

Chapter Two Judgment and the Categories

It is a characteristic feature of Kant's position that the kind of structure (or, in Kant's preferred term: the unity) in virtue of possessing which intuitions count as representations of objects is dependent on an act of sensible synthesis. Intuitions exhibit this unity only to the extent that they are subject to sensible synthesis. In the Introduction I argued that sensible synthesis is distinct from judgment, thereby rejecting a view I call Propositionalism, which holds that acts of sensible synthesis are acts of judgment. The case for rejecting Propositionalism was bolstered by the discussion of Chapter One, since the most plausible way of spelling out a Propositionalist position is by adopting a Component View of intuition and Chapter One showed that Component Views of intuition should be rejected.

If sensible synthesis is distinct from judgment, but at the same time an act of the understanding, we confront what I call the Unity Problem. This is the problem of making intelligible what unifies the acts of judgment and sensible synthesis in such a way that they can be attributed to the same capacity, the understanding. How must we conceive of the understanding if it is a capacity that can be exercised in two distinct ways? Put differently, how can we make sense of the idea that a capacity our primary grasp of which is as a capacity for judgment in addition admits of an exercise that is distinct from judgment?

To address the Unity Problem, indeed even first to appreciate its full force, we need a positive account of how Kant conceives of the relation between judgment and intuition. Only if we comprehend the function of intuition in Kant's picture of cognition will we be in a position to get a clearer idea of sensible synthesis and to begin to address the Unity Problem. This requires,

in the first place, an account of how intuition relates to judgment. In Chapter One I reached the negative conclusion that one popular way of thinking about this relation ought to be rejected. In this chapter I want to develop my own view of this relation.

It is a distinguishing feature of my view that it emphasizes the cognitive function of intuitions. By this I mean the role intuitions play in Kant's theory of cognition. Kant usually characterizes this role by saying that through intuition objects are given to the mind. In the first part of the chapter, I will give an account of this role and examine how it bears on the question of how intuition and judgment are related. I approach this topic by considering the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. Specifically, I ask what the grounds are on which judgments of each type rest. Since intuition plays a grounding role only in the case of synthetic judgments, highlighting the contrast with analytic judgments helps to bring this role of intuition, and thus its cognitive function, into view.

Ultimately, an account of the relation between judgment and intuition must say something about the role of the categories in Kant's framework. In fact, I will argue that to understand the role of the categories *is* to understand Kant's conception of the relation between intuition and judgment (and vice versa). For, as we will see, the categories mark, at a suitably general level, the point of connection between judgment and intuitions. In the middle part of the chapter, therefore, I connect the account of the cognitive function of intuition with the role of the categories.

The third part of the chapter aims to relate the account of the categories I give in the second part to the account of the categories Kant sketches in the *Leitfaden*, in particular in §10 (= *Leitfaden III*). Since it is here that Kant first introduces the categories and delineates, albeit in a

very barebones manner, the relation between the logical forms of judgment and the categories, any interpretation of this aspect of Kant's doctrine must be able to make sense of this portion of the text. Because the notion of synthesis is introduced here as well, my discussion of *Leitfaden III* is partly devoted to this concept and its relation to the categories. As part of this discussion I begin to say something about the relation between the two aspects of the understanding I distinguished in the Introduction: the understanding as a capacity for judgment and the understanding as a capacity for sensible synthesis.

1. The Relation of Judgment and Intuition

1.1 The Cognitive Function of Intuition

Discussions of Kant's conception of intuition typically focus on the characterization he gives of intuition as the singular, immediate representation of an object. We saw an example of this in the previous chapter when we considered proto-Fregeanism. In my view, such discussions frequently go wrong because they fail to give due weight to the context in which this characterization belongs. What I have in mind here is the function Kant assigns to the faculty of intuitions, sensibility, in his theory of cognition. Through intuitions, Kant says, objects are "given" to the mind, while through the understanding they are thought. This claim is of central importance to the doctrine of the *Critique*. Accordingly, it is repeated at various important junctures in the text.¹ So my point is that a discussion of intuition needs to begin by asking what it means for intuitions to "give" objects to the mind. Consideration of the singularity and

¹ Kant makes it the subject of the well-known "Vorerinnerung" (preliminary) at the end of the Introduction at A15/B29, which contains a statement of his doctrine that there are two main sources of cognition. It occurs again very prominently at the opening of both the Transcendental Aesthetic (A19/B33) and the Transcendental Logic (A50/B74).

immediacy characteristics must not be divorced from this function of intuition. In fact, since the cognitive function of intuition serves to make intelligible why intuition has these two characteristics, it comes first in the order of explanation.²

By characterizing the cognitive function of intuition as giving objects to the mind, Kant is implicitly appealing to the contrast between finite and infinite minds. An infinite mind is such that its acts of thinking bring into existence the objects they are about. By thinking of some object *a*, an infinite mind makes it the case that *a* exists. We can express the same thought by saying that an infinite mind gives itself its own objects. Because such a mind gives itself its own objects, it has no need of a receptive capacity. It is, as it were, pure spontaneity. Kant hints at this fact in his choice of terminology. He calls this type of mind an intuitive understanding, thereby indicating that the function of intuition, viz. to give objects, which in a finite mind requires a separate faculty of receptivity, is here taken over by the understanding itself.³

By contrast, the understanding of a finite mind is discursive. Among other things, this entails that its acts of thought do not bring their own objects into existence. When a discursive mind thinks of some object *a*, the question of whether *a* exists remains open. It can only be answered by drawing on the operations of a separate faculty, sensibility. For such a mind, sensibility provides knowledge of existence. Providing knowledge of existence is the cognitive function of sensibility, and this is, I take it, what Kant intends to capture by saying that through the operations of sensibility objects are given to the mind.

² For an interpretation of Kant's notion of intuition that also stresses the object-giving function of intuition see Posy, "Immediacy and the Birth of Reference in Kant."

³ As a result, the distinction between concepts and intuitions does not get a grip on the representations of such a mind. Nonetheless, the point should be clear: giving objects and thinking objects are one and the same act. I discuss this point in greater detail in Chapter Four.

To see this, consider that sensibility can serve the function of giving objects to the mind only because it is a receptive faculty. Its receptivity consists in the fact that its representations, the exercises of this capacity, are object-dependent.⁴ Exercises of sensibility depend on affection of the mind by the object, that is, on a perceptual relation to the object. For a finite mind such as ours, therefore, intuition is the mode of cognition by which we come to know the existence of some object *a*.⁵ Put differently, the point is that the understanding can entertain concepts, combine them into judgments, or analyze their content, but it cannot on its own determine whether a concept is instantiated.⁶ To do that is the function of intuition.

This cognitive function of intuition enables it to play a content-conferring role with regard to concepts. Kant holds that, because intuition gives us knowledge of existence, reflection on what it is possible to intuit gives us knowledge of possible existence. He also holds that a concept has content only if the objects that fall under it have possible existence (and thus have what he calls real, as opposed to merely logical, possibility).⁷ It follows from this that a concept has content only if its object is a possible object of intuition. This is the content-conferring role of intuition. In Chapter One I sought to capture this role by talking about the sensible conditions on cognition. Again, the point is just that a concept has cognitive significance if and only if its

⁴ Cf. the following passages: “Our mode of intuition is dependent upon the existence of the object, and is therefore possible only if the subject’s capacity of representation is affected by that object” ([Unsere Anschauungsart ist] von dem Dasein des Objekts abhängig, mithin nur dadurch [möglich], daß die Vorstellungsfähigkeit des Subjekts durch dasselbe affiziert wird) (B72); “Intuition is a representation that immediately depends on the presence of the object.” (Anschauung ist eine Vorstellung, so wie sie unmittelbar von der Gegenwart des Gegenstandes abhängen würde) (*Prol.*, §8, *Ak.* IV, 281).

⁵ In the last analysis, that is. The claim is not meant to rule out the possibility of e.g. inferring the existence of some object on the basis of previously acquired knowledge.

⁶ The point is closely related to Kant’s famous dictum, in his discussion of the Ontological Argument, that ‘being’ is not a real predicate. The idea is that to ascribe being, in the sense of existence, to an object is not to add any content to the concept of this object. It is, rather, to claim that this concept is instantiated. Cf. A598f/B626f.

⁷ See the discussion in part one of Chapter One.

object is a possible object of intuition. As a consequence, thought has “sense and meaning”⁸ only if it conforms to the sensible conditions on cognition, that is, if its contents are possible contents of intuition.

1.2 Grounds of Judgment

A good way of relating the point about the cognitive function of intuition to the guiding question of this chapter, how intuition relates to judgment, is to turn to the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments and ask what the ground of a judgment of each type is. Since what matters for our purposes is what in the preceding chapter I called judgments of the understanding and since, as we have seen, Kant thinks of a judgment of the understanding as a predicative combination of two concepts, this is the question of what warrants predicating one concept of another.⁹

Let us begin with analytic judgments. Without going into the details of Kant’s theory of analytic judgment, we can take the gist of his view to be that in an analytic judgment the predicative nexus is grounded in the subject-concept because, as he puts it, the predicate is “contained in” the subject.¹⁰ Clearly, the central idea of a conceptual containment theory is that an analytic judgment merely makes explicit a conceptual connection already present, covertly, in the subject-concept of such a judgment. In Kant’s terms, if a judgment of the form ‘S is P’ is analytic, P is combined with S in the judgment on the grounds that it is already contained in S as

⁸ B149; cf. also A84/B116, A155/B194, A240/B299.

⁹ Kant himself phrases the question in terms of the grounds for predicating one concept of another in *Über eine Entdeckung*, Ak. VII, 239. Note that ‘predication’ here has to be understood in accordance with Kant’s theory of judgment, that is, as a relation that one general concept bears to another. So we must not take it in the Fregean sense of a relation between a Fregean concept(-expression) and a Fregean object(-expression).

¹⁰ Cf. A6f/B10f, the *locus classicus* for Kant’s account of the analytic-synthetic distinction.

one of S's marks.¹¹ In other words, P constitutes part of the intension of S. It follows that an analytic judgment is true or false accordingly as the predicate-concept in fact figures among the marks of the subject-concept.¹²

Contrast synthetic judgment. What makes a judgment synthetic is that the predicate-concept is not contained in the subject-concept, yet combined with it predicatively. So the basis for ascribing the predicate to the subject cannot be concept-containment. Rather, the judgment is grounded in the fact that the two concepts are, as Kant puts it, connected "in the object" (B142). At a first approximation, this remark tells us that the ground of a synthetic judgment does not lie in the intensional content of the subject-concept, but rather in the object the judgment is about.

It may seem obvious that synthetic judgments have their ground in the objects they are about, but it is worth emphasizing that against Kant's Leibnizian background this is a rather unorthodox idea.¹³ In the context of a Leibnizian containment-theory of truth, 'containment in the subject-concept' and 'connection in the object' are not disjunct. They are not alternative ways in which a judgment might be grounded, but rather different descriptions of the same thing (even if they can be known to be such only from God's perspective). Reflecting on the framework that supports the Leibnizian view may help put Kant's divergence into sharper relief. The point that matters most is that for the Leibnizian our only cognitively transparent access to objects is through conceptual representation.¹⁴ The concepts we have of things, whether distinct

¹¹ Kant's containment theory of analyticity has been heavily criticized by commentators. For a recent attempt to rehabilitate it see Anderson, "The Wolffian Paradigm and its Discontents" and "It Adds Up After All."

¹² At A6/B10 Kant claims that it is straightforward to apply the containment criterion to negative judgments. In fact, however, it seems that a complementary notion of exclusion is needed to account for negative judgments. Thanks to Michael Kremer for alerting me to this point.

¹³ This is emphasized by Posy, "Immediacy and the Birth of Reference in Kant."

