

Chapter Four Apperceptive Synthesis

1. Introduction

In Chapter Three I presented textual evidence for ascribing to Kant the view that spontaneity can be exercised in two distinct kinds of ways. One of these is judgment. The other is what I call sensible synthesis. A judgment, for Kant, is a combination of concepts. By contrast, sensible synthesis is distinct from judgment in that it is not a combination of concepts. Rather, sensible synthesis is an act of combining a sensible manifold.

Distinguishing judgment and sensible synthesis in this way, while holding that both are exercises of spontaneity, makes it possible to avoid inconsistency in ascribing to Kant the following three claims, each of which he clearly seems to be committed to:

- (1) Intuitions are heterogeneous to concepts.
- (2) Intuitions depend on sensible synthesis.
- (3) Sensible synthesis is an act of spontaneity.

If one denies that sensible synthesis is distinct in kind from judgment, one is forced to deny either (1) or (3). That is, one is forced either to deny that intuitions are heterogeneous from concepts or to accept that sensible synthesis is not spontaneous.¹ In Chapter Three I argued that there are both textual and philosophical grounds that militate against either of these options. As regards (1), the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding is clearly one of Kant's most fundamental commitments. (3), on the other hand, is needed to vindicate the claim that an

¹ Alternatively, one might distinguish between two kinds of spontaneity, sensible spontaneity and intellectual spontaneity; see, for instance, Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, for an example of such a view. However, Kant's insistence that sensibility is receptive makes this a very unattractive option.

intuition is the singular representation of an object. As I argue in Chapter Three, this claim entails that an intuition must non-accidentally exhibit the unity that is thought in the categories. And in Kant's mind, the only way to account for this is to conceive of the unity of an intuition as being due to an act of spontaneity.

There is good reason, then, to maintain all of (1)-(3). If this requires us to accept what in Chapter Three I called a Two Species View of the Exercise of Spontaneity, this may be thought to constitute a powerful recommendation of such a view. However, it is no accident that such a view has not only not found much support in the literature, but that its very possibility has scarcely been recognized. The reason is that Kant seems to treat '(finite) spontaneity,' 'understanding,' and 'capacity to judge' as coextensive terms. And this seems to entail that the only possible exercise of spontaneity is in judgment.

Some commentators have sought to address the problem by attributing sensible synthesis to the imagination, which they take to be a distinct capacity from understanding, yet one that is also capable of a spontaneous act. However, as I argued in the Introduction, this move fails to address the problem of accounting of the objective unity of an intuition. If this unity, in order to count as genuinely objective, must be the unity that is thought in the categories, and if the categories have their origin in the understanding (as Kant undoubtedly holds), then introducing an additional capacity will be of no help.² What we need to understand is how the act of sensible synthesis can be distinct from judgment and yet impart to intuition the very unity that is thought in the pure concepts of the understanding.

² On the contrary, this strategy runs into a version of the "preformation system" objection that Kant articulates in §27 of the B-Deduction. The problem with any preformation system is that it "gives the skeptic what he most desires" (B168). See Chapter Three, §8, for discussion.

The chief advantage of the Two Species View is that it promises to make this intelligible. According to this view, the act that accounts for the unity of an intuition is an act of the very capacity in which the categories have their origin; viz., the understanding. However, the Two Species View faces a significant obstacle in Kant's apparent identification, which I have already mentioned, of 'spontaneity', 'understanding' and 'capacity to judge.' If spontaneity *is* a capacity for judgment, then what basis could there be for attributing to it an act that is distinct from judgment? In the Introduction I labeled this problem the Unity Problem: assuming that it is right to attribute to the understanding two distinct acts, we need an account that explains why these should be regarded as acts of the same capacity. The task of the present chapter is to put into place a major component of a solution to this problem.

I shall argue that Kant's identification of 'understanding' and 'capacity to judge' is merely apparent. While judgment is certainly the paradigmatic exercise of the understanding, Kant's most fundamental characterization of the understanding leaves room for a kind of exercise that is distinct from judgment. This characterization is given in terms of the notion of apperception. Over the course of this chapter and the next, I shall make the case that the doctrine of apperception provides us with a characterization of the understanding that allows us to see judgment and sensible synthesis as acts of the same capacity, and yet distinct in structure. In the present chapter I present an interpretation of some central aspects of the doctrine of apperception, which allows us to give a characterization of the understanding that does not rely on the notion of judgment. Rather, the understanding will be characterized as a capacity for apperceptive synthesis.

For this strategy to work it must be possible to understand both judgment and sensible synthesis as different kinds of apperceptive synthesis. To make the case for judgment will be part of the task of this chapter. To make the corresponding case for sensible synthesis will be the task of Chapter Five.

Before I give an overview of the argument of this chapter, let me comment on a matter of terminology. In a number of places – most notably in the second half of the B-Deduction – Kant speaks of the capacity for sensible synthesis as the productive imagination.³ He is careful to point out that, like the understanding, this capacity is spontaneous; at the same time, its act is clearly distinct from judgment.⁴ Although Kant’s use of terminology is not always consistent – at B153 the productive imagination is said to be the understanding “under the designation of [...] imagination,” while at B162n understanding and imagination are said to be two different exercises of spontaneity – it is clear what the conceptual problem is that the notion of the

³ Cf. B151-4, B162n.

⁴ The central passage occurs at B151f:

Imagination is the capacity of representing an object in intuition even when it is not itself present. Now since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination [...] belongs to sensibility. But insofar as its synthesis is still an exercise of spontaneity, which is determining and not, like sense, merely determinable, [...] the imagination is to that extent a capacity for determining sensibility a priori; and its synthesis of intuitions, in accordance with the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of imagination. This synthesis is an action of the understanding on sensibility [...]. As figurative, it is distinguished from the intellectual synthesis, which is carried out by the understanding alone, without the aid of the imagination.

(Einbildungskraft ist das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen. Da nun alle unsere Anschauung sinnlich ist, so gehört die Einbildungskraft [...] zur Sinnlichkeit; so fern aber doch ihre Synthesis eine Ausübung der Spontaneität ist, welche bestimmend, und nicht, wie der Sinn, bloß bestimmbar ist [...], so ist die Einbildungskraft so fern ein Vermögen, die Sinnlichkeit a priori zu bestimmen, und ihre Synthesis der Anschauungen, den Kategorien gemäß, muß die transzendente Synthesis der Einbildungskraft sein, welches eine Wirkung des Verstandes auf die Sinnlichkeit [...] ist. Sie ist, als figürlich, von der intellektuellen Synthesis ohne alle Einbildungskraft bloß durch den Verstand unterschieden).

productive imagination confronts us with. It is, of course, the Unity Problem, that is, the problem presented by the idea that the spontaneous stem of the cognitive capacity admits of two distinct acts, one being judgment, the other sensible synthesis. Whether we restrict the term ‘understanding’ to the exercise of spontaneity in judgment or use it to designate the spontaneous capacity as a whole (so that the productive imagination is the understanding under a different “designation”) is merely a matter of terminology. The challenge is to give an account of spontaneity that makes it intelligible how a single capacity can admit of two different kinds of exercise. Since our primary hold on the spontaneous stem of the cognitive capacity is through the understanding, construed as the capacity to judge, the challenge can equally be formulated by saying that we need to comprehend how the capacity that accounts for judgment can also be responsible for an act that is distinct from judgment. Either way, what we need is an account of the genus of which judgment and sensible synthesis can both be seen to be species.

I shall proceed as follows. I begin by justifying the exegetical strategy of looking to the doctrine of apperception for an account of the common genus (§§2-3). Next, I approach this doctrine by noting two formal characteristics of apperception (§4). Analyzing each of these two characteristics (in §§5 and 6, respectively) puts me in a position to argue that the genus we are looking for should be characterized as the capacity for apperceptive synthesis (§7). Accordingly, I maintain that this is the most fundamental characterization Kant gives of spontaneity. Recognizing this will enable us to solve the Unity Problem. I end by showing how judgment can be understood as a species of apperceptive synthesis (§8). As I said above, the parallel case for sensible synthesis will be made in Chapter Five.

2. The Exegetical Strategy

I want to begin by laying out the exegetical strategy I am going to pursue in making the case that the most fundamental characterization of the understanding is as a capacity for apperceptive synthesis. Since I discussed this strategy at some length in the Introduction, I will limit myself to a more cursory treatment here.⁵

In the Introduction I argued that the opening of the Transcendental Dialectic contains a clue as to how the Unity Problem might be addressed. In this section Kant draws a distinction between two kinds of exercise of reason; what he calls the logical and the real use of reason, respectively (*usus logicus* and *usus realis*).⁶ He also makes it clear that in this regard reason mirrors the understanding.⁷ The understanding, too, admits of a logical use as well as a real use. What is more, Kant is explicit that it must be possible – in accordance with the general logical principle that every division of a concept presupposes the concept that is being divided⁸ – to comprehend *usus logicus* and *usus realis* as two species of a common genus. In the Dialectic he goes on to provide a characterization of this genus and to make explicit its relation to the species it contains.⁹ Although there is no analogue to this characterization of the genus in the *Leitfaden-*

⁵ See Introduction, §5.

⁶ The distinction is introduced already in §5 of *De Mundi* (*Ak.* II, 393f).

⁷ This is unsurprising. In the final analysis, reason and understanding are but two different aspects of a single capacity, the intellect, or understanding in the wide sense (see e.g. A130f/B169). I cannot address this topic here. For helpful discussion see Brandt, *Die Urteilstafel*, and Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*.

⁸ For a statement of this principle see A290/B346: “But since all division of a concept presupposes a concept to be divided, a still higher one is required [...]” (Da aber alle Einteilung einen eingeteilten Begriff voraussetzt, so muß noch ein höherer [Begriff] angegeben werden [...]).

⁹ Reason in its logical use is the capacity for giving a certain kind of logical form to representations, regardless of whether the representations thus obtained are valid of objects. The logical form in question is syllogistic inference; so we can characterize reason in its logical use as the capacity for syllogistic inference. To say that reason has a real use is to say that this logical form, syllogistic inference, can be employed to cognize objects. But this implies that we can define a set of formal concepts which characterize their objects as being the objects represented by means of the logical form of a syllogism. This is what an Idea of Reason is. The Ideas of Reason are formal concepts in the exact same sense as the categories of the understanding. Just as the latter represent their objects as being possible contents of judgment, so the former represent their objects as being possible contents of syllogistic inference (see Chapter

chapter of the Transcendental Analytic, where the parallel discussion of the understanding occurs, it is clear that the logical requirement still holds.¹⁰ Moreover, I will argue that in the case of the understanding Kant does provide a characterization of the genus as well. While this characterization is not given in the *Leitfaden*, and Kant is not very explicit about this aspect of his position, there are clear indications that this is his view. Or so I shall argue.

