‘Synthesis and Harmony: A Study of Kant’s Account of Sensible Experience in the

Critique of Pure Reason’

A thesis presented for the degree of PhD in Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen

by

Paul Renton

(MA (Hons) in Mental Philosophy

from the University of Aberdeen)

Matriculation Number: 50019145

Supervisor: Beth Lord

Presented in 2013
Declaration

I declare that:

- this thesis has been composed by Paul Renton
- it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree
- the work has been done by Paul Renton
- all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged

Paul Renton
For Vicki and Emily
Foreword

The examiners’ criticism of my original submission was considerable and rightly so, for in my rush to submit something I succeeded in providing little more than a collection of notes rather than a well thought out argument. To their credit the examiners still managed to find an argument, albeit one that was incomplete. I am grateful to the examiners, not only for the constructive criticism that has allowed me produce a vastly improved version of my argument and reading of Kant, but also in guiding me in the manner in which I should present it. I am also hugely indebted to my supervisor, Beth Lord, who has ensured that I have written a thesis whilst keeping in my mind the mistakes I made first time around.

The examiners’ criticism of the original thesis falls into three main categories: a lack of clarity in presenting my argument; a failure to sufficiently distinguish my own view from Kant’s, as well as the other views found in the secondary literature; and, a failure to complete my argument and meaningfully engage with the problem of isomorphism.

To begin with the examiners stated that I failed to give an overall impression of what I aimed to achieve in the thesis and how each chapter was to contribute to this aim. A summary of salient points has been provided sketching out the main points of the argument, but it is in the Introduction that I have provided a clear outline of the argument and how each chapter develops the argument and deals with potential objections. In addition, in each of the four chapters I have restricted myself to clearly specified topics and stages of the larger argument. I have not allowed my discussion to jump around from topic to topic and where the same passages are considered in more than one place this has been in line with the distinct stages of the argument. In contrast to the original thesis, I have not added any new material to the Conclusion, but simply reviewed the main points of the argument and briefly suggested the significance that my argument may have for the general debate on Kant. I have also indicated some areas where more study is required.

The examiners were clear that I was right to take the secondary literature seriously, though I often failed to make my own views clear and distinguish them from other readings. As requested I have attended more to the systematic aspects of Kant’s thought and given attention to the literature where it supports my view or presents arguments that run contrary to my own and so must be dealt with accordingly. In presenting my reading of Kant I have made it clear where I am offering an interpretation or where I am suggesting that there might be scope to either extend his argument or speculate that his thought extends beyond what he explicitly stated in the *Critique*. In general I have ensured that the argument of the thesis has
been driven by my own reading of Kant and not by playing my views up against a succession of commentators.

The third main area of criticism presented the most difficult challenge for me, though the thesis benefitted because isomorphism became the central theme and consequently guides the argument. In the original thesis I failed to present any discussion of the general problems that any view of isomorphism will face or to make it sufficiently clear why isomorphism complements Kant’s argument as an additional condition of the possibility of our representing anything at all. The examiners were right to note that I should consider the possibility of alternative mappings, but, given my reading of Kant and what I think he believes our faculties of cognition provide for representation, it does not appear possible that there are alternative isomorphisms. I have also made an effort to go beyond the initial criticism from the examiners and have assessed the main thrust of the arguments against isomorphism in the secondary literature – isomorphism is generally though to be inconsistent with Kant’s other claims. In responding to the main criticism in the secondary literature I have detailed just why Kant’s outline of the faculties of cognition require an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world and just why isomorphism is not inconsistent with his main claims.

Paul Renton

June 2013
Summary of salient points

1. In this thesis I argue that Kant’s model of sensible cognition is best considered as a modified version of Locke’s representationalism. There is a great deal of common ground between Kant and Locke, but one feature found in Locke that is not so easily found in Kant is a commitment to isomorphism, or as Locke states it, that ideas are reducible to their causes. I think it is possible to find a similar view in Kant.

2. My argument presents a balanced approach to reading Kant, which acknowledges that in practice the systematic nature in which we represent the world is the result of a combination of internal and external factors. The possibility of cognition rests, not only on the nature of the cognitive faculties and our capacity to represent in general, but also upon the nature of the metaphysical world and its relation to sensibility. As I present Kant, the possibility of representing a world is dependent upon our general capacity to combine, the suitability of the given content of the manifold in sensibility to combination of this kind, and the nature of the metaphysical world that determines the content of the manifold.

3. To some extent my argument and outline of sensible cognition goes beyond what Kant says in the Critique, but only because the general nature of his investigation is transcendental. As such, his investigation primarily restricts itself to the very nature of what it is for us to represent in general and the attempt to provide an outline of the transcendental nature of the faculties that make it possible. Kant’s investigation therefore leaves undetermined that part of experience which has its origin in the metaphysical world.

4. There is a tendency to read too much into the cognitive faculties and what they determine in cognition. I argue that it is a mistake to think Kant grounds the objectivity of cognition solely on the nature of the subject’s cognitive capacities or, in the activity of the understanding, that the mind imposes its form of representation on the given manifold of sensibility.

5. Kant presents a more limited idea of what the subject determines in cognition: sensibility provides the general form of intuition; and the activity of the understanding is to subsume the manifold of intuition under concepts. If this is the correct view to take, then he is committed to an ordered or unified manifold in advance of synthesis. For only if the manifold is ordered and, indeed, ordered in harmony with the rules of
synthesis, would the subject in the understanding have the means by which it could subsume the manifold under a concept.

6. Because sensibility provides only the general sensible form of the manifold, it cannot determine the kind of unity presupposed by the rules of synthesis, so the order or unity in the manifold must be the result of the affection of sensibility by the metaphysical world. In which case, the possibility of synthesis, and of objective cognition, rests on the kind of content the metaphysical world produces in sensibility. Thus, for the possibility of cognition, there must be a harmony of function between the action of the metaphysical world on sensibility and our representational faculties. This harmony of function I argue commits Kant to a form of isomorphism or harmony between the general nature of representation and the general nature of the metaphysical world.

7. Isomorphism is not a popular reading of Kant, mainly because it appears to conflict with Kant’s other claims, yet if we read the function of the faculties in the limited way I suggest, then there is no conflict at all. Moreover, an isomorphic relation of representation to the metaphysical world is a condition of our representation of a world.
‘Each time I see any of my movies there are plenty of things that I would like to change. It doesn’t mean that the movie would be any better.’

Roman Polanski

‘[I]t is possible to admit that Kant may have been guilty of inconsistencies and confusion in working out the doctrine, so that one’s interpretation of it need not necessarily fit everything which Kant said.’

Eric Matthews
Acknowledgements

I would like to offer thanks to each of my supervisors: Paul Gorner, who first introduced me to Kant; Peter Baumann, who has stuck with me to the end despite no longer being in Aberdeen; Stephen Gaukroger and Mogens Lærke, who made sure that I presented a first draft; and especially Beth Lord, who ensured that my ‘collection of notes’ became a thesis.

