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# Recovering the ‘True Meaning’ of the Pre-Established Harmony: On a Neglected Key to Kant’s Theory of Intuition

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**Abstract:** The paper discusses Kant’s enigmatic claim that his critical philosophy succeeds in articulating a philosophical insight at which Leibniz’s pre-established harmony was ‘truly’ aimed. Kant makes the claim in response to Salomon Maimon’s (mis)reading of his Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, which involves, in Kant’s words, the untenable assumption of a capacity of divine (intuitive) understanding in humans. The paper argues that Maimon’s misreading of Kant’s account of human intuition has found influential followers in contemporary Kant scholarship and that it is based on a failure to distinguish between what Kant calls “mere sensible appearances” and real phenomena of nature. While the former are entirely sensible singularities without unity, the latter are units composed of infinitely many sensible appearances, and their unity requires understanding. Kant thus appeals to a refurbished version of Leibniz’s pre-established harmony of mind and world, which takes the form of an immanent, indubitable, but ultimately inexplicable harmony of the faculties of sensibility and understanding. The paper includes a reconstruction of both the B-Deduction’s argument and the role of transcendental imagination in the proof.

**Keywords:** Intuition, Pre-established harmony, Leibniz, Imagination

Kant claims on a number of occasions that his *Critique of Pure Reason* [*Critique*] succeeds in articulating a philosophical insight at which Leibniz’s doctrine of the pre-established harmony of mind and world was truly aimed.<sup>1</sup> The paper explores

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<sup>1</sup> See BR, AA 11: 51 f; ÜE, AA 08: 249 ff; MAN, AA 04: 507 f. In an early work, Henrich has already interpreted the critical enterprise in light of Kant’s pre-established harmony claim at BR, AA 11: 51 f (see Henrich, Dieter: “Über die Einheit der Subjektivität.” In: *Philosophische Rundschau* 3, 1955, 28–69, 44 f). Henrich argues that Kant entertains a certain methodological skepticism, on which fundamental axioms of the Deduction must be assumed as given. In this paper, I follow Henrich as concerns the general point about the skeptical limits of the Deduction, which comes

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this enigmatic claim with a view to showing that it offers a neglected key to Kant's theory of intuition. On my reading, Kant's idea of a "proper apology" [*eigentliche Apologie*] (ÜE, AA 08: 250.35 f.)<sup>2</sup> for Leibniz's system involves a widely neglected distinction between what Kant calls "mere appearances," as immediate objects of merely sensible intuition, and "phenomena," as objects of nature constituted through an action of combination and determination of intuition(s) by the understanding. While the latter are empirically real – physical objects of possible experience – the former are entirely ideal – indeterminate and manifold contents of sensible representations inherent in individual minds. On this view, the content of a mere sensible intuition is not distinguished from the immediate object or appearance it "gives." I propose that, if read in the context of Kant's appeal to Leibniz, this distinction provides the basis for a modest and promising reading of the notoriously difficult Transcendental Deduction [Deduction] of the categories.

I approach the neglected distinction between the two kinds of objects<sup>3</sup> in the first section of the paper, in which I discuss Kant's enigmatic pre-established harmony claim in a defense of his Deduction against a misreading by Salomon Maimon. I here relate Kant's reply to Maimon, contained in the 1789 letter to Marcus Herz, to the *Critique's* second (B) edition summary of the Deduction at KrV, B 164 f. Both texts underline Kant's consistent position that the fundamental independence of sensible intuition from human understanding can be maintained in the face of the Deduction's challenge.

Maimon's reading is misconceived insofar as it conflates the object given in immediate and merely sensible intuition with the second-order phenomenon that is produced by an action of combination of intuition on part of the understanding. In the paper's second section, I argue that this conflation haunts the field of Kant scholarship to date. It produces an impasse between two major trends in the current literature that I distinguish for my purposes as 'intellectualist' and 'empiricist' readings of Kant. While the Deduction cannot succeed on

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along with a less ambitious reading of its burden of proof. My own contribution in the context is an explication of the positive premises of the argument more modestly interpreted.

<sup>2</sup> All translations are my own, though I have often consulted different available translations. For translation of the text of the *Critique*, specifically, I have made use of Paul Guyer's and Allen Wood's translation in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, P. Guyer and A. Wood (eds. and trans.), Cambridge, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> The reader might worry that the immediate content of a merely sensible representation – an intuition that is not an object "for" an I – should on properly Kantian terms not be called an "object," precisely because (so the worry might have it) an object is always an object "for" a cognizing subject. I respond to this worry in section II.

an empiricist reading, an intellectualist reading agrees with Maimon's account of the Deduction (both kinds of readings are prone to the conflation).<sup>4</sup> I go on to discuss Kant's further explanation, also contained in the letter to Herz, of how the dualism between sensible appearances and possible objects of nature is compatible with the Deduction's goal. As Kant expresses himself, mere appearances are "nothing in themselves," and also "nothing for us," i. e. nothing for the self-conscious, cognizing subject. While we must infer that we have them, they constitute in themselves no possible object of direct and positive knowledge, but can nevertheless be characterized negatively, as an infinite, unconscious, indeterminate manifold of intuition. However, since they are "nothing in themselves" (nothing but contingent subjective representations), as Kant takes himself to have shown, their existence hinders the proof of the a priori validity of pure concepts for all objects of possible theoretical cognition just as little as it is hindered by the undeniable existence of unknowable things in themselves.

As Kant continues in his reply to Maimon, the Deduction does not and indeed *could not* offer a fully sufficient explanation of why the particular forms of human intuition, in which all objects are given, conform to transcendental apperception and so to a priori determination of objects by means of human understanding. Rather, the proof merely deduces certain a priori conditions that must hold given that we have objective experience.<sup>5</sup> In light of the reasons Kant gives for these limits of transcendental philosophy, I argue in the paper's third section that sensible intuition as such should not be taken to presuppose any action of the understanding. Together with the result established in section two, this yields the gist of Kant's "apology" for Leibniz's system: There is a pre-established harmony, not between mind and world, but between human sensible intuition and understanding, or between (ideal) sensible appearances and (material) objects of rule-governed experience (as argued in section two), and it is "pre-established" insofar as human experience must in a certain sense remain an inexplicable *factum* (as argued in section three).

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<sup>4</sup> In section III, I show that a paradigmatic intellectualist reading entails the attribution of a quasi-divine capacity of intuitive understanding to humans, a point that Kant already raises against Maimon.

<sup>5</sup> The reading defended in this paper thus agrees with the general thesis of Ameriks, Karl: "Kant's Transcendental Deduction as a Regressive Argument", in: *Kant-Studien* 69, 1978, 273–287, i. e., that the proof strategy of Deduction is "regressive" insofar as it moves back to the conditions of the possibility of experience as a given *factum*. I nevertheless take issue with Ameriks's reconstruction of the important so-called second proof step. As I argue in section II, Ameriks in this reconstruction falls back into an 'intellectualist' account of Kant.

The task of the last section of the paper is to provide an account of the role of transcendental imagination in the Deduction, since interpreters have usually taken that role to be to explain certain synthetic intuition-producing operations that guarantee an a priori conformity of sensibly given objects with human understanding. As shown in section three, Kant's appeal to an inexplicable harmony between sensibility and understanding must be interpreted as the expression of a much more modest and properly critical stance regarding the possibilities and limits of theoretical philosophy. In a close reading of the notoriously difficult § 24 of the B-Deduction, I argue that Kant's account of transcendental imagination respects these limits.

## I

In Kant's own words, the Deduction establishes that *whatever objects may come before our senses*, not as far as the form of their intuition, but rather as far as the laws of their combination are concerned [can be cognized a priori through the categories]; and thus [we shall explain] the possibility of as it were prescribing the law to nature and even making the latter [i. e., nature] possible (KrV, B 159 f, bold emphasis mine).<sup>6</sup>

This is how the B-Deduction formulates the ultimate target of proof in § 26.<sup>7</sup> It is explicitly *not* to show that the form of human intuition is constituted by the understanding. Rather, Kant claims to have proven that “**as far as the laws of their combination are concerned**”, any “objects that may come before our senses” must stand under the categories. As I will argue in this paper, mere appearances are not combined; they therefore do not stand under laws of the understanding; and this givenness of (unconscious) appearances in the mere form of sensible intuition is not at odds with the Deduction's goal. For as Kant says in the passage cited above, what we can cognize a priori through the categories is not the form of intuition of objects, but only the system of those most

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6 “[Die Deduktion erklärt die Möglichkeit] die Gegenstände, die nur immer unseren Sinnen vorkommen mögen, und zwar nicht der Form ihrer Anschauung, sondern den Gesetzen ihrer Verbindung nach [durch Kategorien] *a priori* zu erkennen, also der Natur gleichsam das Gesetz vorzuschreiben und sie sogar möglich zu machen [...]”

7 In this paper, I focus primarily on the second version of the Deduction because its more rigorous order of presentation facilitates interpretation. Moreover, since it appeared just two years before Kant sent his letter to Herz in 1789, we have *prima facie* good reason to read the two texts together. While it would take another paper to show this, I believe that the A-Deduction agrees with the B as far as the core argument is concerned. This includes the role of transcendental imagination.

general “laws of combination” that are derivable from the categories, that must apply to any outer object that we can perceive as “coming before our senses”, and that therefore constitute a nature as such (cf. KrV, A 126 ff).<sup>8</sup> On my reading, this is what the Deduction proves, and all that it proves (the Deduction includes several complex steps and sub-proofs, but the overall argument-goal is this). A mere appearance, however, as I will argue, which is given merely in the sensible form of intuition of the subject, does not amount to an object of nature, i. e., to an object that we can experience as coming before our senses.

Section § 26 at KrV, B 164 f. contains a summary of how the Deduction together with the work accomplished in previous sections of the *Critique* purports to achieve the above stated goal. A corresponding summary of the whole argument is offered in the first edition at KrV, A 128 ff. It says that the overall goal presupposes (1) transcendental idealism (the view that space and time are nothing but forms of human sensibility), and presupposes (2) that the combination [*Verbindung*] of representations, glossed as “the apriori form” of our understanding and earlier defined as the *representation* of the *synthetic unity* of a *manifold* of representations (see KrV, B 130 f), exists *only* on account of our understanding as a law-giving capacity: “For laws [do not] exist [...] in the appearances, but only relative to the subject, in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding [...] (B 164).”<sup>9</sup> Claim (1) has been established in the Transcendental Aesthetic. Claim (2) has been established in the Deduction itself, by showing that all combination presupposes transcendental apperception.

I will return to claim (2) in the paper’s last section. In this and the following section, I will discuss what I take to be a relevant role of claim (1) in the Deduction. The proof summary at KrV, B 164 f. touches on this role when Kant remarks that appearances neither “exist” because the sensible subject possesses understanding nor “in themselves” [*an sich*] (ibid). For according to transcendental idealism, appearances are nothing but sensible representations.

I propose to read the somewhat elliptic passage of B 164 f in light of Kant’s letter to Herz from 1789, where Kant defends the proof strategy of his 1787 Deduc-

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<sup>8</sup> Hans Wagner puts the relevant point concisely when he says with reference to B 159 f that the goal of the Deduction is reached with deducing the categories as conditions of the possibility of nature as “sum total of objects that can be experienced [*Inbegriff der erfahrbaren Gegenstände*]” (Wagner, Hans: „Der Argumentationsgang in Kants Deduktion der Kategorien“. In: *Kant-Studien* 71, 1980, 352–366, 363).

<sup>9</sup> “Denn Gesetze existiren eben so wenig in den Erscheinungen, sondern nur relativ auf das Subject, dem die Erscheinungen inhäriren, so fern es Verstand hat, als Erscheinungen nicht an sich existiren, sondern nur relativ auf dasselbe Wesen, so fern es Sinne hat.”

tion. In the letter, Kant answers an objection he attributes to Salomon Maimon, namely that one could only prove the objective validity of the categories on the assumption that understanding itself produces our intuitions of objects. Kant first writes that:

[The objections] are [...] meant to prove: that if understanding is to have a law-giving relation to sensible intuition (not only to empirical but also to *a priori* intuition), [...] it must itself be the creator, either of these sensible forms, or even of the matter of these, i. e. of the objects, since otherwise the *quid juris* cannot be satisfactorily answered. [...] In essence the theory of Mr. Maimon is this: the assertion of an understanding (and indeed the human understanding) not merely as a capacity to think, as it is in our case and perhaps in the case of all created beings, but in fact as a capacity to intuit. (Br, AA 11: 49.22–50.13)<sup>10</sup>

Here is the problem with Maimon's reading of the Deduction: it requires that at least the pure sensible forms of human intuition, space and time, if not also the matter of any intuition, are produced by our capacity of understanding. Therefore, Kant argues, Maimon essentially conceives of the human intellect as intuitive and not (merely) discursive. What this means is that Maimon conceives of human understanding as productive of intuition. In the *Critique*, Kant has already discussed the fundamental difference between an intuitive understanding as a creative spontaneity of intuition and a human, entirely discursive spontaneity.<sup>11</sup> (We will see further below why it would already follow from the assumption that the understanding "creates" – as Kant puts it here – the mere *form* of human intuition, that the understanding would be intuitive).