¹⁴ Because for Leibnizians conceptual representation is the only kind there is they fail to grasp, by Kant's lights, the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. They "intellectualize appearances" (cf. A271/B327), which means,

or confused, provide the only basis for the judgments we make about them. To bring out how radically Kant departs from this picture we can think of him as drawing a line between two different kinds of judgments by reference to the kind of basis we have for them. Only one of these follows the Leibnizian paradigm: Only analytic judgments are such that concepts provide the exclusive basis for making such judgments. By contrast, with regard to synthetic judgment a different kind of ground on which to base our judgments is needed. Here we must appeal to sensible representations of the objects we judge about – and because sensible representations are object-dependent, we might as well say that here the objects themselves serve as our basis. Because Kant is committed to the view that sensible representations are heterogeneous to intellectual representations, sensible representations are not just, as in the Leibnizian picture, conceptual representations in a different guise. They belong to a distinct genus of representation, and this is what enables them to serve as a different kind of ground for judgment.

In setting up this opposition between objects and concepts as two distinct kinds of grounds for judgment I do not, of course, mean to say that synthetic judgments are somehow not composed of concepts. The point is rather that in the case of synthetic judgment the basis for connecting two concepts is not a concept, and what is contained in it, but the object to which the subject-concept of such a judgment refers. The point is that the properties of this object outstrip those already contained in the subject-concept of the judgment. A synthetic judgment, then, is based on the claim that the object that the judgment is about exhibits the properties the judgment

among other things, that they regard sensible representation as merely a sub-species of conceptual representation, viz. confused conceptual representation.

ascribes to it. An image Kant sometimes uses nicely brings out the point: to judge synthetically, he says, we must go outside the subject-concept and look to the object.¹⁵

What is involved in looking to the object? If the object is to serve as the ground of a synthetic judgment, then it must be possible to access the object by means other than the concept through which we represent it. The concept could only ever supply us with the marks that are analytically contained in it. But if the object itself is to serve as a ground for judgment, in such a way that it can ground judgments which predicate of the object properties that are not analytically contained in its concept, then it must be possible to have a kind of representation of the object that puts one in a position to determine what properties the object in fact has. This is the function of intuition. Intuition thus serves as a ground for synthetic judgment because it constitutes a mode of access to objects that puts us in a position to determine which properties an object has over and above those that are already contained in its concept.¹⁶

We see, then, that the cognitive function of intuition comes to the fore in the context of asking for the grounds of synthetically combining concepts in a judgment. And this provides us with the beginning of an answer to the question of how intuition relates to judgment: Intuition grounds the synthetic connection among concepts in a synthetic judgment, where this means that intuition is such as to supply a judger with a reason for predicating one concept of another, in which it is not already contained. It should be clear that on such a picture intuition is in no way a

¹⁵ See e.g. A8f/B12f.

¹⁶ Kant explains this point in the following passage, using the judgment 'Bodies are heavy' as his example: Compare the following passage: "It is thus experience on which the possibility of the synthesis of the predicate of weight with the concept of body is grounded, since both concepts, through the one is not contained in the other, nevertheless belong together, though only contingently, as parts of a whole, namely experience, which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions" (Es ist also die Erfahrung, worauf sich die Möglichkeit der Synthesis des Prädikats der Schwere mit dem Begriffe des Körpers gründet, weil beide Begriffe, ob zwar einer nicht in dem andern enthalten ist, dennoch als Teile eines Ganzen, nämlich der Erfahrung, die selbst eine synthetische Verbindung der Anschauungen ist, zu einander, wiewohl nur zufälliger Weise, gehören.) (B12).

component of judgment, if by component we mean something that is represented as a discrete part in the linguistic expression of a judgment. In this regard, the view I am sketching differs fundamentally from all proto-Fregean approaches, according to which the function of intuition is analogous to the function of a singular term.

1.3 Judgment and Intuition

Since the function of sensibility is to give objects to the mind, the central notion in characterizing the relation of judgment to intuition is the notion of objective validity (equivalently, objective purport). Judgment is the basic unit of cognition. But a judgment is an act of cognition only if it has objective validity. A judgment has objective validity just in case its object is a possible object of intuition.

Since judgment, in the sense under investigation in *Transcendental Logic*, is a species of cognition, to be objectively valid is constitutive of judgment. A judgment that fails to be objectively valid is, qua judgment, defective. But if objective validity is constitutive of judgment, then it must be possible to know what it is for the object of a judgment to be given in intuition. If the object that a judgment is about is a possible object of intuition, a judger must understand what it would be to encounter this object in actual intuition. Otherwise intuition could not play the role of affording us knowledge of existence regarding the objects of our judgments. Intuition could not give to the mind the objects that are thought by means of applying concepts in judgment.¹⁷

¹⁷ My formulation is meant to echo Kant's characterization of the cognitive functions of sensibility and understanding, respectively, at A50/B74.

If this is right, then it must be determinate, for any judgment, what it is for its object to be given in intuition. Moreover, if it is constitutive of judgment qua cognition to have objective validity, this relation to intuition must be internal to judgment. This means that the following is a constitutive feature of judgment: if one understands a judgment one thereby knows what it is for the object of the judgment to be given in intuition. We can express this point by saying that a judgment determines a class of possible intuitions, viz. the class of those intuitions that are sensible representations of the object that is conceptually represented in the judgment.

How does a judgment do this? How does a judgment determine which intuitions are intuitions of its object? It does this by means of the concepts it contains. Concepts serve to specify possible intuitions. In Kant's terminology, every concept contains under it all the intuitions that contain the marks that make up the intension of the concept.¹⁸ Thus, the concept 'dog' contains under it all possible intuitions of dogs. The concept can be regarded as defining a class of possible intuitions, viz. the class of all and only those intuitions through which an instance of the concept would be given to the mind.

We should note, however, that these intuitions are specified only in a comparatively indeterminate way. By this I mean that a concept does not specify the relevant intuitions in their full determinacy, that is, with all of the particular features each of them has. Rather, it specifies, at a level of comparative generality, certain features each such intuition must have to be an intuition of the right kind, viz. one is an instance of the concept, but leaves open the ways in which these features may be further determined. For example, if I make a judgment about dogs, the intuitions through which the object of my judgment would be given have to be intuitions of

¹⁸ Although I cannot argue the point here, I believe that Stuhlmann-Laeisz and, more recently, Smit are correct in holding that Kant is committed to recognizing, in addition to conceptual marks, marks that account for the content of an intuition. Cf. Stuhlmann-Laeisz, *Kants Logik*, 73f, and Smit, "Kant on Marks and the Immediacy of Intuition."

dogs. But every intuition of a dog is, of course, an intuition not simply of a dog in general, but e.g. of a particular breed of dog. It is, for instance, an intuition of a German Shepherd or a Rottweiler. Moreover, it is also an intuition of, say, a German Shepherd that has a particular size and shape; is in a particular place, and so on. It is, in short, an intuition of an individual dog, hence of something fully determinate. The point is that every intuition of a dog would be a member of the class of relevant intuitions. To meet the specification contained in the judgment, each such intuition has to be of a dog. Which dog, or what kind of dog this is, is left open.

1.4 An Objection

It might be objected here that my account already includes an element that Kant separates out and that is not part of his conception of judgment properly speaking. This is the doctrine of the schematism. Schemata have the function of relating concepts to intuitions. But Kant introduces the schemata only after he has laid out his theory of judgment and discussed the relation of judgment to intuition, at least to the extent that this topic figures in the Transcendental Deduction. So it seems that it must be possible to grasp his conception of judgment without making reference, implicitly or explicitly, to the idea of a schema.

My response is that the diagnosis of my position is correct. I agree that there is a sense in which my account of the relation between judgment and intuition already includes the schemata. But I do not believe that this poses a problem. Let me explain. To begin with, in the following sense the account sketched so far does not include the schemata: what I have said is intelligible even if one is not familiar with the doctrine of the schematism. My account so far includes the schemata only in the weaker sense that there is a place for the schemata in it. What is more, it

can be shown that the account remains incomplete unless this place is filled. But this is exactly as it should be. Given that the doctrine of the schematism is addressed to the issue of how concepts, hence judgments, relate to intuitions, this doctrine would be an idle wheel if it were not indispensable to a complete account of this relation. This entails that it is a criterion of adequacy on any interpretation which does not regard the schematism as an aberration on Kant's part that it be able to demonstrate the indispensability of this doctrine to an account of the relation between concepts and intuitions. Although I cannot argue the point here, I believe that my account satisfies this criterion. Support for this contention will come from the discussion of the categories in the remainder of this chapter.

However, this does not imply that the interpretation developed so far contains some kind of illicit appeal to the schematism. Up to this point, I have drawn on portions of the text that precede the schematism, that is, portions in which this doctrine is not yet on the table. And at the end of this chapter, my interpretation will include the claim that Kant's conception of the relation between judgment and intuition cannot be understood independently of the doctrine of the schematism. This commits me to holding that Kant's conception, to the extent that it is developed in those portions of the text that precede the schematism, has, as it were, a gap; a gap that needs to be filled by the schematism. But again, there can be nothing wrong with that. And while it is true that my exposition has not yet reached the point at which this gap is plainly in view, this only means that the objection is, if anything, premature.

I said that the doctrine of the schematism is indispensable to Kant's account of the relation between judgment and intuition. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the way in which my interpretation honors this commitment is distinctive in the following respect. I am committed

to the claim that the relation of judgment to intuition forms an integral part of the theory of judgment that belongs to Transcendental Logic.¹⁹ This entails that if the schemata are indispensable to understanding the relation between judgment and intuition, the transcendental-logical theory of judgment is incomplete without the schemata. It entails, further, that if the theory of the categories is a part of the transcendental-logical theory of judgment, an account of the categories that makes the schematism look like an afterthought will be incorrect – as if we could get a complete picture of things at the end of the Transcendental Deduction and relegate the schematism to issues of “application.”²⁰ The conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is that the transcendental-logical theory of judgment must from the start take into account the way in which judgment relates to intuition. This is what I have sought to do here.

2. The Categories

2.1 Modes of Concept-Combination

In Part One I sketched what I take to be the correct conception of how judgment relates to intuition. Central to this conception is the idea that a judgment – as we might put it: in and of itself – determines what characteristics those intuitions must have through which the objects are given that the judgment is about. This idea also holds the key to Kant’s theory of the categories, which is the topic of the present section. It follows that the theory of the categories can be properly understood only if one places it in the context of a theory of judgment that centers on this idea. To see this, consider that it has been a source of much consternation among

¹⁹ I support this claim in Chapter One, §1.

²⁰ The Schematism is often regarded as presenting Kant’s “general theory of concept-application,” as Bennett puts it (Bennett, *Kant’s Analytic*, 141). Taken by itself, there is nothing wrong with this. What matters is how the theory of concept-application is taken to be related to the theory of concepts. My claim here is that the former is an integral part of the latter.

commentators how the categories are supposed to be derived from the logical forms of judgment in the argument of the so-called Metaphysical Deduction.²¹ I do not pretend to be able to answer every question one might have in this area. But it is clear that, if one takes Kant's derivation seriously, there is an intimate connection between the categories and certain formal considerations about judgment. This much is uncontroversial. It is my contention that commentators have often gone wrong in supposing that these formal considerations about judgment do not include considerations pertaining to the relation of judgment to intuition. Put differently, I claim that many accounts of the categories suffer from a failure to appreciate the extent to which the cognitive function of sensibility informs the theory of judgment presented in the *Transcendental Analytic*.

