure Reason in Dogmatic Use.” There he writes,

Mathematical cognition considers the universal in the particular, indeed even in the individual, yet nonetheless *a priori* and by means of reason, so that just as this individual is determined under certain general conditions of construction, the object of the concept, to which this individual corresponds only as its schema, must likewise be thought as universally determined.²²

What is important is not so much the unique image or the “individual” of the construction. Rather, what is important is the general rule or the schema by which the construction is carried out, for only this “attains the generality of the concept,”²³ the universality and necessity that holds in spite of the particular differences among the images (size, color, composition).²⁴ Hence Kant’s statement that “the schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere except in thought, and signifies a rule of the synthesis

²¹ This is not to suggest that the savage cannot compare his sensations. Such a comparison may be an association to previous encounters with similar objects. Kant would presumably agree with Baumgarten that comparison can be independent from reflection. Longuenesse calls this “aesthetic comparison.” See Longuenesse (1998), 114.

²² Kant (1998), A714/B742

²³ Kant (1998), A141/B180.

²⁴ For a helpful explanation in the case of arithmetical construction, see Young (1992), 166. See also Parsons (1992) and Shabel (2006).

of the imagination with regard to pure shapes in space.”²⁵ These rules of synthesis are what we recognize as necessary and universal in the particular sensible intuition, reflecting, consequently, the schema into a concept.

According to Kant, the logical rules of the understanding (the “permanent laws” of the *Dissertation*) are innate and they in turn become prescriptions for the synthesis of *Einbildungskraft*.²⁶ Transcendental rules or schemata thus bind the activities of *Einbildungskraft* in accordance with the logical functions of the understanding. This is precisely why Kant notes in the A-Deduction that “we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call **nature**, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there.”²⁷ It is this synthetic activity in accordance with rules that we recognize in the appearances and hence reflect or judge.²⁸

These innate rules are the logical functions that Kant presents in the Metaphysical Deduction—judgments of quantity, quality, relation, and modality. In the *Jäsche Logic* Kant presents judgments of quantity as claims of inclusion and exclusion:

In the *universal* judgment, the sphere of one concept is wholly enclosed within the sphere of another; in the *particular*, a part of the former is enclosed under the sphere of the

²⁵ Kant (1998), A141/B180.

²⁶ It is helpful to recall here Kant’s strategy for an analytic of concepts: “We will therefore pursue the pure concepts into their first seeds and predispositions in the human understanding, where they lie ready, until with the opportunity of experience they are finally developed and exhibited in their clarity by the very same understanding, liberated from the empirical conditions attaching to them,” Kant (1998), A66/B91.

²⁷ Kant (1998), A125.

²⁸ This foreshadows a letter to J. S. Beck from 3 July 1792, where Kant writes that the difference between a connection of representations in a concept and one in a judgment is that “in the first, one thinks of a concept as *determined*; in the second, one thinks of the *determining activity* of this concept.” Kant’s point to Beck seems to be that when we make a judgment, we bring the synthetic activity of *Einbildungskraft* (an initially blind activity) to consciousness and recognize logical functions (rules) in the sensible intuition. Judgment is therefore a matter of attending to or reflecting this “determining activity” in the appearance. See Kant (1967), 193; AA, 11: 347–8.

other; and in the *singular* judgment, finally, a concept that has no sphere at all is enclosed, merely as part then, under the sphere of another.²⁹

Universal judgments such as “All bodies are divisible” claim that the extension (sphere) of one concept, “bodies,” is wholly enclosed in the extension (sphere) of another concept, “divisibility.” Similarly in the cases of particular and singular judgments, the extension of the subject-concept is either partially enclosed in the extension of the predicate-concept, “Some bodies are red,” or wholly enclosed as an individual object, “This body is red.” (What this suggests for transcendental logic is that quantitative judgments are claims of numerical identity and difference. In the comparison of appearances, we identify and differentiate them by subsuming them partially or wholly under concepts. We may judge that “All bodies are divisible,” but we can also differentiate various bodies from each other: “Some bodies are red,” but “This body is blue.”³⁰)

Kant presents qualitative judgments as a comparison of the intension (content) of concepts. Although this is not immediately clear from the *Jäsche Logic*, where he notes that “in the *affirmative* judgment the subject is thought *under* the sphere of a predicate, in the *negative* it is posited *outside* the sphere of the latter, and in the *infinite* it is posited in the sphere of a concept that lies outside the sphere of another,”³¹ his notes from the *Logic* suggest that the qualitative subordination of objects under concepts rests on the principle of non-contradiction. As he says in a note to qualitative judgments in the *Logic*, “According to the principle of the excluded middle (*exclusi tertii*), the sphere of one

²⁹ Kant (1992), 598; AA, 9: 102.

³⁰ As the appendix to the Transcendental Analytic, “On the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection,” makes clear, we do not simply differentiate objects through the inclusion and exclusion of conceptual extensions. Since objects are given to us as sensible intuitions that are irreducible to concepts of the understanding, pace Leibniz, we also numerically identify and differentiate objects spatially. See Kant (1998), A260–92/B316–49. See also Longuenesse (1998), 132–5.

³¹ Kant (1992), 600; AA, 9: 103–4.

concept relative to another is either exclusive or inclusive.”³² Hence in the case of the judgment “All bodies are divisible” what we are claiming is that there is nothing intrinsic (no marks) to the concept “body” that contradicts the concept “divisibility.” Negative judgments are claims that there is something intrinsic to the subject-concept that contradicts the predicate-concept: “No humans are immortal.” Now infinite judgments such as “The human soul is non-mortal” indicate only that the intension of the subject-concept contradicts the negation of the predicate-concept, “mortality.” Infinite judgments claim that the subject-concept lies outside the sphere of the predicate (here “mortality”), which sphere Kant says is “really no sphere at all but only *a sphere’s sharing of a limit with the infinite, or the limiting itself.*”³³

We have already discussed two of the logical function of relation above—categorical and hypothetical. What Kant means by relation is the application of a predicate by a condition that is *internal* to the subject-concept (such as the categorical judgment “All bodies are divisible”) or the application of a predicate through a condition *external* to the predicate-concept (such as the hypothetical judgment “If there is perfect justice, obstinate evil is punished.” Here we might say, “In this world obstinate evil will be punished *on the condition* that there is perfect justice.”). The essential difference between categorical and hypothetical judgments is the problematic statement of the antecedent of the hypothetical. For Kant, even if the antecedent is necessarily true, the logical function of the hypothetical is essentially different, insofar as I add a condition that is not recognized as internal to the subject of predication. Kant’s example in the

³² Kant (1992), 600; AA, 9: 104.

³³ Kant (1992), 600; AA, 9: 104.