The Department of Philosophy in Aberdeen has always been welcoming, but special mention for advice and continued encouragement must go to Patricia Clarke, Bob Plant, Gerry Hough, Tony Milligan and the late Paul Tomassi (1962-2005).
Contents

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: The representationalist parallel between Kant and Locke

Appendix: Modification and representational quality

CHAPTER 2: The possibility of synthesis

Section I: Synthesis

Section II: The possibility of synthesis

Section III: Two distinct arguments

CHAPTER 3: Original synthesis

Section I: The weak view of original synthesis

Section II: Two objections to the strong view of original synthesis

CHAPTER 4: Isomorphism

Section I: Isomorphism between representation and the metaphysical world

Section II: The metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be

Section III: The world of representation is more than the metaphysical world

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I argue that Kant’s model of sensible cognition is best considered as a modified version of Locke’s representationalism. My argument presents a balanced approach to reading Kant, which acknowledges that in practice the systematic nature in which we represent the world is the result of a combination of internal and external factors. The possibility of cognition rests, not only on the nature of the cognitive faculties and our capacity to represent in general, but also upon the nature of the metaphysical world and its relation to sensibility. As I present Kant, the possibility of representing a world is dependent upon our general capacity to combine, the suitability of the given content of the manifold in sensibility to combination of this kind, and the nature of the metaphysical world that determines the content of the manifold. To some extent my argument and outline of sensible cognition goes beyond what Kant says in the Critique, but only because the general nature of his investigation is transcendental. As such, his investigation primarily restricts itself to the very nature of what it is for us to represent in general and the attempt to provide an outline of the transcendental nature of the faculties that make it possible. Kant’s investigation therefore leaves undetermined that part of experience which has its origin in the metaphysical world.

In the above proof, however, I still could not abstract from one point, namely, from the fact that the manifold for intuition must already be given prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently from it; how, however, is here left undetermined. … [The categories] are only rules for an understanding whose entire capacity consists in thinking, i.e., in the action of bringing the synthesis of the manifold that is given to it in intuition from elsewhere to the unity of apperception, which therefore cognises nothing at all by itself, but only combines and orders the material for cognition, the intuition, which must be given to it by the object. (B145)

In this passage from the B deduction, Kant reminds us that the manifold is given prior to synthesis, an indication that cognition involves both intuition and concept and therefore requires in addition to the understanding another faculty (of intuition). But he also notes towards the end of the passage that intuition is given to us by the object. As I read Kant, putting both statements together, I think he is saying that intuition is possible on account of both our capacity to intuit and that we only come to intuit anything when the intuition is given to us by the (metaphysical) object. With this thesis I address some aspects of the problem of what in the manifold is determined by the faculties of cognition and what in the manifold is given. My general aim is to bring these two parts together in a single account of what makes
an objective cognition possible and I believe when we do so that Kant’s account of sensible
cognition presents a definite parallel with Locke’s.

Understandably, the literature pays most attention to Kant’s arguments in the *Critique*,
which outline the transcendental conditions of representation and the nature and function of
the cognitive faculties. But I think there is a tendency to read too much into what he says
about the cognitive faculties and what they determine in cognition. This tendency to attribute
more to the subject than Kant intends shows itself in different ways: for instance, Kant is
presented in such a way that the objectivity of cognition is grounded solely on the nature of
the subject’s cognitive capacities or, in the activity of the understanding, the mind imposes its
form of representation on the given manifold of sensibility.¹ I think both views are mistaken.
If I am right, and he presents a more limited idea of what the subject determines in cognition,
then it becomes possible that Kant’s thought embraces more than mere internal conditions of
representation. In my reading of synthesis I suggest that the understanding represents the
combination of the manifold merely by subsuming the manifold under the categories. If this is
the correct view to take, then Kant is committed to an ordered or unified manifold in advance
of synthesis. For only if the manifold is ordered and, indeed, ordered in harmony with the
rules of synthesis, would the subject have the means by which it could subsume the manifold
under a concept. Because sensibility provides only the general sensible form of the manifold,
it cannot determine the kind of unity presupposed by the rules of synthesis, so the order or
unity in the manifold must be the result of the affection of sensibility by the metaphysical
world. In which case, the possibility of synthesis, and of objective cognition, rests on the kind
of content the metaphysical world produces in sensibility. Thus, for the possibility of
cognition, there must be a harmony of function between the action of the metaphysical world
on sensibility and our representational faculties. This harmony of function I argue commits
Kant to a form of isomorphism or harmony between the general nature of representation and
the general nature of the metaphysical world. Isomorphism is not a popular reading of Kant,
mainly because it appears to conflict with his other claims², yet if we read the function of the

¹ That the objectivity of cognition is grounded on our capacity to represent alone is less explicitly stated in the
literature, but if it is supposed that the mind imposes its form on representation, then I think it is implicitly
assumed that the objectivity of cognition has a subjective ground. Paul Guyer, for instance, reads Kant’s attempt
to ground cognition on the unity of the self as a ‘departure from his previous caution about the force of the laws
thought … and instead gravitates toward the view that the conditions of possible experience are rules which the
mind imposes on any possible manifold.’ (Paul Guyer *Kant and the claims of knowledge* Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1987, p132)

² This line of criticism is found in Jill Vance Buroker *Space and Incongruence: The Origin of Kant’s Idealism*
1999; Ralph C. S. Walker ‘Kant on the Number of Worlds’ *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18,
2010, pp821-43.
faculties as I suggest, then there is no conflict at all. Moreover, isomorphism presents an added advantage, for it provides definite grounds for saying that representation does not hang free of the metaphysical world – Kant is not an idealist in the sense often attributed to him. Isomorphism might be proposed as a means of avoiding any charge of idealism, but where my argument has an advantage is where it provides a definite means of explaining the hypothesis of the harmony of mind and world: there needs to be a harmony between representation and the metaphysical world, for under no other condition would cognition be possible.

In the literature there are two broad strategies for reading Kant’s transcendental idealism and, more specifically, whether it is a doctrine that requires one world or two. Is there but one world that we distinguish between how it appears and how it is in itself (the ‘two-aspects’ view) or is there one world of appearance and another of things in themselves (the ‘two-worlds’ view)? Both readings have their problems and their supporting passages, but neither view is entirely comfortable with all parts of the Critique. The problem for the ‘two-aspects’ view is one of reference: how is it possible to know that the things that appear are the same things that are unknown in themselves if there are no conditions of reference to the things themselves? In addition, because what we are able to think of as an object is comprised of qualities that belong only to representation, it means that when we refer to the object we know in experience it is only ever to an object that exists in representation and not to a metaphysically independent object as it appears. The ‘two-worlds’ view has its own difficulties, but it is also misleading, for there never could be two worlds of objects contained in a single ontology, especially if one of these worlds is comprised only of features of representation. The world of appearance can only be considered as a world of ontological things from within the representational standpoint of our experience of that world, but within this standpoint there is no other world. And, from the standpoint where it makes sense to talk of things in themselves as ontological things, our representations would be objects, but not the kind of objects we know in cognition. Instead, representations would merely be a species of things in themselves. In which case, each world (of appearance and of things in themselves) exists only relative to the two distinct ways of considering things and what is meant by ‘thing’ or ‘object’ is relative to the way of considering itself. In the strictest possible sense I think it is right to say that there is but one world, i.e., the metaphysical world; however, that is not the

---

world of our cognition and the only world that has any reality for us is the world of appearance which exists in our representation of it. Certainly, there is an important relationship between appearance and thing in itself, but I do not believe the ‘two-aspects’ and ‘two-worlds’ views capture what it is.

