

Chapter Three The Spontaneity Thesis

One of the distinctive commitments characterizing Kant's position in the *First Critique* is the claim that intuitions, the representations of sensibility, are not simply a matter of receiving impressions. Rather, for intuitions to play their cognitive role of giving objects to the mind, they depend on acts of synthesis, which account for the unity characteristic of representations that are of objects. Because this synthesis pertains specifically to the representations of sensibility, I call it sensible synthesis.

There is a question about how we should think of sensible synthesis. Like all acts of synthesis, it is an act of spontaneity. Since the spontaneous stem of the cognitive capacity is the understanding and Kant seems to identify the understanding with the capacity for judgment, it is tempting to think, as many commentators do, that the act of sensible synthesis is a type of judgment. This is the type of view I call Propositionalism. The most plausible way of spelling out a Propositionalist position is to think of intuitions as components of judgment, that is, to adopt a Component View of intuition. In Chapter One I argued that Kant does not hold a Component View of intuition. And this suggests that Propositionalism should be rejected. Accordingly, we should think of sensible synthesis as being distinct from judgment.

The positive account of the relation between judgment and intuition, which I developed in Chapter Two, confirmed this. But it also served to bring out that, once we give up Propositionalism, we are faced with the Unity Problem. This is the problem that the doctrine of sensible synthesis forces us to attribute to the understanding two distinct kinds of acts, judgment

and sensible synthesis. It is by no means clear, however, how it is possible for a single capacity to admit of two distinct kinds of exercise.

The discussion of the categories in the final third of Chapter Two highlighted the Unity Problem. It showed, on the one hand, that the categories are introduced by Kant as principles of sensible synthesis. On the other hand, the discussion also showed that, as pure concepts of the understanding, the categories in some sense articulate the nature of the understanding. But if the understanding is, in the first instance, a capacity for judgment, then how can the concepts that articulate the nature of this capacity at the same time serve as principles of an act distinct from judgment? Again, this raises the question of what the relation is between the understanding as a capacity for judgment and the understanding as a capacity for sensible synthesis.

The Unity Problem is generated in part by Kant's commitment to the claim that sensible synthesis is an act of spontaneity. This claim is entailed by what I call Kant's Spontaneity Thesis, which is the thesis that combination is never given. The Spontaneity Thesis is the topic of the present chapter. I will give both textual and philosophical grounds for ascribing this thesis to Kant. This serves a two-fold purpose: First, it lends additional support to my claim that sensible synthesis is distinct from judgment and, by the same token, gives us another reason to reject Propositionalism. Second, seeing Kant's motivation for espousing the Spontaneity Thesis will sharpen our understanding of the how Kant conceives the relation between the two stems of cognition, sensibility and understanding. As a result, we will be in a better position to confront the Unity Problem head-on. This will be the task of Chapters Four and Five.

Put differently, the task of this chapter can be characterized as follows: The doctrine of sensible synthesis is motivated by the idea that, if intuition gives objects to the mind, its unity

must have its source in the understanding. This is what the claim that combination is never given, i.e., the Spontaneity Thesis, amounts to. But if this idea generates a problem as severe and, on the face of it, as intractable as the Unity Problem, then we had better ask if the source of this problem, the Spontaneity Thesis, stands up to scrutiny. If it does not, the Unity Problem may well be spurious. In other words, the Unity Problem is well motivated only if the Spontaneity Thesis, on which it rests, is itself well motivated. To argue that it is, and that it has adequate support in Kant's texts, is the task of this chapter.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: I begin by sketching the received view of Kant's Spontaneity Thesis, which I call the Single Species View of the exercise of spontaneity and which holds that all acts of spontaneity are acts of judgment (§1). I then provide textual evidence for regarding this view as mistaken (§2). The alternative to which the textual evidence points is the Two Species View of the exercise of spontaneity, which says that judgment and sensible synthesis constitute two distinct ways of exercising spontaneity. Since this is just the view that generates the Unity Problem my strategy in the remainder of the chapter is to ask what reasons Kant has for accepting it. I supply two such reasons. The first is that what I call a merely receptive mind would not be capable of representing combination (§§3-6). The second derives from the cognitive function of intuition (§7). I end by considering an objection that serves to highlight some important features of Kant's conception of sensibility and its relation to the understanding (§§8-9).

1. Spontaneity as Judgment

Spontaneity, according to Kant, is the hallmark of the understanding, as the following passage, in which he characterizes the two basic cognitive powers of the mind, makes clear:

Our cognition springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first is the capacity of receiving representations (the receptivity for impressions), the second is the power of cognizing an object through these representations (the spontaneity of concepts). Through the first an object is *given* to us, though the second it is *thought* in relation to that representation (which is a mere determination of the mind). [...] If the *receptivity* of our mind to receive representations, insofar as it is affected in some way, is to be called sensibility, then the mind's power of producing representations from itself, the *spontaneity* of cognition, is the understanding. (A50f/B74f)¹

Sensibility and understanding, the passage says, are distinct cognitive capacities because they differ with regard to the way in which their respective representations come into being.

Sensibility is characterized as receptive because sensible representations result from, and thus depend on, the affection of the mind by something external. By contrast, the understanding is spontaneous because it generates representations out of itself, independently of external causes.

Because Kant also characterizes the understanding as a capacity for judgment, it has seemed natural to commentators to associate spontaneity with the capacity for judgment.² On this view, to exercise the spontaneous capacity of the mind is to make judgments. Accordingly, commentators have sought to explain the content of Kant's spontaneity thesis by considering the distinctive features of judgment.

¹ Unsre Erkenntnis entspringt aus zwei Grundquellen des Gemüts, deren die erste ist, die Vorstellungen zu empfangen (die Receptivität der Eindrücke), die zweite das Vermögen, durch diese Vorstellungen einen Gegenstand zu erkennen (Spontaneität der Begriffe); durch die erstere wird uns ein Gegenstand *gegeben*, durch die zweite wird dieser im Verhältnis auf jene Vorstellung (als bloße Bestimmung des Gemüts) *gedacht*. [...] Wollen wir die *Receptivität* unseres Gemüts, Vorstellungen zu empfangen, so fern es auf irgend eine Weise affiziert wird, Sinnlichkeit nennen: so ist dagegen das Vermögen, Vorstellungen selbst hervorzubringen, oder die *Spontaneität* des Erkenntnisses der Verstand.

² Compare, in particular, the following passage from the *Leitfaden*: "We can trace all acts of the understanding back to judgment, so the understanding in general may be regarded as a capacity to judge" (Wir können aber alle Handlungen des Verstandes auf Urteile zurückführen, so daß der Verstand überhaupt als ein Vermögen zu urteilen vorgestellt werden kann) (A69/B94, emphasis omitted). Part of Kant's point here is that, because concepts serve to cognize objects only when they are applied in judgments, a capacity for thought, or cognition through concepts, is a capacity for judgment.

The view advocated by Henry Allison is representative of this approach.³ Central to Allison's view is the idea that judgment must be construed as a "taking as". To make a judgment is to take something to be the case, for instance, to take some object *a* as being *F*. The point of this locution is that it makes explicit the requirement that, in making a judgment, the subject must be aware of the significance of its own act. In particular, the subject must be aware that its act contains a claim to objectivity, to representing how things are. How things are is independent of how they are represented as being, in the sense that representing them as being a certain way does not make it the case that they are this way. The representation may be true or false. If the subject is to be aware of the significance of its act, this means that it must have a grasp of the fact that its act is beholden to a standard of correctness independent of it in just this way. So judgment must involve a grasp of the fact that things may or may not be as a judgment says they are, which means that it must involve a grasp of the distinction between what one judges to be the case, on the one hand, and what actually is the case, on the other.

For judgment to include an understanding of its own significance is for it to be apperceptive, to involve a particular form of self-consciousness.⁴ In fact, Allison takes this to be the content of Kant's principle of apperception, according to which "the 'I think' must be able to accompany all my representations" (B131). The crucial point for our purposes, however, is that, according to Allison, the apperceptive nature of judgment requires spontaneity. To take a representation as a representation of how things objectively are, it is not sufficient for this representation merely to occur in the mind, perhaps as a result of sensible affection. Rather, the

³ See Allison's papers "On Naturalizing Kant's Transcendental Psychology" and "Kant's Refutation of Materialism" as well as his book *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. The view is also defended by Pippin, "Kant on the Spontaneity of Mind."

⁴ Judgment thus is what in Chapter Four I will call a self-conscious capacity.

subject must take a certain stance towards its own representation, attach a certain significance to it. And the taking up of this stance cannot be explained, Allison contends, through the workings of merely receptive capacities. Sensible, i.e. receptive, capacities can explain that a representation with a certain content occurs in the mind. But they cannot explain the taking up of the particular stance involved in attaching objective significance to this representation. In Allison's words,

[s]ensibility can present to the mind x 's that are F 's, but it cannot, not even in collaboration with the imagination, take or recognize them as such. This is the work of the understanding. In this respect, then, Kant's conception of spontaneity is an essential component of his account of the understanding, and particularly its distinction from sensibility.⁵

For Allison, then, the understanding is a spontaneous capacity because it is a capacity for judgment. Judgment is self-conscious in the sense explained, and it is the self-conscious nature of judgment that requires us to conceive of the understanding as a spontaneous capacity.