The task of Part Two of this chapter is to support this claim by showing how the doctrine of the categories is based on the theory of judgment that I have sketched. To confront this task, let us return to the question of what justifies the connection between two concepts in a synthetic judgment. As we have seen, this is the question of what makes a judgment objectively valid. This question, however, can be posed at two different levels. It can be posed either with regard to individual judgments, judgments with a determinate content. At this level, the question is whether, say, the judgment 'All bodies are heavy' is objectively valid. Or it can be posed with

²¹ Strawson voices his own consternation with characteristic eloquence: "It requires only moderate acquaintance with formal logic to be both critical of the list of forms which is to be the basis of Kant's derivation in the *Metaphysical Deduction* and sceptical of the whole conception of the derivation itself. It requires none at all to be astonished by most of the transitions from form to category that he actually makes" (Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 31). Other commentators who hold that there is nothing remotely resembling a plausible argument for a claim regarding the existence of the categories in the *Metaphysical Deduction* include Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*, 71-83; Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant*, 263-275; Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, 131-135; Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*, 98f. Even commentators who wish to give a more sympathetic reading of the *Metaphysical Deduction* tend to hold that Kant's claim to having established the existence of the categories presupposes the results of the *Transcendental Deduction*. See, for instance, Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 152f. The same is true even of the most sophisticated recent interpretation of the *Metaphysical Deduction*, which has been developed by Beatrice Longuenesse in her *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. For a summary statement of her view see Longuenesse, "Kant on a priori concepts: The metaphysical deduction of the categories."

regard to judgment in general, in abstraction from the determinate content of any particular judgment. Here the question is whether anything can be said about what makes a judgment objectively valid that holds of every possible judgment, regardless of what its content may be. In other words, the question is whether there are conditions on the objective validity of synthetic judgments which can be specified without taking into account the content of any particular judgment. Let us call this general question a question about the *form* of judgments.

Here we must forestall a potential ambiguity. Kant holds that the form of judgment, in the sense just introduced, is internally articulated. Its articulation is shown in the Table of Judgments, in the following manner. The Table lists a variety of what we may call elementary logical forms of judgment.²² These can be combined in various ways, such that any particular judgment will exhibit some combination of these elementary forms. This makes it necessary to distinguish three different uses of the term ‘logical form of judgment’.

First, we have the elementary forms of judgment listed in Kant’s table. This use of the term ‘logical form of judgment’ admits of a plural, as there are several elementary forms. Jointly – that is, the elementary forms taken together with the ways in which they may be combined – these constitute what I called the logical form of judgment in general two paragraphs ago. This is the second use of ‘logical form of judgment’ we must distinguish. It only has a singular use. Finally, we can speak of the logical form of a particular judgment, say, the judgment ‘All bodies are heavy’. Its logical form is constituted by the particular combination of elementary logical

²² Cf. Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, 12.

forms of judgment it exhibits. Thus, the logical form of the example is ‘universal, affirmative, categorical’.²³

Now, the elementary forms that are listed in the Table of Judgments are what I call modes of concept-combination. They determine the possible ways in which two concepts can be combined so as to form a judgment.²⁴ The totality of possible modes of concept-combination constitutes *the* logical form of judgment, in the singular.

2.2 Sensible Modes of Combination

We saw that for a judgment to be objectively valid it must stand in a determinate relation to intuition such that it is clear what it is for the object of the judgment to be given in intuition. With regard to this issue, we can draw the same distinction between two different levels, what we may call an empirical and a transcendental level. We can ask of a particular judgment, say ‘Bodies are heavy,’ what it is for the object of this judgment to be given in intuition. And we can ask a similar question about judgment in general. Here, of course, the question cannot be what it is for a particular kind of object to be given in intuition. When we talk about judgment in general we abstract from the particular content of a judgment and therefore also from any specification of the *kind* of object that the judgment is about. Rather, our question is geared towards the form of judgment, that is, the possible modes of concept-combination. So the transcendental question is what it is for intuitions to, as it were, confer content on the various modes of concept-

²³ I am omitting the forms of modality, because they have a special status, adequate treatment of which would involve us in considerations extraneous to the point at issue. Kant discusses the special status of the forms of modality at A74/B99ff.

²⁴ Exactly how the Table works, in particular, how the twelve elementary forms combine with each other, is a matter of some difficulty, which we do not need to go into. For discussion see Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, 9-18.

combination there are. What is it, in other words, that corresponds, on the side of intuition, to the modes of concept-combination in judgment?

This is a question which bears on the issue of objective validity. It may sound slightly strained to talk about the objective validity of judgment in general, as opposed to the objective validity of an individual judgment. But this is exactly what Transcendental Logic is concerned with. It investigates the general conditions governing the objective validity of judgments while abstracting from the content of individual judgments. To say that Transcendental Logic is concerned with the objective validity of judgment in general is just another way of putting this point.²⁵

Since, more specifically, talk of judgment in general concerns the logical form of judgment (in the singular), that is, the totality of possible modes of concept-combination, to say that judgment in general is objectively valid is to say that every elementary mode of concept-combination is objectively valid. And to say this is to say that for each elementary mode of concept-combination it is determinate what it is for objects to be given in intuition in accordance with this mode of combination.

We are now in a position to introduce the notion of a sensible mode of combination. A sensible mode of combination is the analogue, in intuition, to a mode of concept-combination in judgment. A sensible mode of combination, therefore, is an aspect of the form of intuition. It concerns the characteristics of (spatio-temporal) intuition in general, rather than the characteristics of particular intuitions. To say that an intuition exhibits a sensible mode of

²⁵ In the Introduction I mentioned Kant's distinction between the logical use and the real use of the understanding and suggested that to say that the understanding has a real use is to say that representations exhibiting the logical form characteristic of the logical use are cognitions of objects. This is another way of putting the same point. Saying that judgment in general is objectively valid is equivalent, therefore, to saying that the understanding has a real use.

combination is to say that it is determinate what the logical form of a judgment is that is about the object of this intuition. How such modes are to be specified need not concern us for now. What matters is the general idea of a sensible mode of combination. Given this notion, we can see that the objective validity of judgment in general must hinge on the availability of the relevant sensible modes of combination. If judgment in general is objectively valid, then there will be a corresponding sensible mode of combination for every distinct mode of concept-combination.

In the Introduction, I emphasized Kant's commitment to the Heterogeneity Thesis. This is the thesis that sensible and intellectual representations each have their own irreducible form. In particular, the form of the one cannot be accounted for in terms of the other. In giving content to the notion of a sensible mode of combination we must be mindful of this fact. This means that sensible modes of combination must be genuinely sensible. A sensible mode of combination must be something whose specification involves terms proper to the faculty of sensibility.

I flag this point here for two reasons: first, because I think that the severity of the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding is not always appreciated; second, because the point helps us see that while we have some idea now of what a mode of concept-combination is, the notion of a sensible mode of combination is not much more, at this point, than a mere label. We do not yet have a sense of what such a mode of combination really involves. All we know is what role it is supposed to play in Kant's theory of cognition.

The notion of a sensible mode of combination plays a central role in the reading of the *Critique* I am in the process of developing, and it will be useful to give some indication of this now. The following two features of this notion, in particular, make it important. First, as the

preceding discussion has shown, a mode of combination is a formal element. Since the matter-form contrast is obviously a central item in Kant's toolkit and is employed by him at a variety of different levels of analysis, having some sense of what it might mean to talk about the form of something is important for the discussion that follows. In particular, the association of combination with formality is of central importance to Kant, as we shall see, e.g., in Chapter Three. The second important feature regards the relation a sensible mode of combination bears to a mode of concept-combination. What matters is that in one respect a sensible mode of combination is the same as a mode of concept-combination, while in another it is not. It is the same insofar as both are modes of combination. It is different insofar as one is specifically sensible (intuitive), while the other is specifically conceptual (discursive). As should be clear from my discussion of the Unity Problem in the Introduction, this idea of a genus with two different species is of central importance to Kant's conception of the cognitive capacity. Put differently, what makes the notion of a sensible mode of combination important is that it is the sensible analogue to the unity of judgment. As I shall show in what follows, this notion enables us to understand Kant's conception of the unity of intuition, which is obviously central to the doctrine of synthesis and thus to Kant's conception of the spontaneity of the mind.

2.3 Categories

The categories initially enter Kant's discussion as mere labels. More precisely, when Kant first introduces the categories, their content is specified only at a comparatively high level of indeterminacy. Thus, the categories initially come on the scene as concepts whose content will

be further determined in later sections of the *Critique*.²⁶ If what I have said about sensible modes of combination is right, this is not surprising. For, as I will now argue, the categories are nothing other than sensible modes of combination.

The categories are introduced by Kant as principles of unity governing the synthesis of intuitional manifolds.²⁷ To the extent that the synthesis of an intuitional manifold is governed by such a principle, the manifold is represented as having a certain unity. And for a manifold to have unity is, as we can put it rather vaguely, for its elements to be combined so as to form some kind of whole. As principles of unity, the categories govern the act of generating such wholes by combining the elements of the manifold. Therefore, saying that the categories are principles of unity governing an act of synthesis amounts to saying that they are principles of combination.²⁸ Moreover, since the categories govern the synthesis of intuitional manifolds, the modes of combination in question must be sensible modes of combination.

If this is right, the categories are sensible modes of combination. I introduced the idea of a sensible mode of combination as an analogue to the notion of a mode of concept-combination in judgment, in the sense that to each mode of concept-combination there corresponds a sensible mode of combination. This is just the relation that is supposed to hold between the Table of

²⁶ As we shall see in part 3, below, this point is crucial for understanding the argument of the so-called Metaphysical Deduction, where Kant first introduces the categories. Commentators frequently complain that the argument Kant gives here does not show what he claims it shows, viz. “that there are such-and-such categories.” My point about different degrees of determinacy with which the content of the categories is specified by Kant, however, allows one to appreciate that in the Metaphysical Deduction Kant only attempts to establish a claim about categories whose content is relatively less determinate. He does not, for instance, attempt to establish a conclusion about “the rich concept of substance” (Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, 134), but rather a conclusion about a very thin notion of substance, which escapes the criticisms typically made by commentators like Gardner. I discuss this point in greater detail below in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

²⁷ See A78/B104: “Now *pure synthesis, represented generally*, yields the pure concept of the understanding. By this synthesis, however, I understand that which rests on a ground of synthetic unity a priori.” (Die *reine Synthesis, allgemein vorgestellt*, gibt nun den reinen Verstandesbegriff. Ich verstehe aber unter dieser Synthesis diejenige, welche auf einem Grunde der synthetischen Einheit a priori beruht).

²⁸ At B308 Kant refers to the categories as “universal concepts of combination a priori” (allgemeine Verbindungsbegriffe a priori).

Judgments and the Table of Categories. To each elementary logical form of judgment there corresponds a category because the categories are the sensible modes of combination that are the analogues in intuition to the modes of concept-combination in judgment.

The definition Kant gives of the categories at B128 bears this out. According to this definition, the categories are “concepts of an object in general, by means of which its intuition is regarded as determined with regard to one of the logical functions of judgment” (B128). For present purposes, we can abstract from the difference between logical *functions* of judgment and logical *forms* of judgment.²⁹ 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 an arbitrary judgment, it is determinate which formal features intuitions must have if the judgment is objectively valid. In other words, there is a fact of the matter as to what must be the case with intuitions if the judgment is objectively valid. Let me elaborate.

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 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. The categories thus pertain to the form of judgment. But this means that we are also abstracting from the matter of the intuitions in question. What is at issue are, rather, intuitions of an object in general. And this simply means: intuitions that need to satisfy only the very abstract description ‘giving objects to the mind’; in other words, intuitions that make judgments objectively valid.

²⁹ They are, in any case, intimately related: a function of judgment is the capacity to generate judgments with a particular logical form.

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” this can only be what I have been calling sensible modes of combination, that is, sensible characteristics which are so general as to pertain to all possible intuitions, regardless of their matter. 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 mode of concept-combination there corresponds a sensible mode of combination. Therefore, the categories are nothing other than sensible modes of combination.