Jäsche Logic is, “If all bodies are composite, then they are divisible.” The point is not whether the condition “composite” is contained in the subject “body.” The point is that I nevertheless add it as if it were. The difference is in the mental act.³⁴

Finally, in the fourth title of the table of judgments, Kant lists modality along with its three moments—problematic, assertoric, and apodictic. Here he tells us that the modality of judgments “is a quite special function of them, which is distinctive in that it contributes nothing to the content of the judgment...but rather concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thinking in general.”³⁵ He then writes that problematic judgments are possibly the case, assertoric judgments are actual, and apodictic necessary.

Now here Longuenesse has noted the striking difference between Kant’s understanding of modality and modality traditionally understood.³⁶ Kant does not claim that problematic judgments are possible because the concepts combined are noncontradictory (“A is B” is possible if B does not contradict A). Likewise, we are given no definition of necessity as a contradiction resulting from its negation (“A is B” is necessary if its negation is contradictory). Rather, Kant tells us that modality concerns the value of the copula in the “relation of thinking in general.” He then proceeds to provide examples in which problematic judgments are combined with assertoric judgments:

³⁴ Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 140–7. I omit here again Kant’s account of the disjunctive judgment, since it operates from a different standpoint from the categorical and hypothetical, namely, the standpoint of totality. In the first *Critique*, he writes, “Finally, the disjunctive judgment contains the relation of two or more propositions to one another, though not the relation of sequence, but rather that of logical opposition, insofar as the sphere of one judgment excludes that of the other, yet at the same time the relation of community, insofar as the judgments together exhaust the sphere of cognition proper; it is therefore a relation of the parts of the sphere of a cognition where the sphere of each part is the complement of that of the others in the sum total of the divided cognition, e.g., ‘The world exists either through blind chance, or through inner necessity, or through an external cause,’” Kant (1998), A73–4/B99. Because the disjunctive judgment is composed of an exhaustive set of propositions, its proper function rests in the Transcendental Dialectic.

³⁵ Kant (1998), A75/B100.

³⁶ See Longuenesse (1998), 157–61.

Thus the two judgments whose relation constitutes the hypothetical judgment (*antecedens* and *consequens*), as well as those in whose reciprocal relation the disjunctive judgment consists (the members of the division), are all merely problematic. In the above example the proposition “There is perfect justice” is not said assertorically, but is only thought of as an arbitrary judgment that it is possible that someone might assume, and only the implication is assertoric.³⁷

What this suggests is that modality is determined through the judgments position (major or minor premise) in deductive reasoning—thinking in general.

If the claim of section 19 is that the logical form of all judgments is the discursive form of the objective unity of apperception and that this unity of apperception confers necessity and universality, Kant’s claim is that the subsumption of appearances under concepts rests on the transcendental condition of the numerical identity of the act of apperception. Section 19 thus makes explicit the fundamental presupposition of the threefold synthesis, although here he explicitly links the logical table of judgments for the first time with the transcendental unity of apperception.

Now to be sure, Kant also mentions in this section the “*principles* of the objective determination of all representations.”³⁸ These principles presumably refer to the “Analytic of Principles” following the Schematism chapter where Kant will present the principles that “All intuitions are extensive magnitudes,” “In all appearances the real, which is an object of the sensation, has intensive magnitude, i.e., degree,” and “All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect,” etc. These principles will be shown to express the combination of appearances (a world of

³⁷ Kant (1998), A75/B100.

³⁸ Kant (1998), B142, my emphasis.

objects perceivable and knowable) under the condition of the transcendental unity of apperception.³⁹

Section 18 claimed that the intuitive form of the objective unity of apperception is time. Hence all empirical sensations temporally ordered are subject to the transcendental unity of apperception. Now given the claim of section 19, that the discursive form of the objective unity of apperception is the logical form of judgments, Kant can conclude in section 20 that “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). Thus the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under categories.”⁴⁰

The question at this point is how discursive (intellectual) synthesis unites with an intuitive (sensible) synthesis. This is the task of the second step of the B-Deduction. As Kant notes in section 21,

In the sequel (§26) it will be shown from the way in which the empirical intuition is given in sensibility that its unity can be none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general according to the preceding §20; thus by the explanation of its *a priori* validity in regard to all objects of our senses the aim of the deduction will first be fully attained.⁴¹

Kant tells us that in the first step of the Transcendental Deduction he could not abstract from the fact that the manifold for intuition is given, lest he be seen to suddenly promote an *intellectus archetypi* he rejected back in 1772. What he *did* abstract from was the “way

³⁹ See Longuenesse (1998), 181–2.

⁴⁰ Kant (1998), B143.

⁴¹ Kant (1998), B144–5.

in which the manifold for an empirical intuition is given.”⁴² For this reason, the Transcendental Deduction now rests on an explanation of this *mode of givenness*, a demonstration that the sensible given is united by the categories.

6,3 *Synthesis Speciosa*

In the “Schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding,” Kant’s resolution to the “entirely unhomogeneous” relationship between a discursive synthesis and sensible synthesis is to argue that there is a “transcendental schema,” a representation, he says, of a “transcendental time-determination,” which is “homogeneous with the **category** (which constitutes its unity) insofar as it is **universal** and rests on a rule *a priori*... [and] on the other hand homogeneous with the **appearance** insofar as **time** is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold.”⁴³ This transcendental schema is Kant’s ultimate explanation to the “way in which the manifold for an empirical intuition is given.” This schema or “third thing” functions as a license for the subsumption of a sensible intuition (sensible synthesis) under categories of the understanding (intellectual syntheses).

The Schematism follows the Transcendental Deduction proper, but it really offers nothing new beyond a further explication of the results of the second step of the B-Deduction. For the Schematism claims that a *time*-determination is carried out by rules (schemata) that are innate to the faculty of understanding, and this is precisely the lesson of sections 24–6 of the B-Deduction. But to see this, we have to take Kant’s advice. In

⁴² Kant (1998), B144.

⁴³ Kant (1998), A138–9/B177–8.

section 26 he invites us to “see the Transcendental Aesthetic” and then attaches a footnote with a discussion of the *a priori* form of space. Moreover, in section 22 he reminds us that “all intuition that is possible for us is sensible (Aesthetic).” And, finally, in the emendation to section 24, he refers us back to section six, conclusive remarks on the *a priori* forms of space and time. The argument of the second step of the B-Deduction is that the forms of space and time that we encounter as given in the Aesthetic are in fact constructions or determinations in accord with laws inherent to the understanding.