Kant now goes on to contrast this unacceptable reading of the Deduction to what he presents as his successful proof strategy:

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10 "[Die Einwände] gehen [...] darauf hinaus, zu beweisen: daß, wenn der Verstand auf sinnliche Anschauung (nicht bloß die empirische, sondern auch die *a priori*) eine gesetzgebende Beziehung haben soll, so müsse er selbst der Urheber, es sey dieser sinnlichen Formen, oder auch sogar der Materie derselben, d. i. der Objecte, seyn, weil sonst das *quid iuris* nicht Gnugthuend beantwortet werden könne. [...] Die Theorie des Hrn. Maymon ist im Grunde: die Behauptung eines Verstandes (und zwar des menschlichen) nicht bloß als eines Vermögens zu denken, wie es der unsrige und vielleicht aller erschaffenen Wesen ist, sondern eigentlich als eines Vermögens anzuschauen [...]."

11 Kant develops a detailed contrast between human spontaneity (discursive understanding) and a conceivable intuitive spontaneity (intuitive understanding) in the second edition of the *Critique* (see KrV, B 33; B 68; B 72; B 134; B 138 f; B 145; B 159). This particular emphasis on the difference of the two kinds of intellects especially in the revised edition of the Deduction strongly indicates that Kant considered it essential for a proper understanding of the proof. Nevertheless, their opposition is already present in Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation* (see MSI, AA 02: 398 f.) and in the first edition of the *Critique* (see A 67f/B 92f).

Mr. Maimon asks: How do I explain to myself the possibility of the agreement of intuition a priori with my concepts a priori when each has its specifically different origin, **since this agreement is indeed given as a *factum***, but its justification or the necessity of the agreement of two so heterogeneous kinds of representation cannot be made intelligible, and, conversely, how can I through my concept of the understanding, e.g. of cause, [...] give the law to nature, i.e. to the objects themselves [...]?

To this I reply: This all happens in relation to an empirical cognition possible for us only under these [i.e., the following] conditions, thus in a subjective respect, which is however also objectively valid, **because the objects are not things in themselves, but mere appearances**, thus on the one hand, their form, in which they are given to us, also depends on us, with respect to what is subjective it in, i.e. the specific character of our mode of intuition, and on the other hand, they depend on our understanding, the unification of the manifold in one consciousness, i.e. with respect to thought of the object and cognition, so that we can only have experience of them under these conditions, **thus, if intuitions (of the objects as appearances) did not agree with this, they would be nothing for us, i.e., no objects of cognition, neither of us ourselves nor of other things.** (Br, AA 11: 50.24–51.13, bold emphases mine)<sup>12</sup>

As the summary of the Deduction's proof structure at KrV, B 164 f, Kant's reply to Maimon in this passage involves the premise of transcendental idealism. It begins with the following claim: *The objects we speak about are mere appearances, not things in themselves.* Kant distinguishes two separable subjective conditions of the possibility of human empirical cognition on the basis of this premise. These are, firstly, the sensible form in which objects are given to us, and secondly, unification of any given manifold of sensible intuitions in one consciousness through the understanding. So, Kant continues, "if intuitions (of the objects as appearances) did not agree with this [i.e., with unification by the understanding], they

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12 "Nun fragt Hr. Maymon: Wie erkläre ich mir die Möglichkeit der Zusammenstimmung der Anschauungen *a priori* zu meinen Begriffen *a priori*, wenn jede ihren specifisch verschiedenen Ursprung hat, da dieselbe zwar als Factum gegeben, aber ihre Rechtmäßigkeit oder die Nothwendigkeit der Ubereinstimmung zweener so heterogenen Vorstellungsarten nicht begreiflich gemacht werden kan und umgekehrt, wie kan ich durch meinen Verstandesbegrif z. B. der Ursache [...] der Natur, d. i. den Obiecten selbst, das Gesetz vorschreiben [...]?"

Hierauf antworte ich: dies alles geschieht in Beziehung auf ein uns unter diesen Bedingungen allein mögliches Erfahrungs-Erkenntnis, also in subiectiver Rücksicht, die aber doch zugleich objectiv gültig ist, weil die Gegenstände nicht Dinge an sich selbst, sondern bloße Erscheinungen sind, mithin ihre Form, in der sie gegeben werden, auch von uns, nach dem was an ihr subiectiv, d. i. das Specifische unserer Anschauungsart ist, einerseits, und der Vereinigung des Mannigfaltigen in ein Bewustseyn, d. i. dem Denken des Obiects und der Erkenntnis nach andererseits, von unserem Verstande abhängen, so daß wir nur unter diesen Bedingungen von ihnen Erfahrung haben können, mithin, wenn Anschauungen (der Obiecte als Erscheinungen) hiermit nicht zusammen stimmten, sie für uns nichts, d. i. gar keine Gegenstände der Erkenntnis, weder von uns selbst, noch von anderen Dingen, seyn würden."

would be *nothing for us*, i. e., no objects of cognition, neither of us ourselves nor of other things (emphases mine).” Note the wording: “they [i. e., the *intuitions*] [...] would be [...] *no objects of cognition*” (emphases mine).

As this wording shows, Kant's argument involves an implicit distinction between objects as appearances, which are represented in sensibly given intuition, and intuitions as (unified) objects of the understanding. For Kant says that intuitions of appearances, as given or received in the sensible form of intuition, would remain nothing for us – unless they, i. e., the merely sensible intuitions or appearances, both of which are identified with one another in this manner of speaking, were unified by the understanding and thereby cognized *as* objects. While this distinction between mere sensible appearances and unified objects of cognition is rather difficult to track in the letter, the *Critique's* section titled ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ makes it explicit. Kant here writes that “appearances, insofar as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories are called *phenomena*” [*Erscheinungen, so fern sie als Gegenstände nach der Einheit der Kategorien gedacht werden, heißen Phaenomena*] (KrV, A 248f). The same passage states that appearances are in themselves “nothing but representations” (A 250), i. e., mere sensible representations. They must be related to an object of a concept, but they are not in themselves already objects of concepts (see *ibid* and cf. KrV, A 92f/B 125). So mere appearances are distinguished from what Kant calls phenomena insofar as the latter presuppose some action of discursive understanding, which is not presupposed for the mere givenness of the former. While Kant is clearly not always consistent in the use of this terminology, it here becomes apparent why such consistency is both difficult to achieve and difficult for the reader to track: For Kant's terminological distinction between appearances and phenomena amounts to a distinction between two senses of “appearance,” namely between “mere appearances” or “appearances in themselves” and “appearances, insofar as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories.” Apart from the distinction between thing in itself and appearance, this yields a further distinction between the mere appearance immediately “given in” sensible intuition and the empirically real (and in this sense mind-independent) phenomenon that is unified and thought by the understanding:

If therefore we say: **The senses represent objects to us as they appear, but the understanding as they are**, then the latter statement [i. e., “the understanding as they are”] is not to be understood in a transcendental, but merely in an empirical way, that is, how they must be represented **as objects of experience** in the thoroughgoing connection of appearances. (KrV, A 258/B 313f, bold emphases mine.)<sup>13</sup>.

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13 “Wenn wir denn also sagen: die Sinne stellen uns die Gegenstände vor, wie sie erscheinen, der Verstand aber, wie sie sind, so ist das letztere nicht in transscendentaler, sondern bloß

We may now go through Kant's argument in the letter to Herz in the light of this distinction between appearances and phenomena. Kant argues as follows. If merely the first, sensible condition of human experience were fulfilled, but the second, non-sensible condition could not be fulfilled because the form of our intuition did not conform to the possibility of sensible intuitions' unification (lawful combination) through transcendental apperception, then our sensible representations would simply not amount to any possible objects of experience. Neither would they amount to objects of cognition of ourselves as we appear to ourselves, nor to objects of cognition of external things. For then these sensible intuitions or appearances would not only be no objects in themselves (as follows from transcendental idealism), they would also be "nothing for us" (compare for Kant's use of this expression a further passage of the letter at Br, AA 11: 52.08 and cf. KrV, A 111).

What does it mean that our intuitions would be "nothing for us"? Or, as we should ask first: what is Kant's basis for concluding something of the sort that this *could* mean? Now, as is clear from the first sentence of Br, AA 11: 50.24–36, quoted above, Kant holds that human experience of objects is a given *factum* – he even holds that Maimon would grant him as much. This means that Kant holds that intuitions (and so the a priori form of their reception in the subject) in fact "agree" with the possibility of their unification by the understanding. I turn below to the question of what this means for the Deduction's scope and burden of proof. What matters for the present purpose is this: It is not the case, in Kant's view, that there are no sensible objects which "for us" are the objects of our experience. Furthermore, consider that Kant purports to have proven premise (2) summarized in KrV, B 130 f, that combination or the representation of a unity of a manifold of given representations (according to the wording in the letter: "the unification of the manifold in one consciousness") is necessarily an action of the understanding. The letter claims that without this second condition of cognition being fulfilled, we could not possibly cognize any objects at all – because our intuitions would remain "nothing for us." We might initially take this to be a very trivial claim. Since all cognition of objects requires understanding, it is after all obvious that cognition of sensible intuitions involves an action of the understanding (recall that this is how Kant puts it above, *the intuitions themselves* are made the objects of cognition in virtue of being thought). So one might think that Kant's claim is simply the following: *Until* the understanding in some way relates to given intuitions, they are simply not thought, not conscious, not cognized –

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empirischer Bedeutung zu nehmen, nämlich wie sie als Gegenstände der Erfahrung im durchgängigen Zusammenhange der Erscheinungen müssen vorgestellt werden."

thus, trivially, “nothing for us,” i.e., unknown to us. This trivial reading would be compatible with the view that whenever we relate to appearances with the understanding, we cognize these sensible intuitions *as* objects, and that we then cognize them exactly as they already are “in themselves,” i.e., as they are before and independently of our understanding's relation to them.

However, once one considers what the necessary action of the understanding amounts to on Kant's view (unification of intuitions), an action whose analysis yields a fundamental distinction between “mere appearances” and proper “phenomena” of nature, one sees that this trivial reading cannot be the whole story. On the reading I propose instead, Kant's argument entails that mere sensible appearances, which are distinct from phenomena unified by the understanding, are strictly speaking unknowable for us. The reason is that human understanding has *a priori* unified or, in the terminology of KrV, B 130, *combined*, any intuitions to which it relates, and this combination cannot leave the intuitions unchanged.

For my purposes I here presuppose what I take to be some of the most general lines of Kant's account of human understanding (I will go into more details of this account in the following sections of this paper): For Kant, the fundamental function of human understanding is the “function of unity” (see KrV, A 69/B 94), which is the core part of what the Deduction, as we saw, broadly defines as “combination” or the unity of the synthesis of a manifold of representations. Transcendental apperception, which Kant often identifies with the understanding as a whole, is the first principle of this fundamental action of combination.<sup>14</sup> For Kant not only holds that lawful combination of representations is uniquely proper to an understanding (it could only be spontaneous, not received), he also adds at B 130 that combination is the *sole* kind of representation that we spontaneously produce. This means that Kant here expounds a very general concept of combination as an action that is involved in all applications and uses of our dis-

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<sup>14</sup> According to the “Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories”, human understanding on the whole is nothing but a discursive capacity to judge, and is an “absolute unity” (KrV, A 67/B 92), namely a unity or system of pure concepts (see A 65/B 90) with a “common principle” (see A 80f/B 106). Kant then argues in the Deduction that this fundamental principle is transcendental apperception or self-consciousness as the absolutely first principle of human thought in general (see A 118n1) and the ground of the possibility of human understanding as such (see B 131; B 137). Apperception is even identifiable with our understanding (see B 134n1). Kant often uses “transcendental apperception” and “human understanding” interchangeably (see in particular B 150–B 163). The single unifying role of the functions of this capacity, which themselves amount to a system or a unity, is to combine “manifolds” of representations, whether these be given intuitions, concepts, or judgments (see B 143).

cursive understanding – even in actions of the understanding in the guise of the imagination, as we shall see in the last section of the paper. In this last section, I shall argue that sensible intuitions can only be cognized *as objects* on the basis of a constitutive combination (of intuitions) on part of the understanding. For while Kant asserts in the letter to Herz that sensible intuitions are given in the pure form of our sensibility entirely independent of the understanding (he describes this as one of two separable conditions of the possibility of human empirical cognition), such mere sensible intuitions will nevertheless always remain “nothing for” the conscious subject of a human understanding. In other words: It is not possible to conceive of mere appearances *in themselves* in a positive manner. Any application of our understanding to intuitions always already modifies them,<sup>15</sup> turns them into combined or thought objects of possible concepts, i. e., into possible phenomena. We can therefore characterize mere appearances only negatively,<sup>16</sup> by way of analytic judgment. Kant may thus infer what mere sensible representations could not be from his account of understanding that is by definition exclusively opposed to receptivity (see KrV, A 67/B 92). From this opposition it follows, for example, that mere appearances are *not* unified.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Kant defines an appearance as “the *undetermined* object of an empirical intuition” (KrV, A 20/B 34, my emphasis), since understanding, but not sensibility, is a capacity to deter-

15 The fact that human understanding in Kant is defined as spontaneity means nothing less than that it has a certain causal or productive power with respect to its (objective) representations (see in particular KrV, A 51/B 75; A 68f/B 93 f; B 130).