Before I explain what I take the distinction between the logical and the real use of the understanding to be, I would like to make explicit exactly how I intend to use this distinction for my purposes. Obviously, this distinction exhibits the same formal structure – two species of a common genus – as the distinction between judgment and sensible synthesis, according to the interpretation to be developed here. This makes it tempting to think that these two sets of distinctions are really only two different sets of terms for the same thing. In other words, it is tempting to think that the distinction between logical use and real use maps onto the distinction between judgment and sensible synthesis. But this would be a mistake. The situation is slightly more complicated. While it does not warrant extensive discussion, it will be useful for our purposes to sketch briefly how the two sets of distinctions are related.

Two for discussion of this conception of a formal concept). Now, what does it mean to say that syllogistic inference is a mode of knowledge, or cognition? It means that the conclusion of a syllogism is known to be true in virtue of the fact that it follows from the premises. Obviously, this requires that the premises are themselves known to be true. And if the knowledge at issue is indeed due to reason, this requires that the premises must be known to be true in the same manner, that is, as conclusions of other syllogisms. This gets us the idea of a chain of syllogisms, an idea that plays a crucial role in Kant's derivation of the Ideas of Reason. For it is Kant's view that for reason to be itself a capacity for knowledge is for there to be a kind of object that is represented by a complete (possibly infinite) chain of syllogistic inferences; a chain that reaches all the way to what Kant calls "the unconditioned" (A322/B379). An object of this sort is the content of an Idea of Reason.

¹⁰ As I point out in the Introduction, Kant provides an explanation of why the Dialectic does, while the Analytic does not, give a characterization of the genus. In each case, the context of the discussion is the attempt to derive the forms of *usus realis* from the forms of *usus logicus* – the latter serving as the "guiding thread" (*Leitfaden*) for the former. In the case of the understanding this derivation is straightforward, Kant claims; the forms of its real use can be gleaned from the forms of its logical use without any intermediate steps. In the case of reason, on the other hand, the derivation is more complicated. Kant claims that one must first move from the forms of its logical use to the characterization of the genus common to both logical and real use. Only then can the forms of reason's real use be identified. See Introduction, §5.

The distinction between logical and real use, then, does not stand in a one-to-one correlation to the distinction between judgment and sensible synthesis. In particular, I am *not* suggesting that the real use of the understanding consists in its exercise in sensible synthesis. Rather, the relation between the concepts of sensible synthesis, on the one hand, and *usus realis*, on the other, is properly expressed by the following conditional: If the understanding has a real use, then there must also be an exercise of the understanding in sensible synthesis. However, even if the real use of the understanding does not *consist in* sensible synthesis, the characterization of the genus that comprehends both logical and real use as its species *also* serves as a characterization of the genus that comprehends both judgment and sensible synthesis as its species. It is this point that I wish to extract from this discussion of the distinction between *usus logicus* and *usus realis*.

As I proposed in the Introduction, I take it that the distinction between logical and real use should be construed along the following lines. In its logical use the understanding is a capacity for giving a particular logical form to representations, viz. the form, ultimately, of judgment.¹¹ One can describe this form while abstracting from the question whether (and if so, under what conditions) representations bearing this form constitute cognition. This is what Pure General Logic does. However, if representations bearing this logical form do amount to cognition, then the understanding has a real use. We might say, then, that the real use of the understanding consists in the use of representations exhibiting the relevant logical form as

¹¹ Since I am concerned here with judgment as a kind of representation, as distinguished, say, from concepts or inferences or intuitions, each occurrence of the term ‘judgment’ in what follows should be taken as being about judgment in general, not about particular judgments.

cognitions. In other words, if judgment is a form of cognition, then the understanding has a real use.¹²

To say that judgment is a form of cognition is to say that judgment is objectively valid.¹³ But if judgment is objectively valid, then it is a logical form suitable for representing objects that can be given in intuition. However, for intuitions to give objects to the mind – and this means: to give to the mind the kind of thing that can also be represented in a judgment – intuitions must have the relevant kind of unity, viz. the unity of an object. According to my argument in Chapter Three, this in turn requires that the same capacity that is responsible for the unity of a judgment is also responsible for the unity of an intuition. The act that is responsible for the unity of an intuition is sensible synthesis. Therefore, the understanding has a real use only if it can be exercised in sensible synthesis.

So, while sensible synthesis is not identical to the real use of the understanding, these two concepts are closely related. If it is true that the understanding has a real use only if it can be exercised in sensible synthesis, then there is reason to think that the kind of characterization of the understanding that allows us to comprehend its real use will also allow us to comprehend how this capacity can be exercised in sensible synthesis. The task of this chapter is to argue that the doctrine of apperception contains such a characterization. I will therefore seek to extract from the doctrine of apperception a characterization of the understanding that allows us to see it as a capacity which has two distinct kinds of exercise: judgment and sensible synthesis.

¹² One might think that this is trivial. What else could be the function of judgment if not to be the form that cognition takes? But the fact that the corresponding form of reason – the syllogism – does not have a real use shows that the point is not trivial. More precisely, the corresponding form of reason has a real use only as a regulative ideal, not as a constitutive principle of cognition; cf. A642/B670ff.

¹³ It bears emphasizing that even a judgment that is false has objective validity, in the sense in which I use this term here. Compare the discussion of the distinction between Pure General Logic and Transcendental Logic in Chapter One.

3. Textual Evidence

In support of the exegetical strategy I have outlined, I now want to provide textual evidence for the claim that the doctrine of apperception contains a characterization of the understanding that functions as the genus of which both the capacity for judgment and the capacity for sensible synthesis can be seen to be species. This will set the stage for a more extended discussion of the notion of apperceptive synthesis in the remainder of this chapter. The idea is that the textual evidence I am about to present will lend some *prima facie* plausibility to the exegetical strategy of looking to the doctrine of apperception for the most fundamental characterization of the understanding. This being the goal, I will initially present the relevant passages without providing a detailed interpretation of them. In particular, the references to apperception in these passages will remain opaque for the time being. Explicating the relevant aspects of the doctrine of apperception will be the task of subsequent parts of this chapter. For now, what I want these passages to do is merely to motivate my exegetical strategy. In the remainder of the chapter, I will extract from the doctrine of apperception a characterization of the understanding as a capacity for apperceptive synthesis and argue that this characterization functions as the common genus for judgment and sensible synthesis.

The doctrine of apperception is first presented in the Transcendental Deduction.¹⁴ In the B-edition version, on which I will focus, it forms the central topic of the first half of the Deduction (§§15-20).¹⁵ In the following I will briefly discuss four passages from this part of the text. But before I turn to these passages I wish to comment on their location in Kant's argument.

¹⁴ It is also central, of course, to the Paralogisms. But the passages most pertinent to my topic are those in the Deduction.

¹⁵ The claim that the B-Deduction presents a single argument, which divides into two main steps (the first being presented in §§15-20, the second in §§22-26), was first made by Dieter Henrich in his classic paper "The Proof-

As I just said, the doctrine of apperception is first presented in the Transcendental Deduction. More specifically, it is presented in the first of two halves into which Kant famously divides this section in the revised second edition of the *Critique*. A brief reflection on Kant's characterization of how the two halves of the B-Deduction are related will lend support to my contention that the doctrine of apperception contains the fundamental characterization of the understanding.

In §21 Kant characterizes the two halves of the Deduction as differing with respect to the level of abstraction at which they are situated. The first half is situated at a higher level of abstraction than the second half. Specifically, the first half abstracts from the spatio-temporal form of human sensibility, while the second half does not.¹⁶ Using a term I introduced in Chapter Two we can say that the first half discusses the concept of a discursive understanding in general.¹⁷ This means that the claims presented here are intended to be valid of any discursive mind, whether or not its forms of sensibility are, like those of the human mind, space and time.¹⁸

Structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction" and is widely accepted today, though there is disagreement over how the two steps are related to each other. For a survey of the debate see Baumanns, "Kants transzendente Deduktion der reinen Verstandesbegriffe (B): Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht," parts I-IV.

¹⁶ At B144 Kant characterizes the first half as follows: "Thus in the above proposition a beginning is made of a deduction of the pure concepts of understanding; and in this deduction, since the categories have their source in the understanding alone, independently of sensibility, I must abstract from the manner in which the manifold for an empirical intuition is given, and must attend only to the unity which, by means of the category and through the understanding, is added to intuition." (Im obigen Satze ist also der Anfang einer Deduktion der reinen Verstandesbegriffe gemacht, in welcher ich, da die Kategorien unabhängig von Sinnlichkeit bloß im Verstande entspringen, noch von der Art, wie das Mannigfaltige zu einer empirischen Anschauung gegeben werde, abstrahieren muß, um nur auf die Einheit, die in die Anschauung vermittelt der Kategorie durch den Verstand hinzukommt, zu sehen).

By contrast, the second half does not abstract from the manner in which the manifold is given in sensibility (that is, it does not abstract from the spatio-temporal nature of human sensibility): "In what follows (cf. §26) it will be shown, from the manner in which the empirical intuition is given in sensibility, that its unity is none other than that which the category (according to §20) prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general." (In der Folge (§26) wird aus der Art, wie in der Sinnlichkeit die empirische Anschauung gegeben wird, gezeigt werden, daß die Einheit derselben keine andere sei, als welche die Kategorie nach dem vorigen §20 dem Mannigfaltigen einer gegebenen Anschauung überhaupt vorschreibt [...].) (B144f).

¹⁷ See Chapter Two, §2.4.

¹⁸ Kant famously accepts that there might be forms of sensibility other than space and time. Cf. B139.

That Kant thus abstracts from central features of the human mind suggests that he is interested in identifying the essence of a discursive understanding. And this in turn suggests that what we get in the first half of the Deduction can be regarded as a characterization of the understanding that is fundamental.