In addition, Allison identifies judgment with what Kant calls the synthesis of intuitions. Consider the following passage, where, commenting on Kant's identification of the understanding with spontaneity, construed as "the mind's power of producing representations from itself" (A51/B75), Allison writes:

The key to understanding this identification lies in Kant's further identification of discursive thought with judgment. [...] What judgment 'produces' from itself is the representation of objects, that is to say, objectively valid judgments. The understanding is, therefore, spontaneous in the sense that it 'constitutes' objectivity or objective reference in and through the act of judgment, and it does this by synthesizing the manifold of sensible intuition in accordance with its own inherent rules (the pure concepts of the understanding).⁶

In making a judgment, the passage says, the subject synthesizes a manifold of intuition. Moreover, since Kant holds that all synthesis is spontaneous, Allison is committed not just to the claim that all judgments are acts of synthesis, but also to the claim that all acts of synthesis are

⁵ Allison, "On Naturalizing Kant's Transcendental Psychology," 62.

⁶ Allison, "Kant's Refutation of Materialism", 94.

acts of judgment. The latter claim follows from Allison's construal of spontaneity as being tied to the 'taking-as' structure of judgment.

2. Textual Evidence

I believe that the strategy of explaining Kant's conception of spontaneity by focusing exclusively on the characteristics of judgment is mistaken. While it may be correct to say that Kant has a conception of judgment as "taking as," there is textual evidence suggesting that he recognizes exercises of spontaneity other than judgment. He seems to hold that there is a kind of exercise of spontaneity in sensible synthesis, which must be distinguished from exercises of spontaneity in judgment. If this is right, then the account of spontaneity that results from an exclusive focus on judgment is incomplete. What is more, this account has as a consequence the false claim, widely accepted among commentators, that all synthesis takes the form of judging.⁷

⁷ Besides Allison and Pippin, commentators who accept this claim include Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*, Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant*, Carl, *Die transzendente Deduktion der Kategorien in der ersten Auflage der Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*, Henrich, *Identität und Objektivität*, Paton, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*, Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, and Wolff, *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity*. – A non-judgmental exercise of spontaneity is recognized by Baum, "Erkennen und Machen in der Kritik der reinen Vernunft," as well as Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. My own view is in some respects close to Baum's, although my argument for a non-judgmental exercise of spontaneity differs from Baum's. Longuenesse presents a rich and nuanced account of both judgment and sensible synthesis, a detailed discussion of which would require more space than is available here. She rightly claims that sensible synthesis is a distinct act from judgment, but it is not clear that her own position has the resources for cashing this out. For the solution she offers to the Unity Problem makes it look as if judgment and sensible synthesis are distinguished only by being two different stages of the same process, as the following passage suggests: "The reason for the correspondence between logical forms of judgment (forms of 'intellectual synthesis,' mere forms of thought reflected in the categories) and sensible syntheses (which alone give a content to the categories, i.e. make them concepts of possible objects) is that the latter are the effects of the acts that tend to produce the former. The act of thinking whose *result* is judgment, because its *goal* is judgment, affects receptivity and thereby combines the sensible given with a view to judgments. This is how the capacity to form judgments introduces ordering into sensible perception: [...] by *generating* the sensible orderings (figure, succession, simultaneity...) that make possible reflection according to the forms of discursive combination" (Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 202f.). If this is not the right way to read her remark and she does in fact have resources for making the distinction more robust, then it is unclear whether she has a solution to the Unity Problem, since on her account the understanding is most fundamentally a capacity for judgment.

Although the textual evidence pointing directly and unequivocally to exercises of spontaneity distinct from judgment is not plentiful, this is partly compensated by the fact that some of it occurs in very prominent places. Thus, the central piece of textual evidence is found at the opening of the Transcendental Deduction in the B-edition of the *Critique*. This means that it is located at a crucial juncture in Kant's argument. The Transcendental Deduction constitutes the heart of the Transcendental Analytic, arguably even of the entire *First Critique*. It is here that Kant seeks to prove his central contention, that there are pure concepts of the understanding, whose application to objects is known a priori, and which therefore form the basis for synthetic judgments a priori. We can expect, therefore, that a claim advanced at this point in the text plays some role in the overall argument of the Deduction and thus has relevance to the overarching concerns of Kant's project.

Here, then, is the passage in question, taken from the first paragraph of §15, the opening section of the B-Deduction:

The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e. nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in our faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected. However, the *combination* (coniunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title *synthesis* in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves, and that among all representations *combination* is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity. (B129f)⁸

⁸ Das Mannigfaltige der Vorstellungen kann in einer Anschauung gegeben werden, die bloß sinnlich, d.i. nichts als Empfänglichkeit ist, und die Form dieser Anschauung kann a priori in unserem Vorstellungsvermögen liegen, ohne doch etwas anderes als die Art zu sein, wie das Subject afficirt wird. Allein die *Verbindung* (coniunctio) eines Mannigfaltigen überhaupt kann niemals durch Sinne in uns kommen und kann also auch nicht in der reinen Form der sinnlichen Anschauung zugleich mit enthalten sein; denn sie ist ein Actus der Spontaneität der Vorstellungskraft, und da man diese zum Unterschiede von der Sinnlichkeit Verstand nennen muß, so ist alle Verbindung, wir mögen

Kant here puts forth a general principle, which I call his Spontaneity Thesis. At a first approximation, we can formulate it as the thesis that combination cannot be given. Exactly what combination is will concern us later. For now we can simply note that the term is supposed to be equivalent to ‘synthesis,’ and thus concerns a topic familiar from the preceding parts of the *Transcendental Analytic*, in particular the concluding section of the “Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding” (for short, the *Leitfaden*), in which the Table of Categories is presented.⁹ That Kant there calls the categories “pure concepts of synthesis” (A80/B106) makes it clear that the topic of synthesis, hence combination, is closely connected to his chief concern of establishing the objective validity of the categories.

Of combination Kant says in this passage that it is an act of the spontaneous faculty of the mind, the understanding. Hence the Spontaneity Thesis. What is important for my purposes is the fact that he goes on to distinguish between different types of combination. In particular, he distinguishes between combination “of the manifold of intuition” and combination “of several concepts”.¹⁰ Since the latter, the combination of several concepts, must be judgment, the fact that

uns ihrer bewußt werden oder nicht, es mag eine Verbindung des Mannigfaltigen der Anschauung oder mancherlei Begriffe, und an der ersteren der sinnlichen oder nichtsinnlichen Anschauung sein, eine Verstandeshandlung, die wir mit der allgemeinen Benennung *Synthesis* belegen würden, um dadurch zugleich bemerklich zu machen, daß wir uns nichts als im Object verbunden vorstellen können, ohne es vorher selbst verbunden zu haben, und unter allen Vorstellungen die *Verbindung* die einzige ist, die nicht durch Objecte gegeben, sondern nur vom Subjecte selbst verrichtet werden kann, weil sie ein Actus seiner Selbstthätigkeit ist.

⁹ See the discussion of the *Leitfaden* and the categories in Chapter Two, §3.3. – Kant seems to use the term ‘combination’ (*Verbindung*) to refer both to the activity of synthesizing and to its result, the representation of a unified manifold. For the sake of simplicity, I will not usually track this distinction. Nothing in my argument, however, hangs on this.

¹⁰ That Kant speaks of “sensible” and “non-sensible” intuition when he further differentiates between two types of combination in intuition is odd. Non-sensible intuition is intellectual intuition. Intellectual intuition is spontaneous, rather than receptive. At B135 Kant implies that cognition through spontaneous intuition is such that the distinction between an act of combination, on the one hand, and a manifold in need of being combined, on the other, does not have application. One would expect, therefore, that the thesis that all combination is an act of the understanding does not apply to the case of non-sensible intuition. This view is taken by Erdmann, who edited the text of the *Critique* for the Academy edition. He suggests that the passage should be regarded as a slip of the pen and points out that it is included in the list of typographical errors in the *Critique* published by Mellin in 1794. Like Mellin, Erdmann

he separates out the former as distinct from this implies that there must be a kind of combination of the manifold of intuition that is distinct from judgment. If we call this kind of combination sensible synthesis, we can take Kant to be saying that sensible synthesis constitutes a distinct kind of combination from judgment. The former is combination in intuition, the latter is the combination of concepts.

Before I present further textual evidence, let me introduce some terminology. I want to distinguish between two ways of reading the Spontaneity Thesis. The first reading attributes to Kant the view that there is only one type of spontaneous act of the mind, viz. judgment. On this reading all exercises of spontaneity are acts of judgment. I call this the Single-Species View of the exercise of spontaneity:

Single-Species View of the Exercise of Spontaneity: There is only one type of spontaneous act of the mind, viz. judgment.

Accordingly, a reading which attributes to Kant the Single-Species View is called a Single-Species Reading. Allison's reading, as sketched above, is a Single-Species Reading. By contrast, the reading I want to advocate takes Kant to distinguish between two distinct kinds of exercise of

suggests that the passage should be emended to read 'empirical or non-empirical intuition' in place of 'sensible or non-sensible intuition' (cf. *Ak.* III, 587).