The following picture results: Because the categories are sensible modes of combination they function as conditions that must be met for judgment in general to be objectively valid. I said above that judgment in general is objectively valid just in case a corresponding sensible mode of combination is defined for each elementary mode of concept-combination. If the categories are sensible modes of combination, it follows that judgment in general is objectively valid just in case there is a category corresponding to each mode of concept-combination. This is obviously what the Table of Categories, in mirroring of the Table of Judgments, is meant to convey.³⁰

One additional comment about the categories is in order before I conclude this section. As the definition at B128 says, the categories are concepts of objects. As I hope has become clear by now, my thesis that they are sensible modes of combination is compatible with this

³⁰ I should point out that the objective validity of judgment in general does not entail that every individual judgment is objectively valid. Although a default entitlement to objective validity is secured for judgment considered as a species of representation, individual judgments may turn out to be defective because they purport to be about objects that are not possible objects of intuition. This qualification is needed to make it intelligible how there can be a Transcendental Dialectic, an investigation of a number of judgments that fail to be objectively valid.

claim. If the categories are concepts of objects, we can say of an object that it instantiates a particular category. It is important to be clear on what it means to say this. As we have seen, the function of the categories is to correlate sensible modes of combination with modes of concept-combination, that is, with the logical forms of judgment. By saying that a given object falls under a particular category, therefore, what one does is to characterize this object with regard to the logical form of possible judgments about it. And this means that no substantive characterization of the object is being given. The object is not thereby classified as being of this or that kind. The notion of a kind belongs with the matter of a judgment, as opposed to its form. For, to say that an object belongs to this or that kind is to subsume it under a concept that may function as the predicate of an individual judgment; but the predicate of a judgment, together with its subject, constitutes the judgment's matter.

By contrast, the categories do not function in this way. Since they are correlated with the form of judgment, as distinct from the matter, they characterize objects only with regard to this form, not with regard to any material predicates.³¹ In fact, this point is merely the flip-side of the claim that the categories function as conditions on the objective validity of judgment in general. To say that a judgment satisfies these conditions is to say only that the judgment is about objects in general, not that it is about objects of a particular kind. Correlatively, to characterize an object

³¹ This shows that Kant's conception of what a category is differs sharply from the traditional Aristotelian conception. For Aristotle, the categories are the highest genera of being, the only genera that are not themselves species of any higher genus. To characterize Kantian categories in this way would be to mischaracterize them, because it would gloss over their status as formal concepts. Manley Thompson brings this out nicely: "Kantian in contrast to Aristotelian categories are 'concepts of an object in general' (B128) rather than highest genera of objects. They thus (as schematized) provide criteria for deciding what counts as an object at all rather than what counts as an object of one or another sort" (Thompson, "Philosophical Approaches to Categories," 344).

as falling under a category is to characterize it only with regard to the logical form of judgments about it, not with regard to the matter, i.e. the component concepts, of any such judgments.³²

2.4 Categories, Schemata, and the Bare Idea of a Discursive Understanding

Next, let me return to the topic of schemata. We need to distinguish between schematized and unschematized categories. By connecting the categories with the pure schemata – schematizing them – Kant makes the categories applicable to spatio-temporal sensible manifolds. Only in their schematized version do the categories have genuine “sense and meaning.” That is, only when the categories are schematized are criteria available, by means of which it can be determined what it is for intuitions to be given in accordance with the categories. Let me explain.

Since space and time constitute the form of human sensibility, objects are given to us in the form of spatio-temporal manifolds. For it to be determinate what it is for an object to fall under the categories, therefore, the categories must be related to the form in which objects are given, that is, to the form of spatio-temporal manifolds. For example, to be able to say whether something that is given in sensibility is a substance, we have to know what it is for something sensibly given to be a substance. We need a criterion that tells us, in terms of the form of sensibility, how to identify substances among the sensibly given. And only the pure schemata, which relate the categories to the (spatio-)temporal form of sensibility, supply such criteria.

³² For an excellent discussion of this point see Rödl, *Kategorien des Zeitlichen*, 32-37.

By way of illustration, consider Kant's own example from B128f.³³ He implies that, absent the schemata, what it is for something to fall under the category of substance can be characterized only in terms of the logical forms of judgment. Thus, to say of something that it is a substance amounts to saying that it is never (merely) the predicate, but always (also) the subject of a judgment. Kant's point is that such a definition does not tell us how to identify substances in intuition. For that we need a characterization that makes contact with the form of the sensibly given, that is, the form of intuition. But, taken by themselves, the logical forms of judgment fail to do that. They are forms of the understanding, not of sensibility. Taken in isolation, they are *mere* forms of thought, not forms of objects. But since the categories are concepts of objects, what we need is forms of objects. And because our only access to objects is through sensibility, the forms of objects must be specified in terms that relate them to the form of sensibility. The schematized categories provide such a specification.³⁴

At the same time, Kant claims that we can distinguish categories from their schemata and that something important can be said about the categories even when considered in isolation

³³ "Thus, the function of *categorical* judgment was that of the relationship of the subject to the predicate, e.g. 'All bodies are divisible.' Yet in regard to the merely logical use of the understanding it would remain undetermined which of these two concepts will be given the function of the subject and which will be given that of the predicate. For one can also say: 'Something divisible is a body.' Through the category of substance, however, if I bring the concept of a body under it, it is determined that its empirical intuition in experience must always be considered as subject, never as mere predicate; and likewise with all the other categories." (So war die Funktion des *kategorischen* Urteils die des Verhältnisses des Subjekts zum Prädikat, z.B. alle Körper sind teilbar. Allein in Ansehung des bloß logischen Gebrauchs des Verstandes blieb es unbestimmt, welchem von beiden Begriffen die Funktion des Subjekts, und welchem die des Prädikats man geben wolle. Denn man kann auch sagen: Einiges Teilbare ist ein Körper. Durch die Kategorie der Substanz aber, wenn ich den Begriff eines Körpers darunter bringe, wird es bestimmt: daß seine empirische Anschauung in der Erfahrung immer nur als Subjekt, niemals als bloßes Prädikat betrachtet werden müsse; und so in allen übrigen Kategorien).

³⁴ Schematization in no way diminishes the status of the categories as formal concepts. It merely relates them to the human form of sensibility, which, according to Kant, is only one among many conceivable forms of sensibility (I will discuss this point shortly). The schematized categories, we might say, are formal concepts of spatio-temporal objects. As Manley Thompson puts the point: "The statement that categories are concepts of an object in general is thus limited, when the categories are schematized, to concepts of an object individuated by spatiotemporal position" (Thompson, "Philosophical Approaches to Categories," 345).

from their schemata. What is more, the distinction is central to Kant's procedure in the *Critique* and to his method of isolating faculties. This is, therefore, an issue that needs to be handled with some care. To begin with, let us mark the distinction terminologically by talking about schematized and unschematized categories. When I speak of the categories *simpliciter*, it should be clear from the context which version is at issue.

Next, we need to be mindful of Kant's claim that, for all we know, there may be finite, hence discursive, minds with forms of sensibility other than ours.³⁵ The sensibility of such beings would not be spatio-temporal, but instead have some other form. This entails that the objects such beings cognize would not be spatio-temporal, either, but exhibit some other form. Now, Kant insists that while there may be this divergence in forms of sensibility, all finite minds have the same forms of understanding. So the understanding of such beings would be identical to ours. Without worrying about the plausibility of this claim, let us focus on what it shows us about how Kant conceives of a discursive understanding.

The first thing to be said is that the unschematized categories are included among the forms of the understanding. They are what we might call the transcendental-logical forms of the understanding, in contradistinction to the pure-general-logical forms of the understanding, which are the logical forms of judgment that are catalogued in the Table of Judgments.³⁶ Beings with a sensibility different from ours, then, would have the same unschematized categories as we do. The divergence would begin to show only at the level of the schematized categories. This implies that the unschematized categories are situated at a higher level of generality than the schematized ones. The unschematized categories belong to the notion of a discursive understanding in

³⁵ See, e.g., B139, B155.

³⁶ But see the caveat articulated in fn. 61 below.

general, whatever the forms of its sensibility may be. The notion of a discursive understanding in general is extremely important for Kant. Since this is not always appreciated, it will be useful for me to say more about it.

The concept of a discursive understanding is the concept of a mind that is dependent on a sensible faculty for its access to objects. And this means that it is the idea of a mind that is dependent on a sensible faculty for the objective validity, hence the contentfulness, of its thoughts. As I said above, the implied contrast is with an intuitive intellect, that is, an intellect that supplies its own content for its thoughts. The important point is that the mere idea of a discursive understanding already contains the idea of a sensible faculty on which such an understanding is dependent for the contentfulness of its thoughts. In other words, it is part of the content of the concept of a discursive understanding in general that such an understanding requires a sensible faculty to be paired with it.³⁷

³⁷ Kant indicates this when he introduces the distinction between a transcendental analytic and a transcendental dialectic in the Introduction to the Transcendental Logic. At A62/B87 he says:

“In a transcendental logic we isolate the understanding (as above, in the Transcendental Aesthetic, the sensibility) separating out from our cognition that part of thought which has its origin solely in the understanding. The employment of this pure knowledge depends upon the condition that objects to which it can be applied be given to us in intuition. In the absence of intuition all our knowledge is without objects, and therefore remains entirely empty” (In einer transzendentalen Logik isolieren wie den Verstand, (so wie oben in der transzendentalen Ästhetik die Sinnlichkeit) und heben bloß den Teil des Denkens aus unserm Erkenntnis heraus, der lediglich seinen Ursprung in dem Verstande hat. Der Gebrauch dieser reinen Erkenntnis aber beruht darauf, als ihrer Bedingung: daß uns Gegenstände in der Anschauung gegeben sein, worauf jene angewandt werden können. Denn ohne Anschauung fehlt es aller unserer Erkenntnis an Objekten, und sie bleibt alsdenn völlig leer.)

We should not let ourselves be detracted by Kant’s use of the first person plural pronoun in this passage. Since the passage introduces the distinction between a transcendental analytic and a transcendental dialectic, the characterization it contains must cover all of transcendental logic. And since there is at least a part of transcendental logic, viz. most of the Analytic of Concepts, which abstracts from the specifically spatio-temporal nature of human sensibility, the characterization must be compatible with this level of abstraction. The characterization the passage gives says that transcendental logic isolates the understanding and considers its capacities. But it does so under the condition that objects must be given in sensibility. For only if objects can be given in sensibility do the pure acts of the understanding amount to pure cognition. It follows that the condition that objects be given in sensibility is part of the concept of a discursive understanding, considered as a capacity for cognition, regardless of the specific nature of the receptive faculty that is paired with it.

The point is important because it is central to Kant's doctrine of apperception and thus to the Transcendental Deduction. In fact, it already plays a role in the so-called Metaphysical Deduction, that is, the derivation of the Table of Categories from the Table of Judgments. It plays a role in the Metaphysical Deduction because the claim that there are pure concepts of the understanding is contained in the very idea of a discursive understanding. In a nutshell, the argument is this: Cognition for a discursive understanding takes the form of judgments. But, as we have seen, judgments have content only if they bear the right relation to intuition. To judge for a finite mind is to represent objects that must be possible contents of intuition.³⁸ This entails that, if judgment is to be objectively valid, it must be possible to have the relevant intuitions. A pure concept of the understanding embodies this condition. The content of a pure concept is the form that the contents of judgment must have if judgment is to be objectively valid. It is, roughly, the form that intuitions have if they present objects to the mind.³⁹

Kant's repeated comments in the B-Deduction (cf. B135, B138f, B145) that the points he makes there about the synthetic unity of apperception apply to every discursive thinker, whether or not her sensibility is spatio-temporal, constitute further evidence for this claim. For he emphasizes that the doctrine of apperception holds only for beings to whom objects must be given in sensibility. But if the synthetic unity of apperception is "the highest point" (B134n) on which all employment of the understanding depends, if, indeed, "this capacity is the understanding itself" (ibid.), then the condition that the objects of cognition must be given in sensibility is part of the very concept of a discursive understanding. See Chapter Four for discussion of these passages.

³⁸ I am concerned here, as throughout, with theoretical judgments of objects. As I argued in Chapter One, these form the topic of Transcendental Logic. This excludes, for instance, practical judgments, for which the condition of intuitability does not hold. What I say about judgment should also not be taken to apply to analytic judgments.

³⁹ As I said, many commentators fail to appreciate this claim, that a relation to intuition in general is already part of the content of the unschematized categories (which, as we will see shortly, leads to distorted readings of the Metaphysical Deduction). A classic statement of such a view is given by Strawson: "But the 'pure' categories, as derived in the Metaphysical Deduction, are derived, in complete abstraction from the modes of sensibility, simply from the requirements of understanding, the faculty of concepts" (Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 30). Although the letter of this passage may be compatible with my view, it is clear that Strawson takes it to mean that sensibility is not at all in view in the Metaphysical Deduction, not even in the weak sense I have articulated. For a more recent statement of this kind of view consider this passage from Graham Bird's commentary on the *Critique*: "Later I distinguish, as Kant does, between *unschematized categories*, which contain no reference to intuition, schematized categories which provide an abstract description which includes intuition, and a full instantiation of categories in specific sensory experiences" (Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant*, 806, my emphasis).