This suggestion is corroborated, I think, by the following remark, also from §21, in which Kant further delimits the level of abstraction in place in the first half of the Deduction by explaining what is not abstracted from at this level:

In the above proof, however, I still could not abstract from one point, namely, from the fact that the manifold for intuition must already be given prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently from it; in what manner, however, is here left undetermined. For if I wanted to conceive an understanding that itself intuited [...], then the categories would have no significance at all with regard to such a cognition. They are rules only for an understanding whose entire capacity consists in thinking, that is, in the act of bringing the synthesis of the manifold that is given to it in intuition from elsewhere to the unity of apperception [...]. (B145)¹⁹

Kant says here that what the first half of the Deduction does not abstract from is the fact that a discursive understanding is dependent on a separate faculty of sensibility, which provides it with a sensible manifold. That this is a defining characteristic of discursivity is made clear through the contrast with an intuitive understanding. Kant then goes on to say that the categories have significance only for an understanding that is discursive. A discursive understanding is a capacity to think. Unlike the intuitive understanding, it is not a capacity to intuit. But thinking, Kant explains, is the act of bringing the synthesis of the sensible manifold to the unity of apperception. Since this is a characterization of the act of a discursive understanding in general, we have

¹⁹ Allein von einem Stücke konnte ich im obigen Beweise doch nicht abstrahieren, nämlich davon, daß das Mannigfaltige für die Anschauung noch vor der Synthesis des Verstandes, und unabhängig von ihr, *gegeben* sein müsse; wie aber, bleibt hier unbestimmt. Denn wollte ich mir einen Verstand denken, der selbst anschauete [...], so würden die Kategorien in Ansehung eines solchen Erkenntnisses gar keine Bedeutung haben. Sie sind nur Regeln für einen Verstand, dessen ganzes Vermögen im Denken besteht, d. i. in der Handlung, die Synthesis des Mannigfaltigen, welchem ihm anderweitig in der Anschauung gegeben worden, zur Einheit der Apperzeption zu bringen [...].

reason to believe that the notion of apperception will figure in the fundamental characterization of the capacity Kant calls the understanding. This in turn gives us a reason to look to Kant's exposition of the doctrine of apperception for the materials needed for such a fundamental characterization.

I now turn to the four passages from the first half of the B-Deduction which I said I would discuss and which lend additional support to my exegetical strategy. To begin with, in §15, the opening section of the B-Deduction, Kant discusses the notion of combination and characterizes the understanding as a capacity for the spontaneous representation of combination. He then argues that the representation of combination presupposes a representation of unity and that, therefore, there must be a fundamental representation of unity, which is presupposed by all acts of combination, hence by all acts of the understanding.²⁰ I will discuss this point in the next section. For now, what interests me is what Kant goes on to say. Here is the relevant passage:

This unity, which precedes a priori all concepts of combination, is not the category of unity (§10); for all categories are grounded in logical functions of judgment, and in these functions combination, and therefore also unity of given concepts, is already thought. Thus the category already presupposes combination. We must therefore look yet higher for this unity (as qualitative, §12), namely in that which itself contains the ground of unity of different concepts in judgment, and therefore of the possibility of the understanding, even as regards its logical employment. (B131)²¹

The first thing to say about this passage is that it concludes §15. It thus serves as a transition to the following section. This is §16, which is devoted to the synthetic unity of apperception.²² This

²⁰ Cf. B130f.

²¹ Diese Einheit, die a priori vor allen Begriffen der Verbindung vorhergeht, ist nicht etwa jene Kategorie der Einheit (§10); denn alle Kategorien gründen sich auf logische Funktionen in Urteilen, in diesen aber ist schon Verbindung, mithin Einheit gegebener Begriffe gedacht. Die Kategorie setzt also schon Verbindung voraus. Also müssen wir diese Einheit (als qualitative §12) noch höher suchen, nämlich in demjenigen, was selbst den Grund der Einheit verschiedener Begriffe in Urteilen, mithin der Möglichkeit des Verstandes, sogar in seinem logischen Gebrauche, enthält.

²² The text of §16 leaves no doubt that the notion of the synthetic unity of apperception forms the main topic of this section. However, already the title Kant gives to the section makes this explicit. It is "Of the originally-synthetic unity of apperception" (B131).

implies that the unity referred to in this passage is the synthetic unity of apperception. What, then, does the passage say about this unity? I already said that in the lead-up to the passage Kant argues that what is at issue here is a representation of unity that is presupposed by any act of the understanding; that is, any act of spontaneity. Since this suggests that the synthetic unity of apperception ought to play a central role in an account of the understanding, it already lends support to my contention that the doctrine of apperception is the place to look for the fundamental characterization of the understanding.

However, the quoted passage adds to this another point, which provides additional support to my contention. This is the point that the representation of unity in question is “higher” than “the category.” It is higher than the category, because “the category already presupposes combination,” and the representation of unity we are looking for is itself presupposed by any representation of combination. Before I show how this point supports my exegetical strategy, I need to comment on Kant’s terminology here; in particular, on his use of the singular ‘category’ (“Thus the category already presupposes combination”) and on the claim that the unity in question is “higher” than the category. First, Kant’s use of the singular is most likely explained by the fact that at the opening of the passage he talks about a particular category, the category of unity, which is the first category of quantity. However, in light of what the preceding sentence says about all categories (“all categories are grounded in logical functions of judgment, and in these functions combination, and therefore also unity of given concepts, is already thought”), the sentence would not be falsified if, alternatively, one took it to be employing a generic singular and thus to be saying about all categories that they presuppose combination.²³

²³ Kant clearly uses the expression ‘the category’ in this manner on several occasions at B144-6.

Second, what does it mean to say that the unity of apperception is “higher” than the categories? And relatedly, what does it mean to say that the categories already contain combination? To address these questions, we need to distinguish between the representation of a manifold as exhibiting combination, on the one hand, and the representation of a mode or form of combination, on the other. The latter is that which is “enmattered,” or instantiated, in the former. As I argued in Chapter Two, the categories, like the logical forms of judgment, are modes of combination. This means that there is a sense in which it is *not* true to say that the categories contain combination. A category, just as such, is not a representation of a unified manifold. Taken by itself, it is not, as we might put it, a representation of material combination. However, a category does contain combination in the sense that it is the representation of a mode of combination, hence a representation of the form that material combination takes.

Using this distinction we can say that Kant’s claim amounts to saying that the ground of the possibility of representing combination – the unity of apperception – is “higher” than any mode of combination. As I will argue below, I do not take this to mean that the unity of apperception is something wholly distinct from – in the sense of being intelligible independently of – the idea of a mode of combination. Rather, I will argue that what Kant is after with this talk of something “higher” than the categories is a particular characteristic of the modes of combination, without which they would not be able to do their job. Thus, I will argue that the fact that the understanding is inseparable from a certain kind of self-consciousness serves to explain how the representation of combination is achieved. Self-consciousness (that is, apperception) thus serves to explain, at least in part, how the categories can play the role of

modes of combination. Kant's use of the term "higher" should be interpreted in terms of this explanatory role of apperception.²⁴

How, then, does this point, that the unity of apperception is higher than the categories, support my exegetical strategy? To begin with, the passage concludes by saying that, being "higher" than the category, the unity in question – i.e., the synthetic unity of apperception – "itself contains the ground of unity of different concepts in judgment, and therefore of the possibility of the understanding, even as regards its logical employment." If the unity of apperception contains the ground of the possibility of the understanding, then clearly it must be part of any account of this capacity that can legitimately claim to identify its fundamental features.

What is more, Kant here alludes to the distinction between logical and real use. As I argued in §2 above, the fact that Kant draws this distinction between two kinds of use already implies that he recognizes the possibility of giving a characterization of the single capacity that can be exercised in these two ways. In other words, this distinction suggests that Kant is amenable to the idea that the understanding can be construed as a genus containing two distinct species (or, more accurately, a single capacity that admits of two acts). Although the distinction between logical use and real use does not map onto the distinction between judgment and sensible synthesis, the two sets of distinctions are closely related; closely enough, at any rate, for

²⁴ Saying this is compatible with the following point, which might also be at issue in the passage: As the rest of the Deduction makes clear, Kant is committed to the idea that, taken collectively, the categories articulate the unity that the term 'synthetic unity of apperception' refers to. But it is important to realize that the categories form a system. They function, we might say, holistically. Only of the entire system of categories is it true to say that it articulates the unity of apperception, not of any individual category. In light of this, one might think that Kant's claim that the unity of apperception is "higher" than the categories applies to the categories taken individually, though not to the categories taken collectively. If this is right, then the reference to "all categories" in the first sentence of the passage must be read distributively rather than collectively.

us to be able to exploit the point Kant makes about the logical use of the understanding here.²⁵

He says that the unity he seeks to identify contains the ground of possibility “even” of the logical use of the understanding. This suggests that it contains the ground of the possibility not only of the understanding’s logical use, but also of its real use. And this in turn suggests that this ground of possibility might equip us with a characterization of the understanding that is wider, and thus more fundamental, than the notion of a capacity for judgment.

The second passage that lends support to my exegetical strategy occurs in §16, a section that bears the title “Of the originally-synthetic unity of apperception” (B131). In light of what the passage from §15 that I have just discussed says about the connection between combination and unity, it is clear that the title of §16 identifies the fundamental representation of unity that is presupposed by any representation of combination, hence by any spontaneous act of representation. This fundamental representation of unity is the synthetic unity of apperception. Given this connection between spontaneity and unity of apperception, it is not surprising that Kant goes on to characterize the understanding itself in terms of this unity. The understanding, he says, is a capacity for combination because it is a capacity for bringing the manifold of intuition under the unity of apperception:

Combination [...] is solely an operation of the understanding, which is itself nothing further than the faculty of combining a priori and bringing the manifold of given representations under the unity of apperception [...] (B134f)²⁶

In this passage, there is an indication that the characterization of the understanding in terms of the unity of apperception is the most fundamental characterization of this capacity that can be given. The understanding, Kant says, “is itself is nothing further than” the capacity to

²⁵ Cf. above, §2.

²⁶ Verbindung [...] ist allein eine Verrichtung des Verstandes, der selbst nichts weiter ist, als das Vermögen, a priori zu verbinden, und das Mannigfaltige gegebener Vorstellungen unter Einheit der Apperzeption zu bringen [...].

combine representations by bringing them under the unity of apperception. The suggestion seems to be that we will comprehend what the understanding is if we comprehend what it is to bring a manifold of representation under the unity of apperception.

This suggestion is confirmed, I think, by the following passage, which is drawn from the second half of the B-Deduction. Kant says:

That which determines inner sense is the understanding and its *original* capacity of combining the manifold of intuition, i.e. of bringing it under an apperception (as that on which its very possibility rests) (B153, my emphasis).²⁷

The topic of determining inner sense need not concern us for now.²⁸ What matters for us is that Kant here equates the power for combination with the power to bring a manifold of intuition under unity of apperception; he says that the power picked out by these two phrases is “original” and that the very possibility of the understanding rests on it. What matters for now is that we have here a characterization of the understanding that is said to be basic and yet does not make use of the notion of judgment. The availability of such a characterization opens up the conceptual space for thinking of the understanding as a complex capacity; a capacity that is not exhausted by its exercise in judgment but rather admits, in addition, of a kind of exercise that is distinct from judgment.