On the other hand, even the cognition of an intuitive intellect involves both a representation of unity and a representation of manifoldness. It is just that a single capacity accounts for both. Accordingly, both are represented in one and the same act (cf. again B135 and my discussion of this passage in Chapter Four, §5). In light of this, one might think that the notion of combination gets a grip in the case of the intuitive intellect as well. If this is plausible, then it certainly makes sense to say that the combination of a manifold of non-sensible intuition is an act of the intellect. Indeed, since a non-sensible intuition is an act of the intellect (viz. an intuitive intellect), the claim is trivially true. The following passage from the Paralogism chapter might be thought to support this reading: "Thinking, taken by itself, is merely the logical function and hence the pure spontaneity of combining the manifold of a merely possible intuition; and in no way does it present the subject of consciousness as appearance, simply because it takes no account at all of the mode of intuition, whether it is sensible *or intellectual*." (Das Denken, für sich genommen, ist bloß die logische Funktion, mithin lauter Spontaneität der Verbindung des Mannigfaltigen einer bloß möglichen Anschauung, und stellt das Subjekt des Bewußtseins keinesweges als Erscheinung dar, bloß darum, weil es gar keine Rücksicht auf die Art der Anschauung nimmt, ob sie sinnlich *oder intellektuell* sei) (B428f, my emphasis).

spontaneity. One is judgment, the other is sensible synthesis. It attributes to him what I call the Two-Species View of the exercise of spontaneity:

Two-Species View of the Exercise of Spontaneity: There are two distinct types of exercise of spontaneity, viz. judgment and sensible synthesis.

Again, I call a reading that takes Kant to hold this view a Two-Species Reading. As I said above, my goal in this chapter is to put forth a Two-Species Reading of Kant's conception of spontaneity.

In addition to the passage from §15, there are two main sources of direct textual evidence for the claim that Kant holds the Two-Species View.¹¹ One is his essay "On the Progress of Metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff" (written in 1793, though published only posthumously), the other is his correspondence with Jacob Sigismund Beck, a former student of Kant's who, at the time of the correspondence, was working on a book intended to make the Critical philosophy accessible to a wider audience. Consider first a passage from the Progress-essay:

Once the subjective form of sensibility is applied, as it must be if its objects are to be taken as appearances, to objects as the forms thereof, it brings about in its [their?] determination a representation inseparable from this [i.e. the determination, T.L.], namely that of the composite. For we can represent a determinate space to ourselves in no other way than by drawing it, i.e., by adding one space to the other, and so also with time.

Now the representation of a composite, as such, is not a mere intuition, but requires the concept of a compounding, so far as it is applied to intuition in space and time. So this concept (along with that of its opposite, the simple), is one that is not abstracted from intuitions, as a partial representation contained in them, but is a basic concept, and a priori at that – in the end the sole basic concept a priori, which is the original foundation in the understanding for all concepts of sensible objects.

There will thus be as many a priori concepts resident in the understanding, to which objects given to the senses must be subordinated, as there are types of compounding (synthesis) with consciousness, i.e., as there are types of synthetic unity of apperception of the manifold given in intuition." (*Fortschritte*, Ak. XX, 271)¹²

¹¹ There is also additional textual evidence in the *Critique* itself. However, many of the relevant passages have been read by commentators in different ways. Without further interpretation, therefore, they cannot be regarded as dispositive. I discuss some of these passages in Chapter Five.

¹² Die subjektive Form der Sinnlichkeit, wenn sie, wie es nach der Theorie der Gegenstände derselben als Erscheinungen geschehen muß, auf Objekte, als Formen derselben, angewandt wird, führt in ihrer Bestimmung eine

Kant talks about ‘composition’ (*Zusammensetzung*) here, rather than ‘combination’ (*Verbindung*), but for our purposes the difference is irrelevant. According to the technical usage he defines at B202n, combination (lat. *coniunctio*) is a genus whose species are composition (lat. *compositio*) and connection (lat. *nexus*), where composition is combination in accordance with the mathematical categories, i.e. quantity and quality, while connection is combination in accordance with the dynamical categories, the categories of relation and modality, including, in particular, the categories of substance-accident and causality. However, Kant’s identification of ‘composition’ and ‘synthesis’ in the final sentence of the passage, along with what he says there about the pure concepts, suggests that he is using ‘composition’ in a wider sense, as referring to the genus.

What is of interest in this passage is that Kant refers specifically to the combination of spatial and temporal manifolds and suggests that, in the case of space, combination is effected by “drawing.”¹³ While it may not be clear exactly how we should conceive of this activity, it does seem clear that it is not identical to judging. The “adding of one space to another”, which

Vorstellung herbei, die von dieser unzertrennlich ist, nämlich die des Zusammengesetzten. Denn einen bestimmten Raum können wir uns nicht anders vorstellen, als, indem wir ihn ziehen, d. i. einen Raum zu dem andern hinzutun, und eben so ist es mit der Zeit bewandt.

Nun ist die Vorstellung eines Zusammengesetzten, als eines solchen, nicht bloße Anschauung, sondern erfordert den Begriff einer Zusammensetzung, so fern er auf die Anschauung in Raum und Zeit angewandt wird. Dieser Begriff also (samt dem seines Gegenteils, des Einfachen) ist ein Begriff, der nicht von Anschauungen, als eine in diesen enthaltene Teilvorstellung abgezogen, sondern ein Grundbegriff ist, und zwar a priori, endlich der einzige Grundbegriff a priori, der allen Begriffen von Gegenständen der Sinne ursprünglich im Verstande zum Grunde liegt.

Es werden also so viel Begriffe a priori im Verstande liegen, worunter Gegenstände, die den Sinnen gegeben werden, stehen müssen, als es Arten der Zusammensetzung (Synthesis) mit Bewußtsein, d. i. als es Arten der synthetischen Einheit der Apperzeption des in der Anschauung gegebenen Mannigfaltigen gibt.

¹³ This echoes a well-known passage from the *Critique*, in which Kant says that we cannot represent a line except by drawing it in thought and goes on to describe this activity as one of synthesis, specifically as *figurative synthesis* (*synthesis speciosa*); see B154. As Longuenesse argues forcefully in *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, figurative synthesis is modeled on mathematical construction. I discuss Kant’s conception of mathematical construction and its relation to the notion of figurative synthesis in Chapter Five.

presumably is what we do when we, for instance, draw a line by moving a point, is clearly not something we effect by making a judgment. And this is evidence for the claim that there is a kind of exercise of spontaneity that is distinct from judging.

It might be objected that the reference to the categories – the “a priori concepts resident in the understanding” Kant talks about in the final sentence of the passage – points in the opposite direction. Since the categories derive from the logical forms of judgment, the fact that Kant associates synthesis with the categories might be taken to suggest that all synthesis takes the form of judgment, after all. As will become clear when I discuss the notion of a sensible mode of combination below, I think this objection is based on a mistaken view of the categories.¹⁴ The fact that the categories derive from the logical forms of judgment does not support the identification of spontaneity with judgment.

The following passages from the correspondence with Beck also contain evidence that Kant holds the Two-Species View of the exercise of spontaneity:

We cannot perceive composition as given. Rather, we must produce it ourselves: we must *compose*, if we are to represent anything *as composed* (even space and time). (Letter to J. S. Beck, July 1, 1794, Ak. XI, 515)¹⁵

In my judgment everything depends on this: since, in the empirical concept of the *composite* the composition itself cannot be given by means of mere intuition and its apprehension, but only through the *self-active combination* of the manifold in intuition – that is, it can be represented only in a consciousness in general (which is not in turn empirical) – this combination and its function must be subject to rules a priori in the mind, which constitute the pure thought of an object in general (the pure concept of the understanding), by which the apprehension of the manifold must be governed, insofar as it amounts to *one* intuition; furthermore, these a priori rules constitute the condition of all possible empirical cognition of the composite (or that which belongs to it). On the common view, the representation of the composite as such figures, *as given*, among the representations of the manifold, which is apprehended, and does therefore not belong

¹⁴ Compare also the discussion of the categories and their relation to the logical forms of judgment in Chapter Two.

¹⁵ Die Zusammensetzung können wir nicht als gegeben wahrnehmen, sondern wir müssen sie selbst machen: wir müssen *zusammensetzen*, wenn wir uns etwas *als zusammengesetzt* vorstellen sollen (selbst den Raum und die Zeit).

entirely to spontaneity, as however it really must, etc. (Letter to J. S. Beck, October 16, 1792, *Ak.* XI, 376)¹⁶

The first passage is a concise statement of the general principle, the Spontaneity Thesis. Again, there is a reference to space and time, the forms of intuition. So here, too, Kant seems to be saying that the representation of, say, a spatial figure requires an act of combination. Since, again, it seems plausible to hold that it takes something other than an act of judgment to represent a spatial figure, the implication is that there is a type of synthesis, of exercising spontaneity, which is distinct from judging.¹⁷

This is confirmed by the second passage, specifically by the repeated reference to intuition. Kant speaks of “the self-active combination of the manifold *in intuition*” (my emphasis) and of “the apprehension of the manifold [...], insofar as it amounts to *one* intuition.” Of particular interest is the last sentence, where Kant in effect admits that his view is counterintuitive, and thereby provides indirect support for the Two-Species View of the exercise of spontaneity. For the point about the common view, as he calls it, clearly concerns perception, the apprehension of sensory manifolds. Otherwise there would be no reason for the common view to suppose that the composite is given. So if Kant says, of this particular case, that even though combination may appear to be given, it is in fact due to spontaneity, he must be talking about exercises of spontaneity in perception itself, as distinct from judgment.