16 Compare Förster, Eckart: *Die 25 Jahre der Philosophie. Eine systematische Rekonstruktion*. Frankfurt a. M. 2011, 39.

17 A passage which expresses the idea of intuitions' lack of unity succinctly is to be found in the *Anthropology*, where Kant compares mere singular intuitions to “a people without a sovereign:” “Understanding [...] is also called the higher capacity of cognition (to distinguish it from sensibility, as the lower) **because the capacity of intuitions (pure or empirical) contains only the singular in objects**, while the capacity of concepts contains the general in the representations of the latter, the rule, **to which the manifold of sensible intuitions must be subordinated in order to produce unity for the cognition of the object** – Understanding is indeed higher than sensibility, with which the non-rational animals can help themselves [...] like a people without a sovereign; [and] yet [...] a sovereign without a people (understanding without sensibility) can do nothing. [Verstand [...] wird auch das obere Erkenntnißvermögen (zum Unterschiede von der Sinnlichkeit, als dem unteren) genannt, darum weil das Vermögen der Anschauungen (reiner oder empirischer) nur das Einzelne in Gegenständen, dagegen das der Begriffe das Allgemeine der Vorstellungen derselben, die Regel, enthält, der das Mannigfaltige der sinnlichen Anschauungen untergeordnet werden muß, um Einheit zur Erkenntniß des Objects hervorzubringen. – Vornehmer ist also zwar freilich der Verstand als die Sinnlichkeit, mit der sich die verstandlosen Thiere [...] schon [...] behelfen können, so wie ein Volk ohne Oberhaupt; statt dessen ein Oberhaupt ohne Volk (Verstand ohne Sinnlichkeit) gar nichts vermag].” (Anth, AA 07: 196.17–30, bold emphases mine).

mine objects (see KrV, B 150 ff; B 153; A 310/B 367).<sup>18</sup> Kant also holds that only the understanding, but not sensibility, is a capacity of (self-conscious) reflection. Therefore, sensibility cannot make the contents of its representations reflected objects of second-order representations. A merely sensible intuition is thus famously “blind” (KrV, A 51/B 75), which I read as a metaphorical expression: The sensible intuition cannot as it were know (or see) what it represents, for it does not distinguish itself from the content or object given in it. It is in itself not a “conscious” representation in the sense in which Kant employs this term, namely as denoting a reflected representation that stands under transcendental apperception.<sup>19</sup> Finally, and this is an argument to which I will get back in more detail below, since Kant argues that the pure forms of sensibility, space and time, are given infinities that “contain an infinite set of representations” simultaneously within themselves (see KrV, B 40), he may infer that mere sensibility gives an infinite “manifold” of (partial) intuition(s) in any appearance, where the term “manifold” – since we are here speaking about a sensible intuition that is “nothing for” the cognizing consciousness – denotes an indeterminate set whose individual members are not distinguished and enumerated. (By this, I do not mean to suggest that Kant always uses the term “manifold” in this way, for members of a conscious manifold can of course be distinguished and enumerated by the understanding.). In another passage that also uses the expression “nothing for us,” Kant neatly summarizes some of these inferences by claiming that without the kind of unity that only understanding gives to experience, it would be possible

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**18** Compare Vaihinger's commentary on Kant's gloss of appearance at KrV, A 20/B 34: “The point is to emphasize: that the object as object of intuition is *not determined* [unbestimmt], and that this non-determinedness constitutes its concept, i.e., the concept of an appearance [Erscheinung]. The object remains undetermined so long as it is given in sensibility (Vaihinger, Hans: *Commentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2 vols., Stuttgart 1881–1892, vol. 1, 31).” Cf. KrV, A 69/B 94; A 92 f/B 125; B 128; A 266/B 322f; A 373 f.

**19** Compare: “We perceive in ourselves a specific mark of understanding and reason, namely consciousness, [and] if I remove this there remains something, namely *sensus, imaginatio*, the former is intuition in the presence of, the latter without presence of the object [Wir nehmen in uns ein spezifisch Merkmal des Verstandes und der Vernunft, nemlich das Bewusstseyn, wahr, nehme ich dieses hinweg so bleibt doch noch etwas übrig nemlich *sensus, imaginatio, erstres ist die Anschauung bey der Gegenwart, letztes ohne Gegenwart des Gegenstandes*].” (V-Met/Volckmann, AA 28: 449, 27–31)

Compare for this usage of the term “consciousness” [Bewusstsein] in the sense of apperception as the first principle of an understanding, and sensible intuitions' independence of consciousness in this sense Log, AA 09: 33; Anth, AA 07: 135 f; V-Lo/Pöhlitz, AA 24: 510; V-Lo/Dohna, AA 24: 702; V-Met/Mron, AA 29: 888 f.

for a swarm of appearances to fill up our soul without experience ever being able to arise from it. But in that case all relation of cognition to objects of experience would also disappear [...] and would thus be **intuition without thought, but never cognition**, and would therefore be **as good as nothing for us**. (KrV, A 111, bold emphases mine)<sup>20</sup>

In this passage, and also in famous passage at A 112 that follows after it (“appearances would not belong to any experience, [...], and would be nothing but a blind play of representations, i.e., less than a dream”) Kant obviously uses a counterfactual argument: If the understanding did not confer unity to human experience, then.... So again, Kant appeals to the fact that *we do have* experience (which is more than a dream) – which accords with the Herz letter’s appeal to a given *factum* of experience. However, the arguments at A 111 f show at the same time what kind of representations can be (negatively) thought to be given independently of our understanding, according to Kant, and what form they can be thought to take on, independently of our understanding.

## II

In his 1789 letter to Herz, Kant draws on an implicit distinction between mere sensible appearances and combined intuitions thought *as* objects of nature. Before we can fully understand the relevance of this distinction for Kant’s argument against Maimon, and so its role in the Deduction (and therefore a key role of transcendental idealism), it helps to clarify further the distinction in light of Kant’s definition of intuition as a singular [*einzelne*] representation that is immediately related to an object (see KrV, A 19/B 33; A 32/B 47; A 68/B 93; A 320/B 377; Log, AA 09: 91). For, as I shall argue, this definition must apply both to mere sensible intuitions as well as to intuitions that are unified or combined by the understanding (as intuitions of possible empirical phenomena).

Kant’s general usage of the term “intuition” already points to his understanding of the immediacy of intuition. Allison remarks that Kant uses the term to apply to all three of the following: a) the object of a representation (the intuited) b) the representation or mental content (the intuition) and c) the act of representing (the intuiting).<sup>21</sup> This confirms our repeated observations, noted above, that Kant

<sup>20</sup> “[...] so würde es möglich sein, daß ein Gewühl von Erscheinungen unsere Seele anfüllte, ohne daß doch daraus jemals Erfahrung werden könnte. Alsdann fiel aber auch alle Beziehung der Erkenntniß auf Gegenstände weg, [...] mithin würde sie zwar gedankenlose Anschauung, aber niemals Erkenntniß, also für uns so viel als gar nichts sein.”

<sup>21</sup> See Allison, Henry: *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: an Interpretation and Defense, Revised and Enlarged Edition*. New Haven 2004, 82. I think that these three senses are generally *all* under-

identifies in his manner of speaking mere sensible intuitions with mere appearances, which are said to be the undetermined “objects” of sensibly given intuition. Kant also at times identifies *one* unified intuition with the object of possible experience it represents. On my reading, this usage is not simply an imprecision. As I shall suggest, what Allison distinguishes under a) and b) are not distinct on Kant's account of *human sensibility* as an intuition-giving capacity. Object and representation *are* distinct only in the case that the representation in question is not, or not only, intuitive, but (also) discursive or conceptual. So on the view I shall propose, the intuitive object which a sensible intuition “gives” is as such (if we merely consider the sensible form of the representation) nothing but its representational content, which makes the immediacy of a sensible intuition's relation to its object obvious. We will see how this reading cashes out once we understand the singularity of each kind of sensible intuition – for intuitions that must lack unity and for those that are necessarily unified. For the singularity and the immediacy of intuition are intrinsically related.

Let us first consider mere sensible intuition. If mere sensible representations could not be held to be singular and immediate, Kant obviously had no grounds to call them “intuitions.” But Kant *does* think of certain kinds of sensible representations, which on his view *must* lack unity [*Einheit*], as *singular* [*einzelne*] intuitions. For textual evidence, refer to the very explicit passage quoted in note 16 and also all references to passages in which Kant explicitly attributes intuition to non-rational animals (note 18). How then should we understand the singularity [*Einzelheit*] of such representations, which we must think of as lacking the kind of unity inherent to our understanding?

On what I take to be a standard reading of Kant's theory of intuition, singularity is the form of a representation that necessarily represents only and exactly one (i. e., a numerically singular) object, while concepts always relate to more than just one possible object (see Log, AA 09: 97).<sup>22</sup> We may here build on i) Kant's

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stood in the German noun “Anschauung” and that Kant's use is quite ordinary in this respect. Note in particular that the verb [*anschauen*] (to intuit) from which the noun derives is transitive, it requires an object, and thus there cannot be an intuition [*Anschauung*] without a subject intuiting an object. In German as well as in English, it is possible to say without further qualification, “I am thinking” [*ich denke nach*]. But it makes no sense to say, without further qualification, “I am intuiting” [*ich schaue an*]. For there is no intuiting without an object that is being intuited (by a subject), and without saying that, the sentence is incomplete. Nevertheless, the question of whether Kant identifies the content of a sensible intuition with its being intuited (the act of representing) is tricky, and I shall bracket it for my purposes in this paper.

<sup>22</sup> As is often noted, the concept of God constitutes an exception to this definition (see KrV, A 576/B 604). In general, critical commentaries on early influential readings offered in Hintikka, Jakkó: “On Kant's Notion of Intuition,” in: *The First Critique: Reflections on Kant's 'Critique*

definition of singularity as exclusively opposed to the generality that is the form of concepts or discursive representations (see Log, AA 09: 91); ii) the exclusive opposition between an intuition's immediate relation to its object and concepts' merely mediate relation to objects (see KrV, A 19/B 33; A 68/B 93; A 320/B 377); and iii) Kant's view that the form of human sensible intuition is mereological<sup>23</sup> in the sense that any (partial) intuition depends upon an intuitive representation of an unbounded whole.<sup>24</sup> On this basis, I suggest that the indeterminate holistic content of a mere intuition as such constitutes the intuition's singular object. This view is entirely compatible with holding that the content of a sensible intuition (the appearance it gives) is not present to the self-conscious mind. All we are asserting is that the content-cum-object of sensible intuition is singular in the sense that it is numerically one. It is the (intrinsically undifferentiated) whole of whatever it is that the representation represents. For as we saw above, we may negatively infer about a mere sensible representation that it must contain an undetermined, unconscious, undifferentiated manifold, which lacks the kind of unity dependent upon our understanding. But we also need not know anything about the particular properties of the contents of our sensible representations in order to infer that they must be intuitions, i. e., representations of the kind that immediately represent a singular object. If for Kant an immediately represented object just is the content of a representation, then it suffices to know that our sensible representations must *have* content, i. e., that sensibility must be the faculty that "gives" objects to our understanding for cognition, as Kant asserts in innumerable passages (see notably KrV, A 15/B 30; A 19/B 33; A 50f/B 74 f). In the 1789 letter to Herz, as we saw, Kant simply assumes this. In the *Critique*, Kant's analy-

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of *Pure Reason*,' ed. T. Penelhum and J.J. MacIntosh. Belmont, CA, 1969, 38–53, and Parsons, Charles: "Kant's Philosophy of Arithmetic," in: *Philosophy, Science, and Method: essays in Honor of Ernest Nagel*, ed. S. Morgenbesser, P. Suppes and M. White, New York 1969, 568–594 seem to have brought about a consensus in the literature, today, that Kantian intuitions cannot be identified with what we call singular terms. Compare Howell, Richard: "Intuition, Synthesis, and Individuation in The Critique of Pure Reason," *Nous* 7, 1973, 207–32; Thompson, Manley: "Singular Terms and Intuitions in Kant's Epistemology," *Review of Metaphysics* 26, 1973, 314–343; Wilson, Kirk D.: "Kant on Intuition," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 25, 1975, 247–265. Parsons has a more recent article in which he adopts many of the latter authors' more particular suggestions (see Parsons, Charles: "The Transcendental Aesthetic," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. P. Guyer, Cambridge 1992, 62–100, 62–66).