I also avoid the ‘two-aspects’ versus ‘two-worlds’ debate because I find they are insufficiently sensitive to Kant’s concern with the possibility of cognition. I think that most often when he says that we do not know things in themselves it is a statement about the nature of representation and what it is for us to cognize in general. In which case, it is a statement about the cognitive faculty and says nothing of things in themselves at all. When Kant does make some reference to things in themselves, to affection, or to the relation of an object to sensibility, I believe he is making reference to things in a way that lies outside what he generally understands by transcendental philosophy. I think he is quite aware that the possibility of cognition is grounded on more than the capacity of the mind to represent in general, but whatever these further conditions may be lies outside the main concerns of transcendental philosophy to outline this general capacity. What I consider is that, when we bring these two aspects of Kant’s thought together, he looks to be thinking of the relation between appearance and thing in itself along the same lines as Locke.

I split the argument into four chapters. In the first chapter, on the suggestion of Kant himself in the *Prolegomena*, I present Kant’s view of cognition as representationalist along the lines of Locke. However, if Kant is serious in is appeal to Locke, then I think he must commit to four main points: (i) the content of cognition is given through sense and we are passive to what we receive; (ii) we are aware only of ideas (or representations) in us, and we cannot extend our cognition beyond them; (iii) the ideas we have represent no quality of the metaphysical things that produce the ideas in sensibility; (iv) the ideas are reducible to their causes, meaning there is an isomorphic (and representational) relation between the idea in sensibility and the metaphysical thing that produces it. Points (i) to (iii) are relatively easy to find in both Locke and Kant. Point (iv) is, not only more difficult to find, but is somewhat controversial. Put another way, for Kant to follow Locke and say we can reduce the ideas to their causes is at once to admit that the reality of representation is due to the relation of the idea to the cause (the metaphysical object). It is clear to me that this is a central feature of Locke’s understanding of sensible cognition and, in his endorsement of Locke, Kant is presumably aware of it. As it is, even if we are able to draw out the possibility that Kant engaged with each of the four points in endorsing Locke, the question that remains will be whether such a commitment is consistent with Kant’s other doctrines. The argument of the
thesis as a whole is that Kant is indeed committed to an isomorphic relation and that, in the main, isomorphism is consistent with what else he says. What is also relevant is that if I am right to draw such a parallel between Locke and Kant, then any reading of Kant that concentrates on the subjective side of the possibility of cognition fails to address a fundamental feature of what is involved in making an objective and real cognition possible. For the possibility of cognition will indeed rest on a combination of internal and external conditions.

Nevertheless, we are only able to determine what the metaphysical world contributes to the manifold and cognition by first examining the function of the faculty of representation. In chapter 2, I do not concern myself with any external factors involved in a possible cognition, but only with the internal relationship between the act of synthesis and the manifold of intuition in sensibility. To begin with I provide an overview of the idea of synthesis or of what Kant thinks we are doing in the act of the understanding: synthesis, he says, is an act of representing the manifold as something and we represent only through a combination of the manifold in accordance with a rule. But, in order that the understanding can represent the manifold as something, it presupposes that the manifold is a multiplicity and presents to us a varied collection of representational content, for we can represent a combination only if there is something to combine, i.e., distinct qualities. Yet, where synthesis proceeds through the application of rules or the subsumption of the manifold under a concept, the synthesis of the manifold also presupposes that these distinct qualities can be combined in accordance with a rule; which is to say, the qualities must have an order in the manifold in advance of synthesis. However, this cannot be just any order, for the order in question must be suitable to the rules of synthesis in general. In which case, there must be a harmony of form between the empirical manifold and the rules of synthesis.

My argument does not question the subject’s capacity to represent in general, nor Kant’s argument for it, the transcendental deduction. Rather, it merely assumes the conclusion of the deduction and sets out to investigate whether other conditions must be in place for the possibility of an objective cognition. But what is the conclusion of the deduction? The argument I present is specifically intended as a supplement to Kant’s deduction and assumes first and foremost that the argument of the deduction is of such a general nature (accounting only for the transcendental conditions of cognition) that it makes no presuppositions about the manifold in advance of synthesis. The deduction presents an argument that extends only to determining the necessity of the categories for comprehension in general, i.e., Kant’s argument is an attempt to determine their indispensable use in cognition or comprehension of
nature, which confirms their objective validity. In doing so, he outlines the function of the understanding as a basic capacity to represent or comprehend a manifold by subsuming it under categories, which is a claim that stands independently of what the manifold may be like itself. However, having the capacity to represent the manifold under a rule does not suffice for this possibility in practice: in addition to the general capacity to represent, the possibility of representing the combination of the empirical manifold also presupposes that the nature of the content in the manifold is ordered in a manner suitable to synthesis in advance of the act of the understanding.

The argument from Chapter 2 states that synthesis is possible only if there is an order or unity in the manifold in advance of synthesis, yet this claim appears to conflict with Kant’s claim that the order or unity of representation is original and synthetic and that its originality results from the act of synthesis. In Chapter 3 I defend a weaker reading of originality against, what Paul Guyer calls, the ‘strong view,’ where in an act of synthesis ‘the mind actually imposes conformity to the conditions necessary for its experience on objects’.

I think the ‘strong view’ is a mistaken reading of Kant and attributes too much to the act of the understanding. In contrast to the ‘strong view’, I do not believe we should portray synthesis as an act where the unity we represent in the manifold is entirely a determination of the understanding. Instead, I argue that we should read Kant in a weaker sense: in his transcendental project he is outlining the function of the understanding as a basic capacity to represent or comprehend a manifold by subsuming it under the categories, meaning that he simply outlines the necessity of the application of the categories for a possible comprehension of a manifold (a claim that is independent of what that manifold may itself be like). In this way, the categories truly do present the original ground of cognition, as the ground of a possible comprehension of the manifold, for as Kant says it is only when we represent the manifold under the categories that there is anything (an object, world, nature) for us at all. The categories therefore stand as the original ground of the comprehension of nature and, more importantly, nature itself arises for us only on the condition that we represent the manifold under the categories. Within the weak view any statement denying that there is unity in the manifold in sensibility is really only a statement relating to the distinct functions of sensibility and the understanding and that only through the function of the understanding can we comprehend the manifold as a unity at all. Also, whatever order or unity there may be in the manifold in sensibility, it is never a unity of consciousness, which is possible only through the combination of the manifold under the categories. The function of the understanding is to

---

4 Paul Guyer *Kant and the claims of knowledge*, p73
bring the manifold to consciousness and only when it is a unity in or for consciousness do we comprehend the manifold at all. Thus, if Kant’s argument states only the necessity of representing the manifold under a concept, then there is a clear sense in which synthesis and its order can be called original, yet we can also maintain that the manifold is already ordered in advance of synthesis.