¹⁶ Meinem Urteile nach kommt alles darauf an: daß, da im empirischen Begriffe des *Zusammengesetzten* die Zusammensetzung nicht vermittelst der bloßen Anschauung und deren Apprehension sondern nur durch die *selbsttätige Verbindung* des Mannigfaltigen in der Anschauung gegeben und zwar in ein Bewußtsein überhaupt (das nicht wiederum empirisch ist) vorgestellt werden kann, diese Verbindung und die Funktion derselben unter Regeln a priori im Gemüte stehen müsse, welche das reine Denken eines Objekts überhaupt (den reinen Verstandesbegriff) ausmachen unter welchem die Apprehension des Mannigfaltigen stehen muß, so fern es *eine* Anschauung ausmacht, und auch die Bedingung aller möglichen Erfahrungserkenntnis vom Zusammengesetzten (oder zu ihm gehörigen) ausmacht, (d.i. darin eine Synthesis ist) die durch jene Grundsätze ausgesagt wird. Nach dem gemeinen Begriffe kommt die Vorstellung des Zusammengesetzten als solchen mit unter den Vorstellungen des Mannigfaltigen welches apprehendiert wird *als gegeben* vor und sie gehört sonach nicht, wie es doch sein muß, gänzlich zur Spontaneität usw.

¹⁷ Again, what this type of synthesis consists in will concern me below.

3. The Merely Receptive Mind

While there may be textual evidence favoring the Two-Species View, this view faces a number of problems. To begin with, while it may be plausible to suppose that judgment must be spontaneous, it is less easy to see why sensible combination should be spontaneous as well. To make a convincing case against the Single-Species Reading, we should be able to identify the philosophical motivation for Kant to hold the Two-Species View. There are, however, at least two considerations suggesting that there is no such motivation, that combination should in fact be regarded as given. First, there is what we might call the phenomenology of perception. We seem to perceive all kinds of combination: we perceive things as standing in spatial and temporal relations; we perceive objects as bearing properties; we arguably even perceive causal interactions among objects. These are all kinds of combination that must fall inside the scope of Kant's thesis, given that they are kinds of combination governed by various categories (quantity, substance, and causality, in my example). Second, the claim that sensible combination cannot be given threatens to undermine the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. For sensibility is defined as the receptive capacity of the mind. What is sensible, this seems to imply, cannot be spontaneous. It must be given. So if there is a distinctly sensible species of combination, the very fact of its being sensible seems to entail that it must be given. If it is not, the strict separation Kant wants to uphold between the receptive and spontaneous aspects of the mind seems to break down.

There are, then, reasons not to attribute to Kant the Two-Species View. But since the textual evidence seems to point in the opposite direction, we need to ask what might nevertheless prompt him to hold this view, despite the apparent pressures against such a move. This is what I

want to do in what follows. So my guiding question will be what reasons Kant has for affirming the Two-Species version of the Spontaneity Thesis and for holding that no combination whatsoever, including specifically sensible combination, is given. The strategy I shall pursue is based on the following thought. If sensible combination could be given, the receptive capacity of the mind would be responsible for it. We should therefore be able to understand the idea of sensible combination without reference to spontaneity. If this is right, then a merely receptive mind, that is, a mind not possessed of a spontaneous faculty of representation, should be capable of enjoying sensible combination. This is so regardless of whether this would take the same form as in the human case, that is, the case of a mind that is not merely receptive, according to Kant. What matters is that, if the representation of combination can be given, then it is possible in principle for a merely receptive mind to represent combination. We can therefore make progress if we reflect on what a merely receptive mind can and cannot do. If it turns out that a merely receptive mind is in fact incapable of enjoying representations of sensible combination, we will have identified a reason for adopting the Two-Species View.

The viability of this strategy depends on two conditions. First, we must have an independent grip on the distinction between a merely receptive and a finite rational mind; independent, that is, of any claims about combination. Second, we need to flesh out the notion of sensible combination. That is, we must know what counts as sensible combination. Now, it may seem that my example above shows that we already know this: sensible combination is combination in accordance with the categories. Although I will argue that this is correct, we need a more principled reason for this claim. Providing such a reason is the task of the next section. For the remainder of this section I will discuss the idea of a merely receptive mind.

To get the idea of a merely receptive mind into view, it will be helpful to start with the distinction between an intuitive and a discursive understanding, as Kant conceives it; or equivalently, an infinite and a finite rational mind. An infinite mind is characterized by the fact that thought and reality do not come apart. That is, an infinite mind cannot have false thoughts. The reason is that an infinite mind creates the objects of its thought through the very act of thinking them. As we can also put it, an infinite mind (or, equivalently, an intuitive understanding) gives itself its own objects.

Contrast a finite rational, or discursive, mind. Here an act of thinking does not, through its mere occurrence, guarantee its own truth. The objects of finite thought are not created by it, but have independent existence. For this reason, a discursive mind cannot know through thinking alone whether the objects of its thought exist. It is this fact that, in Kant's mind, creates the need for a receptive, or sensible, capacity in a discursive mind. In addition to the capacity for thought, a finite mind needs a way of ascertaining whether the objects of its thought exist. This requires a receptive capacity of representation, a capacity to have representations of objects in virtue of being affected by them. Because affection by the object presupposes the object's existence, such a capacity is a capacity for knowing existence. Its receptive nature enables it to supply what a discursive understanding needs.

Based on this notion of a receptive, or sensible, capacity of representation we can form the idea of a merely receptive mind. This is a mind whose capacities are exhausted by the capacity for sensible representation. It was implicit in the foregoing that a sensible capacity is essentially object-dependent: it is a capacity to have representations of objects in virtue of being

affected by them. For affection to take place, the object must be present. That is, the mind's (properly functioning) sensible capacities must be in a position to register the object's presence.

Whatever the precise nature of the representations that are generated in the subject through affection by the object, the idea of an object-dependent sensible capacity of representation is sufficient for us to ask what kind of cognition a being that has only sensible powers is capable of, and to contrast this with the kind of cognition enjoyed by a being that is both sensible and intellectual, that is, a finite rational being, a being possessed of a discursive understanding. As I said, an object-dependent capacity of representation essentially depends on the presence of the object for its exercise. It can represent only what is within the purview of its senses. If we add to this what Kant calls the reproductive imagination, that is, a capacity to recall previously enjoyed sensible representations, we can say that a merely receptive mind can have representations either in virtue of present affection by objects, or in virtue of past affection by objects. Moreover, in various comments about animals, Kant claims that animals are capable of forming associative connections among the representations they enjoy.¹⁸ Since he also thinks that animals have a receptive capacity of representation, but no intellectual one, we can add the idea of connection by association to the repertoire of a merely receptive mind.

The idea of association at work here is essentially Hume's: If representations A and B are repeatedly experienced together, a disposition is formed to call to mind one of them on the occasion of the other. Thus, if the subject has, say, a perception of A, it also represents B, even though B is not a content that is currently being perceived.¹⁹ With connection by association added to the repertoire of a merely receptive mind, we now have three basic ways in which such

¹⁸ See e.g. the letter to Marcus Herz of May 26, 1789, *Ak.* XI, 48-55.

¹⁹ See Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sections III and V.

a mind can enjoy representations: by being affected, by recalling past affection, and by forming, and actualizing, associative dispositions.

4. Sensible Combination

I suggested that the strategy of investigating why Kant might hold that sensible combination cannot be given by reflecting on what a merely receptive mind is capable of depends on two conditions. The first condition is that we have a grip on the distinction between a merely receptive and a finite rational mind independently of the idea of sensible combination. I have just shown that this condition is satisfied. The second condition is that we have an account of what sensible combination is. I will now provide such an account.

For this purpose, I will employ the notion of a sensible mode of combination introduced in Chapter Two. I will argue that this notion captures the idea of sensible combination that is at work in Kant's discussion of the Spontaneity Thesis. We can take as our clue the remark from §15, quoted above, that all combination is an act of the understanding, which is called synthesis (cf. B130). If we connect this with the claim from §10, that the categories are the pure concepts of synthesis, we get the idea that the categories constitute an inventory of the various forms that combination can take.²⁰ This fits well with what Kant goes on to say about the categories in the Transcendental Deduction. He argues, first, that all combination presupposes the idea of a unity; second, that this unity is the synthetic unity of apperception, and third, that the categories articulate the unity of apperception. We can surmise, therefore, that the categories are, or are at least closely related to, the forms that sensible combination can take. If this is right, we can determine what sensible combination is if we can say how the categories function.

²⁰ This idea is explicitly mentioned in the passage from the *Progress Essay* quoted in §2 above.

The categories derive from the logical forms of judgment, as listed in the Table of Judgments. We therefore need to begin by saying something about these. A logical form of judgment, in Kant's sense, is the way in which, in the basic case, two concepts are combined in a judgment. This sense of logical form is based on the notion of logical form familiar in traditional Aristotelian logic, as illustrated by the Square of Oppositions.

To give an example, consider the judgments 'All swans are white' and 'Some swans are not white'. Because these two judgments contain the same concepts, Kant would say that they have the same matter. They differ only in respect of their logical form. In the terminology of Kant's Table, the first is a universal affirmative categorical judgment, while the second is a particular negative categorical judgment. Because the logical form of a judgment, in this sense, specifies the way in which its component concepts are combined, I call the forms listed in Kant's table modes of concept-combination. Thus, 'universal judgment' is a mode of concept-combination, as are, for instance, 'negative judgment' and 'categorical judgment'.²¹

Kant defines the categories as "concepts of an object in general, by means of which the intuition of an object in general is regarded as determined with regard to one of the logical functions of judgment" (B128). For present purposes, we can take the term 'logical function of judgment' to be equivalent to 'logical form of judgment.'²² To say, then, that the intuition of an object is determined with regard to one of the logical forms of judgment is to say this: given the particular logical form of a judgment, there is a fact of the matter (i.e. it is "determined") as to

²¹ Note that we need to distinguish between the logical forms (plural) listed in Kant's table, and the logical form (singular) of any given judgment. If we call the former the elementary logical forms of judgment, we can say that the logical form of any given judgment will be some combination of these elementary forms. Which combinations are possible need not concern us here. Cf. Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, for discussion.