<sup>23</sup> Compare Wilson's and Grüne's reading for the argument that the notion of a mereological sum is key to illustrate how Kant understands the singularity of human intuition as the intuition's relation to exactly one object (see Wilson 1975, 254; Grüne, Stefanie: *Blinde Anschauung. Die Rolle von Begriffen in Kant's Theorie sinnlicher Synthesis*. Frankfurt a. M. 2009, 47).

<sup>24</sup> Kant proves this in the so-called 'Metaphysical Expositions' of space and time in the Transcendental Aesthetic.

sis of space and time reveals, first, that their forms are intuitive, i. e., immediately contentful and thus object-giving, and second, that they therefore could not originate in our (discursive) understanding. These arguments, which have recently received much attention, build inter alia on Kant's proof that space and time are "given infinities," i. e., forms of representations that "contain an infinite set of representations [simultaneously] within" themselves [*eine unendliche Menge von Vorstellungen in sich enthielte [...] denn alle Teile des Raumes ins Unendliche sind zugleich*] (see KrV, B 40), which could not be produced by an understanding such as ours.<sup>25</sup>

In sum, a mere appearance can be said to be the singular and immediate object of a mere sensible intuition, because it is nothing but the undetermined content of a sensible representation.<sup>26</sup> This is nicely confirmed by several pas-

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**25** In a footnote to § 26 of the B-Deduction, Kant famously distinguishes between a "mere form of intuition" and a "formal intuition" (KrV, B 160n1). The former is what Kant also calls "the mere form of outer sensible intuition, space" (B 137), and he employs a corresponding concept of the mere form of inner sense (see B 154f). The latter is a product of unification and determination of the mere form of intuition by transcendental apperception (via imagination), an action by which space and time first become objects "for" an I. In a recent paper, Onof and Schulting have proposed that the "form of intuition" Kant appeals to in this footnote has the properties of singularity, mereological inversion (entailing infinite divisibility) and infinite magnitude (see Onof, Christian and Schulting, Denis: "Space as Form of Intuition and as Formal Intuition: On the note to B 160 in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason," *Philosophical Review* 124/1, 2015, 1–58, 15). While I agree with Onof and Schulting that the mere form of human sensible intuition is entirely independent of human understanding (see Onof and Schulting 2015, 49), I would maintain that it can be cognized to have these properties only by way of negative inference: The objects of the Metaphysical Expositions in the Transcendental Aesthetic can *qua* objects of philosophical analysis only be *formal intuitions*, and Kant can conclude from the characteristics of these formal intuitions, by way of opposition to concepts, only that they could not originate in human understanding, and must hence originate in the pure forms of human sensibility. See for this view also Blomme, Henny: "The completeness of Kant's metaphysical exposition of space". In: *Kant-Studien* 103, 2012, 139–162. I discuss the footnote to § 26 in more detail in the last section of this paper.

**26** This reading offers a new and simple solution to a general problem that interpreters have encountered, namely how to positively interpret the immediacy of intuition. According to Wilson, the immediacy of human intuition is best interpreted as an isomorphic identity between representation and object (see Wilson 1975, 263 ff). The problem with Wilson's view is that Kant nowhere suggests anything of this sort. Parsons's proposal, that the object of intuition is directly present to the mind, "as in perception" (Parsons 1992, 66), does not add much to the uncontroversial insight that, since Kant defines perception as the "consciousness" of an empirical intuition (see B 160), the intuitive relation to an object must be phenomenologically in many ways like a perceptual relation to an object, and it gives no reason for why Kant might conceive of pure intuitions' object-relation analogically. Smit (see Smit, Houston: "Kant on Marks and the Immediacy of Intuition", in *The Philosophical Review* 109 (2), 2000, 235–266) and Grüne 2009

sages that directly address the task of the Deduction. As we saw above, in the Deduction's proof summary at KrV, B 164, Kant appeals to an appearance as an object "inhering in" the subject *only on account of its sensibility*. The corresponding section in the A-Deduction expresses the point as follows: "Appearances [...] constitute an object that is merely in us, since a mere modification of our sensibility is not to be encountered outside of us at all (KrV, A 129)."<sup>27</sup> Now this does of course not mean that appearances are given without affection of the sensible subject (by something distinct from the subject), that causes the appearance in the first place; after all, Kant appeals to sensible affection as the first origin of all human cognition in central opening passages of the *Critique* (see esp. B 1; A 19/B 33 f). But the point is precisely that the immediate object of singular sensible intuition – the object of a mere sensible representation caused by affection – is *nothing but* the content of this representation; the point is, in other words, that it is not to be identified with anything "outside of" (A 129) the subject's sensibility. The famous (early) letter to Herz from 1772, which is well-known for summarizing the philosophical questions Kant tried to come to terms with in the years that led up to the first publication of the *Critique*, offers the same clue. According to the letter, the relation between a sensible representation and its object can for this reason even said to be trivial:

I asked myself: What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call 'representation' to the object? If a representation contains only the manner in which the subject is affected by the object, then it is easy to understand [...] how this determination of our mind can represent something, that is to say, how it can have an object. Passive or sensible representations thus have an understandable relation to objects [...]. (Br, AA 10: 130.06–14)<sup>28</sup>

Kant here says that a merely sensible representation – a mere "determination of our mind" – contains "only the manner in which the subject is affected." So the content of a sensible (or: received) representation is nothing but the sensible subject's manner or form of receptivity (of affections). And therefore, Kant

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offer a substantial positive account of an intuition's immediate relation to an object as a relation by means of marks. This however comes at the cost of violating a tenet that many interpreters, including myself, would attribute to Kant: the tenet that only concepts, but no intuitions, relate to objects by means of marks.

27 "Erscheinungen machen [...] einen Gegenstand aus, der blos in uns ist, weil eine bloße Modification unserer Sinnlichkeit außer uns gar nicht angetroffen wird."

28 "Ich frug mich nemlich selbst: auf welchem Grunde beruhet die Beziehung desienigen, was man in uns Vorstellung nennt, auf den Gegenstand? Enthält die Vorstellung nur die Art, wie das subject von dem Gegenstande afficirt wird, so ists leicht einzusehen, wie [...] diese Bestimmung unsres Gemüths etwas vorstellen d. i. einen Gegenstand haben könne. Die passive oder sinnliche Vorstellungen haben also eine begreifliche Beziehung auf Gegenstände."

immediately concludes, “it is easy to understand” how this representation “can represent something, that is to say, how it can have an object.” On my reading, what Kant appeals to here is precisely the immediacy of sensible intuition as the relation between a sensible representation and its sensible content-cum-object. For the content in question is nothing but the manner of sensible receptivity to affections, *which just is*: intuitive, or intuition.

For the case of conscious intuition unified by the understanding, the account seems, at first glance, similarly straightforward. Whether the intuition is pure (as e.g. an intuition used in geometry) or empirical, we may say it is immediately related to a singular object “given” in it because the object is not distinct from the mereological content of representation.<sup>29</sup> The difference between this case and the case of mere sensible intuition would then simply be that the content of a conscious representation is by definition cognized by the understanding, and so determined, definitely delineated, and possibly also differentiated into parts. The content is here given in a determinately structured and differentiated mereological form, such that determinate parts of the holistic content are seen in their specific relation within a whole.

While I think that this is the correct way of accounting for the singularity and immediacy of conscious and unified intuition, the fundamental distinction between mere appearances and unified phenomena nevertheless requires a more complicated understanding of the relation between a sensible phenomenon and its representation. For our human representation of a (possible) phenomenon of nature is, on Kant's view, not only sensible but also spontaneous. And this means, it involves human *discursive* understanding as well as the form of *intuition*. It is thus a hybrid representation in the sense that it is both intuitive, i.e., singular and immediate, as well as discursive, i.e., general and mediate. So any representation of a phenomenon of nature also has a non-intuitive aspect to it. However, in so far as it is intuitive, it can be analyzed as a singular and immediate representation in the way proposed above.

The hybrid character of the representation of objects of possible experience, as I read it in Kant, will be fully revealed only in the last section of the paper, where I discuss the understanding's action of combination of sensible intuitions through which objects of experience (phenomena) are first cognized. For

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<sup>29</sup> Compare Shabel, Lisa: “The Transcendental Aesthetic,” in: *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. P. Guyer, Cambridge/New York, 2010, 93–117, 94n6 for the view that “pure intuition” for Kant signifies a singular and immediate a priori representation as well as the object represented thereby.

clarification, I here anticipate some lines of this argument:<sup>30</sup> As we already saw, mere appearances are nothing but sensible representations. They are filled with content simply in virtue of being received and individuated in the specific forms of human sensibility. Only a combinatory act of our understanding-cum-imagination may turn (several singular) intuition(s) into a unified object of possible experience. As I shall argue, such combination of human sensible intuition, by the understanding and via transcendental imagination, always involves a *double* unification and determination, both of given sensible intuition and of possible objects cognizable in it. On Kant's account that becomes fully laid out only in the so-called second proof step of the Deduction, empirically real objects are thus distinct even from the *determined* content of a *unified* intuition: If I do relate to an object of which I can judge that it exists in space and time independently of anyone's contingent perception, e. g. the apple tree in my garden, then this object is not merely part of the determinate content of one of my (conscious) intuitions, contingent on a certain place and time, as e. g. the perspective from which I intuit the tree sitting at my desk right now. On the view I attribute to Kant, a proper phenomenon is rather the common, determinate referent of many actual and possible human intuitions, including possible intuitions in other human subjects. It is determined as the common object of several representations that have themselves, as actual and possible intuitions, been made the first-order objects of my discursive understanding (the object of experience is thus the understanding's second-order object). On this basis, an outer object of nature, about which we can make general judgments across different moments of time, is distinguished from the unified content of some conscious intuition in some sensible subject (which is always dependent on a contingent spatio-temporal perspective). Reinhard Hiltcher has thoroughly discussed this systematic distinction and relation in Kant, in Hiltcher's terminology: between the unity of the intuition (of an object) and the unity of the object (of an intuition), where both unities (as all unity), are brought about by the understanding, but where only the latter is the ultimate trans-subjective object of nature and objectively valid judgment. Hiltcher's reading, to which I return in the last section of this paper, offers a

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**30** I here presuppose the exhaustiveness of Kant's intuition-concept distinction as comprising the two sole kinds of representations of *objects* (see KrV, A 320/B 376 f) as well as Kant's identification of human understanding on the whole with a discursive "capacity to think." The "Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories" in the *Critique* employs the latter term as synonymous with a "spontaneity of concepts" (A 50/B 74) or a "capacity to judge" (A 69/B 94; A 81/B 107; cf. A 51/B 75). See below for my claim that Kant's stipulation of rules and transcendental schemata does not add a third kind of objective representation to the account, rather, they are means of the general representation of (a manifold of) singular intuitions as a unity.

highly illuminating account of the relation of *this difference*, which is a difference or doubling *within* the conscious intuition of a cognizing subject, and Kant's theory of judgment.<sup>31</sup> It is in the context of this discussion that we shall see that Kant really leaves us with three different senses of "objects given in sensibility": The contents of unconscious intuitions (mere sensible appearances), the determined contents of unified intuitions, and outer objects of nature.

The fact that this threefold distinction is central in Kant cannot be emphasized enough. Nevertheless, we may bracket it until the last section of the paper and return for now to the more general and encompassing distinction between mere sensibly given appearances and objects unified by the understanding, which corresponds to Kant's fundamental doctrine of two stems of cognition. I believe that a dominant and erroneous tendency in current Kant scholarship to read the Deduction along the lines of Maimon is based on a wide-spread failure to make even this general distinction, notably the distinction between mere appearances and possible phenomena of nature.<sup>32</sup> This failure is related to an impasse between what I distinguish as 'intellectualist' and 'empiricist' readings of Kant. For my purposes in the present context, an 'intellectualist' interpretation is simply one that holds, like Maimon, that human sensible intuition *as such*, i. e. any singular and immediate representation of sensible objects, presupposes some action of human understanding (or understanding-cum-imagination).<sup>33</sup> The term 'concept-

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31 See two seminal papers by Hiltcher, Reinhard: "Kants Begründung der Adäquationstheorie der Wahrheit in der transzendentalen Deduktion der Ausgabe B", in: *Kant-Studien* 83, 1993, 426–447, and Hiltcher, Reinhard: "Einheit der Anschauung vom Gegenstand und Einheit des Gegenstands der Anschauung in Kants Transzendentaler Deduktion", in: *Gegenstandsbestimmung und Selbstgestaltung. Transzendentalphilosophie im Anschluss an Werner Flach*. Ed. C. Krijnen and K. W. Zeidler. Würzburg 2011, 123–159.