In Chapter 4 I extend the argument from the nature of the manifold in sensibility to the nature of the metaphysical world that produces that manifold in us. I first note that the nature of the faculty of representation (both sensibility and the understanding) means there is a harmony of function between representation and the metaphysical world – the metaphysical world must at least function in some such way that it consistently determines in sensibility a manifold suitable to synthesis. I then argue that the harmony of function amounts to an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world. I base the argument on two main premises: first, the passive function of sensibility and, second, an object can only produce an effect relative to its own nature. From the premises I conclude that any qualitative differences in the manifold are attributable to the metaphysical world and the metaphysical world will produce an effect in sensibility relative to its own nature. However, given that these qualitative differences must also be suitable to synthesis, the only way in which the metaphysical world could produce an effect that reflects its own nature and the rules of synthesis is if the metaphysical world is isomorphic with the rules of synthesis. What is more, because sensibility is passive to the action of the metaphysical world, it is the metaphysical world that produces the isomorphic relation – we represent, for example, that a is R to b because a* is R* to b* in the metaphysical world. In a similar way to what Locke said, then, for Kant, the reality of representation is, not only due to an isomorphic relation of representation to the metaphysical world, but because the objects and relations we represent are due to objects and relations in the metaphysical world.

The main objection to isomorphism is accounted for by the limitations of possible experience: we can never know the nature of the metaphysical world. In which case, how can we ever determine that there is a one to one correspondence of representation to the metaphysical world? This objection has two sides, firstly, where the metaphysical world is more than we can ever represent our world to be; and, secondly, that the world of representation is more than the metaphysical world. I readily admit that the first aspect of the objection is likely correct in some form. However, for the possibility of cognition, there are definite restrictions upon how much more or different the metaphysical world could be and still produce a manifold in us that is suitable to synthesis. Thus, some form of isomorphism
must remain in place between representation and the metaphysical world if cognition is to be possible for us. The second aspect of the objection is more troublesome for isomorphism, but I am really only concerned to address whether Kant commits to a view where the world we represent is more than the metaphysical world. To ascertain whether this was Kant’s view, I focus on the argument from incongruent counterparts in the *Prolegomena*. In §13 of the *Prolegomena* he argues that space cannot be a means by which we represent things in themselves, for space is a non-reducible relation, as is shown by the example of incongruent counterparts. The argument in the *Prolegomena* seemingly leaves us to conclude that the representations of sensibility are something more than the metaphysical world, but I argue that such a reading misrepresents Kant’s argument. Instead, I think Kant states with incongruent counterparts that the Leibnizian model does not work as a whole, so when he states his solution Kant presents us with an entirely new model prefaced by an investigation into the transcendental nature of our cognitive faculties. The result is that Kant makes no commitment to the idea of a purely intelligible world of things in themselves with intrinsic properties alone; and thus, it makes little sense to think Kant subscribed to a view where things in themselves are purely intelligible. Instead, all we can say is that there are things (unknown to us) that must be the cause of the representations in sensibility. In addition, a thing in itself with a purely intrinsic nature is inconsistent with the capacity of the metaphysical world to affect us. So, if the metaphysical world is to affect us, then it must have extrinsic properties, i.e., powers or relations, and I think the most suitable view that incorporates this consideration is found in Kant’s appeal to Locke. If I am right, then Kant’s model of sensible cognition is best considered as a modified version Locke’s representationalism. In other words, Kant is committed to a view of cognition where representation is considered real because of its relationship with the metaphysical world.
Kant often characterised his own transcendental philosophy as limited to a concern with the nature of the cognitive faculty and its capacity to represent objects in general, yet he also allows for a commitment to affection and the sensible nature of cognition more generally. I believe there is more to be said about what he leaves out from his transcendental investigation into the subjective conditions of representation and the most suitable way of presenting this is with a modified version of Locke’s representationalism. In which case, while the commitment to affection and sensible experience will always take a back seat in Kant’s thought, they should not be ignored entirely. Moreover, I think it is an error to believe Kant was presenting a wholesale rejection of his predecessor’s views on cognition, for in many ways he was simply making additions and modifications of their views. Despite much that goes unsaid by Kant, I think he neglects to go into more depth for two main reasons: firstly, because he has other issues to address in a specifically transcendental investigation; and, secondly, because he presumably believes it is not necessary to go into any depth, for the idea of a sensible experience is already clearly defined. If I am right to say that Kant believes the idea of a sensible experience is already clearly defined, what form does this sensible experience take? I think he answers this with the appeal to Locke in the Prolegomena. The initial task in this first chapter is to outline the basic form that Kant’s representationalism would take if it runs parallel to Locke.

Given what Kant says in the Prolegomena, he modifies Locke’s account of sensible cognition, but only in a minor way. He still, for instance, employs the same notion of appearance and along with it the notions of secondary and sensible qualities; secondary qualities are understood to be mere powers in the metaphysical things themselves to produce sensible qualities in us; and the sensible qualities produced belong merely to our manner of representing. Kant’s modification of the Lockean model merely expands what is classed as appearance, so appearance now covers all qualities of representation. Following Locke, Kant also assumes the same relation of appearance to thing in itself – we know things, but only as they appear. And, further, that what we represent or what appears, bears a direct relation to the nature of the things in themselves.

At the end of the chapter I append a discussion of what we should take representational quality to mean. I do this because problems can develop if we do not make a distinction between the effect or modification of sensibility and the sensible quality known by the subject. As sensible subjects we do not know the effect or modification itself, for that is a
metaphysical quality. Rather, our powers of representation allow us to represent a quality when its sense has been affected, much as the brain represents a non-physical colour quality when the eye is physically affected and is physically modified. In representing colour we are not representing or grasping any physical quality of objects in the world or even the physical modification itself, but instead we represent a colour quality when our eyes are physically modified.

Kant’s endorsement of Locke in the Prolegomena is a response to the charge of idealism with which his philosophy has commonly been labelled. Kant, however, does not believe that his view of cognition matches the general description of a ‘manifest idealism,’ so long as ‘idealism’:


There clear differences between this formulation of idealism and Kant’s view of cognition, although it strikes a similar chord if he is stating that we perceive only representations that exist in thought. Kant can easily avoid [1] because of his belief in metaphysical objects (things in themselves) and their role (affection) in producing sensible qualities for human subjects. But what should be stated with regard to [2] and [3] is more difficult to ascertain. Generally Kant is thought to advocate a position where a sensible subject can only know sensible qualities or representations that exist in thought, for awareness does not extend beyond these sensible contents of thought and our idea of an object is defined by them. Thus,

5 The representational nature of the object of cognition itself implies a form of idealism and appears as part of the charge against Kant. ‘Everything that is to be given to us as object must be given to us in intuition. But all our intuition happens only by means of the senses; the understanding intuits nothing, but only reflects. Because the senses … never and in no single instance enable us to cognise things in themselves, but only their appearances, and as these are mere representations of sensibility, “consequently all bodies together with the space in which they are found must be taken for nothing but mere representations of sensibility, “consequently all objects and their role (affection) in producing sensible qualities for human subjects. But what should be stated with regard to [2] and [3] is more difficult to ascertain. Generally Kant is thought to advocate a position where a sensible subject can only know sensible qualities or representations that exist in thought, for awareness does not extend beyond these sensible contents of thought and our idea of an object is defined by them. Thus,