²² They are, in any case, intimately related: a function of judgment is the capacity to generate judgments with a particular logical form.

which features an intuition must have for it to be an intuition of the object that the judgment is about. In other words, there is a fact of the matter as to what properties an intuition must have for it to be related to the judgment in the proper way, viz. in such a way as to be an intuition of the very same object that the judgment is about. Let me elaborate on this.

First, the definition speaks of “an object in general.” This means that the categories operate at a level of generality different from that of particular judgments about particular objects. They abstract from distinctions among kinds of objects, and pertain only to what it is for judgments to be about objects at all, regardless of distinctions among kinds of objects. But this means that what is at issue here is the objective validity of judgment in general. In Kant’s terminology, the categories pertain to the form, as opposed to the matter, of judgment. As a consequence, we must also abstract from distinctions among intuitions of different kinds of objects, if we are to consider the objective validity of judgment at this level of abstraction. What this means is that we need to be able to say something about what it takes for a judgment to be a thought about an object that can also be given in intuition, without attending to differences among kinds of objects. We need to be able to characterize intuitions at a level which abstracts from such differences. So we must identify those features of intuitions which, as we might put it, correspond to the logical form of a judgment; those features, in other words, in virtue of which intuitions satisfy the very abstract description ‘giving objects to the mind.’

Second, to “determine” intuitions with regard to the logical forms of judgment is to correlate sensible characteristics with modes of concept-combination. At the level of “object in general” these sensible characteristics must be formal in the sense that they pertain to all possible intuitions, regardless of what kinds of objects they are of. I call these formal characteristics

sensible modes of combination. So the categories serve to correlate modes of concept-combination with sensible modes of combination. Given the parallel articulation of the Table of Judgments and the Table of Categories, this means that to each logical form of judgment there corresponds a sensible mode of combination.

Because of the essential heterogeneity of understanding and sensibility, sensible modes of combination have to be specified in terms belonging to the form of sensibility. Kant provides such a specification, in terms of time, the form of inner sense, in the chapter on the Pure Principles; more specifically, by schematizing the categories. Although we need not concern ourselves with the details of that doctrine, it will be helpful to illustrate the notion of a sensible mode of combination by means of an example. Consider the categorical form of judgment, the nexus of subject and predicate. The correlated category is that of substance and accident. Simplifying slightly, we can take this to mean that a judgment of categorical form represents its object as a substance bearing a property. But what is it for a substance bearing a property to be given in intuition? What are the sensible criteria of being a substance and of being a property? The correlated sensible mode of combination, specified in terms of the form of inner sense, time, provides an answer: A substance is that which persists through changes of its states.²³ Obviously, this answer would need much unpacking. But the basic point should be clear. A sensible mode of combination specifies, in terms of the formal properties of intuition, what it is for the object of a judgment with the correlated logical form to be given in intuition.

I will now argue that the notion of sensible combination we are interested in is exactly the notion of combination contained in the idea of a sensible mode of combination. More specifically, sensible combination, in the sense in which it is the concern of the Spontaneity

²³ Cf. A182/B224ff.

Thesis, is precisely that which sensible modes of combination are modes of. I already gestured at some supporting considerations above, when I suggested that we could glean from a consideration of §§10, 15, 16, and 20 the claim that the categories are meant to articulate the unity that, according to §15, is presupposed by any combination in the sense of the Spontaneity Thesis. But there is more to be said.

The most important consideration concerns the cognitive function of intuition. Through intuition, Kant says, objects are “given” to the mind, while through concepts they are thought.²⁴ I take this to mean that thought is beholden to intuition, in the sense that whether or not a judgment is about an object depends on whether the object is a possible content of intuition. Thought by itself cannot ensure that the object it purports to be about is possible, in the sense of being a possible existent.²⁵ By contrast, intuition is cognition of existence. Intuition is object-dependent, or, to put the point in Kant’s terms, intuition is immediately related to its object. In intuition, we might say, objects are directly present to the mind. Now, Kant holds that everything that can possibly exist is a possible object of intuition. Therefore, a judgment is about a possible object, and thus has objective purport, only if its object is a possible object of intuition.

If judgment is beholden to intuition in this manner, then there must be a certain kind of correspondence between intuition and judgment. More specifically, it must be possible for something to be an object of intuition and also to be an object of judgment. Intuitions and judgments, that is, must be representations of the same kinds of things. Put differently, it must be possible in principle for the very same thing to be both an object of thought and an object of

²⁴ Cf. A50/B74, quoted above.

²⁵ Kant calls this real possibility and distinguishes it from merely logical possibility. Anything that can be the content of a non-self-contradictory thought is logically possible. But it is one of the fundamental commitments of the Critical philosophy that logical possibility does not entail real possibility. In the terms of Chapter One, real possibility depends not just on logical conditions, but also on sensible conditions.

intuition. What is more, we must be able to ascertain whether this condition is met. That is, we must be in a position to tell what it is for the object of a judgment of a certain structure to be given in intuition. And this must be so despite the essential heterogeneity of intuition and thought. Using Kant's favored term 'unity,' we can put the point by saying that intuitions must be so constituted that their unity is the sensible analogue to the unity of judgment. Only if this condition is satisfied can intuitions play the role of giving to the mind objects that are also possible objects of thought. And this entails that if intuitions do play this role, they must exhibit what I have been calling sensible modes of combination. The unity of intuition, therefore, is the unity articulated by the system of sensible modes of combination.²⁶

Further support for this claim can be derived from consideration of the goal of the Transcendental Deduction. The Deduction is intended to establish the objective validity of the categories, or pure concepts of the understanding. For the categories to be objectively valid is for them to apply to intuitions. In fact, since they are pure concepts, it is for them to apply to intuitions of necessity – which means that if the categories are objectively valid, there is no possible intuition to which they do not apply. Now, for the categories to apply to intuitions is for intuitions to have certain characteristics. What are these characteristics? The answer is to be found in the definition of the categories, already quoted earlier in this section. According to this

²⁶ It should be noted that when I say that the unity of intuition must be the sensible analogue to the unity of judgment I am making a formal point. It concerns those features of intuitions and judgments, respectively, which pertain to them in virtue of being the kinds of representations they are, irrespective of their content. I emphasize this in order to show that the point is compatible with an important difference between intuition and judgment. There is a sense in which intuitions are more determinate than judgments. Thus, when I judge that the cat is on the mat, my judgment leaves indeterminate e.g. the size, color, and position of the cat. But in my intuition of the cat on the mat these features are fully determinate. That is, in my intuition the cat has a definite size, color, position etc. So an intuition that "corresponds to" my judgment is more determinate than the judgment in a number of ways, and to that extent has a more specific content than the judgment. But we can acknowledge this fact while still maintaining that the formal features of the intuition, that is, the sensible mode of combination it exhibits, are strictly analogous to the mode of concept-combination exhibited by the judgment. For the point about determinacy concerns only the matter, in Kant's sense, of these representations, not their formal features.

definition, the categories are concepts of an object in general by means of which its intuition is regarded as determined with regard to the logical functions of judgment. Again, I take this to mean that a category relates an intuition to the logical form of possible judgments about the object of the intuition. Put differently, a category characterizes an intuition with regard to the logical form of judgments that are about the object given by this intuition. And as I argued above, the category does this by specifying, in its schematized version, the sensible mode of combination the intuition exhibits.

We can now give the following argument. If the Transcendental Deduction is intended to establish the objective validity of the categories, and if for the categories to be objectively valid is for intuitions to exhibit sensible modes of combination, then the sense of combination at work in the principle about combination announced at the opening of the Deduction must be that of a sensible mode of combination. Therefore, the Spontaneity Thesis, the thesis that combination cannot be given, amounts to the claim that sensible modes of combination cannot be given.

5. An Objection

One might object to both of the arguments just given that they beg the question. They beg the question because in deriving the notion of sensible combination from judgment, that is, from a capacity characteristic of finite rational minds, as opposed to merely receptive minds, they already assume that combination is something a merely receptive mind is not capable of. For if the sense of combination is such that it is tailored to the unity of judgment, it is but a small step to the thought that combination depends on capacities a merely receptive mind is by definition not possessed of. And if this is so, then the strategy I am pursuing is pointless, because the

answer to the question whether a merely receptive mind is capable of representing sensible combination is pre-determined.

The first thing to say in response to this objection is that the notion of combination, as I have introduced it, leaves it open whether or not combination can be given. It is true that, according to this notion, sensible combination is defined as the analogue, in intuition, to the unity of judgment. But by itself, this leaves it open whether combination in this sense can be accounted for by merely receptive capacities. So far, nothing has been said about what it takes to account for the presence of sensible combination. I have only specified what sensible combination consists in.

But if this is so, then my strategy for identifying the reasons Kant has for holding the Two-Species View is not circular. If the fact that the notion of sensible combination must be understood by reference to the unity of judgment does not by itself establish that sensible combination cannot be given, then the reason why sensible combination cannot be given cannot be that it must be understood by reference to the unity of judgment.