Yet another prominent passage appears to be making a similar point. In a footnote appended to §16 Kant says:

And thus the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point to which one must affix all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic and, after it, transcendental philosophy; indeed this capacity is the understanding itself. (B134n)²⁹

²⁷ Das, was den inneren Sinn bestimmt, ist der Verstand und dessen ursprüngliches Vermögen das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung zu verbinden, d.i. unter eine Apperzeption (als worauf selbst seine Möglichkeit beruht) zu bringen (B153).

²⁸ I address this topic in Chapter Five.

²⁹ Und so ist die synthetische Einheit der Apperzeption der höchste Punkt, an dem man allen Verstandesgebrauch,

If the synthetic unity of apperception is the “highest point” that can be reached in considering the employment of the understanding, so much so that one can identify the understanding with the synthetic unity of apperception, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that a fundamental characterization of the capacity Kant calls the understanding must be given in terms of the synthetic unity of apperception.³⁰ Again, a characterization of the understanding in these terms opens the conceptual space for conceiving of the understanding as capable of an act other than judgment. The passages I have quoted in this section, then, lend at least *prima facie* support to my claim that the doctrine of apperception holds the key to a solution of the Unity Problem.

4. Two Characteristics of Apperception

I have argued that in order to solve the Unity Problem we need an account of the understanding which makes it intelligible that this capacity admits of two distinct kinds of exercise, viz. judgment and sensible synthesis. Alternatively, we can put the point by saying that we need an account of spontaneity that allows us to see both the productive imagination and the capacity for judgment as spontaneous capacities. I have given reasons for thinking that the doctrine of apperception contains the materials for such an account. I will now turn to this doctrine and argue that the desired account becomes available if we conceive of the

selbst die ganze Logik, und, nach ihr, die Transzendental-Philosophie heften muß, ja dieses Vermögen ist der Verstand selbst (B134n).

³⁰ To say that the synthetic unity of apperception is a capacity, as Kant does at the end of the quoted passage, is to say that the synthetic unity of apperception can be exercised or actualized. It is actualized in acts of representing combination. Each such act involves sensible matter. What actualizes the synthetic unity of apperception is that this unity informs given sensible matter. The unity is the same in every such act of enmattering. This is what enables Kant to speak of it as a capacity. I say more about this below.

understanding as most fundamentally a capacity for apperceptive synthesis. Both judgment and sensible synthesis can then be construed as different species of apperceptive synthesis.

Since my interest in the doctrine of apperception is guided by the Unity Problem, I shall discuss only those aspects of this doctrine that are relevant to solving this problem in the way I have indicated. This means that I will not address many of the topics that have been discussed in the literature in connection with apperception.³¹ Moreover, I will not give a detailed interpretation of the relevant stretches of Kant's text, since doing so would take us too far afield. Instead, I will approach the doctrine of apperception by noting two formal characteristics of apperception, which can be identified without going into a great deal of textual detail. Reflecting on these two characteristics will provide us with sufficient materials for an account of apperceptive synthesis.

The first such characteristic concerns the concept of self-consciousness. It is clear that the doctrine of apperception is, in some sense, a doctrine of self-consciousness. For one thing, Kant uses the term 'self-consciousness' as a gloss on 'apperception' (see e.g. B132). Just what kind of self-consciousness is at issue, however, is not so clear. Nor is it clear what is meant by the *unity* of self-consciousness. One might think that the expression 'unity of apperception' denotes the unity of a particular representation or consciousness, viz. consciousness of the self. On such a view, the term 'apperception' indicates the content of this consciousness, its intentional object: It

³¹ These include the following: the exact content of the principle of the synthetic unity of apperception; the alleged analyticity of this principle; the relation between apperception and personal identity; the conditions for the self-ascription of representations; and the role of apperception in Kant's argument for the objective validity of the categories. For discussion see Allison, "Apperception and Analyticity in the B-Deduction"; Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*; Baum, *Deduktion und Beweis in Kants Transzendentalphilosophie*; Carl, "Ich und Spontaneität"; Cramer, "Über Kants Satz 'Das: Ich denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können'"; Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*; Henrich, *Identität und Objektivität*; Henrich, "Die Identität des Subjekts in der Transzendentalen Deduktion"; Keller, *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness*; Kitcher, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*; Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*. – A surveys of the literature on apperception can be found in Wunderlich, *Kant und die Bewußtseinstheorien des 18. Jahrhunderts*.

is a consciousness of the self as opposed to a consciousness of objects distinct from it, that is, of material objects. But this cannot be how Kant uses the term. Kant's ambition is to show that the unity of apperception is the highest principle of cognition.³² To even make sense of such a project, the unity of apperception must be conceived as something that can pertain to *any* content; that is, to any object of cognition, not just cognition of the self. Accordingly, the phrase 'unity of apperception' should be construed in what we might call a formal, as opposed to a material, mode.³³ It denotes a mode of consciousness, rather than a particular content of consciousness. This means that any content can, in principle, exhibit this unity. In particular, the unity of apperception is not limited to my own inner states. Consciousness of my own inner states is the content of what Kant calls inner sense, which he is at pains to distinguish from apperception.³⁴

Kant actually indicates this in his use of the term. For he frequently uses the term 'unity of apperception' elliptically. What is omitted is the specification of that which exhibits this unity. Accordingly, the full locution is, schematically, 'unity of apperception of x'. When Kant is fully explicit, he employs instances of this schema and speaks, for instance, of the unity of (the) apperception *of the manifold of intuition*.³⁵

³² Cf. the title of §17, at B136: "The Principle of the Synthetic Unity of Apperception is the Highest Principle of all Use of the Understanding" (Der Grundsatz der synthetischen Einheit der Apperzeption ist das oberste Prinzip alles Verstandesgebrauchs).

³³ Some commentators do not appreciate this point. They portray Kant as attempting to derive the objective validity of the categories from the fact of self-consciousness, and they think of self-consciousness in a material rather than formal mode. A prominent example of such a view is Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*.

³⁴ See e.g. B157-159.

³⁵ As in the following passages: "Namely, this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition [...]" (B133); "Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions [...]" (B134); "The logical form of all judgments consists in the objective unity of the apperception of the concepts contained therein" (B140); "[...] synthetic unity of the apperception of the manifold of sensible intuition [...]" (B150, emphasis omitted).

It follows from this that apperception must not be confused with Lockean reflection.³⁶ Apperceptive consciousness, for Kant, is not the inner-directed observing of one's own mental acts.³⁷ Reflection in this sense has for its content exclusively the mind's operations and is therefore distinct from a consciousness of material objects. But if the unity of apperception is supposed to be the unity of cognition in general, it must not be limited in its application to the subject's own inner states.

A second formal characteristic of apperception can be identified if we attend to the way in which Kant introduces the topic in the B-Deduction. As we saw in the previous section, towards the end of §15 Kant motivates the discussion of apperception that follows in §16 by arguing that the spontaneous act of combination presupposes a representation of unity.³⁸ Here is the relevant passage:

But in addition to the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, the concept of combination also carries with it the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is the representation of the *synthetic* unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise from the combination; rather, by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes possible the concept of combination. (B130f)³⁹

After arguing, in the lead-up to this passage, that the representation of combination (*Verbindung*) is always spontaneous, Kant now relates the notion of combination, or synthesis, to the notion of unity. He says, in the second sentence of the passage, that to represent a manifold as combined is to represent it as exhibiting synthetic unity. From this he concludes that the

³⁶ For Locke's notion of reflection see the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. II, chp.1.

³⁷ This kind of consciousness seems to be rather what Kant calls inner sense. See A22/B37 along with B152-56.

³⁸ Many discussions of apperception in the literature are hampered by the fact that they do not pay sufficient attention to this connection. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a commentator to say that Kant's argument in Deduction properly starts only in §16 (see, for example, Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 163). By my lights, this is a mistake. To appreciate the function that the doctrine of apperception has in Kant's account of cognition, one needs to understand the relation between apperception and combination, which is explained in §15.

³⁹ Aber der Begriff der Verbindung führt außer dem Begriffe des Mannigfaltigen, und der Synthesis desselben, noch den der Einheit desselben bei sich. Verbindung ist Vorstellung der *synthetischen* Einheit des Mannigfaltigen. Die Vorstellung dieser Einheit kann also nicht aus der Verbindung entstehen, sie macht vielmehr dadurch, daß sie zur Vorstellung des Mannigfaltigen hinzukommt, den Begriff der Verbindung allererst möglich.

representation of unity at issue here cannot be one that is generated by the act of combination. Rather, it is presupposed by this act. Whatever the argument may be that licenses this conclusion, it is the conclusion (rather than the argument for it) that is of interest to us now. So the claim we are concerned with is that the representation of unity does not result from the act of synthesis, but is in some sense prior to it.

This can look to be a surprising claim. It can look surprising because it seems natural to expect just the reverse: An act of synthetically combining the elements of a manifold is, one wants to say, an act that results in the representation of this manifold as unified. There is a clear sense here in which the representation of unity is the product of the act of synthesis. But Kant appears to be making just the opposite claim: He appears to be saying that, rather than resulting from the act of synthesis, the representation of unity precedes it.

However, to read Kant as accepting the latter claim, while rejecting the first, would be a mistake. Upon closer inspection the passage reveals that Kant takes these two claims to be compatible. He does not deny that there is a sense in which the act of synthesis yields the representation of a manifold as unified. What he does deny is rather the idea that such an act could be intelligible in the absence of a prior representation of unity. He is saying that the act that results in the representation of a manifold as unified is itself dependent on a prior representation of unity. Among other things, this means that Kant is implicitly providing a characterization of the kind of act that synthesis is: It is an act that unifies a manifold *by means of* a prior representation of unity.

This implies that the type of synthesis at issue here is different from the kind of unification of representations that may be effected by a process of association, where association

is understood along the lines laid out in Chapter Three.⁴⁰ The presence of an associative mechanism may account for the fact that representation A regularly calls forth representation B. There is a sense in which these representations may be said to be unified, viz. in the sense that they regularly occur together. But this type of unification does not depend on a representation of the associative mechanism itself. Its occurrence is not dependent on the fact that the unity that is brought about by the mechanism is itself represented as such (however implicitly). Association can occur whether or not the associative connection is itself represented. It does not, therefore, depend on the availability of a prior representation of unity.