If section 19 begins the first step of the B-Deduction, section 24 titled “On the application of the categories to objects of the senses in general” begins the second.⁴⁴ Here Kant returns to the lesson of the first step, namely, that “the pure concepts of the understanding are related through the mere understanding to objects of intuition in general,” what he called in section 19 judgment and what he here calls a *synthesis intellectualis*. But now, he notes,

Since in us a certain form of sensible intuition *a priori* is fundamental, which rests on the receptivity of the capacity for representation (sensibility), the understanding, as spontaneity, can determine the manifold of given representations in accord with the synthetic unity of apperception, and thus think *a priori* synthetic unity of the apperception of the manifold of **sensible intuition**, as the condition under which all objects of our (human) intuition must necessarily stand, through which then the categories, as mere forms of thought, acquire objective reality.⁴⁵

Here we have the first intimation, albeit still obscure, of the transcendental schema, “the *condition* under which all objects of our (human) intuition must necessarily stand.” It is

⁴⁴ Following Henrich’s classic essay, “The Proof-Structure of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction,” I understand the second step of the B-Deduction to conclude with the argument of section 26. See Henrich (1969).

⁴⁵ Kant (1998), B150.

this condition that will link the categories and the sensible intuition, similar to the categorical syllogism in logic discussed above.⁴⁶

We saw that schemata were rules for synthesis. In the case of perception, they guide (necessitate) *Einbildungskraft* in associating specific sensations, emphasizing some and deemphasizing others, so that the appearance can be reflected as a concept, i.e., judged. In section 24, Kant now moves from empirical associations prior to judgment to a transcendental figurative synthesis or *synthesis speciosa*. There he writes, “The figurative synthesis, if it pertains merely to the original synthetic unity of apperception, i.e., this transcendental unity, which is thought in the categories, must be called, as distinct from the merely intellectual combination, the **transcendental synthesis of the imagination** (*transzendente Synthesis der Einbildungskraft*).”⁴⁷ Kant then says that this transcendental synthesis of *Einbildungskraft* “determine[s] the form of sense *a priori*” and is an “effect of the understanding on sensibility and its first application...to objects of the intuition.”⁴⁸ The transcendental synthesis of *Einbildungskraft* or *synthesis speciosa* is an inner affection that determines space and time, “the form of sense *a priori*.” It therefore seems plausible that the *synthesis speciosa* determines the form of sensibility for the sake of the reflection of the pure categories of the understanding.

⁴⁶ What Kant is suggesting in the above passage, which he will flesh out soon after, is very similar to the claim he gave in section 10: “The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgment** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of judgment into concepts by means of the analytic unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects *a priori*,” Kant (1998), A79/B104–5. The important difference here is that whereas in section 10 he discusses “the manifold in intuition in general,” as he does in the first step of the B-Deduction, he now specifies the intuition as a *sensible* (human) intuition.

⁴⁷ Kant (1998), B151.

⁴⁸ Kant (1998), B152.

If *Einbildungskraft* or *produktive Einbildungskraft*⁴⁹ is an inner affection or self-affection, this is why Kant finds the need to clarify his doctrine of inner sense in the emendation to section 24:

Here is now the place to make intelligible the paradox that must have struck everyone in the form of inner sense (§6): namely how this presents even ourselves to consciousness only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves, since we intuit ourselves only as we are internally **affected**, which seems to be contradictory, since we would relate to ourselves passively.⁵⁰

In section six, he told us that time is a subjective condition, the form of inner sense or the form of the “intuition of our self and our inner state” and the “*a priori* formal condition of all appearances in general.”⁵¹ The paradox, then, that “must have struck everyone” consists in the twofold nature of inner sense. How can I as an active subject intuit myself as a passive object only as I appear to myself and not as I am in myself?

In a footnote to the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Kant clarifies this paradox and tells us that in logic the I is a subject of thinking, a reflecting I, or a pure apperception and notes that “there is nothing more to say except that it is a very simple idea.”⁵² And in a footnote to section 25 of the B-Deduction he notes that “the **I think** expresses the act of determining my existence” and that this representation of spontaneity indicates nothing more than *that* I exist as an intelligence—a thinker.⁵³ But the I is also an object of perception or of inner sense, what he calls empirical apperception. In this sense, the subject turns toward itself and is aware of its mental states. It brings empirical

⁴⁹ Kant (1998), B152: “Now insofar as the imagination is spontaneity, I also call it the **productive** imagination, and thereby distinguish it from the **reproductive** imagination, whose synthesis is subject solely to empirical laws, namely those of association, and that therefore contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of cognition *a priori*, and on that account belongs not in transcendental philosophy but in psychology.”

⁵⁰ Kant (1998), B152–3.

⁵¹ Kant (1998), A33–4/B50.

⁵² Kant (2007), 246; AA, 7: 135n.

⁵³ Kant (1998), B157n–8n.

cognitive content to conscious awareness.⁵⁴ The importance of the clarification of this paradox is that the very capacity to observe empirical cognitive content, inner sense, is possible only if its form (time) is affected or constructed.⁵⁵ Thus when Kant says that transcendental philosophy distinguishes inner sense from the faculty of apperception, the implication is that transcendental philosophy demonstrates the conditions for the possibility of empirical psychology.

Once we distinguish inner sense from pure apperception, we should see that this inner affection by *Einbildungskraft*, in accordance with the synthetic unity of apperception, is the condition for the possibility of the *a priori* forms Kant laid out in the Transcendental Aesthetic. This appears to be Kant's point in a footnote to section 26:

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** [*Zusammenfassung*] of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it *precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis*, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible.⁵⁶

This footnote, following the introduction to the *synthesis speciosa*, suggests that this synthesis “precedes all concepts” but is nonetheless the first application of the understanding on sensibility. If this is so, this means we have to follow Kant's lead and work backwards. We have to return to the Aesthetic and reread the notion of form and the pure intuitions of space and time.

⁵⁴ Cf. Kant (1998), A107: “The consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of our state in internal perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can provide no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances, and is customarily called **inner sense** or **empirical apperception**.” Cf. Zöllner (1989b).

⁵⁵ Cf. Kant (1998), B66–9.

⁵⁶ Kant (1998), B160n–1n, my emphasis in italics.

In the Aesthetic Kant characterized space and time as nondiscursive, singular, and infinite given magnitudes. But they are also forms of appearances, forms of sensible intuitions, and pure forms of sensibility, all of which, Kant says, allow “the manifold...to be intuited as ordered in certain relations.”⁵⁷ As he puts it there,

Accordingly, the pure form of sensible intuitions in general is to be encountered in the mind *a priori*, wherein all the manifold of appearances is intuited in certain relations. This pure form of sensibility is also called **pure intuition**. So if I separate from the representation of a body that which the understanding thinks about it, such as substance, force, divisibility, etc., as well as that which belongs to sensation, such as impenetrability, hardness, color, etc., something from this empirical intuition is still left for me, namely extension and figure.⁵⁸

Space and time provide order or determine the manifold of sensations in a sensible intuition, thereby delineating the extension and figure of the objects of intuition. But as the prior passage notes, they are also themselves intuitions or “pure intuitions” with extension and figure if we abstract from sensations and the concepts of the understanding.⁵⁹

Now in the case of intuition commentators have noted that the term is ambiguous.⁶⁰ For the latter might be construed as the *intuited* (the object of sensation or the appearance organized by space and time) or as *intuiting* (the way in which the object of sensation and appearance are received through sensibility). Thus in the case of “form of appearances,” we should keep in mind that appearances have a form as the *intuited* and that appearances are organized in accordance with the form of *intuiting*. But what might

⁵⁷ Kant (1998), A20. In the second edition Kant writes, “ordered in certain relations,” omitting “intuited as.”