Nonetheless, the objection gets at something important. Let me try to bring this out by retracing my steps. The goal is to understand why Kant holds that *sensible* combination, in particular, cannot be given. This claim appears puzzling because sensibility is a receptive capacity, that is, a capacity to have representations in virtue of being affected. This means that sensible representations are given. And if sensible representations are given, then why is the kind of combination exhibited by these representations not equally something that is given? I suggested that we can make headway by considering what a merely receptive mind is capable of; in particular, by considering whether a merely receptive mind is capable of representing

combination. This is informative with regard to our goal for the following reason: if combination can be given, then combination is something that sensible capacities can account for. And if combination is something that sensible capacities can account for, then a merely receptive mind is capable of exhibiting it. Because of this connection, we should be able to learn something about why combination cannot be given by considering why a merely receptive mind cannot exhibit it.

We must of course be careful not to end up saying something to the effect that a merely receptive mind cannot exhibit combination because it is not spontaneous. That would defeat the purpose of my strategy. And this is what the objection highlights. But if we have, first, a conception of a merely receptive mind that is more substantive than a merely negative characterization in terms of its difference from a spontaneous mind and, second, a notion of combination that does not have built into it the claim that it must be spontaneous, then we should be able to give a more informative response. We should be able to say something of the form ‘A merely receptive mind cannot exhibit combination because combination is F, and a merely receptive mind can only do G; but G is not sufficient to account for F’.

The advantage of this strategy is that it will allow us to say why the claim, noted above, that we seem to perceive things as combined all the time does not pose an objection to the Spontaneity Thesis; why it is, in other words, compatible with the Two-Species View of the exercise of spontaneity.

6. Combination and the Merely Receptive Mind

We are now in a position to provide reasons, on Kant's behalf, for his commitment to the Two-Species View. I will argue that there are two such reasons. The first is that a merely receptive mind is incapable, in principle, of enjoying sensible combination. The second is that, even if sensible combination could be given, intuition could not play the role it has in Kant's epistemology, viz. that of "giving objects to the mind"; that is, thought could not be beholden to intuition in the way I have outlined. I will discuss the first reason in the present section and the second reason in §7.

First, then, let us turn to the contention that a merely receptive mind is in principle incapable of enjoying sensible combination. This amounts to saying that a capacity for object-dependent representation, on its own, cannot account for the presence of sensible modes of combination. To see why this is so, consider the following. Object-dependent representation, as I have defined it, is representation in virtue of affection by an object. In the fundamental case, it is representation in virtue of current affection. That is, the subject entertains a representation only because, and as long as, something is affecting it. In the absence of any additional resources the content of such a representation cannot go beyond the affection. What the subject thus represents is something like a Humean impression. By itself, it does not represent anything that endures beyond the current affection. Representation by means of impressions is, as we might put it, enclosed in the present moment.²⁷ Now, if all the representations of which a merely receptive mind is capable are of this kind, then clearly these representations cannot exhibit sensible modes of combination. For a sensible mode of combination is, in essence, a particular kind of unity among representations. It is the unity apparent, for instance, in the idea that distinct

²⁷ Cf. Rödl, *Kategorien des Zeitlichen*, 77-82.

representations, occurring at different times, are representations of one and the same persisting object. Or again, that unity is operative in the idea that numerically and qualitatively distinct objects, perceived on different occasions, are all instances of a single kind. Or finally, it is there in the idea that there are objects, and that an object is the kind of thing that has properties. Note that these are meant to be examples of the unity constitutive of sensible modes of combination. They do not amount to an exhaustive characterization. But they should suffice for conveying a sense of the kind of unity at issue.

The representations of a merely receptive mind do not exhibit this kind of unity. They fail to exhibit it because object-dependent representation on its own lacks the resources to generate it. To see this, consider what resources are available to object-dependent representation. As we have just seen, in the basic case the content of the representations characteristic of a merely receptive mind is exhausted by what is currently affecting the mind. Representations change as affections change. But this means that there is no space here for awareness of any connections between the changing contents. There is, we might say, a succession of contents, but no awareness of this succession. Awareness is restricted to the changing contents and does not include the fact *that* they are changing, nor the awareness of any other relations obtaining between them. As Kant puts it, such awareness is “in itself dispersed” (B133).

It does not change matters if we add to the repertoire of a merely receptive mind capacities for reproductive imagination (memory) and associative dispositions (see above, §3). Reproductive imagination is the capacity to recall previously entertained contents. But if these contents did not include the awareness of the relevant kind of unity when they were first received, they will also lack it when they are recalled in imaginative reproduction.

Connection by association might seem to be more promising. But consider what this mechanism, as I have introduced it, really amounts to. The idea of connection by association is that if representations A and B are repeatedly experienced together, a disposition is formed to call to mind one of them on the occasion of the other. Thus, if the subject has, say, a perception of A, it also represents B, even though B is not a content that is currently being perceived.

There are several reasons why such a capacity cannot generate sensible modes of combination where there were none to begin with. First, the kind of unity that accrues to representations in virtue of associative connection is obviously far less complex than the unity of sensible modes of combination. As Hume makes clear in his discussion of this capacity, connection by association tracks spatio-temporal contiguity among perceived contents. It connects things that repeatedly occur at roughly the same time, and in roughly the same location. But it is clear that the unity at issue in the notion of a sensible mode of combination is a much more complex affair.

More importantly, connection by association operates, as it were, behind the subject's back. At least this is so in the case of a merely receptive mind. What associative dispositions accomplish is that some representation B occurs whenever representation A occurs, even when there is nothing present to generate B by virtue of affection. But this connection is not *for* the subject. The subject is not aware of the fact that B occurs whenever A occurs. It experiences first A and then B (in a case of temporal contiguity, that is). It does not experience *that* there is first A and then B. In other words, it does not experience the way in which A and B are related. It does not apprehend the unity of A and B.

If this is right, then however complex the associative dispositions of a merely receptive mind may be, its representations will not exhibit sensible modes of combination. It follows that if the notion of combination at issue in the Spontaneity Thesis is that captured by the idea of a sensible mode of combination, a merely receptive mind is not capable of representing combination. The representation of combination does not belong to its repertoire.

7. The Function of Intuition

I said that there is a second reason for Kant to hold the Two-Species View, one that has to do with the cognitive function of intuition. The cognitive function of intuition is to “give” objects to the mind. I have interpreted this as saying that thought is beholden to intuition: A thought has objective purport only if its object is such as to be a possible content of intuition.

Now, for intuition to be able to serve this function, it must be possible for judgments to “correspond” to intuition.²⁸ That is, it must be possible for what is given in intuition to be a representation of the same object as the corresponding judgment. But a judgment has a particular logical structure and in virtue of this represents its object as having a certain formal character; for instance, as being a bearer of properties or as being capable of undergoing change. If intuition is to give to the mind the objects the mind judges about, then intuition must also have a certain structure, viz. just the structure that enables it to represent objects exhibiting this formal character. Using Kantian terminology, let me capture this point by saying that judgment and intuition must have the same unity. Again, the point is just this: if it is possible to have intuitions

²⁸ Cf. B165: “We cannot think an object except through categories; we cannot cognize an object we think except through intuitions, which *correspond* to these concepts” (Wir können uns keinen Gegenstand denken, ohne durch Kategorien; wir können keinen gedachten Gegenstand erkennen, ohne durch Anschauungen, die jenen Begriffen *entsprechen*) (my emphasis).

of the very same objects about which one makes judgments, then intuitions and judgments must both have the kind of structure, whatever it is, that makes them representations of the same objects. If, for instance, a judgment represents some a as being F , then intuition must be capable of representing a 's that are F . Again, the point is meant to be one about the basic structure, or unity, of intuition. It is compatible with the fact that the content of an intuition is generally more determinate than the content of a judgment.

I argued above that for intuitions to exhibit combination is for intuitions to exhibit sensible modes of combination. And for intuitions to exhibit sensible modes of combination is for them to have the same unity as judgment, albeit in a specifically sensible version. For a sensible mode of combination is defined as the sensible analogue of the logical form of judgment. And the logical form of judgment constitutes the unity of judgment, in the sense that matters for our purposes.²⁹

Now assume, for the sake of argument, that combination can be given. Then the fact that intuitions exhibit sensible modes of combination would be an empirical fact, something that depends on what is given in intuition. Assume, further, as a matter of fact, sensible combination is given in the case of all intuitions. In other words, the assumption is that all intuitions exhibit the same unity as judgment, but that they do so as a result of affection.

In such a scenario, it would be a contingent fact that intuitions possess the same unity as judgment. They might, at least in principle, fail to possess this unity. And this means that intuition cannot serve its cognitive function of being that to which thought is beholden for its

²⁹ One could describe Allison's position, sketched in §1 above, as being motivated in part by an appreciation of this point. Thus, Allison is aware that intuitions give objects to the mind only if they exhibit the same unity as judgment. The problem is that he takes this to imply that for an intuition to exhibit this unity is for it to be a component of judgment. I discuss component views of intuition in Chapter One.

objective purport. For if intuition is to serve this function, it must not be an accident that intuitions possess the unity of judgment. It must be a matter of necessity.³⁰ That is, it must be something that can be known *a priori*. This follows from the fact that being objective purport is constitutive of judgment, in conjunction with the fact that, for Kant, our only access to objects is through intuition.³¹ Let me elaborate.