5 The representational nature of the object of cognition itself implies a form of idealism and appears as part of the charge against Kant. ‘Everything that is to be given to us as object must be given to us in intuition. But all our intuition happens only by means of the senses; the understanding intuits nothing, but only reflects. Because the senses … never and in no single instance enable us to cognise things in themselves, but only their appearances, and as these are mere representations of sensibility, “consequently all bodies together with the space in which they are found must be taken for nothing but mere representations of sensibility, “consequently all objects and their role (affection) in producing sensible qualities for human subjects. But what should be stated with regard to [2] and [3] is more difficult to ascertain. Generally Kant is thought to advocate a position where a sensible subject can only know sensible qualities or representations that exist in thought, for awareness does not extend beyond these sensible contents of thought and our idea of an object is defined by them. Thus,
[2] is thought to be true of Kant. A different line of thought would be to suggest the awareness of mere sensible qualities (produced by metaphysical objects) is by extension perception of metaphysically real objects. Put quite simply, the sensible qualities or representations in thought would be a subject’s sense or sensing of the metaphysically real. In which case, the things we believe we perceive would in fact be metaphysically real objects and they are known through the sensible qualities they produce in us. But there are difficulties with the suggestion that we know metaphysically real things as they appear. In the Prolegomena Kant says the metaphysical objects are ‘objects of our senses’ (4: 289; 40), but I believe the most suitable reading is to suggest that he means by this that ‘they’ (the metaphysical objects) are given to us by way of sensibility. However, he also states that because ‘they’ are given by way of sensibility we can know ‘nothing of them as they are in themselves, but ... [are] acquainted only with their appearances, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses.’ (4: 289; 40) I do not think that Kant means by this that our awareness of any quality extends beyond the appearance or the representations to the metaphysical objects that produce the representations in us. The main difficulty for thinking otherwise is in understanding what ground there could be for making a reference to the metaphysical object and specifically in such a way that it is taken to be the object of our knowledge. How is it at all possible to call the metaphysically real object the object of our knowledge when no quality of that object is in fact known to the subject? If Kant was claiming that we sense and know metaphysically real objects, his rejection of the idealist charge would be clear. He could not be an idealist because we know metaphysically real things. However, because he formulates the basis of our knowledge claim as knowledge of things mediated ‘through the representations which their influence on our sensibility provides for us …’ (4: 289; 41), such a claim is more difficult to support. He may believe that his philosophy is ‘the very opposite of [idealism],’ (4: 289; 41) but he is in fact only in a position to provide a different form of idealism. Kant’s transcendental idealism is not a ‘manifest idealism,’ even if there is something common to idealism in point [2].

The appeal to Locke is significant for at least two reasons, firstly, because it identifies Kant to be engaged beyond a merely epistemological or conceptual philosophy concerned to outline the idea of an object and the capacity of the subject to represent in general. He often looked to distinguish transcendental idealism for other reasons, but, with his endorsement of

---

*Selected Philosophical Writings* translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, AT 41; p91

6 I think Kant’s primary intention in the Critique and the Prolegomena was that transcendental philosophy should be understood to concern only the nature of the cognitive faculty and its capacity to represent objects in
Locke, such a differentiation is no longer possible. In addition, it provides an explanation for the difficulties any reader will have encountered in understanding the relationship Kant depicts between appearance and thing in itself. It also means we should regard the relation of appearance to thing in itself as the same relation of secondary to sensible qualities found in Locke. Thus, to understand Kant’s relation between appearance and thing in itself, we must first grasp what Locke was saying about secondary and sensible qualities.

In the *Prolegomena* a parallel is drawn between his own account of sensible experience and that of Locke, although Kant merely cites Locke as representative of the traditional primary/secondary/sensible quality view of sensible cognition.\(^7\) The basic view of

---

\(^7\) Lucy Allais makes a similar note of the connection between Kant and Locke and states that ‘the mind-independence of appearances can be made by analogy with Lockean sensible qualities’ (Lucy Allais ‘Kant’s One World: Interpreting “Transcendental Idealism”’, p669). In the connection of Kant with Locke it is important to be clear just what the analogy will amount to. In my view, an account of Locke will incorporate primary and secondary qualities that belong to the object and sensible qualities that exist only for the perceiving sensible subject. While I think Allais is correct to bring attention to an analogy with Lockean sensible qualities, it is unfortunate that the view she expresses does not make the distinctions between primary, secondary and sensible qualities sufficiently clear. Her reading of the analogy between Kant and Locke suffers as a result. In her paper, Allais starts an explanation of the ‘mind-dependence of appearances’ (p669) by way of an analogy with Lockean secondary qualities, only then to reject its use by Kant on account of inconsistencies between the *Prolegomena* and the *Critique*. Kant, she claims, does not present the same account of secondary qualities in the passages from *Prolegomena* 4:289 and *Critique* B45. However, it should be noted that in neither passage does Kant refer to secondary qualities by name and it is only in the *Prolegomena* that he does refer to primary qualities. But what is also apparent is that in both passages there is no rejection by Kant of primary qualities in favour of secondary qualities, and if he is appealing to Locke, then any rejection of primary qualities is in fact to turn to sensible qualities. This is the most sensible reading to make of both passages, for both refer to appearance understood as ‘alterations’ (B45) or ‘modifications’ (*Prolegomena* 4: 289; 41) and not as secondary quality. In which case, and contrary to Allais’ reading, the passages do present an equivalent view of Locke’s primary/secondary/sensible quality distinctions, though not explicitly by name. I agree with Allais that Kant’s view of appearance is ‘bound up with his [Locke’s] indirect or representative realist view of perception’. (p670) But, as for an understanding of appearances, the ‘analogy with secondary qualities,’ as apparently ‘Locke conceives them,’ (ibid.) presents
Kant’s is like Locke’s. They both assert that we sense metaphysically real objects (the things themselves) and on account of this regard metaphysically real objects as the objects of cognition. Yet both philosophers, at the same time, assert that we can know only the qualities that are given through affection and that these qualities known by us do not belong to the objects themselves. Thus, they each claim that we do not know the metaphysical objects as they are in themselves, but merely as they appear – which is to say, we represent what they give to us. In perception or intuition we are aware only of sensible or representational qualities and these exist only in thought. But by extension, an awareness of these qualities is regarded as intuition of metaphysically real objects.