32 Important exceptions to this tendency in today's Kant scholarship are, apart from Hiltcher (see note 33), Wagner 1980 (see esp. Wagner 1980, 358 ff, where Wagner clearly separates the cognitive contribution of (a manifold of and form of) intuition on the part of sensibility from the cognitive contribution of unity and an object of possible judgment on the part of the understanding), Flach, Werner: "Das Kategorienkonzept der kritischen Philosophie Kants und seine Revision in der Erkenntnislehre des Marburger Neukantianismus", in: *Kategorie und Kategorialität. Historisch-systematische Untersuchungen zum Begriff der Kategorie im philosophischen Denken der Philosophie*, ed. Dietmar Koch and Klaus Bort, Würzburg 1990, 267–301 and Flach, Werner: *Immanuel Kant. Die Idee der Transzendentalphilosophie*, Würzburg 2002. Flach 2002, 35 ff also introduces the relevant terminology (notably the notion of an "appearance" in Kant) in a concise, and in my view, correct way.

33 The following exemplary works propose an intellectualist reading in my sense, and a much longer list could be given: Cohen, Hermann: *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung*, Berlin 1885; Natorp, Paul: *Die logischen Grundlagen der exakten Wissenschaften*, Leipzig 1910; Strawson, Peter F.: *The Bounds of Sense. An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, New York/London 1966; Ameriks 1978; McDowell, John: "Lecture II: The Logical Form of an Intuition", in: *The Journal of Philosophy*

tualist' might also be suitable for the intellectualist view, since human discursive understanding in Kant is a complex unity, all of whose functions and possible applications involve general and mediate, i.e., *conceptual* representations of some sort, whether these are explicit concepts, syllogisms, or just general rules or schemata.<sup>34</sup> (I will nevertheless avoid using the frequent distinction between 'conceptualist' and 'non-conceptualist' readings of Kant, since this distinction is very differently defined in different authors. There are, for example, interpreters who defend or are sympathetic to what they call a 'non-conceptualist' account

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95 (9), 1998, 451–470; McDowell, John: "Lecture III: Intentionality as a Relation", in: *The Journal of Philosophy* 95 (9), 471–491, 1998; Longuenesse, Béatrice: *Kant and the Capacity to Judge: Sensibility and Discursivity in the Transcendental Analytic of the 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, Princeton 1998; Longuenesse, Béatrice: *Kant and the Human Standpoint*, Cambridge 2005; Allison 2004; Pippin, Robert: "Concept and Intuition: On Distinguishability and Separability", in: *Hegel Studien* 40, 2005, 25–40; Land, Thomas: "Kant's Spontaneity Thesis", in: *Philosophical Topics* 34, 2006, 189–220; Land, Thomas: "Prescribing Unity to Intuition: Sensibility and Understanding in the Transcendental Deduction", in: *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants*, vol. 2, ed. Guido de Almeida et al., Berlin 2008, 419–430; Engstrom, Stephen: "Understanding and Sensibility", in: *Inquiry* 49, 2006, 2–25; Engstrom, Stephen: "The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32, 2008, 359 – 380; Ginsborg, Hannah: "Kant and the Problem of Experience", in: *Philosophical Topics* 34, 2006, 59–106; Ginsborg, Hannah: "Was Kant a Nonconceptualist?", in: *Philosophical Studies* 137, 2008, 65–77; Haag, Johannes: *Erfahrung und Gegenstand*, Frankfurt a. M. 2007; Grüne 2009; Grüne, Stefanie: "Is there a Gap in Kant's B Deduction?", in: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, 2011, 465–490; Höppner, Till: "Kants Begriff der Funktion und die Vollständigkeit der Urteils- und Kategorientafel", in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 65, 2011, 193–217; Friedman, Michael: "Kant on Geometry and Spatial Intuition", in: *Synthese* 186 (1), 2012, 231–255. An early and pronounced intellectualist reader of Kant was his student Jacob Sigismund Beck. Compare a letter from Beck at Br, AA 11: 311. The most controversial and likely most discussed intellectualist position is that already the pure form of human intuition presupposes or must be produced by some action of human understanding (or understanding-cum-imagination). I return to this position and some of its exemplary proponents in the following section. But there are other versions, too. Allison for example claims that because understanding is required for the relation of a representation to an object, only a determinate intuition, i.e., an intuition determined by the understanding, is a singular representation (see Allison 2004, 81f). Yet since singularity – the relation to a singular object – is one of Kant's defining criteria of intuition as such, this amounts to saying that only an intuition determined by the understanding amounts to an intuition in the full or proper sense of the term.

**34** Rules are general (and so conceptual) representations. The same holds for schemata, since they rest on rules. Kant explains very clearly that a schema is general because it depends upon concepts or rules of the understanding. Compare in particular: "The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination; but since the synthesis of the latter has as its aim *no singular intuition* [keine einzelne Anschauung] but rather only the unity in the determination of sensibility, the schema is to be distinguished from an image (KrV, A 140/B 179, emphasis mine)." A transcendental schema "is homogeneous with the category (which constitutes its unity) in so far as it is general and rests on a rule a priori" (A 138/B 177 f). See also KrV, A 141/B 180.

of Kant, but who deny that an intuition of an object is possible without understanding.<sup>35</sup>) For my purposes, an 'empiricist' reading is, equally simple, one on which conscious empirical intuitions of outer objects, i. e., (partial) representations of *real phenomena*, may be given by mere sensibility independently of the understanding.<sup>36</sup> The impasse between intellectualist and empiricist readings in my sense results from their shared assumption that the singular objects to which Kantian (outer) intuitions are immediately related *just are* possible objects of experience (and couldn't be anything else). It is obvious that the empiricist reading rests on this assumption. The intellectualist reading rests on it since its reason for the declared *general* dependency of human intuition on the understanding is that objects of possible experience could otherwise not be a priori governed by (pure concepts of) the understanding. For the rationale behind this reasoning is that any sensible intuition *as such* gives a particular object of (possible) experience, i. e., an individual phenomenon of nature. This common conflationary view thus fails to account for the fact that objects of experience are not only intuitive but *also* unified objects of mediate and general representation and must hence be distinguished from mere intuitions. In other words, the view cannot properly accommodate Kant's distinction between a singular and immediate relation to an object, which is genuinely *non-discursive* (and can therefore not depend on human understanding, on Kant's account), and the general and mediate (reflected) relation to an object, which is genuinely *discursive* and constituted as soon as human understanding comes into play. Not surprisingly, paradigmatic 'empiricist' readers thus admit that they cannot offer an interpretation of the Deduction as a valid argument,<sup>37</sup> while the 'intellectualists' must admit

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35 Stefanie Grüne, who has argued that Kant is "the founder of Non-Conceptualism" (Grüne 2011, 474n27; cf. Grüne 2009, 251–254), maintains: "[A]n intuition is [...] the outcome of an activity of mental processing which Kant calls synthesis of the understanding" (Grüne 2011, 476) and "no intuitions are formed without the categories functioning as rules for synthesis" (Grüne 2011, 480).

36 Paradigmatic readings of this sort are forcefully defended in Hanna, Robert: "Kant and Non-conceptual Content", in: *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2005, 247–290; Hanna, Robert: "Kant's Non-Conceptualism, Rogue Objects, and The Gap in the B Deduction", in: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, 2011, 399–415; Allais, Lucy: "Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47, 2009, 383–413; Allais, Lucy: "Transcendental Idealism and the Transcendental Deduction", in: *Kant's Idealism. New Interpretations of a Controversial Doctrine*, ed. D. Schulting and J. Verburgh, Dordrecht 2011, 91–107; Golob, Sacha: "Kant on Intentionality, Magnitude, and the Unity of Perception", in: *European Journal of Philosophy* 22 (4), 2011, 505–528; McLear, Collin: "Two Kinds of Unity in the Critique of Pure Reason", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53, 2015, 79–110.

37 Hanna 2011 explicitly concedes this point. Like Hanna, Allais 2009, 2011 offers what I understand to be an 'empiricist' account of Kant (see below), but holds this to be compatible with

that they, like Maimon, cannot accommodate Kant's repeatedly emphasized claim that objects are given to us by sensible intuition entirely independently of the understanding.<sup>38</sup>

Having clarified Kant's often implicit distinction between mere appearances and real phenomena, we now have the necessary requisites to answer the question about the peculiar role of transcendental idealism (claim (1) at KrV, B 164 f) in the Deduction. Assuming that Kant has proven claim (2), that combination or lawful connection is a representation that could not be received, we can validly conclude from (2) together with (1) that all general laws of nature depend solely on the function of unity (combination) proper to our understanding, and so on the categories. For according to (1) and (2) objects of nature cannot stand under *other* laws than under those to which we have subjected them through combination. Since space and time are nothing but the intuitive forms of human receptivity (1), spatiotemporal objects cannot stand under laws that would be independent of a human subject, e.g. under *noumenal* laws that would govern things in themselves. And even though mere appearances may well be given in sensible intuition independently of and prior to any fulfillment of the non-sensible condition of the possibility of human experience, as Kant claims in the letter to Herz (and cf. A 16/B 30; B 67; B 132), this does not entail that we could miss out on some hidden relations or laws, unbeknownst to us, that could hold among possible objects of experience. For mere sensible appearances do not amount to such objects.

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Kant's Deduction. The problem I see with her reading is that she accounts merely for the proof that *whenever we cognize an object as an object, this involves some function of the unity of the understanding*. As Guyer has emphasized, the latter claim can be taken to be established already by the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories, and the Transcendental Deduction is supposed to prove the stronger claim that the categories apply a priori to any possible object of experience. In other words, the goal of Kant's Deduction is not merely to prove the conditional, that whenever some human being has experience of an object, the categories are employed to constitute this experience. Rather, the proof must establish that the categories necessarily apply to any object of nature independently of contingent human perception; i.e., that they apply also to those objects of nature that no one ever happens to perceive. See Guyer, Paul: "The Deduction of the Categories", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. P. Guyer, Cambridge 2010, 118–150, 121 f.

**38** See e.g. KrV, A 15f/B 30; A 19/B 33; B 67; A 50ff/B 74 ff; A 67f/B 92 f; A 89f/B 122 f; B 132; B 146; Log, AA 09: 35 f. among many other passages. My account does away with the notorious exegetical dilemma of how to read the latter passages together with passages such as B 137; KrV, 79/B 104 f; B 159 f; B 309 where Kant asserts that any relation to an object of cognition presupposes the understanding. The seeming contradiction between these different passages dissolves once one sees that Kant employs different senses of the term 'object' in them.

## III

Continuing the reply to Maimon in his 1789 letter to Herz, Kant turns to three questions the *Critique* does not answer, nor aims to answer.

But how such a sensible intuition (as space and time) [as] form of our intuition, or such functions of the understanding as logic develops out of it, are themselves possible, **or how it is the case that one form agrees with the other in giving rise to a possible cognition**, that is absolutely impossible for us to further explain [...]. **But it is also not at all necessary to answer this.** (Br, AA 11: 51.24–35, bold emphases mine)<sup>39</sup>

Here is the first question this passage addresses: How is the sensible form of our intuition possible? The second one asks: How are the functions of unity of our understanding possible? And the third and final question asks: How should we explain the agreement of the form of our sensibility and the form of our understanding that gives rise to all possible human cognition? As he writes to Herz, this is not what Kant wants to answer, or needs to answer. As we saw above: experience is assumed as a *factum*. Similarly, as with the first two questions, the third is a question, which Kant says we simply cannot answer.

As concerns the first two questions, the *Critique*, too, explicitly denies any purport to answering them (see KrV, A XVII ff; B 145 f; cf. Prol, AA 04: 318 f).<sup>40</sup> But what does the *Critique* say with respect to the third question? Does it not offer an account of why our sensible intuition must necessarily agree with the understanding's functions of unity? One might have thought, in particular, that Kant introduces a “transcendental” imagination (see A 118 f; B 151) precisely to this end. For a capacity of cognition is called “transcendental” if and only if it must be appealed to in an explanation of the possibility of a priori cognition (see B 25; A 56/B 80 f; B 132; A 118). Moreover, the action of transcendental imagination

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39 “Wie aber eine solche sinnliche Anschauung (als Raum und Zeit) Form unserer Sinnlichkeit oder solche Functionen des Verstandes, als deren die Logik aus ihm entwickelt, selbst möglich sey, oder wie es zugehe, daß eine Form mit der Andern zu einem möglichen Erkenntnis zusammenstimme, das ist uns schlechterdings unmöglich weiter zu erklären [...] Aber diese Frage zu beantworten ist auch gar nicht nöthig.”