Since our only immediate access to objects is through intuition, judgments are beholden to intuition for their objective purport. A judgment has objective purport if and only if the object it represents is a possible object of intuition. But if objective purport is constitutive of judgment, it follows that it is constitutive of judgment that it “correspond to” intuition, in the sense that the same thing that can be an object of judgment can also be an object of intuition. As I have been putting this point, intuition has the same unity as judgment.

From this it follows that if judgment has objective purport, then intuition necessarily possesses the same unity as judgment. So the possibility of cognition requires that all possible intuitions exhibit the same unity as judgment. Put differently, in a being that possesses the capacity for judgment it must be a constitutive feature of the intuitions such a being enjoys that they exhibit the same unity as judgment. And this entails that it cannot be a contingent fact that intuitions possess this feature. It cannot be a fact that may or may not obtain. Therefore, the unity of intuitions cannot be something that is given.

³⁰ As Barbara Herman has pointed out, there is a similar concern with non-contingency in Kant’s moral philosophy. Moral worth accords only to actions done from the motive of duty, rather than actions being merely in conformity to duty, because only if duty is the motive is it ruled out that the action’s conformity to duty is an accident. See Herman, “On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty.”

³¹ Note that I am concerned here, as throughout, with judgment as a kind of cognition. It is clear that, at least for the purposes of Transcendental Logic, this is how Kant thinks of judgment. See, e.g., A69/B74. See also Chapter One, §1.1.

The point can also be put as follows. To say that sensible combination is given is to say that it is the content of some range of actual intuitions. But to say that combination is constitutive of intuition is to say that combination enters into the very possibility of intuition. That is, combination is definitive of what it is for something to be a possible intuition. But if this is so, then whether intuition exhibits combination cannot depend on what is or is not given in actual intuition. Combination, we might say, must be in place already, “prior” to any actual acts of intuiting. It must be *a priori* in Kant’s sense: a necessary and strictly universal feature of intuition.³² So, again, the conclusion is that if combination were given, it would not have the right modal force.

8. The Pure Form of Sensibility

In each of the preceding two sections I gave an argument, on Kant’s behalf, for the thesis that sensible combination cannot be given. The first argument is a simple *modus tollens*. If combination could be given, a merely receptive mind would be capable of it. But consideration of the notion of a merely receptive mind shows that such a mind is incapable, in principle, of representing combination. So combination cannot be given.

The second argument starts from the observation that sensible combination is a constitutive feature of intuition and contends that if combination were given, it would not be constitutive of intuition. Put differently, the argument is that it cannot be a merely contingent fact that intuition possesses the unity of judgment. But if combination were given, it would be a merely contingent fact.

³² Cf. A2/B3f for the definition of ‘a priori’ in terms of necessity and universality.

If this is right, we have good reason to think that Kant interprets the Spontaneity Thesis along the lines of the Two-Species View. However, the content of the Spontaneity Thesis is not limited to the claim that combination cannot be given. Rather, Kant takes the claim that combination cannot be given to entail that combination must be “produced”; that is, that combination must be a product of spontaneity. One might object that, while my arguments establish that Kant has good reason to hold that combination cannot be given, they do not show that combination must be produced. What we lack is an argument to the effect that these two alternatives exhaust the available possibilities.

Put in this general way, this objection goes to the heart of Kant’s “Zwei-Stämme-Lehre,” his doctrine that there are two, and only two, sources of cognition, receptivity and spontaneity. According to this doctrine, a representation is either the product of receptivity or the product of spontaneity. If it is the former, it is given. If it is the latter, it is produced. *Tertium non datur*. If we could appeal to this doctrine as a premise, Kant’s inference from the non-givenness of combination to its spontaneous character is valid. But it would take us too far afield to try to defend this doctrine within the confines of this chapter. Instead, what I propose to do is to give the objection a more specific focus, one which arguably makes it stronger as well. This will put us in a position to respond to it without taking on the entire doctrine of the two sources of cognition.

Central to Kant’s theory in the *Critique* is the claim that there is a pure form of sensibility. This idea, so the objection goes, contains everything we need to undermine my arguments in support of the thesis that sensible combination cannot be given. If this is right, then these arguments do not establish that combination must be a product of spontaneity. They show

at most that combination belongs to the pure form of sensibility, as opposed to its empirical matter. Obviously, this would support the case for the Single-Species Reading of the Spontaneity Thesis.

Let me spell this out. We can take the thesis that there is a pure form of sensibility to mean that there are essential properties of intuition, which can be known independently of any particular act of intuiting. Thus, to say that space and time constitute the pure form of sensibility is to say that intuitions necessarily have spatio-temporal properties, which pertain to them independently of what is apprehended in any particular act of intuiting.

Now, part of the point of calling space and time forms of sensibility is that these properties pertain to intuition independently of the understanding. They are forms of sensibility, not of the understanding. In accordance with the Two Sources Doctrine, this seems to imply that intuitions exhibit these forms independently of any involvement of the understanding. The fact that Kant thinks that the schematism is needed to relate the categories to intuition appears to support this independence claim. The idea is that the categories need to be schematized because by themselves they bear no relation to the form of sensibility. Forms of the understanding, i.e. pure concepts, and forms of sensibility are, as Kant puts it, completely heterogeneous.³³

So, assuming that it can be established that what the pure form of sensibility accounts for is the right kind of combination, it seems that a pure form of sensibility possesses sufficient independence from the understanding to block the move from ‘combination cannot be empirically given’ to ‘combination must be spontaneous’. Discharging this assumption should

³³ “However, in comparison with empirical intuitions (indeed, sensible intuitions in general), pure concepts of the understanding are completely heterogeneous [...]” (Nun sind aber reine Verstandesbegriffe in Vergleichung mit empirischen (ja überhaupt sinnlichen) Anschauungen ganz ungleichartig [...]) (A137/B176).

be relatively straightforward. Again, we may look to the doctrine of the schematism, and its implementation in the chapter on the Pure Principles.

The pure principles of the understanding relate the categories to the pure form of inner sense, time.³⁴ They specify the way in which intuitions instantiate the categories simply in virtue of the fact that they possess the pure form of inner sense. As I argued above, the categories signify sensible modes of combination. Being derived from the logical forms of judgment, they articulate the sensible analogue of the unity characteristic of judgment. So intuitions that instantiate the categories exhibit the same unity as judgment. It follows that, if intuitions instantiate the categories in virtue of their form, then intuitions exhibit combination in virtue of the pure form of sensibility, rather than the spontaneity of the understanding.³⁵

In response to this objection, I will argue that while it may have bite against the first argument I gave, it leaves the second argument untouched. That is, it has no force against the claim that what I have called the correspondence (or agreement) of judgment to intuition – that is, the fact that intuition has the same unity as judgment – must be non-contingent.

I argued that Kant holds that combination cannot be given partly for the reason that, if it were, it would be merely contingent that intuition has the same unity as judgment. The suggestion that combination in intuition is accounted for by the pure form of sensibility might seem to address this argument, because the pure form of sensibility is a priori, not empirical. This is to say that the relevant features of the form of sensibility are necessary and universal. It

³⁴ That, and why, there is no corresponding doctrine for the form of outer sense, space, is irrelevant to our purposes.

³⁵ The view that the pure form of sensibility is by itself sufficient, independently of the understanding, to account for the unity of intuition is advocated, for instance, by Lucy Allais and Robert Hanna. See Allais, “Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space,” Hanna, “Kant and Nonconceptual Content,” and Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism.”

seems, therefore, that if sensible combination is due to the pure form of sensibility, the correspondence between intuition and judgment is non-contingent.

However, this argument is not sound. To show this I want to turn our attention to a comment Kant makes in §27, at the end of the B-Deduction. The comment is made in the context of a discussion of how the necessary agreement between experience and the categories can be explained. Although it may seem that this is a different topic from the one we are concerned with, since ‘experience’ is Kant’s term for empirical knowledge, whereas we are concerned merely with intuition, in point of fact, Kant’s topic in §27 encompasses our topic.³⁶ Experience is knowledge that is based on empirical intuition. In Kant’s view, for experience to be in agreement with the categories empirical intuition must be in agreement with the categories as well. And for intuition to be in agreement with the categories is for intuition to have the same unity as judgment. But this is just the point that we are concerned with. So to explain how experience agrees with the categories is in part to explain how intuition agrees with judgment. More specifically, it is to explain why intuition necessarily exhibits the same unity as judgment.

Kant says that the necessary agreement of experience and the categories can be explained in only one of two ways. Either experience makes the categories possible, or the categories make experience possible. He rules out the first option because that would turn the categories into empirical concepts. Consequently, the necessary agreement is explained by the fact that the categories “contain the ground of the possibility of all experience in general” (B167). Kant then considers the objection that he has overlooked a possible third alternative. I want to suggest that

³⁶ For Kant’s use of the term ‘experience’ see also §27: “Empirical cognition, however, is experience” (Empirische Erkenntnis aber ist Erfahrung) (B165f).

what he says about the alleged third alternative applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the claim that sensible combination is due to the pure form of sensibility.

The alleged third alternative is what Kant dubs the “system of preformation”. In such a system the categories do not make experience possible, nor do the categories depend on experience. Rather, experience and the categories are independent of one another, but are nevertheless in agreement. On this view, the categories have the status of psychological dispositions: they do not reflect objective requirements of cognition, but rather the way our minds cannot help but operate. They express, as Kant puts it, a subjective necessity.