To say that synthesis does depend on such a prior representation of unity, then, is to say that synthesis (in the sense at issue) is not a process of association. It is a different type of unifying process, and we need to understand just what kind of process it is. To mark the difference terminologically I will distinguish between associative synthesis and apperceptive synthesis. Why the type of synthesis that depends on a prior representation of unity should be called ‘apperceptive’ will emerge from the discussion that follows. It is, however, already clear from what I have said so far that Kant sees a close connection between this type of synthesis and apperception. For, as the quoted passage shows, it is by highlighting the fact that this type of synthesis depends on a prior representation of unity that he introduces the topic of apperception in the second half of §15. So we already have reason to believe that the representation of unity that is presupposed by apperceptive synthesis is – or is at least closely connected to – the unity of apperception.

I have laid out two features of Kant’s doctrine of apperception: First, apperception is a mode of consciousness, as opposed to a particular content of consciousness. Since apperception

⁴⁰ See Chapter Three, §6.

is a form of self-consciousness, this implies that apperception is a special form of self-consciousness. It is not a consciousness of the self, as distinct from other contents of consciousness. Rather, self-consciousness must itself be a formal feature of apperceptive consciousness. Second, I have argued that we should expect the doctrine of apperception to contain an account of the representation of unity that, according to §15, is presupposed by the act of apperceptive synthesis.

In concluding this section, let me briefly draw out a consequence of the second feature and introduce a terminological distinction. This consequence may seem obvious, but since it is easily overlooked, it is worth making explicit. If apperceptive synthesis is made possible by a prior representation of unity, then it is clear that this representation of unity cannot be identical to the representation of a manifold as unified. The latter is what synthesis produces. It cannot, therefore, be identical to the representation that makes synthesis possible in the first place. And this means that we must carefully distinguish between the representation of a manifold as unified, on the one hand, and the representation of unity that is presupposed by the act of synthesis, on the other. To make this task easier, let me introduce the following terminological convention. To refer to the former I will use locutions like the following: ‘representing combination,’ ‘representing a manifold as combined’ or ‘representing an intuition as unified.’ By contrast, to refer to the representation of unity that is presupposed by any representation of combination I will use expressions such as ‘prior representation of unity,’ ‘abstract representation of unity,’ ‘representation of the mode of combination’ and ‘unity of apperception’. Since the prior representation of unity in question is the unity of apperception, it follows that we

must also distinguish between, on the one hand, the representation of apperceptive unity as such and, on the other, the representation of a manifold as exhibiting apperceptive unity.

5. Intuitive Understanding and Discursive Understanding

In the preceding section I identified two central features of Kant's doctrine of apperception. In this section I will focus on the second of these. This is the feature that the doctrine of apperception is intended by Kant to furnish an account of the representation of unity that is presupposed by the act of apperceptive synthesis. Since my goal in this chapter is to give an account of apperceptive synthesis and to argue that the understanding should be construed as fundamentally a capacity for apperceptive synthesis, we need to understand why apperceptive synthesis presupposes a representation of unity. That is, we need to clarify what the relation is between the act of apperceptive synthesis, on the one hand, and the representation of unity that is presupposed by this act, on the other. My aim in the present section is to put into place some of the materials needed for this. I will focus on another important distinction Kant draws, viz. the distinction between discursive and intuitive understanding.

This way of proceeding is recommended by some of Kant's own remarks. In the course of setting out the doctrine of apperception in the first half of the B-Deduction he repeatedly emphasizes that this doctrine applies only to a discursive understanding, but not to an intuitive understanding. More precisely, what is limited to a discursive understanding is the Principle of the Synthetic Unity of Apperception (PSUA), which, as we shall see, must be distinguished from the bare notion of apperception in general. Since Kant draws our attention to this fact three times in the course of a mere ten pages, he surely takes it to be significant. I want to proceed, therefore,

by considering the relevant passages. This will put us in a position to identify the differences between intuitive and discursive intellect to the extent that they bear on the notion of apperception. And this will in turn enable us to better appreciate the relation between unity of apperception and apperceptive synthesis.

Here, then, are the passages in which Kant comments on the relation between apperception, on the one hand, and the distinction between discursive and intuitive intellect, on the other:

An understanding, in which through self-consciousness all of the manifold would at the same time be given, would intuit; ours can only think and must seek intuition in the senses. (B135)⁴¹

This principle [i.e., the PSUA, T.L.], however, is not a principle for every possible understanding, but only for one through whose pure apperception in the representation *I am* nothing manifold is given at all. (B138f)⁴²

In the above proof, however, I still could not abstract from one point, namely, from the fact that the manifold for intuition must already be given prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently from it [...]. For if I wanted to conceive an understanding that itself intuited (as, say, a divine understanding, which would not represent given objects, but through whose representation the objects would themselves at the same time be given, or produced), then the categories would have no significance at all with regard to such a cognition. They are rules only for an understanding whose entire capacity consists in thinking [...]. (B145)⁴³

As the first two passages make clear, self-consciousness, or apperception, is a feature of both the discursive and the intuitive understanding. But as the second passage (and, implicitly, the third passage) also shows, the PSUA applies only to the discursive understanding, not to the

⁴¹ Ein Verstand, in welchem durch das Selbstbewußtsein zugleich alles Mannigfaltige gegeben würde, würde *anschauen*; der unsere kann nur *denken* und muß in den Sinnen die Anschauung suchen.

⁴² Aber dieser Grundsatz ist doch nicht ein Prinzip für jeden überhaupt möglichen Verstand, sondern nur für den, durch dessen reine Apperzeption in der Vorstellung: *Ich bin*, noch gar nichts Mannigfaltiges gegeben ist.

⁴³ Allein von einem Stücke konnte ich im obigen Beweise doch nicht abstrahieren, nämlich davon, daß das Mannigfaltige für die Anschauung noch vor der Synthesis des Verstandes, und unabhängig von ihr, *gegeben* sein müsse [...]. Denn wollte ich mir einen Verstand denken, der selbst anschauete (wie etwa einen göttlichen, der nicht gegebene Gegenstände sich vorstellte, sondern durch dessen Vorstellung die Gegenstände selbst zugleich gegeben, oder hervorgebracht würden), so würden die Kategorien in Ansehung eines solchen Erkenntnisses gar keine Bedeutung haben. Sie sind nur Regeln für einen Verstand, dessen ganzes Vermögen im Denken besteht [...].

intuitive intellect. It follows that we must draw a distinction between this principle, on the one hand, and the act of apperception, on the other.⁴⁴

Although the act of apperception is something that both types of intellect are capable of, this act takes a specifically different form in each case. To have a reasonably concise terminology, I will speak of finite apperception and infinite apperception, respectively, to refer to the specific shape the act of apperception takes in each case. As Kant points out in the first passage, infinite apperception is characterized by the fact that the act of self-consciousness is at the same time an act of representing a manifold. This means that in the intuitive intellect the two essential components of cognition – manifold and unity; alternatively, the particular and the general – are represented in one and the same act.⁴⁵ The act of self-consciousness is the source of the unity of cognition in both kinds of intellect. But in the intuitive intellect this same act also generates the manifold that is represented as exhibiting unity.

By contrast, the discursive intellect depends on another capacity, receptivity, for the representation of the manifold of cognition. Finite apperception is responsible only for the representation of unity. And, in contrast to infinite apperception, this is, as we might put it, a representation of bare unity; it is a representation of unity that, as such, does not contain the representation of any manifold as unified.

This entails that for cognition to be achieved in a discursive mind the respective contributions of two distinct capacities must come together. Spontaneity supplies the

⁴⁴ Since the act of apperception itself takes different forms in the different kinds of intellect, it should be noted that I am using this term here in a generic sense. Talk of the act of apperception, therefore, should, at least in the present context, be construed as involving an abstraction from the particular form that this act takes. It should be construed as talking about the act of apperception *in general*.

⁴⁵ At A97 Kant characterizes cognition as “a whole of compared and connected representations” (ein Ganzes vergleichener und verknüpfter Vorstellungen).

representation of unity, or the form of cognition. Sensibility supplies the manifold, or matter of cognition. Since cognition consists in the representation of the manifold as unified – that is, the matter of cognition taking on the requisite form – what is required is, more specifically, an act that effects the unification of the manifold. And ‘unification of the manifold’ must mean here that the manifold comes to exhibit precisely that unity which is the content of the representation of unity that has its source in spontaneity. Kant’s generic term for this act – an act that, as we might put it, serves to “enmatter” the form of cognition – is synthesis.

This consideration explains why the Principle of the Synthetic Unity of Apperception (PSUA) applies to the discursive understanding and only to it. Indeed, it reveals that this principle is a mark of discursivity, hence of finitude. Infinite apperception accounts for both the form and the matter of cognition: to represent unity and to represent the manifold is one and the same act. Because finite apperception accounts only for an abstract representation of unity, but not for the representation of the manifold, an act of synthesis is required for combining the matter of cognition in accordance with this representation of unity.

As the term ‘synthesis’ already indicates, the act that imparts the form of cognition to its matter is an act of combination. By means of this act the sensible manifold is represented as combined, or unified. The sensible manifold comes to exhibit the kind of unity, the abstract representation of which precedes the act of synthesis. This suggests that the form that this prior representation of unity takes is that of a mode (or manner) of combination. What precedes the act of combination is thus a representation of the mode of combination. A representation of the mode of combination – of the form that any act of combination takes – is, then, the bare representation of unity that is presupposed by the act of combination, or synthesis.

In Chapter Two I characterized the logical forms of judgment, which Kant catalogues in the Table of Judgments, as modes of concept-combination. The logical forms of judgment are modes of combination in precisely the sense at issue here. They are the forms that any act of combination – of the relevant type, viz. judgment – takes. If what I just said is right, this means that, collectively, the logical forms of judgment can be regarded as the abstract representation of unity that is presupposed by the act of combination, at least in the case in which combination takes the form of judgment.⁴⁶

The PSUA says that the sensible manifold “stands under the conditions of the originally-synthetic unity of apperception” (B136). I take this to mean that the sensible manifold must be susceptible to a synthesis that unifies a manifold by representing its elements as belonging to, or exhibiting, the unity of apperception – a synthesis, that is, which imparts to the sensible matter the form of cognition. As Kant puts it, the sensible manifold “must be capable of being *combined* in a single consciousness” (B136f). And the reason the manifold must be susceptible to this kind of synthesis is that

“without this nothing could be thought or cognized by means of this manifold, because the given representations would not have in common the act of apperception ‘I think’ and would thus not be comprehended in one self-consciousness” (B137).

The comparison of intuitive and discursive understanding shows that the unity of self-consciousness constitutes the form of cognition. For cognition to occur, this form must be realized in the matter of cognition. Since, in a discursive understanding, the matter of cognition is a manifold given in sensibility, cognition for such an understanding requires that the sensible

⁴⁶ Kant’s claim at B140f that the logical form of a judgment consists in the objective unity of the apperception of the concepts making up the judgment contains this point. I discuss this claim below, in §8.

manifold come to exhibit the unity of self-consciousness. But this, I take it, just *is* for the manifold to, in the words of this passage, “be comprehended in one self-consciousness.”