⁵⁸ Kant (1998), A20–1/B34–5.

⁵⁹ Cf. Kant (1998), A27/B43.

⁶⁰ See Longuenesse (1998), 217–25 and Allison (2004), 82.

we say about a “*pure* intuition?” It seems at least to be the form of intuiting.⁶¹ Moreover, it also appears to be an object itself, the intuited, “as is really required in geometry.” And yet, in the appendix to the Transcendental Analytic titled “Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection” Kant states that “the mere form of intuition, without substance, is in itself not an object, but the merely formal condition of one (as appearance), like pure space and pure time, which are to be sure something, as the forms for intuiting, but are not in themselves objects that are intuited (*ens imaginarium*).”⁶² What, then, is a pure intuition if it is not itself an object that is intuited, though to be sure it is an object “as is really required in geometry?”

In the *Dissertation*, as we have already seen, Kant raised the question whether space and time are innate or acquired concepts. Recall that they are neither, at least not acquired in the sense of an empirical abstraction. Rather, they are acquired by abstraction of “the very action of the mind, which coordinates what is sensed by it, doing so in accordance with permanent laws.”⁶³ Kant repeats this claim in his response to Eberhard in the 1790 *On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one*, where he again returns to the question of whether space and time are innate or acquired. There he writes,

The *Critique* admits absolutely no implanted or innate *representations*. One and all, whether they belong to intuition or to concepts of the understanding, it considers them as *acquired*. But there is also an original acquisition, (as the teachers of natural right call it), and thus of that which previously did not yet exist at all, and so did not belong to anything prior to this act.⁶⁴

⁶¹ See Kant (1998), A22/B36.

⁶² Kant (1998), A291/B347. Cf. Kant (1998), A429n/B457n.

⁶³ Kant (2002a), 400; AA, 2: 406.

⁶⁴ Kant (2002b), 312; AA, 8: 221.

Like the *Dissertation*, Kant goes on to suggest that space and time are acquired, though “originally.” They are *acquired*, he says, because their ground lies in the subject and its “mere *receptivity* peculiar to the mind, when it is affected by something (in sensation), to receive a representation in accordance with its subjective constitution.”⁶⁵ This is their “first formal ground.” But they are *original*, insofar as there is another affection from within, the abstraction of which are the pure intuitions of space and time.⁶⁶

What Kant seems to have in mind in the Amphiboly is that pure intuition, though not a real object, is an *ideal* object or “*ens imaginarium*,” in the precise sense that it is an abstraction of mental actions in accordance with permanent rules of the mind. If we return to the B-Deduction, we begin to see that this first application of the understanding on sensibility or *Einbildungskraft*—posited independently from sensation and pure categories—yield the pure intuitions of space and time, *ens imaginaria*.

This resolves the tension in Kant’s remark in the footnote to section 26 that space must be represented as an object in geometry. For what Kant means is not that the geometer takes the image itself as the principal object. Indeed, we know the image is arbitrary. As Kant puts it, “No image of a triangle would ever be adequate to the concept of it.”⁶⁷ Geometry, rather, “hurries immediately to intuition, in which it considers the concept *in concreto*, although not empirically, but rather solely as one which it has exhibited *a priori*, i.e., constructed, and in which that which follows from the general

⁶⁵ Kant (2002b), 312; AA, 8: 222.

⁶⁶ In the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant notes the ambiguity in the term “abstraction.” He writes, “The expression *abstraction* is not always used correctly in logic. We must not speak of abstracting something (*abstrahere aliquid*), but rather of abstracting *from something* (*abstrahere ab aliquo*).” In the case of pure intuitions, we abstract *from* categorial and sensorial content (that is, we isolate the intuitions *from* further determinations). But in the case of the mental acts which arise in accordance with permanent laws, we abstract *something* (that is, pure intuition is an abstraction *of* these mental acts). See Kant (1992), 592; AA, 9: 95.

⁶⁷ Kant (1998), A141/B180.

conditions of the construction must also hold generally of the object of the constructed concept.”⁶⁸ In the *Dissertation*, Kant called these “general conditions of the construction” “permanent laws” of the mind, i.e., necessary and universal rules. In the *Critique*, they are schemata. These are the proper objects of geometry.

Importantly, Kant uses similar (mathematical) language to describe the method of the Transcendental Aesthetic. It is a “metaphysical exposition” of the concepts of space and time, what is an exhibition (*Darstellung*) of the concept as given *a priori*.⁶⁹ Thus whatever the particular presentations of space and time are, it seems that we should consider them as abstractions of mental actions in accordance with rules. Now this appears to be inconsistent with common readings of the Aesthetic. After all, Kant simply presents space and time there as if they are always already formed. But again, Kant warns us in the footnote to section 26 that “in the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which *does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible.*” If we then heed Kant’s invitation and return to the Aesthetic, the pure intuitions of space and time look to be in fact constructions of a prior synthetic act, just as they were described in the *Dissertation* and *On a discovery*.

This brings us to the difference between a “form of intuition” and a “formal intuition.” Is Kant suggesting that a pure intuition, space and time, is a form of intuition or a formal intuition? In the footnote to section 26 he tells us that the formal intuition

⁶⁸ Kant (1998), A715–6/B743–4.

⁶⁹ Kant (1998), A23/B38.

“gives unity of the representation” and form of intuition “merely gives the manifold.”

Longuenesse has suggested that this distinction rests in Kant’s “epigenetic” conception of the conditions of representation.⁷⁰ As Kant’s remarks to Eberhard in *On a discovery* suggest, if the *synthesis speciosa* constructs space and time of the Aesthetic, there must be something intrinsic to sensibility, mere receptivity, that allows for spatial and temporal order. Sensibility, as the process of transforming impressions into sensations, contains the potentiality for spatial and temporal form. This is what Kant means by a form of intuition—the potential to be organized or a “first formal ground.” A formal intuition, on the other hand, is a result of that “law of mind, according to which it joins together in a fixed manner the sense-impressions made by the presence of an object.”⁷¹ The formal intuition is a result of the *synthesis speciosa*.⁷² This formal intuition is the pure intuition of the Aesthetic, what Kant now says presupposes the first application of the understanding on sensibility, although, to be sure, it “precedes all concepts.”⁷³

⁷⁰ Longuenesse (1998), 221

⁷¹ Kant (2002a), 400; AA, 2: 406.

⁷² Cf. Longuenesse (1998), 221.