This much can be said independently of considering whether the pure concepts themselves have objective validity. If they do, the judgments of a discursive understanding are objectively valid. If they do not, these judgments are empty. What matters is that all of these claims can be derived from the bare concept of a discursive understanding in general, in abstraction from the spatio-temporal nature of human sensibility.

3. Categories and Synthesis

Over the course of the previous two sections I have developed a view of how Kant thinks of the relation between judgment and intuition as well as a conception of the categories that supports this view. I have argued that judgment must be understood to bear an internal relation to intuition, and I have explicated this claim by saying that a judgment must supply criteria for determining what it is for its object to be given in intuition. This relation to intuition, I claimed, is constitutive of judgment considered as a species of cognition. It is something that one must understand in order to count as possessing the capacity to make judgments.

According to this conception of judgment, representation through concepts is internally related to representation through intuitions, in the sense that it is a function of concepts to determine classes of possible intuitions. The central idea here is that a judgment represents an object in virtue of specifying the intuitions through which this object would be given to the mind. Since the specification is discursive rather than intuitive, it is achieved by means of concepts. The concepts of which a given judgment is composed identify the relevant kinds of intuitions,

while the mode of concept-combination the judgment exhibits identifies the sensible mode of combination these intuitions must have.⁴⁰

The account of the categories sketched in §2 supports this picture of judgment because the categories are identified as sensible modes of combination. Since the categories are sensible modes of combination, they indicate the conditions that must be satisfied for judgment in general to be contentful. They function, as it were, as the bridge that leads from the logical form of a judgment to the formal properties of the intuitions through which the object of a judgment exhibiting this form must be given in sensibility.

In developing this account of the categories, I have primarily drawn on the characterization of the understanding as a capacity to judge. However, Kant provides two distinct characterizations of the understanding, the relation of which is not immediately clear. Besides being characterized as a capacity to judge, the understanding is also described as a capacity for sensible synthesis. On the assumption that judgment and sensible synthesis are not identical, which I supported in the Introduction, it is not clear how a capacity for judgment can at the same time be a capacity for sensible synthesis, and vice versa. This is what I call the Unity Problem, the main problem I am going to address in the following chapters. The topic of the categories now requires us to introduce the capacity for sensible synthesis into the discussion.

As I briefly indicated in §2.3, the categories are officially derived by Kant as principles of sensible synthesis. I want to consider this derivation, which is given in the third section of the *Leitfaden* (= *Leitfaden III*), in more detail. My aim is to determine how the account of the categories I have provided fits with what Kant actually says in *Leitfaden III*. However, to put

⁴⁰ Notice that this view of the relation between judgments and intuitions is not available to someone who holds what in Chapter One I called a Component View of intuition, according to which intuitions are components of judgments. Since Component Views are common, the position I have outlined in this chapter is unorthodox.

Kant's discussion in *Leitfaden III* in perspective, I will first consider two different but closely related issues. The first of these is the notion of the pure origin of a concept. Kant says that the categories are pure concepts of the understanding because they have a pure origin, and this origin lies in the understanding. By reflecting on what Kant means by this I aim to amplify the account of the categories so far developed. The second issue is the notion of a metaphysical deduction and its relation to the idea of a transcendental deduction. The section of the *Leitfaden* in which Kant introduces the categories as principles of sensible synthesis is later referred to by him as the Metaphysical Deduction of the categories. Considering what the idea of such a deduction is will put the text in proper perspective. Finally, looking at the text of the Metaphysical Deduction in the final section of this chapter will put us in a position to consider the relation between the capacity for judgment and the capacity for sensible synthesis and thus to get the Unity Problem properly into view.

3.1 Pure Origin of a Concept

Towards the end of the Transcendental Deduction Kant refers back to the *Leitfaden* as the “metaphysical deduction,” whose task he characterizes as showing that the categories originate in the understanding a priori.⁴¹ Before we proceed, it will be useful to reflect on this characterization and to consider the difference between a metaphysical deduction and a transcendental deduction of the categories, as this will shed light on how Kant conceives of what he is doing in *Leitfaden III*. First, however, I want briefly to address a worry that is bound to

⁴¹ “In the *metaphysical deduction* the a priori origin in general of the categories was established through their complete coincidence with the universal logical functions of thinking [...]” (In der *metaphysischen Deduktion* wurde der Ursprung der Kategorien a priori überhaupt durch ihre völlige Zusammentreffung mit den allgemeinen logischen Funktionen des Denkens dargetan [...]) (B159).

arise if one looks at the literature on the Metaphysical Deduction. The worry is that even to take Kant's distinction seriously is already to be barking up the wrong tree. The reason is that the Metaphysical Deduction (MD) is frequently considered a complete failure because what Kant claims to establish about the pure concepts in this section is, according to this view, in fact established (if at all) only in the Transcendental Deduction in combination with the Analytic of Principles. To get to the heart of Kant's argument on behalf of the categories, therefore, one ought to go straight to those sections and regard the Metaphysical Deduction as one of the unfortunate outgrowths of Kant's obsession with architectonic.⁴²

At the most general level of description, the charge against the Metaphysical Deduction is simply that the section fails to deliver what Kant promises, viz. a derivation of the categories from the logical forms of judgment. But to leave it at that would be to downplay the seriousness of the charge. For it is frequently claimed that it is hard to comprehend even the possibility of such a derivation, much less its actual success. The reason is, so this line of thought continues, that the derivation would require that the logical forms of judgment somehow entail the corresponding categories. However, as Sebastian Gardner puts it, "[it] is obvious that the mere concept of judgment (or of thought in accordance with the laws of logic) does not contain, even implicitly, any metaphysical concepts."⁴³

As we shall see, such a view of the Metaphysical Deduction misconstrues both its method and its objective. It is not the case that the categories are somehow deduced directly from the logical forms of judgment. Rather, as I will show in what follows, the Metaphysical Deduction contains an argument to the effect that judgments exhibiting the forms identified in the Table of

⁴² See the references in fn. 21 above.

⁴³ Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, 133.

Judgments have objective validity only if the objects they purport to be about instantiate the corresponding categories. As we shall see, this argument starts from the concept of a discursive understanding, that is, an understanding whose cognitions depend for their contentfulness on a separate faculty of sensibility.

The failure correctly to identify the argument given in the MD goes hand in hand with a mistaken view of its objective. For to say that Kant in this section derives the categories is ambiguous. There is more than one thing one could mean by such a claim, and Kant's distinction, which I am about to discuss, between demonstrating the existence of a pure concept, on the one hand, and demonstrating its objective validity, on the other, is part of the problem here. As we shall see, there is a clear sense in which the categories can be said to be derived from the logical forms of judgment in the Metaphysical Deduction. But this sense is compatible with the categories turning out to be empty. If this is right, then the goal of the MD cannot be to establish a "weighty" metaphysical conclusion, to the effect that all possible objects of experience instantiate the concepts of substance, cause etc. The charge that it fails to establish such a conclusion thus misses its target. The conclusion that the MD is in fact aimed at is more modest. The charge that metaphysical conclusions are purportedly derived from merely logical considerations does not apply to it.⁴⁴

I will come back to this issue. Let us now consider in more detail how Kant himself formulates the goal of the Metaphysical Deduction. He says that the task of the Metaphysical

⁴⁴ It is worth pointing out that there is also confusion about the kind of argument Kant intends to give. Some commentators take Kant to be aiming at a deduction in the sense of a deductive inference and note that, by this standard, his argument fails. However, as Dieter Henrich has pointed out, this is not how Kant uses the term 'deduction.' Adapting this term from its use in the legal practices of his time Kant uses the term to refer to a stretch of discourse that is aimed at vindicating one's entitlement to a claim. This need not take the form of deductively inferring this claim from independently available premises. See Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*." Compare also Kant's own remarks in the section entitled "On the Principles of a Transcendental Deduction in General" at A84/B116ff.

Deduction is to show that the categories have a pure origin,⁴⁵ while the task of the Transcendental Deduction is to show that the categories have objective validity. Since a pure concept of the understanding is defined as a concept that has a pure origin the task of the Metaphysical Deduction can also be characterized as that of showing that such concepts, i.e. pure concepts of the understanding, exist. To understand what is involved in this we have to ask what it is for a concept to have a pure origin. I will first attempt to answer this question before returning to the distinction between the Metaphysical Deduction and the Transcendental Deduction in the next section.

The claim that categories are concepts which have a pure origin pertains specifically to the matter, as distinct from the form, of a concept. So we need to introduce this distinction. The form of a concept consists in its being a general representation of objects. As representations of objects, concepts belong to the genus 'cognition'.⁴⁶ What distinguishes them from other species of this genus is their generality: A concept applies to indefinitely many objects. Contrast intuition, which is defined as the singular representation of an object. I will come back to these formal characteristics of concepts below.

Kant points out that we can characterize intuitions and concept as having the same matter but differing in form.⁴⁷ Thus, an intuition of a ship has the same matter as the concept of a ship. Both are representations of ships. But the intuition is a representation of a particular ship, while the concept applies to all ships. As this example indicates, the matter of an intuition is the object

⁴⁵ For the purposes of this discussion, I use 'pure origin' and 'a priori origin' as equivalent expressions.

⁴⁶ This distinguishes concepts from representations that do not have objective purport, such as sensations. Cf. the so-called *Stufenleiter* at A320/B376f.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Logik*, §2 (*Ak.* IX, 91). Note that the matter-form contrast can be applied (and is applied by Kant) at different levels. Thus, what constitutes a form at one level may function as matter at a different level. Therefore, it is not inconsistent for Kant to say, for instance, that an intuition has a certain form, while saying in a different context that intuition constitutes the matter of cognition.

it is about. The same holds for concepts. The matter of a concept is the object, or objects, it purports to be about.⁴⁸

Kant uses the notion of origin in connection with both the form and the matter of concepts. Of a concept's form he says that it has its origin in the understanding.⁴⁹ This amounts to saying that the understanding is the capacity that is responsible for the generality of a representation. Forming a concept as well as using one are acts of the understanding. On the other hand, Kant's account of the origin of a concept's matter, or, alternatively, of the origin of a concept with regard to its matter, is more complex.

Here we need to distinguish three species of concepts. First, the matter of an empirical concept has its origin in empirical intuition.⁵⁰ This means that such a concept is derived from instances of it given in intuition. Second, the matter of a pure sensible concept has its origin in the pure forms of sensibility, space and time. Here the concept derives, not from empirical, but from pure intuition. Geometrical concepts serve as the paradigm of this kind of concept.⁵¹ Thus, with respect to their matter both empirical and pure sensible concepts originate in intuition. Contrast the third species of concepts. Their matter does not originate in intuition at all, but instead in the understanding. These are the pure concepts of the understanding. They are pure because, like the pure sensible concepts, their matter does not derive from anything empirical. But unlike the pure sensible concepts, the matter of these concepts does not derive from pure

⁴⁸ Again, see *Logik*, §2; cf. also R2834 (*Ak.* XVI, 536).

⁴⁹ Cf. *Logik*, §5 (*Ak.* IX, 93).

⁵⁰ I am ignoring here what Kant calls the difference between "given" and "made" concepts, for which see *Logik*, §4 (*Ak.* IX, 93). The latter are empirical concepts that we form at will by recombining materials taken from other empirical concepts. Unlike given empirical concepts, which are abstracted from instances of them given in experience, such concepts may or may not be instantiated. The concept of a unicorn would be an example of a concept that happens not to be instantiated. For the purposes of my discussion I can limit myself to "given" concepts. Note that in this sense of 'given' there can be concepts that are given a priori. So 'given' here does not entail 'empirical'.