I have not so far offered an account of what the unity of self-consciousness is and why it constitutes the unity of cognition.⁴⁷ However, the discussion of how the discursive understanding differs from the intuitive understanding has shown what the connection is between this notion of unity and the act of apperceptive synthesis that presupposes it. To put the point in terms of the formulations Kant uses in §16, when he first introduces the notion of apperceptive unity: if the “the ‘I think’ [is] able to accompany all my representations” (B130), then it must be possible to synthesize sensible manifolds in such a way that they come to exhibit the unity expressed by ‘I think’. The ‘I think’ expresses the unity of cognition, and for cognition to be achieved this unity must be “enmattered” in the sensible manifold. This is what the act of apperceptive synthesis accomplishes. The way in which discursive understanding differs from intuitive understanding highlights this function of synthesis. For it brings out that the discursive act of apperception taken by itself, independently of any sensible matter, accounts only for a bare representation of unity; that is, a representation of unity that is devoid of any material content, a representation of a mere mode of combination without any matter combined in accordance with this mode. For this representation of unity to constitute the form of cognition it must become the form of some material content. The finitude of a discursive spontaneity manifests itself in the fact that something over and above the representation of this unity is required to accomplish this. The relation, then, between the act of synthesis, on the one hand, and the representation of

⁴⁷ I address this issue in the next section.

apperceptive unity, on the other, is this: the latter is the act that serves to implement the form of cognition – apperceptive unity – in its matter.⁴⁸

6. Self-Conscious Capacities

My goal in this chapter is to argue that the doctrine of apperception provides us with a generic characterization of the understanding, which allows us to see both judgment and sensible synthesis as species of a single genus. Having such a characterization available will put us in a position to solve the Unity Problem. The discussion up to this point has already yielded a preliminary formulation of the generic characterization we are looking for: Generically, the understanding is a capacity for a synthesis of a particular kind, a kind I call apperceptive synthesis, in order to distinguish it from synthesis by association. The distinguishing characteristics of apperceptive synthesis are, first, that it depends on a prior representation of unity and, second, that it is, or involves, a kind of self-consciousness. In the preceding section I discussed the first characteristic. I argued that the representation of unity that is presupposed by apperceptive synthesis is, specifically, a representation of the mode of combination that this synthesis employs. It is thus a representation of the form that apperceptive synthesis imparts to the matter of cognition; that is, of the form that any synthesized manifold will exhibit.

In this section I will discuss the second distinguishing characteristic of apperceptive synthesis, self-consciousness. As we shall see, the two characteristics are connected. A synthesis characterized by self-consciousness is a synthesis that effects combination by means of a prior representation of its mode of combination.

⁴⁸ It is for precisely this reason that Kant says that the unity of apperception “contains a synthesis” (B133).

When I introduced this second characteristic above, in §4, I said that apperception, as Kant understands it, is a form (or mode) of consciousness, as opposed to a consciousness of a particular content – e.g. the self, or one’s own inner states, or some such. I believe that a plausible interpretation of the claim that self-consciousness is a form or mode of consciousness can be found in the idea of a self-conscious capacity.⁴⁹ I will begin, therefore, by introducing this idea.

To say that a capacity is self-conscious is to say that its exercise constitutively involves a grasp of the capacity’s nature. Every act of such a capacity thus involves an understanding of itself qua act of this capacity. Or, as we might also put it, every such act must include the application of the concept of the capacity. The act is what it is only in virtue of employing this concept.

An example will help make the idea clear. Consider the capacity to have beliefs. Arguably, one cannot have a belief unless one understands, however implicitly, what a belief is. Such an understanding has to include, for instance, that what I believe may diverge from how things are, that my believing something does not make it so, and that, therefore, a belief must be given up if it is shown to be false. In this sense, a belief must include an understanding of itself. Or, as we might also put the point, one cannot have beliefs without having the concept of belief.⁵⁰

As this example shows, the act of a self-conscious capacity must contain an element that is general. It must include an understanding, however implicitly, of the defining characteristics of

⁴⁹ For this idea see Boyle, “Two Kinds of Self-Knowledge”; Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge*, 98-108; and Rödl, *Self-Consciousness*, chapters three and four.

⁵⁰ Donald Davidson expresses the point as follows: “It is possible to have a belief only if one knows that beliefs may be true or false” (Davidson, “Truth Rehabilitated,” 16). – Cf. also the discussion in Chapter Three, §1.

the capacity, hence of all of its acts. A different way of putting this point is by saying that the act of such a capacity involves a representation of what this act shares with all other acts of this capacity. Or, to use Kant's Aristotelian terminology, such an act must contain a consciousness of its own form.

Evidently, this notion of a self-conscious capacity provides us with a sense of 'self-consciousness' in which self-consciousness can plausibly be regarded as a mode, or form, of consciousness, rather than a particular content. In explicating this notion I did not talk about representations with a particular content, except by way of example. Instead, I made a point about the formal characteristics of certain classes of representations. And this shows that the idea of a self-conscious capacity is the idea of a form of consciousness.

I now want to argue that the capacity for apperceptive synthesis is a self-conscious capacity. The capacity for apperceptive synthesis is a capacity for synthesis, or, equivalently, a capacity for the combination of representations of objects; for short, a capacity for combination. So 'capacity for combination' is the genus to which it belongs. According to my definition of a self-conscious capacity, to say that a capacity for combination is self-conscious is to say that an act of combination depends on the presence, in this act, of a representation of the capacity's form. In other words, combination is effected by means of a consciousness of the constitutive features of any act of combination.

As I have emphasized repeatedly, Kant holds that the act of apperceptive synthesis, or combination, depends on a prior representation of unity. In the preceding section I argued that this representation of unity should be thought of as a mode of combination. If this is right, then the representation of unity that precedes the exercise of the capacity for apperceptive synthesis is

a representation of the form of this capacity. It is a representation of the form that acts of combination take. For this is precisely what is contained in the idea of a mode of combination.

What is more, any act of apperceptive synthesis contains, at least implicitly, this prior representation of unity; that is, it contains a representation of the mode of combination. As I shall try to show in a moment, combination is effected only by means of the consciousness of the mode of combination. Any act of combination thus depends on the representation of the mode of combination in the strong sense that the act would not *be* an act of combination if it did not involve this kind of consciousness of its own form. But this entails that the capacity for apperceptive synthesis is a self-conscious capacity in the sense defined above.

Since the point that an act of combination constitutively depends on a consciousness of its own form is central to my argument here, I would like to present some additional evidence that Kant is committed to this point. I will do this in two steps. First, I will briefly return to the passage from B130f, in which Kant says that combination presupposes a representation of unity. Second, I will discuss Kant's conception of judgment.

The passage from B130f (already quoted above, in §4) runs as follows:

But in addition to the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, the concept of combination also carries with it the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is the representation of the *synthetic* unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise from the combination; rather, by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes possible the concept of combination. (B130f)

Although Kant does not go into any detail here, we can, I think, extract the following two points from the passage. First, Kant says that combination is “first [made] possible” by a prior representation of unity. This clearly implies that there is a robust dependence relation here: But for the representation of unity, there would be no acts of combination. Next, the second sentence of the passage – “Combination is the representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold” – may

be taken to suggest that the act of combination itself contains the representation of unity. The suggestion is that to represent a manifold as exhibiting combination *is* to represent it by means of the prior representation of unity. The prior representation of unity is itself part of the content of the representation of combination.

It is hard to make out in the abstract exactly what this means. The point will be easier to see, I think, if we consider how it applies to judgment. In the *Leitfaden* chapter of the *Transcendental Analytic*, Kant endeavors to give an account of the capacity he calls the understanding.⁵¹ This account aims at completeness. Its purpose is to “yield an exhaustive inventory of [the understanding’s] powers” (A79/B105). The shape that this inventory of the understanding’s powers takes is that of the two tables Kant presents in the *Leitfaden*, the Table of Judgments and the Table of Categories. How these two tables are related does not concern us now.⁵² The point I wish to make regards the first table. This table presents what Kant claims is a complete catalogue of the elementary logical forms of judgment. Now, what does it mean to say that this catalogue gives us an inventory of the understanding’s powers?

If we think of judgment as one of two species of combination, then the logical forms of judgment constitute the modes, or forms, that this species of combination takes. To use the label I introduced in Chapter Two, the elementary logical forms of judgment are modes of concept-combination. I now want to suggest that my claim that the understanding is a self-conscious capacity for combination – in other words: a capacity for apperceptive synthesis – can help us make sense of the idea that the Table of Judgments is an inventory of the understanding’s powers. For if this claim is right, then the understanding (in one of its two guises) is a capacity

⁵¹ He characterizes this account as the “hitherto scarcely attempted dissection of the capacity of the understanding itself” (A65/B90), which is to be distinguished from the analysis of concepts.

⁵² I gave an account of the relation between the two tables in Chapter Two.

for making judgments by means of a consciousness of the modes of combination characteristic of judgment. These modes of combination are the logical forms of judgment catalogued in Kant's table. So the understanding, qua capacity to judge, is a capacity for combining representations by means of a consciousness of the logical form of its act. A consciousness of the forms of judgment is present in the act of judging itself. And this, I think, is what makes it reasonable for Kant to think of the Table of Judgments as an inventory of the understanding's powers.

It seems clear that judgment is self-conscious in the sense that to so much as make a judgment one must understand what one is doing. One must have a grasp of the significance of this act – for instance, of the fact that a judgment makes a claim to truth and is thus beholden to how things in fact are. But this means that one cannot make a judgment unless one possesses the concept of a judgment.

An aspect of possessing the concept of judgment is a grasp of the logical form of this act. This may be highly implicit. But the point is that to count as making, e.g., a universal, affirmative, categorical judgment, I must understand, among other things, that a singular, negative, categorical judgment employing the same concepts would contradict my judgment. And I must understand such things as that 'All F are G', together with 'All G are H,' implies 'All F are H'.

If it is right that the kind of grasp of the logical forms of judgment that is illustrated by this example is a necessary condition of making any judgment at all, then this is just another way of saying that a consciousness of the logical forms of judgment must precede, and be present in, any act of judging. In making a judgment I have an implicit understanding that what I am doing is to combine concepts because I am bringing to bear a mode of concept-combination. Such an

understanding includes the fact that the mode of concept-combination is general, that is, a mode of combination that may be exhibited by other concepts than the ones employed in the present judgment. In this way, the act of judgment depends for its possibility on a prior representation of its form.