⁷³ There is considerable debate concerning what Kant means by the mere form of intuition and a formal intuition in the footnote to section 26. Heidegger has suggested that the mere form of intuition is what he calls a “syndosis.” This term is meant to capture the unity that is given in space and time through a connection of the homogenous units such that space and time can be intuited as pure intuitions. A formal intuition, on the other hand, presupposes conceptual synthesis. It is derivative. The problem with Heidegger’s account is that he accords spontaneity to sensibility, what Kant calls pure receptivity. But as I noted in chapter two, this is consistent with Heidegger’s “more original” interpretation. See Heidegger (1997b), 92–5; 24: 135–7. Recently, debates between Henry Allison and Béatrice Longuenesse have arisen concerning the precise meaning of a form of intuition and a formal intuition. According to Longuenesse in her *Capacity to Judge*, a formal intuition is a pure intuition of space and time, which are themselves the result of the *synthesis speciosa* or *Einbildungskraft* of section 24. However, in his review of *The Capacity to Judge* and in the revised version of *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, Allison has emphasized that section 26 is merely a rectification of a methodological omission from the Transcendental Aesthetic and not a reverse or change in doctrine. All Kant means to point out, suggests Allison, is that the omission from the Transcendental Aesthetic of a preconceptual synthesis was necessary on methodological grounds, and, by section 26 of the B-Deduction, can now be properly inserted. See Longuenesse, *Capacity to Judge*, ch.8 and Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 192–3. See also Longuenesse’s response to Allison in Longuenesse, *Human Standpoint*, 34–6. For Allison’s response to Longuenesse’s response, see Allison,

It is helpful here to return to the first edition, just prior to the Preliminary Reminder, where Kant tells us that “if therefore I ascribe a synopsis to sense, because it contains a manifold in its intuition, synthesis must always correspond to this, and **receptivity** can make cognitions possible only if combined with **spontaneity**.”⁷⁴ What Kant calls in 1787 a “mere form of intuition” he here called a “synopsis.” Though a terminological difference, I suggest the doctrine remains the same. For in describing the first of the threefold synthesis, Kant writes,

Now in order for **unity** of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call **synthesis of apprehension**, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such.⁷⁵

The level of description here is empirical. But he also tells us that this synthesis “aimed directly at the intuition” is also exercised *a priori*, without which “we could have *a priori* neither the representation of space nor of time, since these can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides.”⁷⁶ The implication, I take it, is that the mere form of intuition *as* a synopsis of sensations is affected through a synthesis according to mental laws, yielding formal intuitions, i.e., the pure intuitions of space and time.

With this interpretative legwork, section 24 and its emendation lose much of their perplexity. It now looks like Kant is in full possession of the terminology required for the

Essays on Kant, 43–8. Finally, it should be noted that Longuenesse takes her initial interpretation of a formal intuition from Waxman’s *Kant’s Model of the Mind*. See Waxman (1991), 79–117. Günter Zöllner has also pointed out this distinction and developed an interpretation that foreshadows the Waxman/Longuenesse position in his ‘From Innate to *A Priori*.’ See Zöllner (1989a).

⁷⁴ Kant (1998), A97.

⁷⁵ Kant (1998), A99.

⁷⁶ Kant (1998), A99–100.

theory of self-affection that he lacked in 1781. The meaning of the following passage is now clear:

[I]nner sense...contains the mere **form** of intuition, but without combination of the manifold in it, and thus it does not yet contain any **determinate** intuition at all, which is possible only through the consciousness of the determination of the manifold through the transcendental action of *Einbildungskraft* (synthetic influence of the understanding on the inner sense), which I have named the figurative synthesis.⁷⁷

The novelty here, in comparison with the 1781 edition, is the figurative synthesis (*synthesis speciosa*), which is now the designation for that mental act occasioned by a reception of sensations.

That Kant would choose to designate *Einbildungskraft* as that specific act that generates space and time also clarifies the claim that this inner affection “precedes all concepts.” For as we have seen in the case of empirical apprehension and reproduction, these schematic constructions presuppose rules but *precede empirical concepts*. Concepts are the result of recognition or the reflection of the schema (and thus also the sensible intuition).⁷⁸ The *synthesis speciosa* is, strictly speaking, an intuition, which, according to the *Stufenleiter*, is “immediately related to the object and is singular.”⁷⁹ The theoretical duty is then to reflect the intuition under *a priori* concepts, which reflective act, as we know, is not predetermined, as if “I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected.”

Another novelty of the emendation is how Kant explicitly links the generation of time with space and provides substance to the claim that the “understanding therefore does not **find** some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but

⁷⁷ Kant (1998), B153–4. Cf. Kant (1998), B67–8.

⁷⁸ Cf. Allison (2004), 113–4.

⁷⁹ Kant (1998), A320/B377.

produces it, by **affecting** inner sense.”⁸⁰ What is clear is that as *Einbildungskraft* runs through the manifold of outer sensations and organizes them according to the laws of the mind, it simultaneously generates spatial relations *and* temporal relations. For since all outer sensations are inner states from the standpoint of the mind, the affection of the mere form of outer sense is necessarily an affection of the mere form of inner sense. Hence every outer-affection is an occasion for self-affection, and thereby the generation of time.⁸¹ As Kant puts it, “Motion, as action of the subject (not as determination of an object), consequently the synthesis of the manifold in space, if we abstract from this manifold in space and *attend solely to the action in accordance with which we determine the form of inner sense*, first produces the concept of succession at all.”⁸²

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⁸⁰ Kant (1998), B155.

⁸¹ In the officially labeled “Loose Leaf Leningrad 1,” a series of *Reflexionen* dated from the late 1780s, Kant opens with this reflection: “Time is the mere subjective form of inner intuition, insofar as we are affected by ourselves.” See Kant (1987), I.2, Roman numeral, for the page (I for *recto*, II for *verso*), and by Arabic numeral, for the line of the original. For an analysis of this *Reflexion*, see Zöllner (1989b).

⁸² Kant (1998), B155, my emphasis. Cf. Kant B154: “We cannot think of a line without **drawing** it in thought, we cannot think of a circle without **describing** it, we cannot represent the three dimensions of space at all without **placing** three lines perpendicular to each other at the same point, and we cannot even represent time without, in **drawing** a straight line (which is to be the external figurative representation of time), attending merely to the action of the synthesis of the manifold through which we successively determine the inner sense, and thereby attending to the succession of this determination in inner sense.”

7, A Theoretical Imperative

The offences (*vitia*) of *Einbildungskraft* are that its inventions are either merely *unbridled* or entirely *ruleless* (*effrenis aut perverse*). The latter fault is the worst kind.

—Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, 7: 181

For it is a subjectively necessary touchstone of the correctness of our judgments generally, and consequently also of the soundness of our understanding, that we also restrain our understanding by the *understanding of others*.

—Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, 7: 219

7,1 A Faculty of Rules

Having shown that Kant's revisions between 1781 and 1787 constitute neither a change in doctrine nor a shrinking back (pace Heidegger) but a clarification that *Einbildungskraft* is bound by *a priori* rules inherent to the mind, I now turn to its implications—part two of my thesis. The *a priori* categories of the understanding are necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, but they are not sufficient. I now argue that there is further work to be done at the empirical level, work that we are to be held accountable for lest we create our own private fantasies impervious to social discourse and scientific truth. In particular, I explore here the implications for mental health.

If, as Kant claims in the *Critique*, experience is conceptual—judgment—the content of our concepts will determine our perception. One implication is that false conceptual content alters our experience. We resemble dreamers in waking life, as Kant would say. As we know from chapter four, this is precisely how Kant describes some forms of mental illness in the anthropological writings. They are altered experiences driven by false concepts, products of a

“diseased *Einbildungskraft*.”¹ I conclude this dissertation with the argument that Kant’s account of empirical thinking amounts to a duty to bind the reproductive imagination according to a common concept (*conceptus communis*), what Kant sometimes refers to as common sense (*sensus communis*). This is what I call the theoretical imperative whose consequences I argue are both preventive and therapeutic.²

At the conclusion to the A-Deduction Kant tells us that the understanding is a “**faculty of rules.**” This, he says, is “more fruitful” and “comes closer to its essence,” for insofar as these rules “represent existence as necessary” and hence are laws, it is the “legislation (*Gesetzgebung*) for nature, i.e., without understanding there would not be any nature at all, i.e., synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances in accordance with rules.”³ Necessity does not arise from without but from *within*. Kant’s insight is that human beings are themselves the bearers of objectivity. But the thing about rules, as the cliché goes, is that they are made to be broken. As Kant puts it in the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*:

To observe the various acts of the representative power in myself, *when I summon them*, is indeed worth reflection; it is necessary and useful for logic and metaphysics. — But to wish to eavesdrop on oneself when they come into the mind *unbidden* and on their own (this happens through the play of the *Einbildungskraft* when it is unintentionally mediating) *constitutes a reversal of the natural order in the faculty of knowledge (eine Verkehrung der natürlichen Ordnung im Erkenntnisvermögen)*, because then the principles of thought do not lead the way (*as they should*), but rather follow from behind. This eavesdropping on oneself is already a disease of the mind (melancholy), or leads to one and to the madhouse.⁴

¹ See Kant (2007), 318; AA, 7: 213.

² We know Kant’s categorical imperative. He tells us to “*act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.*” See Kant (1900–), 4: 421. But, to be sure, Kant also asks us to think only in accordance with a common concept (*conceptus communis*) or common sense (*Gemeinsinn, sensus communis*). He asks us to “restrain our understanding by the *understanding of others*,” Kant (1900–), 7: 219. I call this Kant’s theoretical imperative.

³ Kant (1998), A126–7. In the published version of the first edition Kant writes, “Rules, so far as they are objective (and thus necessarily pertain to the cognition of objects) are called laws.” But in his personal copy of the first edition, Kant writes, “Rules, so far as they [represent] existence as necessary...”

⁴ Kant (2007), 245; AA, 7: 133–4, my emphasis in the last two italicized clauses.

If the principles of the understanding, presumably the principles of the Analytic of the *Critique*, guide *Einbildungskraft*, this constitutes the “natural order in the faculty of knowledge.” But Kant’s point is that there are cases in which *Einbildungskraft* associates representations without rules or according to uncommon, private concepts, which he here calls a “disease of the mind” or a “reversal of the natural order in the faculty of knowledge.”

We have seen cases of reversals. In mental illness or certain temperaments of character, *Phantasie* constructs subjective experiences, private worlds. But we have also seen cases of an objective construction of experience, namely, the threefold synthesis of the 1781 *Critique*. There Kant presupposed a rule of the mind that guides the reproductive act of *Einbildung*.⁵ Experience as empirical thinking is a binding of *Einbildung* in accordance with an empirical concept. Yet this synthesis of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition presupposes a “concept.” Recall that Kant’s deeper insight was that insofar as the mind strives toward judgment, a reflection of the unthematic schema of *Einbildungskraft*, the mind takes itself as its own object, i.e., the threefold synthesis presupposes self-consciousness, a numerically identical function of unity through successive syntheses. Kant’s assumption of the threefold synthesis is that the human being strives toward thinking, an assumption grounded by the transcendental unity of apperception.

The threefold synthesis employs, at least in part, a descriptive method. It describes the genesis of an appearance reflected under both concepts and transcendental apperception. But since experience (in the thick sense) for Kant is a judgment, the threefold synthesis also presents a task for its reader: strive to represent the world in accordance with concepts and principles.

⁵ See footnote 45 in chapter two above.

We know that representations described in the A-Deduction do not always arise. The reproductive imagination can order sensations according to habit, as Hume convincingly shows,⁶ or it can arrange sensations according to temperaments and the private fantasies of the deranged, demented, and insane. As Kant puts it in the *Anthropology*,

We often play with obscure representations, and have an interest in throwing them in the shade before *Einbildungskraft*, when they are liked or disliked. However, more often we ourselves are a play of obscure representations, and our understanding is unable to save itself from the absurdities into which they have placed it, even though it recognizes them as illusions.⁷

Left to play, unbound by rules of the understanding, *Einbildungskraft* associates representations that we would prefer, often for the sake of social propriety, to repress.

We know Kant holds out little hope for the chronically ill. They merely deserve our pity as their imaginations uncontrollably weave a private world. And lacking what Kant often calls “mother-wit” (*Mutterwitz*),⁸ the natural gift of seeing the particular instance of a universal rule, some of us will perpetually fail to reflect (recognize) the universal rule in the particular appearance. No amount of rules can correct stupidity, according to Kant.⁹ But if one does not suffer from a serious psychopathology or mental deficiency, there is a question whether transcendental judgment (the binding of *Einbildungskraft* and its subsequent reflection) is a prescription for empirical judgment and a correction for bad habits.

⁶ Cf. Kant (2007), 261: AA, 7: 149: “*Habit (Angewohnheit) (assuetudo)*, however, is a physical inner necessitation to proceed in the same manner that one has proceeded until now... The reason why the habits of another stimulate the arousal of disgust in us is because here the animal in the human being jumps out far too much, and 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.”

⁷ Kant (2007), 247; AA, 7: 136. Kant tells us, furthermore, that there are many representations that we are unconscious of: “The field of sensuous intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious, even though we can undoubtedly conclude that we have them; that is, *obscure* representations in the human being (and thus also in animals), is immense. Clear representations, on the other hand, contain only infinitely few points of this field which lie open to consciousness; so that as it were only few places on the vast *map* of our mind are *illuminated*.” See Kant (2007), 247; AA, 7: 135.

⁸ See Kant (1998), A133/B172 and Kant (2007), 250; AA, 7: 139.