Kant rejects this alternative because it does not do justice to the necessity that characterizes the pure concepts, and it is worth quoting the relevant passage in full:

The concept of cause, for instance, which expresses the necessity of an event under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on an arbitrary subjective necessity, implanted in us, of connecting certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. I would not be able to say that the effect is connected with the cause in the object (that is, necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think this representation in any other way than as so connected [...]. (B168)³⁷

And this, he concludes, leads directly to skepticism; specifically to a Humean skepticism about the existence of necessary connection.³⁸

The first thing to note about this passage is that it turns on the idea of a non-contingent agreement between cognition and its object. On the alternative Kant is rejecting here, there is agreement, but this is a merely contingent fact. He suggests that this means that the source of the

³⁷ Denn z.B. der Begriff der Ursache, welcher die Notwendigkeit eines Erfolges unter einer vorausgesetzten Bedingung aussagt, würde falsch sein, wenn er nur auf einer beliebigen uns eingepflanzten subjektiven Notwendigkeit, gewisse empirische Vorstellungen nach einer solchen Regel des Verhältnisses zu verbinden, beruhte. Ich würde nicht sagen können: die Wirkung ist mit der Ursache im Objekte (d. i. notwendig) verbunden, sondern ich bin nur so eingerichtet, daß ich diese Vorstellung nicht anders als so verknüpft denken kann [...].

³⁸ Hume’s famous “skeptical solution” to the problem that the representation of necessary connection appears to have no rational ground is, of course, precisely to treat this representation as the manifestation of a psychological disposition. See Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, section V.

agreement is in the wrong place. It lies, in the terms of the passage, in the subject, rather than in the object, as it should. If we spell this out, the claim is that the reason why my judgment that, e.g., every *F* is *G* is in agreement with its object must be the fact that every *F* is *G*. It must not be that I cannot help but make this judgment. If I cannot help but make this judgment, then my judgment does not rest on the right reason. It rests on what is, as far as cognition is concerned, an extraneous factor.

I said that this argument can be modified so as to apply to the thesis that combination in intuition is neither given nor spontaneous but rather due to the pure form of sensibility, which was the core of the objection I raised. The point of contact lies in the fact that the forms of sensibility, like subjective dispositions of thought, constitute a merely subjective requirement. They are merely subjective in the sense that they do not derive from the concept of an object of cognition. And this means that the forms of sensibility, although a priori, are not necessary in the sense required by Kant.

That Kant recognizes the possibility of forms of sensibility other than ours is evidence for this claim. It shows that the fact that space and time are our forms of sensibility is a fact about human nature. And this means, in the first instance, that it does not derive from the objective requirements of cognition.³⁹

If this is right, it follows that if sensible combination is due to the form of sensibility, the contingency-argument I gave in §7 applies. The objection gets no grip on this argument. As a consequence, the doctrine of the pure form of sensibility does not constitute a third alternative, which would block the move from ‘combination cannot be given’ to ‘combination is spontaneous’.

³⁹ This point is emphasized by John McDowell in his paper “Hegel’s Idealism as a Radicalization of Kant.”

9. Sensible Synthesis

The objection just discussed is motivated by an appreciation of an important aspect of Kant's conception of the relation between understanding and sensibility. Considering this motivation in connection with my response to the objection will help us better to understand this conception. One way to think of the suggestion that the pure form of sensibility is by itself sufficient to account for the unity of intuition is to see it as an attempt to take seriously Heterogeneity Thesis; that is, his insistence that sensibility and understanding are distinct, indeed heterogeneous, capacities. The objection takes the Heterogeneity Thesis to imply that the unity of an intuition is self-standing and thus independent of any exercise of spontaneity. I have argued that this is mistaken. However, it serves to draw our attention to the Heterogeneity Thesis and remind us that, when we try to comprehend in what way the unity of an intuition is dependent on spontaneity, we must be careful not to undermine the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. This is what the kind of Single Species View of the exercise of spontaneity that I attributed to Allison at the beginning of this chapter does.

Allison holds that any exercise of spontaneity is an act of judgment. If one holds this view, then an appreciation of the point from §27, that there must be a sense in which the unity of intuition is made possible by spontaneity, will lead one to think that to so much as have a unified intuition one must be making a judgment.⁴⁰ But this threatens to undermine the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. Kant is clear that one can enjoy intuitions independently of any

⁴⁰ One way of spelling out such a position is to think of intuition as a component of judgment. See my discussion of such a view in Chapter One.

concurrent acts of judgment.⁴¹ The lesson to draw from this, I think, is that we need to recognize a non-judgmental exercise of spontaneity.

Kant describes an act of spontaneity that is operative in intuition itself in the section that concludes the argument for the objective validity of the categories in the B-Deduction, §26. He calls it the synthesis of apprehension, and he nowhere says that this act should be construed as a type of judgment. On the contrary, there is every indication that the synthesis of apprehension is a type of sensible synthesis and thus distinct from judgment. In connection with the objection just discussed, what is interesting about Kant's discussion of the synthesis of apprehension in §26 is the role that the pure forms of sensibility play in it.

Kant's argument is roughly as follows: Contrary to what the Transcendental Aesthetic might lead one to think, the representation of something as given in the pure forms of sensibility, space and time, depends on the synthesis of apprehension, which is a synthesis in accordance with the categories. Since empirical intuitions are necessarily given in accordance with the forms of sensibility, empirical intuitions depend on a synthesis in accordance with the categories.⁴²

⁴¹ Cf. e.g. B132: "That representation which can be given prior to all thinking is called *intuition*" (Diejenige Vorstellung, die vor allem Denken gegeben sein kann, heißt *Anschauung*).

⁴² This argument is given in the following passage at B160f:

But space and time are represented a priori not merely as *forms* of sensible intuition, but as themselves *intuitions* which contain a manifold, and are therefore represented with the determination of the *unity* of this manifold in them (see the Transcendental Aesthetic). Thus *unity of the synthesis* of the manifold, without or within us, and consequently also a *combination* to which everything that is to be represented as determined in space or in time must conform, is given a priori as the condition of the synthesis of all *apprehension* – not indeed in, but with these intuitions. [...] Consequently, all synthesis, through which even perception becomes possible, stands under the categories [...].

Aber Raum und Zeit sind nicht bloß als *Formen* der sinnlichen Anschauung, sondern als *Anschauungen* selbst (die ein Mannigfaltiges enthalten) also mit der Bestimmung der *Einheit* dieses Mannigfaltigen in ihnen a priori vorgestellt (siehe transz. Ästhet.). Also ist selbst schon *Einheit der Synthesis* des Mannigfaltigen, außer oder in uns, mithin auch eine *Verbindung*, der alles, was im Raume oder der Zeit bestimmt vorgestellt werden soll, gemäß sein muß, a priori als Bedingung der Synthesis aller *Apprehension* schon mit (nicht in) diesen Anschauungen zugleich gegeben. [...] Folglich steht alle Synthesis, wodurch selbst Wahrnehmung möglich wird, unter den Kategorien [...].

Kant is quite clear here that the kind of structure that accrues to intuitions in virtue of the pure forms of sensibility – what we might call spatio-temporal unity – is not self-standing, in the sense of being independent of spontaneity. The doctrine of the synthesis of apprehension entails that spatio-temporal representation itself depends on a spontaneous synthesis. This is the point that the objection considered in the previous section fails to take seriously.

At the same time, it becomes clear that if the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding is to be preserved, the synthesis of apprehension must be distinct from judgment. What is represented through synthesis of apprehension is characterized by exhibiting spatio-temporal structure. By contrast, judgment is characterized by having a certain logical structure. Therefore, judgment could not fulfill the function of the synthesis of apprehension. From this it follows that if this synthesis is an act of spontaneity there must be two distinct ways of exercising spontaneity.

If this is right, then the proper way to understand Kant's Spontaneity Thesis is as requiring a Two Species View of the exercise of spontaneity. In addition to the textual evidence directly favoring such a view, which I considered at the beginning of this chapter, we now have some sense of the philosophical motivation for Kant to adopt a view of this kind. It has emerged that Kant has good reason to hold that neither combination in judgment nor combination in intuition is ever given. However, appreciating Kant's motivation does not yet put us in a position to provide a worked-out account of a Two Species View of the exercise of spontaneity. For this we need to know more about the precise shape that the exercise of spontaneity in sensible synthesis takes. More importantly, we need to find a way of addressing the Unity Problem. This is the problem of explaining how a single capacity, spontaneity, can have two distinct kinds of

exercise. I will address the Unity Problem in the following chapter. By way of concluding this discussion of the Spontaneity Thesis, let me add a remark concerning sensible synthesis.

In the passage from the Progress Essay quoted in §2 above, Kant illustrates the Spontaneity Thesis by means of the example of “drawing” a space. He says, “we can represent a determinate space to ourselves in no other way than by drawing it, i.e., by adding one space to the other.” Drawing, e.g., a line is an example of sensible synthesis. This gives us at least a preliminary grasp of how sensible synthesis differs from judgment. For it seems intuitively clear that the drawing of a line is something quite different from an act of judging. In Chapter Five I will argue that passages such as this one, and indeed the doctrine of sensible synthesis as a whole, should be seen against the background of Kant’s theory of geometrical construction. Geometrical construction provides us with a model for thinking about an exercise of spontaneity that does not take the form of judgment. To appreciate this model, however, we need to understand some aspects of Kant’s philosophy of mathematics. A more worked-out account of the Two Species View of spontaneity, therefore, will not be forthcoming without some discussion of Kant’s views about mathematics. This discussion, too, will be provided in Chapter Five.