I have argued that the capacity for judgment is an instance of a self-conscious capacity for combination, because the act of judgment is dependent on a grasp, on the part of the subject, of its logical form, and this form can be characterized as a mode of combination. This point about judgment illustrates the more general claim I wish to make, viz. that the understanding as such, and at its most fundamental, is a self-conscious capacity for combination; or, in other words, a capacity for apperceptive synthesis. More specifically, the point about judgment helps us understand what it means to say that the operations of a self-conscious capacity of combination depend on a consciousness of its own form. A capacity whose exercise depends on a consciousness of its own form is a self-conscious capacity in the sense I introduced above. And the notion of a self-conscious capacity was put forth as an interpretation of a central characteristic of apperceptive synthesis. This is the characteristic that the sense of self-consciousness picked out by the predicate 'apperceptive' is that of a mode or form of consciousness, as opposed to a consciousness of a particular content. We now see that the kind of self-consciousness characteristic of a self-conscious capacity is formal in exactly this sense. Self-consciousness characterizes the mode of operation of such a capacity, as opposed to particular exercises of it. Any exercise of such a capacity, whatever its content, is dependent on a consciousness of its own form. If the capacity is, specifically, a capacity for combination, as in the case of the understanding, this entails that combination is effected by means of a

consciousness of the mode of combination. To say that the understanding is a capacity for apperceptive synthesis, then, is to say that it is a self-conscious capacity whose acts depend on a prior representation of modes of combination.

7. Apperceptive Synthesis

The task of this chapter is to argue that the doctrine of apperception offers a solution to the Unity Problem. The Unity Problem arises because Kant is committed to the idea that the understanding is capable of two distinct kinds of exercise. One of these is judgment, the other is sensible synthesis. This calls for explanation: How is it possible for a single capacity to have two different kinds of exercise? How, in particular, must the capacity in question be characterized for it to be intelligible that both judgment and sensible synthesis are acts of this capacity? This is the Unity Problem.

It is clear that the Unity Problem cannot be solved if one conceives of the understanding exclusively as a capacity to judge, as many commentators do.⁵³ Since sensible synthesis is distinct in character from judgment, it is plainly incomprehensible how a capacity for judgment could at the same time be a capacity for an act that is specifically distinct from judgment. Accordingly, if the Unity Problem is to be solved we need a different characterization of the understanding. My aim in this chapter is to argue that the doctrine of apperception provides us with the desired characterization.

The doctrine of apperception invites us to think of the understanding as a capacity for apperceptive synthesis. This provides us with the conceptual resources for construing judgment and sensible synthesis as two distinct kinds of apperceptive synthesis. If it can be shown that

⁵³ See the references in fn.7 of Chapter Three.

such a construal is plausible, then the characterization of the understanding as a capacity for apperceptive synthesis offers a solution to the Unity Problem.

In the preceding sections I have developed an account of apperceptive synthesis. I have argued that the capacity for apperceptive synthesis is a capacity for representing combination by means of a consciousness of the form that acts of combination take; that is, a consciousness of the modes of combination. And to give an illustration of this point I have discussed the way in which the capacity to judge depends on a grasp of the logical forms of judgment. In the remainder of this chapter, I will confront two tasks: First, I will provide some textual support for the account of apperceptive synthesis I have sketched. Second, I will show that the definition of judgment Kant gives in §19 of the B-Deduction supports the thesis that judgment ought to be construed as a species of apperceptive synthesis. This should be seen as supplementing the discussion of the logical forms of judgment in the preceding section, which already served to lend some plausibility to this thesis. I will address the first task in the present section and the second task in the following section.

According to the account developed in this chapter, the central characteristics of apperceptive synthesis are the following: First, apperceptive synthesis is self-conscious in the sense that any act of this capacity presupposes a grasp, at least implicitly, of its nature. Second, to have this grasp of the capacity's nature is to have an understanding of the possible forms that combination can take; that is, of the relevant modes of combination. In the case of judgment the relevant modes of combination are the logical forms of judgment. In the case of sensible synthesis the relevant modes of combination are the schematized categories.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ I make the case for this claim in Chapter Five. See also the discussion of the categories and the notion of a sensible mode of combination in Chapter Two, §2.2 and §2.3.

The idea is that any act of apperceptive synthesis necessarily includes an awareness of the fact that combination is represented by means of the representation of a mode of combination. Thus, to make a judgment is to represent concepts as connected according to a logical form of judgment.⁵⁵ This kind of representation includes as a component a grasp of the fact that the logical form of judgment is a form, that is, something that can be instantiated in indefinitely many other cases, by indefinitely many other concepts. And it includes a grasp of the fact that the subject and predicate of the particular judgment at issue are related as subject and predicate only because they are represented in this act by means of such a form.⁵⁶

In Chapter Five I will argue that the same structure is present also in sensible synthesis. Specifically, any act of spatial representation includes as a component a grasp of the fact that the spatial region represented in the current act is part of a larger spatial whole. The part-whole relationship is represented by means of an awareness of the relation that the parts bear to one another. This relation, in turn, is the mode of combination a representation of which is presupposed by any act of sensible synthesis.

Let me now offer some textual support for this account of apperceptive synthesis. To begin with, the two central characteristics of apperceptive synthesis are more determinate versions of the two formal characteristics of apperception that I noted in §4. Accordingly, the passages cited in §4 also support my account of apperceptive synthesis. These were, first, the passages in which Kant makes clear that the locution ‘unity of apperception’ is elliptical and should be understood as shorthand for ‘unity of apperception of x’. This indicates that

⁵⁵ More precisely, the concepts must be represented as instantiating one of the possible combinations of the elementary logical forms of judgment. But we can abstract from the complex nature of the Table of Judgments for present purposes. See Chapter One, §2.1, for discussion.

⁵⁶ For a brief but very insightful discussion of this point see Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge*, 99f.

apperception is a mode of consciousness rather than a particular content. Second, I quoted the passage at B130f in which Kant argues that any representation of combination presupposes a representation of unity.⁵⁷

Next, I want to consider some key passages from §16, the most prominent discussion of apperception in the B-Deduction. In the course of this discussion, Kant repeatedly speaks of the unity of apperception and, equivalently, the unity of self-consciousness. As the famous opening sentence of the section says, this unity must encompass all representations that are cognitively significant; that is, all representations that are not, as Kant puts it, “nothing for me.”⁵⁸ According to my interpretation, the unity at issue here is a unity in which representations partake in virtue of being possible contents of acts of combination, that is, of exercises of the capacity for apperceptive synthesis. I said that an act of apperceptive synthesis contains a consciousness of its own form. This consciousness includes an awareness of the fact that this form is general, that it can take different contents from the one represented in the current act. In virtue of this awareness, the content represented in the current act is represented as being related to the contents of other possible acts of the capacity; indeed, to the contents of all other possible acts of the capacity. In this manner, the currently represented content is represented as partaking in a global unity. This is what Kant calls the unity of apperception.

⁵⁷ “But in addition to the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, the concept of combination also carries with it the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is the representation of the *synthetic* unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise from the combination; rather, by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes possible the concept of combination” (Aber der Begriff der Verbindung führt außer dem Begriffe des Mannigfaltigen und der Synthesis desselben noch den der Einheit desselben bei sich. Verbindung ist Vorstellung der *synthetischen* Einheit des Mannigfaltigen. Die Vorstellung dieser Einheit kann also nicht aus der Verbindung entstehen, sie macht vielmehr dadurch, daß sie zur Vorstellung des Mannigfaltigen hinzukommt, den Begriff der Verbindung allererst möglich) (B130f).

⁵⁸ “The *I think* must *be able* to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me” (Das: *Ich denke*, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten *können*; denn sonst würde etwas in mir vorgestellt werden, was gar nicht gedacht werden könnte, welches eben so viel heißt als: die Vorstellung würde entweder unmöglich, oder wenigstens für mich nichts sein) (B131f).

Let me illustrate the point by turning to the case of judgment again. A grasp of the logical forms of judgment must include an understanding, not only of the fact that these forms are systematically related to each other, but also of the fact that representations exhibiting these forms, that is, concrete judgments, stand in relations to each other. And they do so in virtue of exhibiting these forms. As I pointed out in Chapter One, Kant's conception of judgment is such that the capacity of a judgment to stand in inferential relations to other judgments is not accidental to it. It is, rather, an aspect of the predicative structure of judgment itself. Part of what Kant means by saying that judgments are "functions of unity among our representations" (A69/B94) is that judgments stand in inferential relations to other judgments.⁵⁹ Because judgments are related to one another in this way, to represent something by means of the logical forms of judgment is to represent it as part of a whole, viz. the whole of cognition.⁶⁰

An act of the capacity for apperceptive synthesis, then, represents its content as partaking in what Kant calls the unity of apperception, and it does so in virtue of the consciousness of its form that is constitutive of it. This point can also be expressed by saying that, in virtue of its self-conscious nature, an act of apperceptive synthesis represents its content as being related to the contents of all other possible acts of the same capacity. In representing a content in this manner I implicitly represent it as forming a unity with all other possible contents. As Kant puts it, I represent it as belonging to a universal self-consciousness.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See Chapter One, §3.2.

⁶⁰ Cognition is "a whole of compared and connected representations" (ein Ganzes verglichener und verknüpfter Vorstellungen) (A97). This whole need not be actual. What matters is that in virtue of its form a judgment is represented as part of a whole that is at least possible, even if it is not actual (in the sense that not all of its parts exist).

⁶¹ Cf. B132: "For the manifold representations that are given in a certain intuition would not all together be *my* representations if they did not all together belong to a self-consciousness; i.e., as my representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must yet necessarily be in accord with the condition under which alone they *can* stand together in a universal self-consciousness [...]" (Denn die mannigfaltigen Vorstellungen, die in einer gewissen

Of the unity of apperception, understood along the lines just sketched, Kant says that it “contains a synthesis of representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis” (B133). Since ‘synthesis’ is equivalent to ‘combination,’ this amounts to the claim that unity of apperception is possible only because acts of combination are possible. According to the interpretation here developed, the point is that I can represent a particular content as belonging to the unity of apperception only because I can represent it by means of an act of combination that includes a consciousness of its own form such that this form is thereby represented as having universal application. This reading is corroborated, I think, by the reason that Kant goes on to give for his claim in the passage immediately following the one just quoted:

For the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is in itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The latter relation therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my *adding* one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis. (B133)⁶²

I take it that what Kant means by ‘empirical consciousness’ in the first sentence of this passage is akin to the consciousness of what in Chapter Three I called a merely receptive mind. It is kind of consciousness that can be accounted for by means of receptive capacities alone. In accordance with the Spontaneity Thesis, i.e. the thesis that combination is never given, Kant says here that merely receptive consciousness is “in itself dispersed.” It does not contain the representation of combination that is required for a content to be represented as partaking in the unity of apperception. This requires, rather, the “adding [of] one representation to the other and [the]

Anschauung gegeben werden, würden nicht insgesamt *meine* Vorstellungen sein, wenn sie nicht insgesamt zu einem Selbstbewußtsein gehörten, d.i. als meine Vorstellungen (ob ich mich ihrer gleich nicht als solcher bewußt bin) müssen sie doch der Bedingung notwendig gemäß sein, unter der sie allein in einem allgemeinen Selbstbewußtsein zusammenstehen *können* [...]).