⁵¹ I discuss Kant's account of geometrical concepts in Chapter Five.

intuition either, which is why they are pure concepts of the understanding rather than pure concepts of sensibility. It is this fact that makes the pure concepts of the understanding a radically different kind of concept from the other two species I distinguished. So, in order to understand what it would take for there to be such concepts we have to ask what it is for a concept to originate in the understanding not just with regard to its form, but also with regard to its matter.

To begin with, let me point out that I take Kant's talk of the pure origin of the categories to be shorthand for 'origin in the understanding with regard to matter.' The kind of pure origin that pure sensible concepts have is not at issue in the *Metaphysical Deduction*. So, for a category to have a pure origin is for its matter to originate in the understanding, as opposed to (pure or empirical) intuition. Again, what does that mean?

I suggest that we try to exploit a parallel with pure sensible concepts. Since they derive from pure intuition, we can think of pure sensible concepts as characterizing the form of sensibility. By 'form of sensibility' I mean the constitutive features that exercises of this capacity – that is, intuitions – exhibit. The analogous move in the case of pure concepts of the understanding yields the claim that these concepts characterize the form of the understanding. Again, the sense of form is that of the constitutive features of exercises of the capacity. So the pure concepts of the understanding should be seen as concepts that characterize the constitutive features of exercises of the understanding. And this allows us to make sense of the idea that the matter of such a concept originates in the understanding: for the matter of a concept to have its origin in the understanding is for the form of the understanding to be the matter of this concept, where 'form of the understanding' refers to the constitutive features of exercises of this capacity.

It follows that a pure concept of the understanding is a concept whose matter is constituted by the form of the capacity that the understanding is. We have to ask, then, what kind of capacity the understanding is.

As we saw in Chapter One, Kant characterizes the understanding as a capacity to judge.⁵² He does this in the interest of identifying what he calls the functions of the understanding. Recall how I described his strategy: The central feature of judgments is that they are “functions of unity” among representations. This implies that, if the understanding is a capacity to judge, it must be a capacity to generate unity among representations; more specifically, a capacity to generate the kind of unity characteristic of judgments. Hence Kant’s conclusion at the end of *Leitfaden I*: “The functions of the understanding can therefore be found in their entirety if one can exhaustively exhibit the functions of unity in judgments” (A69/B94).⁵³ He goes on to say that it is indeed possible to do the latter, and he sets out to do it in *Leitfaden II*. As the plural in Kant’s formulation already indicates, and as *Leitfaden II* of course confirms, the capacity to judge is internally articulated. It is made up of several distinct sub-capacities, each of which is responsible for a distinct kind of unity among representations. So we need to note that when we transition from *Leitfaden I* to *Leitfaden II* we are moving from a comparatively higher level of generality, at which we talk simply about the capacity to judge, to a slightly lower level of generality, at which the internal articulation of this capacity comes into view.

The so-called Table of Judgments presents the internal articulation of the capacity to judge. As Michael Wolff has pointed out, the Table should be read as a table of *both* the logical

⁵² In Chapters Three and Four I shall argue that this is not the most fundamental characterization of the understanding. Fundamentally, the understanding is a capacity for apperceptive synthesis. Judgment is one of two forms that the act of apperceptive synthesis can take. Still, judgment is the paradigmatic act of the understanding.

⁵³ “Die Funktionen des Verstandes können also insgesamt gefunden werden, wenn man die Funktionen der Einheit in den Urteilen vollständig darstellen kann.”

forms of judgment *and* the functions of the understanding.⁵⁴ So we really have two tables in one. The isomorphism of the two tables is explained by the fact that the functions of the understanding are defined in terms of the logical forms of judgment. Each function of the understanding is a capacity to generate judgments of the corresponding logical form. In Kant's notorious view, the table of functions offers an exhaustive characterization of the capacity that is the understanding.⁵⁵

If this is what the understanding is, a complex, articulated capacity for judgment, then, according to the suggestion I have been developing, the functions of the understanding constitute the matter of the pure concepts of the understanding. It follows that we can form the idea of a pure concept of the understanding if we can form the idea of a concept whose matter is a function of the understanding. But now we face a difficulty. To be a genuine concept, our putative concept of the understanding must have not just the matter, but also the form of a concept. I said above that the form of a concept is that it is a general representation of objects. For a variety of reasons, it is clear that by 'object' here are meant, at least *inter alia*, entities that can exist in time and space; external objects, we might say, as distinct from objects of inner sense. But this creates a problem for the suggestion that a category for Kant is a concept whose matter is a function of the understanding. If there is any sense at all in which a function of the understanding can be regarded as an object, it is an object of inner sense. It is, after all, a mental capacity and does not exist in space. So it seems that a concept whose matter is a function of the understanding is a concept of certain internal objects; not, however, of any external objects.

⁵⁴ Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, 19-32.

⁵⁵ Cf. A79/B105: "For these functions fully exhaust the understanding, and yield a complete inventory of its powers" (denn der Verstand ist durch gedachte Funktionen völlig erschöpft, und sein Vermögen dadurch gänzlich ausgemessen).

The problem we thus confront is that it is not clear how we could simultaneously satisfy both requirements on a pure concept of the understanding: that it be a representation of objects and that its matter be a function of the understanding. They appear to be incompatible.

We can work our way around the apparent incompatibility of the two requirements if we hold on to a thought that already came into view when I introduced the notion of a sensible mode of combination in §2.2, above. Simply put, this is the thought that in an important sense the categories concern intuition rather than judgment. They are not of modes of concept-combination in judgment (i.e., logical forms of judgment), but sensible modes of combination, that is, modes of combination exhibited by intuitional manifolds. Now, I said that functions of the understanding are capacities for judgment; capacities to combine concepts. But assume for the moment that, somehow, a function of the understanding is also a capacity for sensible synthesis, that is, for the combination of intuitional manifolds.⁵⁶ In that case it would be easy to satisfy the two requirements on the idea of a pure concept of the understanding. Such a concept would be a concept of objects *because* it would be a sensible mode of combination, the mode of combination exhibited by intuitions through which objects are given in sensibility. And it would be a sensible mode of combination because, and in the sense that, it would constitute the form of a capacity to combine intuitional manifolds in accordance with these modes of combination, that is, a capacity to represent intuitional manifolds as exhibiting these modes of combination.

I shall argue that this is in fact how Kant conceives of the pure concepts. That is, he thinks of the functions of the understanding as capacities for judgment and, at the same time, as capacities for sensible synthesis. How this is possible should seem puzzling. But, as I shall argue, to find his way to this thought is what Kant attempts to do in developing his theory of the

⁵⁶ Cf. my discussion in the Introduction.

categories. To get this theory more fully into view we need an account of the doctrine of sensible synthesis. In the final section of this chapter I will provide an initial sketch of this doctrine, though only to the extent that Kant discusses it in the Metaphysical Deduction. This initial sketch will be filled out in subsequent chapter, especially in Chapters Four and Five. For now, what remains to be done is to supplement this discussion of what a pure concept of the understanding is by considering how Kant introduces this notion in the Metaphysical Deduction. This will be the task of §3.3. To pave the way for it I will return to the question of what the task of the Metaphysical Deduction is, and how it is distinguished from the Transcendental Deduction, in §3.2.

It should be clear from the discussion so far that if the strategy for demonstrating the existence of pure concepts of the understanding that I have sketched is indeed Kant's, this strategy has prospects of success *only if* Kant can show that the idea of a capacity for sensible synthesis is internally related to the idea of a capacity for judgment. Otherwise the claim that the functions of the understanding are capacities for both tasks will be *ad hoc*. More precisely, Kant would make himself vulnerable to the charge that either the apparent definition of the understanding as a capacity to judge in *Leitfaden I* was mistaken, or else that the claim that the functions of the understanding are also capacities for sensible synthesis is unjustified. Therefore, Kant will be able to vindicate his entitlement to the categories only if he can show that the capacity for sensible synthesis is internally related to the capacity for judgment. But this is just another way of formulating the Unity Problem, the problem of making it intelligible that judgment and sensible synthesis are distinct acts, but at the same time acts of a single capacity. It thus emerges that the Unity Problem concerns Kant's chief goal in the Transcendental Analytic,

viz. the goal of demonstrating that there is a set of pure concepts of the understanding, which are valid of all possible objects of experience.

As I will argue in Chapter Four, Kant confronts the task of establishing the connection between judgment and sensible synthesis in the Transcendental Deduction, not in the Metaphysical Deduction. In the latter he merely asserts that there is such a connection without yet seeking to entitle himself to this claim. If the task of demonstrating the existence of the categories requires this claim to be fully justified, Kant fails to execute the task of the Metaphysical Deduction successfully. Nevertheless, there is a clear sense in which the Metaphysical Deduction is concerned with the task of demonstrating the existence of the categories, whereas the Transcendental Deduction is devoted to the separate task of showing that these concepts are objectively valid. To explain what I mean here let me return to the question I raised at the beginning, of how these two tasks are distinguished.

3.2 Metaphysical Deduction and Transcendental Deduction

If the proposed division of labor between the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions is to make sense, then it must be one thing to show that a pure concept exists and another thing to show that such a concept has objective validity. It is tempting to suppose that this entails that it is possible for pure concepts to exist, yet to lack objective validity. To determine whether Kant is in fact committed to the latter claim we would need to determine exactly what the argumentative structure of the Transcendental Deduction is and how it relates to the preceding parts of the *Analytic*. That would take us too far afield. However, it is clear that Kant is committed to the first claim, and my goal in this section is to make a proposal for how to

understand the difference between proving the existence of a pure concept, on the one hand, and demonstrating its objective validity, on the other.

This difference rests on the distinction between sensibility in general and the spatio-temporal form of specifically human sensibility; or, what comes to the same, the distinction between a discursive understanding in general and the human understanding. In section 2.4, above, I argued that a reference to sensibility in general is already contained in the idea of a discursive understanding in general. We saw that this allows the idea of concepts of sensible modes of combination to be part of Transcendental Logic, that is, of an investigation in which we “isolate the understanding.”⁵⁷ What this means is that, importantly, we can form this idea without drawing on any facts about specifically human sensibility. The same is not true of the task of proving that such concepts have objective validity. To show that the categories are objectively valid, one must draw on facts about sensibility because sensibility and understanding are independent of each other, in the sense that it is not an analytic truth that sensibility satisfies the conditions that must be met for the understanding to be successfully exercised (cf. A89-91/B122f). This is a consequence of Kant’s commitment to the Heterogeneity Thesis.⁵⁸ What kinds of facts about sensibility are at issue here and what it would take to demonstrate the objective validity of the categories need not concern us now. What matters is that we can differentiate between the two projects of showing the existence and objective validity, respectively, of the categories by reference to whether facts about the specifically human variety of sensibility enter the argument.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Again, this fact and its significance for Kant’s argumentative strategy are overlooked by many commentators.

⁵⁸ See the Introduction.

⁵⁹ Talk of facts here is intended to cover the peculiar “a priori facts” Kant purports to establish in the Aesthetic, viz. that the forms of human sensibility are space and time. Such talk is warranted, I believe, on account of Kant’s view

I want to emphasize that for such facts about sensibility to be part of the argument the mere mention of sensible manifolds and the ways in which they need to be combined is not sufficient. For, again, the need for objects to be given in sensibility follows analytically from the bare idea of a discursive understanding and is thus available independently of any facts about specifically human sensibility, such as are at issue in the Transcendental Aesthetic. Sensibility enters the argument of the Metaphysical Deduction only in this thin sense, as an implication of the very idea of a discursive understanding, even though the opening paragraph of *Leitfaden III*, in which there is a reference to space and time, may seem to suggest otherwise.⁶⁰

I said in Chapter One that a concept's being objectively valid amounts to its having a content. Concepts that lack objective validity are empty. This seems to imply that if the Metaphysical Deduction is not concerned with the objective validity of the categories, it is not concerned with their content. But this implication does not sit well with two other claims I have made: First, I said that the Metaphysical Deduction is concerned with the matter of the pure concepts; one is tempted to say 'What else could the matter of a concept be but its content?' Second, we saw that the capacity to judge is articulated. That is, there are several distinct forms of judgment; accordingly, there are several distinct categories. By reference to what can these be distinguished, as they clearly are in the Metaphysical Deduction, if not their content?