40 Regarding the grounds of human a priori forms of intuition in particular, Kant arguably employs a traditional notion of the a priori even in the critical philosophy, on which space and time are first grounds of all human sensible cognition of which no further ground can be given (see Hogan, Desmond: “How to Know Unknowable Things in Themselves”, in: *Nous* 43, 2009, 49–63, 52 ff.). Space as such ground, following a traditional notion of the a priori but with an adaptation to transcendental idealism, would be an a priori representation precisely in the sense that any representation of a determinate space, or of determinate spatial relations between objects, presupposes a representation of given (indeterminate) space.

constitutes in Kant's own words our understanding's "first application" [*erste Anwendung*] (B 152) to human sensible intuition, as well as "the ground of all others [i. e., the ground of all other such applications of human understanding to human intuition] (ibid.)." So it might seem that the appeal to transcendental imagination constitutes an attempt to deduce, after all, the ultimate ground of our discursive understanding's agreement with the a priori form of intuition, which guarantees that any object we may sensibly cognize must agree with a priori concepts.

In the Deduction's second edition even more clearly and explicitly than in its first version, Kant subordinates transcendental imagination to the understanding in that it executes principles of the understanding on sensibility (see *ibid.* and cf. A 119; A 123 ff). This has led interpreters to think that transcendental imagination is best interpreted as the actualization of a non-discursive or "pre-discursive" first principle of human understanding itself. On this widely received view, understanding in its "first application" *cum* transcendental imagination first produces the very intuitive forms in which we sensibly represent objects.<sup>41</sup> As one prominent proponent of that position, Longuenesse argues that "space and time [...] are the product of *synthesis speciosa*, the transcendental synthesis of imagination,"<sup>42</sup> and that this just amounts to saying that the forms of human intuition are the product of "pre-discursive" understanding's affection of human sensibility.<sup>43</sup> One important reason for why human understanding on this account of its "first application" to sensibility must operate in a non-discursive manner is that a *discursive* understanding can only operate successively, proceeding from parts to whole. In this way, the synthesis of the pure forms of space and time, which contain infinite parts within themselves, could never be completed by a finite understanding such as ours (in Kantian technical terms, a discursive understanding can thus only produce a "composite," where the parts are prior to and successively integrated into the whole, but not a "*totum*" or mereological whole such as the intuitive form of space or time, where the whole is prior to the parts – as noted

<sup>41</sup> The view that the pure forms of human intuition presuppose understanding-cum-imagination is attributed to Kant by a historical line in the reception and interpretation of the *Critique* to date. See among many others notably Cohen 1885; Natorp 1910; Longuenesse 1998; 2005 and recently Friedman 2012, 247 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Longuenesse 2005, 34.

<sup>43</sup> See Longuenesse 1998, 211–242 and Longuenesse 2005, 33 ff and 66–69. I cite just two explicit passages: "[S]pace and time themselves, [...] as forms of intuition and pure intuitions [...] are [...] the product of the 'affection of sensibility by the understanding' (2005, 33)." And "space and time as a whole [...] result from an 'affection of sensibility by the understanding.' [...] To describe this, I have used the expression 'pre-discursive understanding,' [which] [...] generates the representation in imagination of one, undivided space, and one, undivided time (2005, 68 f)."

above). Like other important proponents of a reading along these lines, Longuenesse is very well aware of this point,<sup>44</sup> which is a core reason for why she resorts to the terminology of ‘pre-discursiveness’ and to the idea of a human spontaneity of cognition in the guise of *imagination*: For the idea is that imagination – the capacity to give images, which are a sub-species of Kantian intuitions in so far as they too are singular mereological wholes – can *instantaneously* generate the singular whole of space and time, all (possible) parts of which are simultaneously given in it. On this reading, imagination or “pre-discursive” understanding thus acts non-discursively a) because it does not proceed successively from parts to whole and b) because it produces an intuition, which on Kant’s definition is exclusively opposed to discursive representation. By contrast, on the reading I will offer in the following section, transcendental imagination is in fact construed by Kant as a proper “application” of an essentially *discursive* capacity, namely as executing a *successive* action of combination.

Longuenesse’s reading evidently agrees with the view Kant attributes to Maimon. For it amounts to attributing a creative capacity of spontaneous intuition to humans. An interpretation of transcendental imagination as an integral *intuitive* component of human understanding therefore not only comes at the cost of violating the critical conception of this understanding as a discursive unity.<sup>45</sup> It also goes hand in hand with the assumption of an overly ambitious burden of proof; one that Kant already found in Maimon. This is the assumption that the Deduction purports to derive the ultimate ground of a necessary agreement of the forms of any objects that may be given in sensible intuition with concepts of the

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<sup>44</sup> Compare esp. Friedman 2012. In a recent paper, Messina surprisingly cites Longuenesse as his major exemplary proponent of what he calls the ‘Synthesis Reading,’ which he defines as the view that the pure form of space is successively synthesized by ‘*synthesis speciosa*’ (see Messina, James: “Kant on the Unity of Space and the Synthetic Unity of Apperception”, in: *Kant-Studien* 105, 2014, 5–40, 7f. and 20). Messina admits at one point in his article that “[p]roponents of the Synthesis Reading [...] might claim that [...] there would remain another (more general) type of figurative synthesis that is able to [non-regressively or non-successively] generate the unity of space, and that renders the other type of figurative [successive] synthesis possible (Messina 2014, 20f).” On my best understanding of Longuenesse and Friedman, this is precisely the view they want to maintain (see references in note 41 and Friedman 2012, 49, especially 49n33). If my reading is correct, Longuenesse’s position would, in fact, not fundamentally differ from Messina’s own proposal, which argues that the singular whole of metaphysical space of the Transcendental Aesthetic – what Longuenesse calls “space and time themselves, [...] as forms of intuition and pure intuitions” – necessarily depends upon the synthetic unity of transcendental apperception, though without therefore presupposing a successive synthesis (see Messina 2014, esp. 6 and 22f).

<sup>45</sup> See Fichant, Michel: “Pour conclure”, in: *Philosophie* 60, 1998, 70–101, 92 and Onof and Schulting 2015, 17 ff. for further critique of Longuenesse’s position along these lines.

understanding. From Neo-Kantians to Longuenesse, Friedman and many others today, transcendental imagination is taken to constitute this ground.

The 1789 letter to Herz and other writings in which Kant retrospectively summarizes the achievements of his critical theoretical philosophy do not mention transcendental imagination. This agrees with the proof summaries of the Deduction offered in both editions of the *Critique* itself, which, as we saw in the previous section, present the structure of the complete argument on a very general level without any appeal to imagination. Surely this indicates that on Kant's own understanding of the *Critique*'s Deduction, the proof does not turn on deriving a third capacity as a common ground or common "root" [*Wurzel*] (A 16/B 29)<sup>46</sup> of sensibility and understanding. Rather, Kant's account of the possibility of human theoretical cognition resembles Leibniz' pre-established harmony interpreted in an unorthodox manner, namely, as a harmony between the two sole objective a priori principles of human cognition we may validly deduce. These are the a priori forms of human sensible intuition and transcendental apperception as the principle of unity of a discursive understanding. This, then, is the gist of Kant's 1789 letter to Herz and other texts purporting to furnish a "proper apology" for Leibniz's system: Explaining how sensibility and understanding come together in actual experience is beyond the limits of critical reason. Their harmony remains an inexplicable factum.

I have [...] strongly convinced myself that Leibniz with his pre-established harmony [...] had in view not the harmony of two different beings, namely sensible and intelligible beings, but of two different capacities of the very same being, in whom sensibility and understanding harmonize to give rise to an empirical cognition, of whose source [viz, the harmony], if we wanted to judge it, even though such investigation lies completely beyond the bounds of human reason, we could give no further ground than our divine creator, though since it is indeed given we can completely explain the justification of a priori judgment by means of it (i. e. the *quid juris*). (Br, AA 11: 52.19–31)<sup>47</sup>

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**46** When Kant famously suggests in the Introduction to the *Critique* that sensibility and understanding are two "stems" [*Stämme*] of all human cognition, which "*perhaps*" (KrV, A 16/B 29, emphasis mine) spring from a common "root," he adds in the same sentence that such root is unknown to us (cf. A 648f/B 676f.). Kant also explicitly states that he defends an alternative to single principle systems such as Rationalism and Empiricism (see A 271/B 327).

**47** "[Gleichwohl] überrede ich mich sehr, daß Leibnitz mit seiner Vorherbestimmten Harmonie [...] nicht die Harmonie zweyer Verschiedenen Wesen, nämlich Sinnen und Verstandeswesen, sondern zweyer Vermögen eben desselben Wesens, in welchem Sinnlichkeit und Verstand zu einem Erfahrungserkenntnis zusammenstimmen, vor Augen gehabt habe, von deren Ursprung, wenn wir ja darüber urtheilen wollten, obzwar eine solche Nachforschung gänzlich über die Grenze der menschlichen Vernunft hinaus liegt, wir weiter keinen Grund, als den Gottlichen Urheber von uns selbst angeben können, wenn wir gleich die Befugnis, vermittelst dersel-

Kant holds that it is impossible to derive a sufficient explanatory ground of the agreement of human sensible intuition with human understanding. The introduction of a transcendental imagination in the course of the Deduction should therefore not be interpreted as the attempt to offer such an explanation. But what, then, is the role of this capacity in the argument?

## IV

I shall now propose that Kant's answer to this question is very modest. On my reading, Kant introduces transcendental imagination merely as the *specific* form human discursive understanding must assume in its first application to the *specific* human form of receptivity, namely the form of a *successive movement in space*. We already saw that the role of imagination in the Deduction is not that of a necessary premise of the proof summarized on a general level. Rather, as I shall argue in this section, imagination is introduced by Kant in order to specify and illustrate (and thus to further motivate) an implication of the undeniable agreement between two absolutely "heterogeneous kinds of representation," as the letter to Herz puts it, between sensible intuition and discursive thought. In other words, an appeal to the capacity of imagination makes the *factum* of human experience as understood by Kant – the fact that a discursive understanding can successfully unify representations given in a human form of intuition – comprehensible *in concreto*. Again, this fact remains ultimately inexplicable in the sense that a common first principle of the two distinct stems of human cognition cannot be deduced. But since imagination is traditionally conceived of as a capacity to *intentionally* re-present absent objects in *concrete (intuitive)* form, an appeal to imagination plausibly motivates the Kantian argument that a fundamental application of human understanding to human sensibility must underlie possible experience. On my reading, Kant simply discovers that the human capacity of imagination is a guise that the understanding (as a capacity of intentional thought) may assume in its *successive* (because *discursive*) combination/unification of given intuition(s), where this action turns the mere form of intuition into a formal intuition, and, on this basis, relates mere appearances to possible phenomena of nature they may represent.

In the B-Deduction, transcendental imagination is introduced in § 24. This section belongs to the second part of the proof (the first part is completed in § 20,

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ben a priori zu urtheilen, (d. i. das quid iuris) da sie einmal gegeben sind, vollkommen erklären können."

see B 144).<sup>48</sup> Up to § 20, Kant goes through the entire argument on an abstract level. He attempts, in particular, to abstract from the fact that the *specifically human* forms of sensible intuition are space and time. At the outset of § 24, Kant therefore reminds the reader that thus far, he had appealed to combination, the *sole* kind of representation that humans spontaneously produce (see B 130), as a purely intellectual representation (see B 150). For he had abstracted from the *specific* forms of sensible intuition to which the categories, “in” which combination is thought or represented, are related (see *ibid.*). “Figurative synthesis” of transcendental imagination is then defined as a *combination* of a manifold of *specifically human*, spatiotemporal intuition. It too is a “synthesis of intuitions in accordance with the categories” [*Synthesis der Anschauungen, den Kategorien gemäß*] (B 152), and as already noted above, it is what Kant calls “an effect of the understanding on sensibility and its first application (and at the same time the ground of all others) to objects of the intuition that is possible for us [humans]” [*eine Wirkung des Verstandes auf die Sinnlichkeit und die erste Anwendung desselben (zugleich der Grund aller übrigen) auf Gegenstände der uns möglichen Anschauung*] (*ibid.*).

To clarify Kant’s *general* concept of “combination,” recall that this term is defined as the representation of the synthetic unity of a manifold. It “carries with it” [*führt bei sich*] not merely the concepts of synthesis and of a manifold, but also, and most fundamentally, a representation of unity (see B 130 f.). The representation of unity Kant here appeals to is the unity of apperception as the fundamental principle of human understanding (see B 130 ff.). A substantial step of the argument accomplished in the first part of the B-Deduction is thus an argument to the conclusion that transcendental self-consciousness is the first principle of all action of combination.<sup>49</sup> This must be read together with the following key passage from the “Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories”:

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**48** Henrich, Dieter: “The Proof-structure of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction”, in: *Review of Metaphysics* 22, 1969, 650–659, has received much attention for discussing the division of the B-Deduction into two related parts, even though he was not the first one to notice this structure (Hiltscher 1993, 427, names several predecessors). For a detailed discussion of the reception of Henrich’s article in the current Kant literature see Baumann, Peter: “Kants transzendente Deduktion der reinen Verstandesbegriffe (B). Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht”, in: *Kant-Studien* 3/4, 1991, 329–348, 436–455, and *Kant-Studien* 1/2, 1992, 60–83, 185–207.