⁹ See Kant (1998), A133/B172n.

In the *Critique*'s "Analytic of Principles" Kant writes,

But now although **general logic** can give no precepts to the power of judgment, things are quite different with **transcendental** logic, so that it even seems that the latter has as its proper business to correct and secure the power of judgment in the use of the pure understanding through determinate rules.¹⁰

Transcendental logic secures the power of judgment in the pure understanding. But I also think it offers a model for empirical understanding. Transcendental philosophy is prescriptive, pedagogical. It tells us how we ought to judge as thinkers. It thus provides something analogous to the use of examples in empirical judgment, namely, the "leading-strings" or the case to which the rule ought to be applied. Might it be the leading-string for *Einbildung*, the empirical power to associate *Abbilder*, *Nachbilder*, and *Vorbilder*?¹¹

7.2 Freedom of Thought

In section 27 of the B-Deduction, Kant returns once more to the alternatives he sketched for Herz in 1772 and formulated again in section 14 of the first edition of the *Critique*.

There are only two ways in which a **necessary** agreement of experience with the concepts of its objects can be thought: either the experience makes these concepts possible or these concepts make the experience possible. The first is not the case with the categories (nor with pure sensible intuition); for they are *a priori* concepts, hence independent of experience (the assertion of an empirical origin would be a sort of *generatio aequivoca*). Consequently only the second way remains (as it were a system of the **epigenesis** of pure reason): namely that the categories contain the ground of the possibility of all experience in general from the side of the understanding.¹²

Kant then remarks that if someone still insisted on a middle way, namely, a "**preformation-system**," the following, he says, would be decisive proof against it:

That in such a case the categories would lack the **necessity** that is essential to their concept. For, e.g., the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed

¹⁰ Kant (1998), A135/B174.

¹¹ To be sure, Kant calls this power *Bildung* in the *Pölitiz Lectures*. See Figure 4-2 above. But by 1781 he calls the reproductive power of imagination "*Einbildung*" in contrast to the productive power of imagination, "*Einbildungskraft*."

¹² Kant (1998), B166–7.

condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object (i.e., necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected; which is precisely what the skeptic wishes most, for then all of our insight through the supposed objective validity of our judgments is nothing but sheer illusion.¹³

This is to say that necessity is not simply a psychological or physiological predetermination—“I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise.” Rather, necessity, what Kant here calls an “epigenesis of pure reason,” appears to be an organization of representations according to rules which the subject binds himself to and subsequently *endorses as a theoretical duty*.¹⁴

For Kant, rules and laws have a hold on us because we can freely choose to endorse them as a rational human being. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, for example, Kant tells us that the moral law motivates us because in binding ourselves to it we show respect and love for ourselves and each other as rational persons. This force, whether in its practical or theoretical aspect, is a constraint (*Zwang*).¹⁵ Now since in our case constraint can manifest itself as self-constraint, this force is an inner force or compulsion (*Nötigung*).¹⁶ In light of the passage quoted above, we can now say that necessity is not a feeling of outer constraint but rather an inner compulsion. The subject, subsequently, must feel a theoretical vocation (*Bestimmung*) to reflect and endorse the appearances as so connected. As the passage from the *Anthropology* suggests and as we have seen from Hume, the imagination does not *always* act in accordance with rules of the

¹³ Kant (1998), B167–8.

¹⁴ Cf. Kant (1998), A128: “But all empirical laws are only particular determinations of the pure laws of the understanding, under which and in accordance with whose *norm* they are first possible, and the appearances assume a lawful form, just as, regardless of the variety of their empirical form, all appearances must nevertheless always be in accord with the pure form of sensibility,” my emphasis.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Kant (1996), 512–3; AA, 6: 379–80. Cf. Kant (1900–), 4: 1333: “*Alle Verbindlichkeit stehen unter Gesetzen, und sind entweder perfectae oder imperfectae. Zu jenen kann ich gezwungen werden, zu diesen nicht. Zwang ist Einschränkung meiner Freiheit.*”

¹⁶ Cf. the German for necessity—*Nötwendigkeit*

understanding. But when it does so act, it manifests “the natural order in the faculty of knowledge,” which we then freely reflect and take responsibility for. Thinking is thus a free choice and a theoretical duty.

Now this is not to suggest that the constraint of *Einbildungskraft* is a manifestation of practical freedom. For, strictly speaking, Kant thinks that practical freedom is a manifestation of consciously binding ourselves to rules out of respect for the moral law. *Einbildungskraft* is an *a priori* power, “of which we are seldom even conscious.”¹⁷ But perhaps Kant’s deeper insight is that, analogous to the practical philosophy, we *ought* to be conscious of this power of the mind, particularly in its empirical associations, out of respect for ourselves as reasoners.¹⁸ There is a theoretical duty to raise this power to consciousness and endorse (or alter) the rules by which it is bound.

7,3 A Case Study: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* Revisited

For Kant, psychopathology lies on the same spectrum as rational thinking. The difference is a matter of degree. Given the ease with which we slide from reason to madness, we can understand why thinking according to common concepts would be so important. Such thinking offers a prescription not only against “logical egoism” but psychopathology as well, the slide from day-dreaming to fanaticism.

¹⁷ Kant (1998), A78/B103. Cf. Fichte (2000), 55: “*Ein Akt des Geistes dessen wir uns als eines solchen bewußt werden, heißt Freiheit. Ein Akt, ohne Bewußtsein des Handelns, bloße Spontaneität.*” Fichte often explains intuition as a self-forgetfulness or an unconscious act: “*Ich vegesse mich selbst gänzlich, und verliere mich in der Anschauung,*” Fichte (2000), 69.

¹⁸ The claim here is not that everyone has a duty to perform transcendental philosophy—reflect on the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of experience—for whether we are conscious of these operations or not we cannot alter them. The claim is that everyone has a duty to reflect upon the empirical associations of the reproductive imagination, for these are alterable.

The *Critique*'s theoretical imperative is in fact an echo of the 1760s. This imperative was the maxim of the 1766 *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*. In the first chapter of part one, "A tangled metaphysical knot, which can be either untied or cut as one pleases," Kant asks for the sense and ground of a spirit-being. He wants to know whether this concept is objectively valid. It is, he says, only if the concept arises from an abstraction from experience.

The problem in the case of a spirit-being, of course, is that it is debatable whether it can be found in experience. Hence to the question how such a concept arises, Kant writes the following in a lengthy footnote:

There are many concepts which are the product of covert and obscure inferences made in the course of experience; these concepts then proceed to propagate themselves by attaching themselves to other concepts, without there being any awareness of the experience itself on which they were originally based or of the inference which formed the concept on the basis of that experience. Such concepts may be called *surreptitious concepts*. There are a great number of such concepts; some of them are nothing but delusions of the imagination (*ein Wahn der Einbildung*)...¹⁹

This footnote highlights the imperative to check the essential marks we hold concepts to contain against experience, as well as the understanding of others, since too often concepts contain erroneous marks, slipped in unwittingly by associations of *Einbildung*.