In response to these questions we need to distinguish two senses of 'content'. This distinction is closely connected to the thesis that the idea of a sensible manifold is analytically contained in the idea of a discursive understanding. I will refer to content in the first sense as

that forms of sensibility other than space and time are conceivable. It is not a conceptual truth, according to Kant, that space and time constitute the forms of human sensibility, but a fact about human nature, albeit one that can be known a priori.

⁶⁰ Cf. A77/B102.

‘abstract content,’ to content in the second sense as ‘spatio-temporal content.’ Abstract content is the kind of content that can be specified independently of any reference to the character of specifically human sensibility, and thus independently of whether a concept is or is not empty. I call it ‘abstract’ in order to bring out the connection with the notion of sensibility in general. This is the notion of something abstract or, as we can also put it, something determinable. No actually existing sensible capacity is a sensible capacity in general. It is, rather, a sensible capacity with a specific character; as Kant would say, a sensibility with a particular form. Every existing sensible capacity thus represents a particular determination that sensibility in general can take on.

To say that a concept has (merely) abstract content is, therefore, to say that it has not been specified what it would be for an object falling under this concept to be given in an intuition that is the exercise of an actual sensible capacity. Any reference to the particular form of an actual sensible capacity has been left out. Among other things, this entails that it cannot be specified, by reference to abstract content alone, what it would be for a concept to be instantiated; that is, what it would be for an object falling under this concept to be given in intuition.

By contrast, to say that a concept has spatio-temporal content is to say, among other things, that this can be specified. Spatio-temporal content makes reference to the particular character of specifically human sensibility. It thereby allows one to determine at least the formal – i.e. spatio-temporal – characteristics of the intuitions that would show the concept to be instantiated. To say that a concept has spatio-temporal content therefore implies that the concept is not empty.

This raises another question: If the Metaphysical Deduction considers only abstract conceptual content but not the spatio-temporal character of human sensibility, then what resources are there for specifying the abstract content of a concept? The answer to this question is: the resources of Pure General Logic. To see how this might work, consider the way in which the pure concepts of the understanding relate to the logical forms of judgment. Within Pure General Logic we can distinguish logical forms of judgment, as the Table of Judgments attests.⁶¹ No appeal to intuition needs to be made in order to distinguish, say, particular from general judgments, or the quality of a judgment from its relational form. We can define these distinctions purely in terms of the kinds of conceptual tools available within Pure General Logic.⁶² If based on these distinctions we define a pure concept of the understanding as the concept of the object of a judgment of a given logical form, we are in a position to distinguish between different concepts of this kind without having to appeal to the specific character of human sensibility. We simply avail ourselves of the resources of Pure General Logic and then form the idea of an object of a judgment with a given logical form. As we saw above (§2.4), this idea contains the idea that such an object is something that must be given to the mind in sensibility. But in saying no more

⁶¹ This claim needs qualification. As Kant explicitly says (cf. A71f/B96f), some of the forms isolated in the Table of Judgments are not usually considered in Pure General Logic (PGL). Thus, from the perspective of PGL singular judgments do not constitute a distinct logical form because in the context of syllogistic they behave just like universal judgments. Similarly, to distinguish infinite judgments from affirmative and negative judgments one needs to take into account considerations other than those properties of judgments on which their behavior in syllogistic inference depends. And this means that it is not quite right to say that the Table of Judgments belongs to PGL. More specifically, the Table of Judgments in part depends on considerations which, unlike PGL, take into account the content of cognition. Thus, to distinguish infinite judgments, in which a negative predicate is affirmed of a subject (Kant's example is 'The soul is immortal'), from affirmative ones, one has to attend to the content of the predicate at least to the extent that one can differentiate between positive (real) and negative predicates. Still, the Table of Judgments does not concern the conditions under which objects corresponding to the logical forms contained in it can be given to a sensible faculty. If by a concern with the relation of cognition to its object we mean this kind of concern, it is still correct to say that, like Pure General Logic, the Table of Judgments abstracts from the relation of cognition to its object, while the Table of Categories does not.

⁶² For instance, we can define the quantity of judgments in terms of relations of partial and complete overlap between the extensions of concepts, where 'extension' is a PG-logical notion intelligible independently of any reference to sensibility.

than this we do not move beyond the bare idea of a discursive understanding in general. As I have said repeatedly, this idea analytically contains the claim that the objects of a discursive understanding must be given through some kind of sensible faculty. For this reason, we do not appeal to any resources beyond those that are available when we “isolate” the understanding.⁶³ In particular, we do not appeal to anything more determinate than the notion of sensibility in general. Thus, we do not appeal to the character of an actual sensible capacity such as the spatio-temporal character of specifically human sensibility.

In terms of the distinction between abstract and spatio-temporal content we can now characterize the difference between the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions as follows. The Metaphysical Deduction is concerned exclusively with abstract content. This means that at this point in the argument of the Analytic the Table of Categories that is presented as the culmination of the Metaphysical Deduction is a table of concepts to which so far only an abstract content has been assigned; that is, a content that can be specified independently of any reference to the specifically human forms of sensibility. This implies that it is a table of concepts which may for all we know still turn out to be devoid of spatio-temporal content. By contrast, the Transcendental Deduction is concerned precisely with the spatio-temporal content of the categories. Specifically, the goal of the Transcendental Deduction is to give an argument to the effect that the categories have spatio-temporal content. It stops short of specifying what the spatio-temporal content of each category is. That is the task of the chapter on the Pure Principles.⁶⁴ However, as this claim implies and as even a cursory look at the text confirms, both

⁶³ Cf. the passage from A62/B87 quoted in fn. 37 above.

⁶⁴ The Pure Principles explicitly relate the categories only to time, the form of inner sense, but not to space, the form of outer sense. But since Kant holds that there can be no inner sense without outer sense (see the Refutation of Idealism, B274ff), the kind of conceptual content of which minds with a specifically human sensibility are capable

the argument of the Transcendental Deduction and the discussion of the Pure Principles rest on considerations concerning the spatio-temporal nature of human sensibility.⁶⁵

We are now in a position to respond to the criticisms that are often leveled at the Metaphysical Deduction. As we have seen, a frequent criticism is this: Not only does the argument of the Metaphysical Deduction not establish what it purports to; it is hard to see what a successful argument from logical forms of judgment to categories could even look like. Commentators sympathetic to Kant tend to react to this charge, whose force they largely concede, by suggesting that the Metaphysical Deduction is not intended as an “ambitious” argument that establishes that there are exactly the twelve categories Kant identifies. Rather, they suggest, it must be understood as aiming for the weaker claim of suggesting candidate concepts for the status of categories, whose possession of this status is justified elsewhere.⁶⁶

As we can now see, both parties here make the same mistake. They fail to appreciate, first, that Kant’s concern in introducing the categories is with the conditions governing the objective validity of judgment, rather than with “weighty” ontological issues, and, second, that in the MD the categories are given only a relatively thin content, which can be fully specified by appeal to the logical forms of judgment in conjunction with the idea of a separate faculty of receptivity. Let me say a little more about each of these two points.

should, I think, be characterized as spatio-temporal content. Moreover, when Kant says that time is the form of inner sense he does not mean to deny that time is also a formal characteristic of outer sense; cf. A34/B50f. To relate the categories explicitly to the concept of an object of outer sense in general is the task of the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.

⁶⁵ As regards the B-edition version of the Transcendental Deduction, considerations pertaining to the spatio-temporal nature of human sensibility enter the argument only in what is usually regarded as its second step; specifically, in §24 and §26. For the claim that the B-Deduction has the form of a single argument in two steps see Henrich, “The Proof-Structure of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction.”

⁶⁶ This is Graham Bird’s view; see *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge*, 83f, as well as *The Revolutionary Kant*, 259f and 268f. See also Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 152-156.

As to the first point, it is a widespread view that the relation between categories and logical forms of judgment in Kant is this: To possess a categorial concept is to have the capacity to make judgments of the corresponding logical form.⁶⁷ Although there is a kernel of truth to it, this conception of the relation between judgments and categories overlooks the fact that the latter pertain specifically to the question of what it is for the former to be objectively valid; that is, to bear a relation to objects that must be given in sensibility. Kant's view is not that the capacity to make judgments of a certain logical form is identical with the capacity to use certain concepts, of which he then tries to show that they have categorial status. Rather, his view is based on the assumption that the logical forms of judgment can be identified independently of any considerations bearing on the contentfulness of judgments exhibiting these forms. In the terms Kant uses to draw the distinction between Pure General and Transcendental Logic, the logical forms of judgment can be identified in abstraction from the relation of cognition to its object – or, as Kant also puts it, they can be identified while abstracting from the content of cognition.⁶⁸ Unlike the logical forms of judgment, the categories belong to Transcendental Logic precisely because they are concerned with the relation of cognition to its object, with its objective validity or contentfulness. And this is what makes it possible to derive the latter from the former. Again, the derivation rests on the thought that to be contentful a judgment must be about an object that

⁶⁷ Thus, Bird says that the unschematized categories are “identical with forms of judgment” (*Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, 106); and in his recent book he says that the categories *express* the logical forms of judgment (*The Revolutionary Kant*, e.g. 266f). Bennett's commitment to this kind of view is evident from the following passages: first, commenting on the categories of negation and totality, he asks: “[...] is there also a concept of negation, associated with ‘not’ and its cognates? Or of totality, associated with ‘all’ and its cognates? Kant answers these questions affirmatively. He uses the ‘concept’ terminology to codify those features of judgments which concern the sort of work they do [...]” (*Kant's Analytic*, 75); second, he claims that “[...] the concept of cause is [according to Kant] the ability to handle hypotheticals” (ibid., 92), and, finally, he says that “[...] the so-called ‘concept of existence’ [i.e. the category of existence] [...] is the capacity to handle assertoric or non-modal judgments” (ibid., 92).

⁶⁸ Cf. the discussion of this in Chapter One, §1.2.

can be given in sensibility, and that the logical forms of judgment can be used to formulate this condition at the level of abstraction at which we are concerned with the contentfulness of judgment in general, rather than with judgments about particular kinds of objects. The mistake that lies in equating the categories with the capacity to make judgments of the correlated logical forms thus turns out to be a failure to appreciate the specific concerns of Transcendental Logic, as distinguished from those of Pure General Logic.

The second mistake mentioned above has its roots in a failure to take seriously Kant's distinction between proving the existence of a pure concept, on the one hand, and proving its objective validity, on the other. As we have seen, the latter is a more ambitious undertaking than the former. But commentators who regard the Metaphysical Deduction as a failure typically neglect this difference and work on the assumption that there is only one thing it could be to "derive the categories from the logical forms of judgment." And this is to draw "weighty" ontological conclusions about the ultimate structure of reality (as constituted by appearances) from logical considerations pertaining to the forms of judgment. However, as my discussion has shown, ontological considerations in this sense enter Kant's argument only in the Transcendental Deduction, that is, only when he is concerned with the objective validity, as distinct from the existence, of the pure concepts. To demonstrate the existence of a pure concept is not, on Kant's view, to establish an ontological claim. It is rather to show how consideration of the constitutive capacities of the understanding, to the exclusion of anything empirical, yields material for a nominal definition of a set of concepts that can on account of this be said to have their origin in the faculty of understanding itself. Whether these concepts are, or even can be, instantiated is a

separate question, which Kant addresses in the Transcendental Deduction under the heading of the objective validity of the categories.

3.3 Principles of Synthesis

Based on a consideration of the cognitive function of intuition in the first part of this chapter, in the second part I presented a conception of the categories as sensible modes of combination. In developing this conception I considered the understanding as a capacity for judgment. The guiding thought is that, since a judgment is objectively valid if and only if its object is a possible object of intuition, the categories specify the conditions that must be met for judgment in general to have objective validity. In Part Three, I approached the topic of the categories from a different angle and asked what it is for a concept to originate in the understanding with regard to its matter. This eventually led to the suggestion that what Kant calls the functions of the understanding (the capacities that make up the understanding and on which the categories are based) must be both capacities for judgment and capacities for sensible synthesis. Let us now consider how Kant introduces the categories as principles of sensible synthesis in the third section of the *Leitfaden*.