**49** I touch on a relevant point of this step in my discussion of B 137 f below. It is beyond the scope of the paper to say more about the general argument from self-consciousness in the proof.

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 understanding. (KrV, A 79/B 104 f)<sup>50</sup>

This passage states in a nutshell that the categories just are general expressions of the unity of a synthesis of different representations in an intuition. If we read this together with B 131, the categories just are general, i. e., *conceptual* expressions or abstract re-presentations of an action of combination. Moreover, according to B 131, “the same function” that gives both unity to different concepts in judgments and to different representations contained in an intuition, is transcendental apperception as the fundamental principle of all combination.

But what are the “different representations in an intuition” to the synthesis of which the category confers unity, according to the famous passage at A 79/B 104 f.? We must ask this question because in §§ 20 and 21, at the turn to the second proof step, Kant is again concerned with the claim that in *One* intuition [*Eine Anschauung*] (see B 143), *many* representations (synonymously a “manifold” of representations “given in” an intuition [*das Mannigfaltige in einer sinnlichen Anschauung Gegebene*], or “the manifold in a given intuition” [*das Mannigfaltige in einer gegebenen Anschauung*]) are unified. The much discussed capitalization of the word “One” in these sections is intended to capture the sense of “unity [*Einheit*],” so that *One* intuition is a unified intuition, i. e., one that presupposes the categories, and hence stands under the unity of transcendental apperception. As Henrich has noticed correctly, the mere singularity [*Einzelheit*] of intuition is distinct and entirely independent of this *oneness* or unity intended here. For any intuition as such is a singular representation, but not every intuition is, simply in virtue of being an intuition, a unity that depends upon human understanding.<sup>51</sup> The result of earlier sections of this paper, that mere sensible appearances are distinct from a unified intuition, and hence from a possible phenomenon, thus provides us with a basis to understand the claim at issue in §§ 20 and 21: The expression “the manifold of intuition” denotes many undistinguished sensible appearances (mere sensible intuitions) that are as such nothing for us. Their combination by the understanding first produces a unified intuition that stands under transcendental self-consciousness.

<sup>50</sup> “Dieselbe Function, welche den verschiedenen Vorstellungen in einem Urtheile Einheit giebt, die giebt auch der bloßen Synthesis verschiedener Vorstellungen in einer Anschauung Einheit, welche, allgemein ausgedrückt, der reine Verstandesbegriff heißt.”

<sup>51</sup> See Henrich 1969, 645. As independent of the unity [*Einheit*] of an intuition that stands under transcendental apperception, Henrich here glosses the mere singularity [*Einzelheit*] of intuition as “the distinctness of any arbitrary intuition as opposed to others” (ibid.).

For the purpose of illustrating this, Kant appeals to the fact that time and space are singular intuitions, and that all possible parts of them in turn are (singular) intuitions, even in the first, allegedly abstract proof step of the Deduction (see in particular KrV, B 136n1 and B 137f). The term “a manifold of intuition” here too denotes an indeterminate set of many (partial) intuitions. The relevant activity of combination which unified intuition presupposes is accordingly not, as e.g. in concept formation, the activity of combining different representations (whether intuitions or concepts) “under” a “common” and more general representation (see A 68/B 93). Rather, it is the lawful combination of many singular (not yet unified) intuitions *within* a singular *and* unified intuition. It is a horizontal, mereological combination of indefinitely many given intuitions into a unified (whole of) *One* intuition.

To see that this is the job that Kant attributes to transcendental imagination, we must note another central but often neglected terminological issue. Kant tends to identify “combination” [*Verbindung*] with an action of “determination” [*Bestimmung*] of sensible intuition “in accordance with synthetic unity of apperception.” Earlier passages of the first proof step already formulate the argument in terms of determination instead of formulating it in terms of combination (see KrV, B 138; B 142; B 143; B 147). Likewise, the argument expounded at the outset of § 24 is mainly an explication of a spontaneous action of combination in terms of a determination of the manifold of given sensible intuitions (in short but synonymously, a “determination of sensibility a priori” or a “determination of the form of sense,” see B 150 ff), for the specific case where the form of intuition is spatiotemporal. The subsequent part of § 24 turns on this identification of “determination” and “combination:”

That which **determines** the inner sense is the understanding and its original faculty of **combining** the manifold of intuition, i. e., of bringing it under apperception [...]. Now since in us humans the understanding is not itself a faculty of intuitions, and [...] cannot as it were **combine** the manifold of *its own* intuition, [...] its synthesis [...] is nothing other than the unity of the action [...] through which it is capable of itself **determining** sensibility internally with regard to the manifold that may be given to it [...] [I]nner sense, on the contrary, 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 the imagination [...], which I have named the figurative synthesis. (KrV, B 153f., bold emphases mine)<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> “Das, was den inneren Sinn **bestimmt**, ist der Verstand und dessen ursprüngliches Vermögen das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung zu **verbinden**, d. i. unter eine Apperception [...] zu bringen. Weil nun der Verstand in uns Menschen selbst kein Vermögen der Anschauungen ist [...] und gleichsam das Mannigfaltige seiner eigenen Anschauung zu **verbinden** [daher nicht fähig

The passage merits close reading. First, it says that since human understanding is not a capacity of intuition, it cannot combine the manifold of “its own,” i. e., its self-produced intuition. Rather, through “the unity of its action” it can only combine or determine the many intuitions given in the “mere form of intuition” as yet without combination. This mere form of sensible intuition, without combination of the manifold of partial intuitions contained in it, does not yet contain any determinate intuition. For a determinate intuition is an intuition whose manifold is combined. Therefore, a determinate intuition is an intuition that stands a priori under transcendental apperception and so under the categories. Now since Kant has already introduced transcendental imagination as the capacity executing our understanding's action of combination on human sensibility, it is clear from the context that what is said here about human understanding applies to transcendental imagination. The passage therefore concludes that combination or determination of human sensible intuition “is possible only **through the consciousness of the determination of the manifold** through the transcendental action of the imagination [...], which I have named the figurative synthesis.”

Two results of earlier sections of this paper can now be fully confirmed. First, mere sensible and (as yet) undetermined intuitions are no objects for the cognizing subject, for they first “become” objects “for” an I through the figurative action of their combination/determination. Second, an undetermined intuition is not distinct from its sensible and originally “undetermined object.” It is only if we determine our intuitions that we may distinguish them from objects they represent. For as soon as our understanding (cum transcendental imagination) relates to a given sensible intuition, it does not only determine the sensible intuition, but also, at the same time, the object that any intuition immediately contains. The application of understanding to sensibility in this way first introduces the difference between an representation and its object or referent, which is a difference only for the human consciousness (for human discursive understanding). This double action of determination – both determination of representation and of object of representation – executed by transcendental imagination, is illustrated in two different passages of the Deduction by appeal to the action of imagina-

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ist], so ist seine Synthesis, wenn er für sich allein betrachtet wird, nichts anders als die Einheit der Handlung [...] durch die er [...] selbst die Sinnlichkeit innerlich in Ansehung des Mannigfaltigen, was der Form ihrer Anschauung nach ihm gegeben werden mag, zu **bestimmen** vermögend ist. [...] [D]er innere Sinn [enthält] die bloße Form der Anschauung, aber ohne **Verbindung** des Mannigfaltigen in derselben, mithin noch gar keine **bestimmte** Anschauung [...], welche nur durch das Bewußtsein der **Bestimmung** desselben durch die transscendentale Handlung der Einbildungskraft [...], welche ich die figürliche Synthesis genannt habe, möglich ist.”

tively drawing a line (see KrV, B 137 f; B 154 f). In the first of these passages, Kant writes:

[T]he mere form of outer sensible intuition, space is not yet cognition at all; it only gives the manifold of intuition a priori for a possible cognition. But in order to cognize something in space, e. g., a line, I must *draw* it, and thus synthetically bring about **a determinate combination of the given manifold**, so that the unity of this action is at the same time the unity of consciousness (in the concept of a line), **and thereby is an object (a determinate space) first cognized**. The synthetic unity of consciousness is therefore [...] not merely something I [...] need in order to cognize an object but rather **something under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me**. (KrV, B 137 f, bold emphases mine)<sup>53</sup>

This passage says that intuitions first become an object for an I – intuitions that immediately give objects are themselves made the mediate object of the capacity of concepts – through transcendental apperception, i. e., through “determinate combination.” Combination, which is at the same time a determination, of a manifold given in the mere form of intuition, in this way first produces a determinate object, e. g. a determinate space (cf. B 202 f). The argument is here held on a very general level, concerning human sensible intuition in general, so as to apply both to empirical intuition and to the pure forms of intuition itself, which are objects for a subject only as “formal intuitions” (B 161n1). As stated in the first sentence of the above-quoted passage, “the mere form of outer sensible intuition, space, is not yet cognition at all.” This mere form of intuition is the a priori form of mere appearances. The example of the cognition of a line in space, about which Kant then states with emphasis that it must be *drawn* in a given space, thus describes the paradigm of the action of combination with respect to *human* intuition, specifically – but independently of whether the intuition in question is pure or empirical. It is the paradigm of the action that turns the merely subjective form of intuition into a general and formal intuition of space and time (as used in geometry), and also the paradigm of the action that turns dispersed appearances into unified and determined intuitions. Such unified and determined intuitions may

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53 “So ist die bloße Form der äußeren sinnlichen Anschauung, der Raum, noch gar keine Erkenntniß; er giebt nur das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung a priori zu einem möglichen Erkenntniß. Um aber irgend etwas im Raume zu erkennen, z. B. eine Linie, muß ich sie ziehen und also **eine bestimmte Verbindung des gegebenen Mannigfaltigen** synthetisch zu Stande bringen, so daß die Einheit dieser Handlung zugleich die Einheit des Bewußtseins (im Begriffe einer Linie) ist, und **dadurch allererst ein Object (ein bestimmter Raum) erkannt wird**. Die synthetische Einheit des Bewußtseins ist also eine objective Bedingung aller Erkenntniß, nicht deren ich bloß selbst bedarf, um ein Object zu erkennen, sondern **unter der jede Anschauung stehen muß, um für mich Object zu werden**.”

in this way be related to, which for Kant is the same as to say: may *be cognized or determined as* representations of, possible objects of experience. It is here that we encounter a further complication of the representation-object relation in Kant that I already mentioned in an earlier section of this paper: A phenomenon of nature, on this reading, is the common, determinate referent of many actual and possible human intuitions, including possible intuitions in other human subjects. It is determined as the common object of several representations that have themselves, as actual and possible intuitions, been made the first-order objects of a discursive understanding. The object of experience is thus the understanding's second-order object and is in this way distinguished from the content of some intuition that happens to inhere in some sensible subject.

Reinhard Hiltcher has offered an in-depth discussion of this doubling, as a systematic distinction that is introduced in any application of human understanding to human sensibility, between the unity of an intuition and the (unity of an) object of cognition.<sup>54</sup> Importantly, Hiltcher's proposal concerning this difference also includes a positive account of the second proof-step's contribution to the successful achievement of the Deduction's overall goal. According to Hiltcher, this is Kant's argument: The unified sensible intuition of an object, which is always bound to the contingent bodily perspective of the sensible subject, is grounded, through transcendental imagination, in the unity of a *thought* object<sup>55</sup> of experience – and thus depends upon understanding as a capacity of objectively valid judgment. In this way, Hiltcher can show that the complete functions of judgment, and so the complete system of pure concepts, constitute *both* the unity of the object of experience *and* the relation of a sensible (unified) intuition to this object, even though the mere unity of the intuition in itself does not require all categories.<sup>56</sup> Now this is obviously much more than I have set out to do in this last section, and touches on questions that go beyond the said aims of this paper as

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54 This is the terminology in Hiltcher, 2011. Hiltcher 1993, 429f, instead speaks about the “sense of the determinable object given in intuition” as both identical and different from the “sense of the object that is thought and cognized in judgment” [“*Der Sinn des in der Anschauung gegebenen bestimmbaren Gegenstandes und der Sinn des im Urteil gedachten und erkannten Gegenstandes muss zwar **einerseits derselbe sein, andererseits aber müssen beide Sinne auch differieren.***”]

55 Compare esp. Hiltcher 2011, 136 and 140–145. Hiltcher 2011, 140 writes: “Der eigentliche objektive Gegenstand ist für Kant ein solcher, der im Urteil gültig oder ungültig bestimmt werden kann. Der eigentliche Gegenstand ist der im Urteil geltungsdifferent **gedachte** Gegenstand der Anschauung. Geltungsdifferentes Denken des objektiven Gegenstandes der Anschauung bedeutet – paradox gewendet – nichts anderes, als den Gegenstand im Urteil als einen solchen zu bestimmen, der **gerade nicht** in seiner Anschauung aufgeht.”