This imperative is all the more important when we consider that if associations give rise to surreptitious concepts and that concepts as rules, according to the *Critique*, are in turn guidelines for further constructions of experience, then, as the anthropological writings warn, we are liable to not only construct slightly delusional worlds but fail to recognize them as such.

In *Dreams* Kant presents a material explanation for the supposed visions of the fanatic or spirit-seer. He argues that his visions are due to damaged nerve-tissue whose vibrations produce images that imitate the affects of outer impressions. The spirit-seer consequently interprets the

¹⁹ Kant (2002a), 308n; AA, 2: 321n.

force and vivacity of the inner impression *as* an outer impression, interpreting the delusion as real.²⁰ But by the publication of the 1798 *Anthropology*, Kant abandons this explanation. He suggests that mental illness is the sole concern of the philosophical faculty, since “physicians and physiologists in general are still not advanced enough to see deeply into the mechanical element in the human being so that they could explain, in terms of it, the attack that led to the atrocity.”²¹

For Kant, psychopathology, and the diagnosis of derangement or fanaticism in particular, is a philosophical matter. For what the philosopher looks for is the employment of “logical private sense” (*sensus privatus*) in the construction of the patient’s experience. To be sure, there are some instances of psychopathology that lack even the slightest coherence, no concepts or rules. But most cases, such as fanaticism and *vesania* (*Aberwitz*), are characterized by a rule-guided *Einbildungskraft*, although the rules themselves are of “a totally different standpoint into which the soul is transferred, so to speak, and from which it *sees all objects differently*.”²² In the case of *vesania*, what we might call deranged systematizing, Kant calls this “*positive unreason*” and notes that “*unreason* (which is something positive, not mere lack of reason) is, just like reason, a mere form into which objects can be fitted, and both reason and unreason are therefore dependent on the universal.”²³

In 1766 Kant does not juxtapose the hypochondriac and the fanatic. Here he substitutes the metaphysician for the former, who, in this insightful and rhetorical essay, often appears only nominally different. In his explanation of the concept of spirit-beings, Kant suggests that these metaphysicians have grounded their concept in the ambiguous shades of the night, whose forms

²⁰ See Kant (2002a), 331–3; AA, 2: 344–5.

²¹ Kant (2007), 319; AA, 7: 214.

²² Kant (2007), 321; AA, 7: 216, my emphasis.

²³ Kant (2007), 323; AA, 7: 218.

harmonize with their hopes and dreams. These concepts then affect their subsequent intuitions and perceptions: they perpetually find confirmation all around for their deepest desires. But given what we have seen from Kant's remarks in the *Critique* concerning intuition—that it is a product of *Einbildungskraft*—we can offer an explanation that Kant might have provided in retrospect from his work in the 1780s. What characterizes the experience of the metaphysician is a hope that guides his imaginative construction of experience. He uncritically shapes his sensations according to a private concept and thereby creates a dream-state in waking life. It seems plausible, given Kant's repeated warnings about unchecked illusory experiences—in the case hypochondria—that this metaphysician could soon show symptoms of a fanatical intuition.

The metaphysician's behavior looks dangerously similar to the fantast, whose experience, from his perspective, makes perfect sense. The rules that guide *Einbildung* are consistent with other concepts he holds. His experience is thus grounded in reasons, although reasons no one else shares: there is method to his madness. Lest he construct and thereby wander through a dream, one internally coherent and impervious to the understanding of others, the philosopher, no less than the hypochondriac, must reflect upon his experience and analyze the concepts that underlie his perceptions.

But as I think I have shown, for Kant this is not just a problem for metaphysics. All flights of fancy lie on the same spectrum as raving madness. Since it is *not* the case that I cannot but create objective experiences, I must make my concepts explicit for critique—make a judgment. This is the theoretical imperative, one product of which is a healthy understanding—*gesunder Menschenverstand*.

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Duquesne University Senior Excellence Award in Philosophy	2008
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PUBLICATIONS

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PRESENTATIONS

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“Aesthetic Perfections and Euclidean Constructions: Kant’s Productive Imagination”
Leuven Kant Conference, Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium, 29 May 2014

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“Seeking Solutions to Unconscious Conflicts: Reflections on Kant’s Imagination”
Southeast Philosophy Congress, Clayton State University, 16 February 2013

“Presuppositions and Grounds: Maimon and Fichte on the *Quid Facti* of the Transcendental Deduction”
Kentucky Philosophical Association, Centre College, 28 April 2012

“Eros and Subjectivity: A Commentary on Hans Loewald and Jonathan Lear”
The Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society, Rutgers University, 4 November 2011

“Keeping Your Cool: A Psychoanalytic Explanation of Affect-Regulation”

Tennessee Philosophical Association, Vanderbilt University, 13 November 2010

Conference Comments

Christopher Hill's "Agency, Social Structure, and Reflexivity in Hegel's Dialectic"
University of Kentucky 16th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, 6 April 2013

Jane Kneller's "Sign, Symbol, and Symphilosophie: The Social Dimension of the Beautiful in Kant and the Jena Romantics"
Perspectives in the Philosophy of Art, University of Kentucky, 31 March 2012

Kurt Blankschaen's "The Moral Lie"
University of Kentucky 15th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, 24 March 2012

Jasper van Buuren's "Phenomenal Space and Physical Space"
University of Kentucky 14th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, 25 March 2011

INTERNSHIPS

Clinical Ethics Consultation 2015
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WORKSHOPS

American Association of Philosophy Teachers: Teaching Philosophy
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COURSES (SELECTED)

Kant's *Naturrecht Feyerabend* (Audit) — Günter Zöller Summer 2014

Kant and Self-Consciousness (Audit) — Günter Zöller Winter 2013–2014

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Audit) — Daniel Breazeale Spring 2013

Hegel's Objective Spirit — Italo Testa Spring 2012

Kant's <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> — Stefan Bird-Pollan	Spring 2012
System and Foundation Between Kant and Hegel — Daniel Breazeale	Spring 2012
Merleau-Ponty — Ronald Bruzina	Fall 2011
Symbolic Logic II — Timothy Sundell	Spring 2011
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Plotinus's <i>Enneads</i> — David Bradshaw	Fall 2010
Becoming Kant: From Leibniz to Kant's <i>Dissertation</i> — Brandon Look	Fall 2010
Perception: Merleau-Ponty and Analytic Philosophy — Ronald Bruzina	Spring 2010
Plato's Late Ontology — Eric Sanday	Fall 2009
Marx and the History of Western Marxism — Arnold Farr	Fall 2009

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ACADEMIC SERVICE

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Proofreading and Reference Editor	2012

Daniel Breazeale's book *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre*

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