That one could, without detracting from the actual existence of outer things, say of a great many of their predicates: they belong not to these things in themselves, but only to their appearances and have no existence of their own outside our representation, is something that was generally accepted and acknowledged long before Locke’s time, though more commonly thereafter. To these predicates belong warmth, colour, taste, etc. That I, however, even beyond these, include (for weighty reasons) also among mere appearances the remaining qualities of bodies, which are called prima rias: extension, place, and more generally space along with everything that depends on it (impenetrability or materiality, shape, etc.), is something against which not the least ground of uncertainty can be raised; and as little as someone can be called an idealist if he wants to admit colours as properties that attach not to the object in itself, but only to the sense of vision as modifications, just as little can my system be called idealist simply because I find that even more of, nay, all of the properties that make up the intuition of a body belong merely to its appearance: for the existence of the thing that appears is not thereby nullified, as with real idealism, but it is only shown that through the senses we cannot cognise it at all as it is in itself. (4:289; 41)

In this passage Kant gives no indication of a rejection or alteration to the idea of ‘appearance,’ but merely indicates a change to and expansion of what is classed as such. Whatever differences there are between the two philosophers Kant’s endorsement highlights his own belief in the common ground between his own and Locke’s philosophy. In attempting to understand what Kant meant by appearance we have therefore been given a clear license to turn to Locke and in Locke we find something similar to what Kant says in the Prolegomena:

[We can know] nothing of them as they are in themselves, but ... [are] acquainted only with their appearances, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses. (4: 289; 40)

two options: either, appearances are ‘mind-independent powers and dispositions,’ or they are ‘ideas in our minds which fail to resemble the powers’. (ibid.) Allais fails to note that the former pick out Locke’s secondary qualities (which are qualities of the object), and the latter pick out Locke’s sensible qualities (the mere appearance or modification in the subject). It is not a case of a choice, however, for appearance never could have been the former. More pertinently, though, Kant’s account needs to make use of both secondary and sensible qualities and in the same way that Locke uses them.
And in Locke:

It is evident the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. (Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book IV, Chapter IV, 3, p298)

[T]hey [simple ideas] represent to us things under those appearances which they are fitted to produce in us (Locke *Essay* Book IV, Chapter IV, 4, p299).

There are three notable points where Locke and Kant expound the same general ideas of sensible experience and appearance.

(i) Cognition is through sense, and our sense is passive.

In the first instance, we are passive beings, meaning the content of thought is not of our own making:

[T]he understanding is merely passive; and whether or no it will have these beginnings and, as it were, materials of knowledge, is not in its own power. For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or no; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without, at least, some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks. These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas set before it do therein produce. As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them. (Locke *Essay* Book II, Chapter I, 24-5; pp44-5)

(ii) We are aware only of ideas (or representations) in us and we cannot extend our cognition beyond these ideas:

Since the mind in all its thought and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them. (Locke *Essay* Book IV, Chapter 1, 1, p267)

(iii) The ideas we have (and the objects they represent) themselves represent no quality or property of the metaphysical objects that produce the representations in us. What we represent is only what the metaphysical things produce in the mind. Thus, what we represent is only a quality that belongs to our manner of representing. Locke writes:
External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us … (Locke Essay Book II, Chapter I, 5, p34)

[Of] the ideas produced in us by these secondary qualities … [t]here is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. (Locke Essay Book II, Chapter VIII, 15, p60)

Kant makes a further point: in the Prolegomena he says that the properties of the metaphysical object ‘cannot migrate over into my power of representation.’ (4:282; 34) Instead, we must only think that the metaphysical object leaves its impression in the subject, and what it leaves in the subject is necessarily distinct from any property of the metaphysical object itself.

An additional general feature in Locke’s account of sensible cognition is more difficult to find in Kant:

(iv) Locke makes a further association between idea and metaphysical object: the ideas in the mind are isomorphic to the powers of the metaphysical things to produce those ideas in us.8 Locke writes

The particular bulk, number, figure, and motion of the parts of fire or snow are really in them, whether anyone’s senses perceive them or no; and therefore they may be called real qualities, because they really exist in those bodies. But light, heat, whiteness, or coldness are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna. Take away the sensation of them; let not the eyes see light or colours, nor the ears hear sounds; let the palate not taste, nor the nose smell; and all those colours, tastes, odours, and sounds, as they are such particular ideas, vanish and cease, and are reduced to their causes, i.e., bulk, figure, and motion of parts. (Locke Essay Book II, Chapter VIII, 17, p60)

In saying that the ideas are reducible to their causes (the powers in the things themselves), I believe Locke states the existence of an isomorphic relation between the sensible quality and the power to produce that sensible quality. In other words, a sensible quality directly corresponds to a property of the metaphysical object itself. Locke does say the sensible qualities do not exist unperceived, but he also states their reality in our perception of them is built on the qualities in the things themselves, i.e., on those powers to produce sensible

---

8 The possibility that Kant commits to a fourth common point between his own and Locke’s theory is something that must be addressed, for we need to suggest a way to interpret point [3] in Kant’s description of ‘manifest idealism’. If Kant denies that there is something that corresponds to our representation, it is not clear in what way he is then able to claim that there is an object existing outside the subject which produces the representations in us. In which case, the question, if we do think he commits to a metaphysical object (which he does if he commits to a sensible account of cognition that involves affection), is what we can take him to mean by ‘correspond’ in the 4: 288 passage.
qualities in the mind. In the strictest sense, what is real is the power in the metaphysical object
and the reality of the sensible quality merely extends from that power:

[W]e immediately by our senses perceive in fire its heat and colour, which are, if
rightly considered, nothing but powers in it to produce those ideas in us … (Locke
Essay Book II, Chapter XXIII, 7, p135)

The reality of heat and colour, for Locke, is strictly to be found in the powers of the things
themselves, and the reality he attributes to the sensible quality they produce in us is merely
derived from the reality of the thing itself. The relationship he depicts between sensible and
secondary quality is therefore isomorphic, but Locke gives good reason for saying this: the
relationship between idea and thing is sufficient for what he calls ‘real knowledge’ and a
subject would, for instance, have a real ‘idea of whiteness’ when the idea is

exactly answering that power which is in any body to produce it there, [whereby the
idea] has all the conformity it can or ought to have with things without us. And this
conformity between our simple ideas and the existence of things is sufficient for real
knowledge. (Locke Essay Book IV, Chapter IV, 4, p299)

A further suggested point from Locke is that the represented qualities (the ideas produced in
the mind) are representations of the real things themselves, or even that these ideas somehow
convey to the mind those things themselves. I do not, however, see how our cognition of
knowledge of appearance alone (of the representational qualities or ideas produced in us) can
at the same time stand as cognition or knowledge of the things themselves. But, despite
Locke’s understanding of the sensible nature of cognition, he does seem to regard the ideas or
representations produced in the mind as ideas or perceptions of the things themselves. Even
so, I do not believe that Locke is actually suggesting the metaphysical object or the powers
themselves are conveyed into the mind. Consider the following passages:

[When I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects
convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions. (Locke Essay Book II,
Chapter I, 3, p34)]

[Our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects do convey into the mind
several distinct perceptions of things (Locke Essay Book II, Chapter I, 3, p33).