⁶² Denn das empirische Bewußtsein, welches verschiedene Vorstellungen begleitet, ist an sich zerstreut und ohne Beziehung auf die Identität des Subjekts. Diese Beziehung geschieht also dadurch noch nicht, daß ich jede Vorstellung mit Bewußtsein begleite, sondern daß ich eine zu der andern *hinzusetze* und mir der Synthesis derselben bewußt bin.

being conscious of their synthesis.” What is required here, it seems, is an act that accounts for the representation of the whole to which the various contents are said to belong and that also accounts for the consciousness of these contents as belonging to this whole. An act of combination, which is such as to include an awareness of the mode of combination that the content is represented as exhibiting, meets this requirement.

8. Judgment

The remaining task for this chapter is to show that judgment can be understood as a species of apperceptive synthesis. I have already provided some support for this claim in the previous two sections, where I used the case of judgment to illustrate the central characteristics of apperceptive synthesis. What I want to do now is, first, to give a brief summary of the points I made in that connection and, second, to discuss the definition of judgment Kant puts forth in §19 of the B-Deduction.

The capacity for apperceptive synthesis exhibits two central characteristics: it is a self-conscious capacity, and its operations depend on a prior representation of unity. I have argued that the prior representation of unity is furnished by the modes of combination that Kant identifies, and that the capacity is a capacity for synthesis, or combination, because these modes are self-consciously represented in any exercise of the capacity.

Kant’s theory of judgment contains more determinate versions of these features. To begin with, judgment is self-conscious. To be making a judgment a subject must understand the significance of her own act. She must understand that a judgment is something that can be true or false. And she must understand that a judgment stands in inferential relations to other judgments,

so that it can serve as a reason for other judgments, and other judgments can serve as reasons for it.

In addition, a form-matter distinction is central to Kant's theory of judgment. The particular concepts that enter into a given judgment constitute its matter. The manner in which they are combined constitutes the logical form of the judgment. Kant distinguishes twelve elementary logical forms of judgment, and any judgment will exhibit some combination of these.⁶³ As I have said repeatedly, these forms should be thought of as modes of concept-combination. Jointly, they delimit the possible ways in which concepts may be combined to form a judgment.

In §6 above I said that the Table of Judgments, in which Kant presents the elementary logical forms of judgment, is intended to provide an inventory of the understanding's powers. This claim helps elucidate the role that the logical forms of judgment play in Kant's theory of judgment, and it lends support to my contention that judgment is a species of apperceptive synthesis. For it implies that the capacity for judgment is itself constituted by these logical forms, that is, by the modes of concept-combination. By this I mean that the capacity for judgment must be understood as the capacity to effect the representation of concepts as combined (i.e., a judgment) *by means of* the representation of a mode of concept-combination. The subject may not explicitly represent the mode of concept-combination as such a mode, but the crucial point is that it is by means of a grasp of this mode and its significance that concepts are combined in a judgment. The subject understands that it is in virtue of exhibiting this mode that given concepts have the kind of unity that is constitutive of a judgment. At the same time, she understands that

⁶³ See the discussion of the logical forms of judgment in Chapter Two, §2.1, for more detail.

the mode is a form, that is, something that is general and may take on different contents than the present one.

What I have just described is the self-conscious employment of the logical forms of judgment as modes of combination, that is, as forms that acts of apperceptive synthesis may take. That these modes are employed self-consciously makes it possible for Kant to think of the logical forms of judgment as specifications of the powers that make up the capacity to judge. To self-consciously represent such a mode of concept-combination, where this includes an understanding of its formal character, *is* to be in possession of a power of combining concepts. For included in this self-consciousness is an understanding of the fact that, qua form, a mode of concept-combination is a potentiality. It is the potentiality of this form's being brought to bear on a particular matter of judgment, that is, on particular concepts. If we think of a mode of concept-combination as a schema (not in Kant's technical sense), the point is that the schema, just as such, has the potential to be instantiated. A self-conscious representation of it therefore constitutes a capacity for instantiating it.⁶⁴

That Kant thinks of judgment in this way is borne out, I think, by the discussion of judgment he gives in §19 of the B-Deduction. He announces his main thesis in the section's title:

The logical form of every judgment consists in the objective unity of the apperception of the concepts contained in it. (B140)⁶⁵

I take it that the term 'logical form' here does not denote the elementary logical forms of judgment. Rather, it refers to that which the elementary forms jointly articulate; that is, to the essential formal features of judgment. That this is what Kant has in mind is clear from what he

⁶⁴ I take it that this is a more specific version (specific to judgment) of the point that Kant has in mind when he says of the synthetic unity of apperception that "this capacity is the understanding itself" (B134n), thus characterizing what one might have thought is a representation as constituting a capacity. Thanks to Sebastian Rödl for helping me see this.

⁶⁵ Die logische Form aller Urteile besteht in der objektiven Einheit der Apperzeption der darin enthaltenen Begriffe.

says in the section. At issue is the “Erklärung” of judgment in general.⁶⁶ In Kant’s usage, this term is tied to the topic of definition, of whatever kind.⁶⁷ Therefore, what is at issue is the essence of judgment.

The essence of judgment is said to consist in the objective unity of the apperception of the concepts making up a judgment. Let me first comment on the notion of objective unity, which we have not encountered so far. Among other things, Kant is concerned in §19 with the fact that judgment has objective purport. He uses the term ‘objective unity of consciousness,’ which contrasts with ‘subjective unity of consciousness,’ to distinguish a representation that has objective purport from a representation that does not. A merely associative unity of representations is an instance of the latter.⁶⁸ I will not address Kant’s discussion of this topic in §19, except to note that he sees a close connection between objective purport and unity of apperception.⁶⁹ What interests me is that Kant locates the essence of judgment in the fact that a judgment represents its content as exhibiting unity of apperception.

According to the interpretation I have developed in this chapter, to represent something as exhibiting unity of apperception is to represent it through an act of apperceptive synthesis.

⁶⁶ The opening sentence of the section runs thus: “I have never been able to satisfy myself with the definition that the logicians give of judgment in general” (Ich habe mich niemals durch die Erklärung, welche die Logiker von einem Urteile überhaupt geben, befriedigen können) (B140).

⁶⁷ In his discussion of definitions in the chapter on the Discipline of Pure Reason, Kant laments the poverty of the German language, which uses the same word, ‘Erklärung,’ for each of four distinct types of what we may loosely call definitions. These are what Kant calls exposition, explication, declaration, and definition (in a narrow, technical sense). Cf. A730/B758.

⁶⁸ Cf. B142.

⁶⁹ This connection is the topic of §17. The crucial passage occurs at B137: “An *object* [...] is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*. However, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity [...]” (*Objekt* aber ist das, in dessen Begriff das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung *vereinigt* ist. Nun erfordert aber alle Vereinigung der Vorstellungen Einheit des Bewußtseins in der Synthesis derselben. Folglich ist die Einheit des Bewußtseins dasjenige, was allein die Beziehung der Vorstellungen auf einen Gegenstand, mithin ihre objektive Gültigkeit [...] ausmacht [...]). The context of this passage makes it clear that by ‘unity of consciousness’ Kant means ‘unity of apperception.’ So the claim is that the unity of apperception grounds the objective purport of representations.

Simply noting this should suffice for supporting my case that judgment is a species of apperceptive synthesis. But it may be helpful briefly to consider once more the role that the logical form of a judgment plays in this. Kant says, specifically, that the logical form of a judgment consists in the unity of apperception of the concepts contained in it, and he claims that this is what the copula signifies.⁷⁰ My claim that the elementary logical forms of judgment should be understood as modes of concept-combination and that a consciousness of these modes is essential to the apperceptive nature of judgment helps us make sense of this.

Again, I am supposing that the logical form of judgment in general that Kant speaks of in §19 is related to the elementary logical forms of judgment catalogued in the Table of Judgments as follows: The logical form of judgment in general consists in the fact that every judgment exhibits some combination of the elementary logical forms. We can therefore regard the Table of Judgments as articulating the logical form of judgment in general.

Of the logical form of judgment in general Kant says here that it consists in the unity of apperception of a judgment's constituent concepts. If we think of a judgment as involving the self-conscious employment of modes of concept-combination, along the lines I have indicated, this claim becomes intelligible. In a judgment, concepts are represented as forming a characteristic kind of unity in virtue of the fact that they are represented as being caught up in a mode of concept-combination. This unity is the unity of apperception because it is essentially a self-conscious unity, that is, a unity possible through the act of a self-conscious capacity. More precisely, it is a self-conscious unity because the concepts have this unity only in virtue of the fact that the act involves a consciousness of the mode of concept-combination.⁷¹ For this reason,

⁷⁰ See B141f.

⁷¹ I spelled out above what this entails. See §6.

we are in a position to make sense of Kant's definition of judgment in §19 if we think of the modes of concept-combination that constitute the logical form of a judgment as articulating the form of the act of a self-conscious capacity for combination; or, as I have been putting it, of a capacity for apperceptive synthesis.

I have argued that Kant's discussion of judgment in §19 confirms my claim that judgment should be understood as an act of the capacity for apperceptive synthesis. If this is right, then judgment can be seen as an act of a capacity which we can also characterize independently of judgment. This opens up the conceptual space for thinking of this capacity as one that also admits of an exercise distinct from judgment. In the next chapter, I shall make the case that the act of sensible synthesis constitutes an exercise of the capacity for apperceptive synthesis which is distinct from judgment. The account of apperceptive synthesis that I have developed in this chapter now puts me in a position to do so. According to this account, the understanding, the spontaneous capacity of the mind, is most fundamentally a capacity for the self-conscious representation of combination; as Kant puts it, the understanding is "nothing further than the faculty of combining a priori and bringing the manifold of given representations under the unity of apperception [...]" (B134f).