56 See esp. Hiltcher 2011, 137, 156.

a whole.<sup>57</sup> For the purposes of my more general proposal here – to show against a prototypical “intellectualist” reading that Kant conceives of the action of transcendental imagination as an originally *successive* movement in “the mere form of outer sensible intuition (space)” – we need not go further into the difficult issues of how the overarching relation between understanding as the capacity of *objectively valid judgment* (and hence as the capacity to *determine* objects) and sensible object-giving intuition is spelled out in the B-Deduction’s second-proof step (via transcendental imagination). Nevertheless, since Hiltscher’s work addresses this question in detail, thus providing (more than Henrich and others after him have done) a substantial positive account of distinct steps of the B-Deduction without falling prone to either an empiricist or intellectualist reading in my sense, it can serve as a further reference here.

I now return to the general question about the role of transcendental imagination in the Deduction vis-à-vis Kant’s modest account of the proof in his Herz letter, assuming a certain inexplicable harmony between sensibility and human understanding. Consider that human imagination can be intentionally steered. For example, while I cannot (or only in very limited ways) control what I sensibly perceive, I can intend to imagine, and succeed in intentionally imagining objects, e. g. the shape of a house. So there is good sense to be made of the idea that imagination just is that very capacity of re-producing concrete sensible representations in accordance with intentional thought (with “unity of transcendental apperception,” in Kant’s terminology). Kant therefore argues at B 137f that while the action of drawing a determinate line in space is successive, it is nevertheless also a unity. As an action of combination, it presupposes a consciousness or a concept of its unity, so that every moment of the action is held together in consciousness as belonging to a single unified act. Only in this way is it possible that I represent each segment of the line as belonging to the same identical, determinate line. As Kant explains: “the unity of this action is at the same time the unity of consciousness (in the concept of a line).” (*Synthesis speciosa* in the B-Deduction

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<sup>57</sup> Recall my overall aim in this paper: I have offered a plausible account of Kant’s appeal to Leibniz in his 1789 proof summary addressed to Herz, with a view to showing that it offers a key to the Deduction’s compatibility with the fundamental independency of sensible intuition from human understanding. I have argued that this is possible without falling back into what I have called an “empiricist” reading of Kant. With regard to this overall argument of the paper, the aim of this last section is merely to show that the role of transcendental imagination is *not* what it is on an “intellectualist” reading of the Deduction (notably on Longuenesse’s, Friedman’s and Messina’s influential view), and that it is nevertheless compatible *both* with a universal validity of the categories for all possible objects of nature *and* with the givenness of a specifically human form of sensible intuition (space and time), and thus the givenness of appearances in this form, independently of the understanding.

thus supposedly integrates all three components of the so-called “three-fold synthesis” in the A-Deduction: It is a successive apprehension and reproduction of segments of time and space, and the a priori recognition of the unity of these reproduced segments through conceptual consciousness (cf. KrV, A 99–A 110).) As already illustrated in the first proof step at B 137 f, Kant's claim in § 24 therefore again is that we can cognize time or space themselves as determinate (geometrical) objects only by means of a successive and yet unified drawing-together or determination of their forms. This is the second passage that explains the double action of determination – both determination of representation and of the object of representation – as executed by transcendental imagination. Here, too, the figurative drawing action itself assumes the form of time (succession) in space (see B 154 f). And since a successive action that takes place in space is properly called a “movement” [*Bewegung*], Kant here also uses this term to denote the “figurative synthesis,” the action of combination that must be executed by a power of imagination (see B 155n1).

On this reading, when Kant explains at B 154 f. that “movement, as action of the subject” [*Bewegung als Handlung des Subjects*] first “produces the concept of succession” [*bringt den Begriff der Succession zuerst hervor*], he cannot mean that the thinking subject first produces time as the mere form of human sensibility. Rather, he must mean the following: the successive action of *synthesis speciosa* is the ground of the possibility of forming a conscious and general (thus conceptual) representation of succession. We may form this concept if we “attend merely to the action of the synthesis of the manifold through which we successively determine the inner sense, and thereby attend to the succession of this determination” [*bloß auf die Handlung der Synthesis des Mannigfaltigen, dadurch wir den inneren Sinn successiv bestimmen, und dadurch auf die Succession dieser Bestimmung in demselben, Acht haben*] (B 154). From this our own successive action, on which we thus reflect, we may then *abstract* a concept of time-as-succession. To say that we “attend merely to the action of the synthesis of the manifold through which we successively determine the inner sense, and thereby attend to the succession of this determination,” is for Kant here the same as to say that we “attend solely to the action with which we determine the inner sense in accordance with its form [*bloß auf die Handlung Acht haben, dadurch wir den inneren Sinn seiner Form gemäß bestimmen*]” (B 155). For to determine inner sense in accordance with its form just means to determine it successively.

It should be clear from the above that it would be wrong to charge Kant with a problem of infinite regress here. Firstly, Kant does not need to explain how a finite and successive “movement” of human imagination could possibly generate infinite time and space. For Kant does not argue that understanding-cum-imagination produces the infinite and continuous forms of time and space, he simply

presupposes them as given. They are forms of which we can determinately re-present and hence cognize only definitely limited parts. But Kant also need not worry about problems such as how an infinite manifold of mereological representations could possibly be synthesized by a movement of the imagination that is itself successive and thus finite. For as we saw in the last section, Kant holds it to be impossible for us to explain why our forms of sensible intuition conform to unification by our understanding, in other words, how it is that self-consciousness, in the guise of imagination, can non-regressively and successfully combine (indefinitely many parts of) the given infinite forms of space and time. His argument in § 24 is also much more modest than that. It introduces transcendental imagination merely as the *specific* form our discursive understanding must assume in its first application to our sensibility (namely, the form of a successive movement through space), and it simply expounds *in concreto* the inner action from which we first abstract our concepts of time and space.

The notorious footnote in § 26, often cited in support of a reading along the lines of Maimon, Longuenesse, or the more recent Friedman, reiterates the expressions explained at B 154 f, and, as I propose, it provides in fact additional support for the alternative interpretation of transcendental imagination offered in this paper. Kant's well-known argument in § 26 is that the unity conferred by the understanding to the formal intuition of space and time unifies at the same time any object that could possibly be represented *in* the space and time so (consciously) intuited. Here, then, is the sentence of § 26 to which Kant adds the famous footnote:

But space and time are represented not merely as *forms* of sensible intuition, but also as *intuitions* themselves (which contain a manifold), and thus with the determination of the *unity* of this manifold in them *a priori* (see the transcendental Aesthetic). (KrV, B 161)<sup>58</sup>

If we leave aside for a moment the reference to the Transcendental Aesthetic, the substantial content of what Kant is saying here conforms very well with the reading I propose: Space and time are not merely the forms of sensible intuition (in any sensible intuition, they are immediately and necessarily “represented,” namely as the forms of this sensible intuition), they are also represented “as intuitions themselves.” That is to say, they are also the intentional object of thought or reflective consciousness, or in other words, they are pure (forms of) intuitions

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<sup>58</sup> “Aber Raum und Zeit sind nicht bloß als Formen der sinnlichen Anschauung, sondern als Anschauungen selbst (die ein Mannigfaltiges enthalten), also mit der Bestimmung der Einheit dieses Mannigfaltigen in ihnen *a priori* vorgestellt (siehe transsc. Ästhet.).”

re-presented as a priori intuitions. To further explain this difficult distinction, and its somewhat unclear formulation, Kant adds in the note, firstly, this:

Space, represented as *object* (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the *comprehension* [*Zusammenfassung*, literally the *grasping-together* or *drawing-together*] 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 representation. (KrV, B 161n1)<sup>59</sup>

This, to the reader, should be a mere iteration of results already established above. The “mere form of intuition” is distinguished from the unified “formal intuition,” which is nothing but the form of intuition figuratively described (and thereby determined) by the imagination.<sup>60</sup> The second half of the footnote is somewhat more difficult, since it aims to explain the reference to the Transcendental Aesthetic:

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. For since through it (as the understanding determines sensibility) space or time are as intuitions first *given*, the unity of this a priori intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (§ 24). (ibid.)<sup>61</sup>

Since Kant here appeals back to § 24, it is clear that he intends to remind the reader of the just introduced action of transcendental imagination as the action of understanding's determining sensibility, which “precedes” all concepts insofar as it constitutes the “first application” of our discursive understanding to our sensible intuition and “the ground of all others,” e. g., the ground of the possibility of

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<sup>59</sup> “Der Raum, als Gegenstand vorgestellt (wie man es wirklich in der Geometrie bedarf), enthält mehr als bloße Form der Anschauung, nämlich Zusammenfassung des mannigfaltigen nach der Form der Sinnlichkeit Gegebenen in eine anschauliche Vorstellung, so daß die Form der Anschauung bloß Mannigfaltiges, die formale Anschauung aber Einheit der Vorstellung giebt.”

<sup>60</sup> Compare Shabel's recent work for this reading. Shabel argues that metaphysical space of the Aesthetic is the mere “form of intuition” in the footnote, that geometrical space is a “formal intuition,” and that unity or unification of space is produced only in the latter (see Shabel 2010, 106n33).

<sup>61</sup> “Diese Einheit hatte ich in der Ästhetik bloß zur Sinnlichkeit gezählt, um nur zu bemerken, daß sie vor allem Begriffe vorhergehe, ob sie zwar eine Synthesis, die nicht den Sinnen angehört, durch welche aber alle Begriffe von Raum und Zeit zuerst möglich werden, voraussetzt. Denn da durch sie (indem der Verstand die Sinnlichkeit bestimmt) der Raum oder die Zeit als Anschauungen zuerst gegeben werden, so gehört die Einheit dieser Anschauung a priori zum Raume und der Zeit und nicht zum Begriffe des Verstandes (§ 24).”

an explicit conceptualization of our intuition. As seen above, § 24 explains how the concepts of space and time are first abstracted from the successive combination of given indeterminate intuition through a drawing movement of the imagination. It is this action of transcendental imagination that Kant refers to in the note with the “synthesis that does not belong to the senses, but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible.” When Kant states that “the unity of this a priori intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding,” we should thus understand him to be saying that the unity in question is of course a *synthetic* and figurative unity as “belongs to” (or may be conferred to) a singular representation, i.e., a unity of a concrete-intuitive whole, not the abstract unity of a general concept which orders other (lower) concepts analytically “under” itself. The reference to the Transcendental Aesthetic is important because while Kant there intended to establish, *inter alia*, precisely this latter distinction between singular intuition and discursive concept, he did in his analysis of human intuition of course appeal to intuitions that are objects “for an I,” namely the objects of philosophical or transcendental-phenomenological analysis. Thus he already did appeal to determinate intuitions (to objects of possible concepts) in the Aesthetic, which do presuppose transcendental imagination and so transcendental apperception, but he could not yet make that explicit in the Aesthetic, since the fundamental unifying action of transcendental imagination is only explained in later sections of the *Critique*. All of this is perfectly compatible with my reading, and confirms a consistent use of various terminology across passages as I read them. The only part of the footnote that may seem to contradict me is the expression that through the determination of sensibility by the understanding, i.e., through transcendental imagination, “space or time are as intuitions first given.” This could seem to confirm the Maimon-reading, which holds that transcendental imagination first produces the very form of human intuition as such. I have two responses to this objection. First, my reading does not depend on an analysis of Kant’s use of the word “given” or “givenness” – it is compatible with my reading that not all givenness of representations must be sensible (i.e., received), but that understanding, through an action of combination, may also spontaneously “give” representations to itself. Second, when Kant says space and time are “as intuitions” first given through transcendental imagination, I take him to be saying that they are first determinately re-presented as unified objects of transcendental consciousness *to an understanding*. The sentence does not require a reading on which the intuitive forms of human sensibility as such are spontaneously produced by our understanding (or understanding-cum-imagination).

To summarize my interpretation, Kant introduces a transcendental imagination in his Deduction in order to specify *in concreto* (or: for concrete objects of pos-

sible perception) the evidently successful unification of given sensible intuition by a discursive understanding such as ours. Since the proof presupposes the intuitive forms of *specifically human* sensibility in which all appearances are given, it must also assume an active role of imagination in all our experience. It must assume an active involvement in experience of a power to determine the intuitive forms of human receptivity as formal intuitions, and to figuratively combine mere appearances originally received in the intuitive forms of human sensibility into (determinate representations of) possible phenomena of nature. It makes sense to say that imagination is precisely the capacity of the kind to which this job can be attributed. Nevertheless, the overall proof structure of the Deduction does not need to appeal to transcendental imagination. For the argument can be summarized on a general level without concrete illustration of the “first” application of human understanding to the a priori form of intuition. As shown above, Kant’s task is not to fully explain the agreement of forms of intuition with functions of unity of the understanding. This agreement is assumed as an ultimately inexplicable factum, and transcendental imagination is on this picture not the ultimate *explanans* of why, objectively, the human form of sensibility agrees with transcendental apperception, let alone with specific categorial forms of thought.

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