We can approach this task by recalling the two requirements on a pure concept of the understanding – a concept that originates in the understanding with regard not just to its form, but also to its matter – which I identified in §3.1. These are (i) the requirement that such a representation be a concept of objects, where the scope of ‘object’ includes objects of outer sense; and (ii) the requirement that such a representation be a concept of a constitutive capacity of the understanding.

To say, as I did in §2.4, that the schematized categories are sensible modes of combination is to focus on the first requirement to the exclusion of the second. I made no mention of constitutive capacities of the understanding in developing this account. Instead, I argued that the categories are formal concepts of objects because they characterize objects only with regard to the logical form of possible judgments about them. And they do so in virtue of the fact that their content is constituted by the sensible modes of combination that intuitions must exhibit in order to give objects to the mind.

My characterization of the categories in terms of sensible modes of combination, then, satisfied the first requirement on the idea of a pure concept of the understanding, but not the second. The second requirement, however, is addressed by the theory of synthesis, which is first introduced in *Leitfaden III*. If we want to understand how Kant attempts to satisfy both requirements, then, we must take into account the theory of synthesis. The discussion of *Leitfaden III* that follows is intended to do just that, at least to the extent to which the theory of synthesis is developed in this section.

I shall argue that the way in which the categories are introduced in *Leitfaden III* appears to be in conflict with the account I have developed in this chapter. As I will explain shortly, in *Leitfaden III* the categories are introduced as principles of synthesis. What the relation is between a principle of synthesis and a sensible mode of combination is not obvious. I shall argue that the challenge of reconciling these two accounts of the categories refers us back to the Unity Problem and thus to the fundamental challenge of reconciling the two aspects of the understanding, its being both a capacity for judgment and a capacity for sensible synthesis.

Though short, the text of *Leitfaden III* is very dense. An in-depth discussion of it would require more space than I have here. Rather than discussing the section as a whole, I shall focus on two central passages. In the first passage, Kant gives what appears to be a summary of the argument he has just laid out. It runs as follows:

The first thing that must be given to us for the a priori cognition of all objects is the *manifold* of pure intuition; the *synthesis* of this manifold by means of the imagination is the second thing, but it still does not yield cognition. The concepts that give *unity* to this pure synthesis, and that consist solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity, are the third thing necessary for cognition of an object that comes before us, and they depend on the understanding. (A78f/B104)⁶⁹

In this passage, Kant lists three requirements of a priori knowledge: the manifold of pure intuition, a synthesis of this manifold by the imagination, and concepts that give unity to this synthesis. As the immediate context of the passage makes clear, this claim about a priori knowledge is a claim of Transcendental Logic. According to the account I gave of Transcendental Logic (cf. Chp. One, §1.2), this discipline investigates what it takes for exercises of the understanding to amount to cognition. Which simply means that Transcendental Logic investigates the conditions that have to be satisfied for judgments of the understanding to have spatio-temporal content. We already know that, speaking very abstractly, these conditions require that the object a judgment purports to be about must be a possible object of (specifically human) intuition. The question then is what it takes for the purported object of a judgment to be a possible object of intuition. Since the notion of ‘object’ here has the merely formal sense of ‘object of a judgment of the understanding,’ the requirement of intuitability takes on a formal character as well: all that is required is that the intuitions through which the object is given

⁶⁹ Das erste, was uns zum Behuf der Erkenntnis aller Gegenstände a priori gegeben sein muß, ist das *Mannigfaltige* der reinen Anschauung; die *Synthesis* dieses Mannigfaltigen durch die Einbildungskraft ist das zweite, gibt aber noch keine Erkenntnis. Die Begriffe, welche dieser reinen Synthesis *Einheit* geben, und lediglich in der Vorstellung dieser notwendigen synthetischen Einheit bestehen, tun das dritte zum Erkenntnis eines vorkommenden Gegenstandes, und beruhen auf dem Verstande.

exhibit just the kind of unity that the judgment represents them as having. I have been using the term ‘sensible mode of combination’ to designate this unity. Because they thus pertain to the form, as opposed to the matter, of intuition, sensible modes of combination are specified in terms of the formal characteristics of intuition, and this means: in terms of the properties of pure intuition. This gets us the idea of a pure manifold, the first of Kant’s three ingredients.

As Kant makes clear earlier on in *Leitfaden III*, for sensible manifolds to exhibit unity a synthesis is required, that is, a spontaneous activity of the mind which generates unity in the manifold.⁷⁰ This gets us the second ingredient listed in the passage, viz. synthesis. However, Kant says that synthesis by itself is not yet sufficient for the kind of cognition we are interested in. I take this to mean that what is at issue is a particular type of synthesis, viz. the type that accounts for the appropriate kind of unity. Not just any type of synthesis fits this bill. The kind of unity that can be traced to synthesis by association, for instance, would not be the right kind of unity, hence synthesis by association not the right type of synthesis.⁷¹ Rather, what we need is a type of synthesis that confers on the sensible manifold the unity exhibited by sensible modes of combination. This, I take it, is what the third ingredient accounts for: “the concepts, which give unity to this synthesis.” It specifies the kind of unity Kant is after and, as a consequence, serves to single out the type of synthesis that is at issue.

If this is right, then the type of synthesis in question is one which depends on the concepts that, in some sense, account for the unity that this synthesis confers on the sensible

⁷⁰ Cf. A77/B102: “The spontaneity of our thought requires that [the manifold of pure intuition] first be gone through, taken up, and combined in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it. I call this act synthesis” (Allein die Spontaneität unseres Denkens erfordert es, daß [das Mannigfaltige der reinen Anschauung] zuerst auf gewisse Weise durchgegangen, aufgenommen, und verbunden werde, um daraus eine Erkenntnis zu machen. Diese Handlung nenne ich Synthesis). – This is a statement of what I call Kant’s Spontaneity Thesis. I discuss this thesis in Chapter Three.

⁷¹ I say more about this in Chapter Three, §6.

manifold. As the contrast with associative synthesis suggests, this dependence is not an accidental feature but one that is essential to the type of synthesis at issue. By means of this feature, this type of synthesis is distinguished from merely associative synthesis.

This is not yet very informative. At this point, Kant has not provided us with a lot of material for giving a more substantive characterization of sensible synthesis. In Chapter Four I shall draw on the doctrine of apperception, as presented in the Transcendental Deduction, to give a more substantive characterization. I shall argue that a synthesis that is dependent on concepts for its unity is one which operates by means of a representation of its own form. The form of this act is itself represented in the act, and this kind of representation requires concepts. Again, I will provide more detail in Chapter Four. But we can already see that Kant's characterization of these concepts in the present passage fits with such an account. He says that these concepts "consist merely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity." If synthesis generates unity in the manifold by means of a representation of its own form, then a concept whose content is just this unity is suitable for functioning as the representation of form by means of which the act of synthesis operates.

As Kant goes on to say, in a passage I will discuss in a moment, these concepts, on which synthesis depends for its unity, are the pure concepts of the understanding. What *Leitfaden III* tells us about the pure concepts, therefore, is that they function as grounds of unity for synthesis. In the second part of this chapter I developed an account, according to which a category for Kant is a sensible mode of combination. We need to ask now how these two characterizations of the categories – as sensible modes of combination and as grounds of unity for synthesis – relate to one another.

According to the account of synthesis I outlined just now, synthesis generates unity in the manifold by means of a representation of this unity. If this is the unity of a sensible mode of combination, then the two characterizations of the categories coincide: The categories function as grounds of unity for synthesis precisely because, and insofar as, they are sensible modes of combination. If sensible synthesis operates by means of a representation of the unity that it confers on the manifold and if this unity is the unity of the sensible modes of combination, then synthesis operates by means of a representation of sensible modes of combination. It follows that the two glosses on what a category is are merely two different characterizations of the same thing.

In arguing for this point I have relied on the idea that the categories function as what we might call principles of sensible synthesis. By this I mean that they are constitutive of the capacity for sensible synthesis, in the sense that one must possess these concepts if one is to have this capacity. Recall now one of the two requirements that a pure concept of the understanding must meet, according to the account of what such a concept is that I gave in §3.1 above. This is the requirement that such a concept must originate in the understanding with regard to its matter. I took this to mean that such a concept must be a concept of constitutive features of any exercise of the understanding; or, for short, constitutive features of the capacity that the understanding is. The claim that the categories are principles of sensible synthesis meets this requirement very nicely.

Notice, however, that it does so only on the condition that the understanding is a capacity for sensible synthesis. This suggests that the entire account of the categories that is sketched in *Leitfaden III* is premised on the claim that the understanding is a capacity for sensible synthesis.

As we shall see in a moment, the culminating passage of the section confirms this. It confirms as well that the understanding is also a capacity for judgment. Since judgment and sensible synthesis are distinct acts, this means that we have come face-to-face with the Unity Problem again, the problem of making intelligible that the understanding is a capacity which admits of two distinct acts. It now emerges that we cannot even give a satisfying account of the categories without addressing this problem.

Leitfaden III culminates in a passage that is meant to sum up the justification for deriving the Table of Categories from the Table of Judgments. What is significant for our purposes is that in this passage Kant attributes to a single capacity, the understanding, two distinct acts, viz. judgment and sensible synthesis. Here is the text:

The same function which gives unity to the different representations *in a judgment*, also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations *in an intuition*, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding. (A79/B104f)⁷²

If we take Kant's term '*Funktion*' to be equivalent to 'capacity',⁷³ the central claim of the passage is that one and the same capacity is responsible for both the unity of sensible synthesis and the unity of a judgment. Moreover, this unity is said to be the pure concept of the understanding.⁷⁴ What we have here is the idea of a capacity to represent a certain kind of unity, which is represented by the categories. This capacity, however, admits of two different kinds of exercise, judgment and sensible synthesis. Accordingly, the unity that the categories represent

⁷² Dieselbe Funktion, welche den verschiedenen Vorstellungen *in einem Urteile* Einheit gibt, die gibt auch der bloßen Synthesis verschiedener Vorstellungen *in einer Anschauung* Einheit, welche, allgemein ausgedrückt, der reine Verstandesbegriff heißt.

⁷³ A move licensed by, among other things, the passage at A68/B93, quoted earlier in this section, in which Kant says that concepts rest on functions, and that a function is the "unity of the act of ordering several representations under a common one". Kant's talk of "the unity of the act" must be taken to be about a generic act. And to ascribe a generic act to the understanding is to ascribe to it the capacity to perform tokenings of this act. For an interpretation of the term 'function' along these lines, see Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, 65-57.

⁷⁴ Kant's use of the singular here must mean that jointly the categories articulate this unity. When differences between individual categories are not at issue Kant sometimes employs this talk of "the category." See my discussion of another passage in which he does so in Chapter Four, §3.

must have two modes. Since it is a unity that characterizes intuitions, it must have a sensible mode. Since it is a unity that characterizes judgments, it must have a conceptual, or discursive, mode.

Kant's discussion of the categories in *Leitfaden III*, then, leads us back to the Unity Problem. It does so because Kant here presents the categories as principles of sensible synthesis. This means that they are principles of an act that is spontaneous, yet distinct from judgment. I have argued that this account of the categories is compatible with the characterization of the categories as sensible modes of combination, which I have developed in this chapter. The compatibility of the two accounts, however, rests on the condition that a conception of the understanding is available according to which this capacity admits of two distinct acts. To make such a conception available we need to address the Unity Problem. In the next chapter I will confront this problem by discussing Kant's motivation for the view that underlies the problem. This is the view that an intuition exhibits the unity characteristic of an object only as the result of an act of synthesis. This view is captured by what I call Kant's Spontaneity Thesis, the thesis that combination is never given. Accordingly, the following chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the Spontaneity Thesis.