[Things] produce in our minds the particular ideas we have of them. (Locke Essay
Book II, Chapter VIII, 12, p59)
Perhaps Kant too makes a similar suggestion. At the end of Note II, which comes after §13 of the *Prolegomena*, and following his nod towards Locke, Kant presents an analogy between pure and empirical properties and the objects they represent. Of the former, he says: ‘the representation of space is perfectly in accordance with the relation that our sensibility has to objects’ (4:289-90; 41). As I understand this, it is an attempt to outline cognition as a relation or that it involves a relation between representation and the metaphysical world. But while the relationship is unknown to us, it is nevertheless important to note that Kant thinks our faculty of sensibility is in perfect accordance with the (metaphysical) object. That, for Kant, is as far as it is possible to go in outlining the relationship between representation and metaphysical object. In the attempt to dispel his detractors from continuing to state his account as idealist, he believes he would need to assert far more about the relationship, for instance, that the representation (space) ‘is even fully similar to the object’ (4:290; 41). Yet a statement of similarity between form of representation and object is, he says, an ‘assertion with which I can connect no meaning, as little as with the assertion that the sensation of red is similar to the property of cinnabar that excites this sensation in me.’ (ibid.) Kant again makes it clear, then, that a property such as redness belongs ‘merely to its appearance’ (4:289; 41); but at the same time he indicates that the property of redness in appearance is associated with the property of cinnabar that excites the sensible quality in me. Such an association allows that the representation of the red colour is a representation of the property or power of cinnabar that excited the sensation. And just this kind of association is what I take Kant to mean by a representation being in perfect accordance with a (metaphysical) object. In which case, saying that space belongs only to the general form of the subject’s representation does not mean it is any less a form of representing (metaphysical) objects. Where any statement is made that the subject represents, cognises, or experiences objects, where ‘object’ is referred to as a metaphysical object, and cognition is merely of their appearance it must acknowledge a representational relationship between representation and the metaphysical world. Kant steps back from any claim of ‘similarity’ between representation and the metaphysical world, but the statement he does make is not inconsistent with the isomorphic relationship I find in Locke.

One further point that might confirm the parallel between Locke and Kant is that Kant refers to the ‘property of cinnabar’ in the way we would expect Locke to refer to a secondary quality or power of the metaphysical object which produces or excites a representation in me. On the basis of Locke’s isomorphism – the relationship that allows a reduction of representation to their causes – we would expect our representations of certain qualities to be
produced when in the presence of metaphysical objects with certain powers to produce. The sensible qualities represented by the subject are indebted to the secondary qualities of the object itself in such a way that when I now represent the sensible quality red it is because of the property of cinnabar is now present to my senses and excites it in me.

Kant and Locke are both clear that the subject knows only sensible qualities and not the powers or qualities of the metaphysical objects themselves. It means that, where they do claim that we know metaphysically real objects (as they appear), they can only be appealing to the relationship that exists between the qualities of the metaphysical object and the sensible qualities they produce in us. Neither could sensibly claim that we know the metaphysical world in the ordinary sense, for instance, as we know objects like tables and chairs, and nothing in truth can justify the claim that a sensible subject can know or experience metaphysically real things. But in the reading I present here, there is at least an understanding of what Locke and Kant likely meant by it. As I read Locke, he takes the reality of the idea or representation of an object to be the result of the relation of that idea to the things themselves. What I also want to claim is that on account of the parallel he draws with Locke, Kant equally states that the reality of representation must depend on the relation of representation to metaphysical reality. The main problem for demonstrating the relation of representation to metaphysical reality is that this model relies upon an isomorphism between the power in the metaphysical object and sensible quality in the subject. In my view, without an isomorphic relation between idea or representation and the thing itself (the metaphysical object) Locke would lose the reality to the sensible qualities. Thus, if Kant is seriously committed to Locke’s view of sensible cognition, then he is stating that the very possibility of cognition relies not only upon the nature of the subject’s capacity to represent, but on a seemingly quite specific relationship between representation and the metaphysical world. My aim with the thesis as a whole is to present Kant in such a way that demonstrates this commitment: that the reality of representation depends upon an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world. If we do not present Kant in this way, then he will have great difficulty explaining the reality of representation and defending any charge of idealism.

Going back to the characterisation of idealism cited at the start of the current section, it is clear that Kant is able to reject the charge of idealism as he there characterised it in the Prolegomena:

Further, because Locke asserts that the reality of the idea is derived from the metaphysical world, the idea is a reflection upon the metaphysical world and any change in the metaphysical world will be reflected in the idea for the sensible subject.
Idealism consists in the claim [1] that there are none other than thinking beings; [2] the other things we believe we perceive in intuition are only representations in thinking beings, [3] to which in fact no object existing outside these beings corresponds. (4: 288-9; 40)

But if he endorses the specifically sensible account of cognition that I propose here, which involves affection and awareness of sensible qualities alone, he, not only endorses a wider view of his own philosophy, but commits to a form of idealism along the representationalist lines found in Locke: [1] cannot be true for Kant because he asserts that the very possibility of experience requires the existence of metaphysical or affecting objects; [2] is true for Kant in some form on the grounds that the content of cognition is sensible in nature; and [3] is true, for Kant, because something corresponds to the sensible quality in the subject, at least as its cause. As yet I have not fully embraced the possibility of a strong and direct relation of correspondence in Kant, but merely asserted that it seems consistent with Kant saying that my representation is in perfect accordance with the object and that he talks about the ‘property of cinnabar’ in the way we would expect Locke to refer to a secondary quality or power of the metaphysical object which produces or excites a representation in me. As I have said, on the basis of Locke’s isomorphism – the relationship that allows a reduction of representation to their causes – we would expect our representations of certain qualities to be produced when in the presence of metaphysical objects with certain powers to produce. If Kant takes Locke seriously, then, with this relation of idea or representation to the things themselves being such a central feature, it is only natural to suppose he thinks the same relation applies.

However, even if it is right to draw out the possibility that Kant engaged with each of the four points I have outlined in endorsing Locke, including an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world, is such a commitment consistent with Kant’s other doctrines? The argument of the thesis as a whole is that Kant is indeed committed to an isomorphic relation and, on the whole, that isomorphism is consistent with what else he says about sensibility and the understanding. In the following I present a reading of sensibility and the understanding that presupposes, not only that the content of representation is determined by the metaphysical world, but that the metaphysical world must be isomorphic to the rules of synthesis if synthesis is to be at all possible.

\[10\] Transcendental philosophy will remain what it is, as a concern for the nature of representation in general and the subjective conditions of such representation, but Kant’s thought embraces more than just these transcendental considerations. I explore this further in the third section of the following chapter.
Appendix: Modification and representational quality

Before continuing to the discussion of synthesis, I would like to clarify just what is meant by the representation that the metaphysical world produces in us. In this appendix I am concerned to make note of a distinction between sensation as a modification of sensibility and as a quality that can be known by us. It is important to make such a distinction because when we come to talk about representation and what we are representing, the qualities represented are qualities that can be accessed by thought alone.

In the Prolegomena Kant says that the properties of an object in itself ‘cannot migrate over into my power of representation.’ (4:282; 34) The metaphysical object leaves its impression in us, but what it leaves is necessarily distinct from any property of the object itself. Nevertheless, even if I take up the impression in my representation of an ‘object’, the impression left by the metaphysical object cannot be the object represented by us. For while the impression or sensation is a condition of our representing anything at all, the quality represented by me (what I am aware of when I represent) is not only distinct from any quality of the affecting object, but is also distinct from the impression (the effect) left by the metaphysical object. Our powers of representation allow us to represent a quality when our sense has been affected, much as a brain represents a non-physical colour quality when the eye is physically affected and modified. In representing colour we are not representing or grasping any physical quality of objects in the world or even the physical modification itself, but instead we represent a colour quality when our eyes are physically modified. Kant says that as sensible subject’s we ‘acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects’ (A19/B33). But while sensation may be a metaphysical product (of affection) in the mind, what we represent is instead a mere representational quality. The content of our cognition is not the modification or impression itself, but a representational quality that we come to represent when we are affected. What we know is merely representational content. In the Prolegomena Kant says:

There are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves, but are acquainted only with their appearance, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses. Accordingly, I by all means avow that there are bodies outside us, i.e., things which, though completely unknown to us as they may be in themselves, we know through the representations which their influence on our sensibility provides for us, and to which we give the name of a body – which word therefore merely means the appearance of this object that is unknown to us but is nonetheless real. (Prolegomena 4: 289; 40-1)
What I read Kant as saying is that to know things as they appear is not to say we know metaphysical objects, nor the (metaphysical) effect they produce in us. Rather, given the nature of our cognitive faculties and our capacity to represent, when we are affected by the metaphysical objects their action on our sensibility will produce representational content for us. Consider again the analogy with the function of the eye in colour perception. In the same way, given the nature of the human brain and its interconnection with the eye, when the eye is affected and modified that modification will produce for the brain a non-physical representational content, i.e., an awareness of colour, though colour is neither in the physical object or the modification of the eye.

In addition, the representational quality of sensation should not be given an undue status as something real. For a real status would ignore entirely the nature of the object for us and what it is possible for us to refer to as a quality of an object. Nevertheless, rejecting the reality of the represented object is not to deny that representational qualities can have a mind-independent reality: the representational qualities can have a mind-independent reality because they can be content for any subject, though only where a subject with the same or similar capacities for representation is affected (in the same way by the same kinds of metaphysical objects). The supposed public availability of objects is no problem for representationalism and it does not stand as an objection. Instead, it is quite possible to say that a subject is able to cognise objects that are mere representations and yet assume that the world of objects is available to any subject. The given representational content of sensation can be shared by different subjects, and for a genuine public world we presuppose a common metaphysical world available to all sensible subjects. While the objects experienced by the subject are representations, these representations have an external cause and are brought about by the action (affection) of some external (metaphysical) thing on sensibility. I believe it is meaningful to say that it is the external things in themselves that are intersubjectively available to beings like us, i.e., to beings with the same or similar cognitive capacities, and for this reason they are still public. It could be objected – as Arthur Collins says in defence of the public nature of objects – that representations ‘could not have mass and attract one another, and thus could not figure in physical laws.’11 But we can always respond by saying they do not need to, for the representations merely need to be able to represent such features to us. Again, then, I follow the reading of Locke and suggest the reality of the representational

qualities to be possible on account of their ground in sensible affection. Nevertheless, the subjective conditions of cognition must not be forgotten, because a public world will only be available for different sensible subjects if they have the same capacity to receive and represent objects. In other words, only where a subject has both the capacity to receive and represent is cognition possible and only where the subject has the capacity to represent will a metaphysical object possibly produce a representation (or content for representation) for us. Kant spends the majority of his time detailing the subjective conditions of representation, but I reiterate that we should not forget he is outlining a sensible account of cognition and with it we must say that the reality of our cognitions is also due to the metaphysical object which affects us.
Chapter 2: The possibility of synthesis

In the opening chapter I suggested that we draw a parallel between Kant and Locke. A defining feature of the parallel is that the reality of representation is due to the relationship of representation to the metaphysical world. According to Locke, the reality of representation is derived from the reality of the thing itself which produces the representation in us. My eventual aim is to defend a reading of Kant which commits to the same relationship between representation and the metaphysical world. However, in this chapter I am not concerned with any external factors involved in a possible cognition, but with the internal relationship between the act of synthesis and the manifold of intuition in sensibility. I argue that the power of the subject to represent, i.e., the capacity to combine the given content of the manifold in an act of synthesis through concepts, is insufficient for the possibility of an objective cognition. Instead, the very possibility of synthesis presupposes an order to the given manifold of sensibility. My argument does not question the subject’s capacity to represent in general, nor Kant’s argument for it, the transcendental deduction. Rather, it merely assumes the conclusion of the deduction and sets out to see whether other conditions must be in place for the possibility of an objective cognition.

I start in the first section with a brief sketch of synthesis and what I think Kant believes takes place in the act of combining the manifold in one cognition. In very simple terms, synthesis is the cognitive act through which we come to see the manifold as something or to see something in the manifold. Moreover, the act in general is for us to represent the manifold as nature or a world. Following the outline of synthesis I turn in Section II to my primary concern and investigate what the idea of synthesis presupposes of the manifold. In the Anticipations of Perception, Kant himself states that we can know something a priori of sensation, but this is only to say that there must be sensation. Even so, from the many empirical examples he provides, as well as the very idea of a manifold – ‘Mannigfaltig’ literally meaning ‘many-fold’ – I think we are right to agree that Kant assumes there is variation in the given manifold. As a result, synthesis is viewed as the attempt to represent the variation in the manifold as something. But the problem for synthesis is that variation alone is insufficient for us to represent the manifold as something. Rather, the content of the manifold must be ordered in some way, and not just in space and time. Synthesis presupposes that the content of the manifold can be combined and in the act we represent the relation of one content to another in accordance with a rule. But the possibility of such combination requires the content of the manifold to have an order in advance of synthesis. What is more,
this cannot just be any order, for the order in question must be suitable to the rules of synthesis in general.

In order to be fair, I turn in Section III to the argument of the deduction and outline the distinct nature of my own project from Kant’s. It is important to make this distinction because it appears at times that he is saying something similar to my own argument. For instance, in the section, ‘On the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination’ he states that empirical synthesis assumes the ‘governance of a certain rule to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves’ (A101). But despite appearances, Kant is not saying anything of the kind. Certainly, he assumes, like others before him, that empirical synthesis presupposes regularity in the manifold. However, because the regularity underlies empirical synthesis in general, it must be necessary. So, in line with what he has already stated in the preamble to the deduction, he argues that a necessary regularity could only have its ground in the nature of our cognitive faculties. Kant’s argument states that the regularity which makes an empirical synthesis or association possible is a determination of the manifold (in this case) by imagination and does not claim that the manifold is ordered already in advance of synthesis.¹²

¹² Consider what Kant says about transcendental affinity. ‘The ground of the possibility of the association of the manifold, insofar as it lies in the object, is called the affinity of the manifold.’ (A113) ‘All appearances therefore stand in a thoroughgoing connection according to necessary laws, and hence in a transcendental affinity, of which the empirical affinity is the mere consequence.’ (A113-4) ‘There must therefore be an objective ground, i.e., one that can be understood a priori to all empirical laws of the imagination, on which rests the possibility, indeed even the necessity of a law extending through all appearance, a law, namely, for regarding them throughout as data of sense that are associative in themselves and subject to universal laws of a thoroughgoing connection in reproduction. I call this objective ground of all association of appearances their affinity.’ (A122) By transcendental affinity it appears possible that Kant is making a transcendental statement about the nature of the manifold and how it contributes to the possibility of synthesis. Yet I think we must look at Kant’s project in a different way. One possible reading is to suggest that where he is concerned to outline the subjective conditions of representing, he is in fact stating only that in order to ground the possibility of associating the content of the manifold we must represent the affinity of the manifold. In which case, Kant’s statement is that the affinity is a product of the power of the understanding to represent the combination of the manifold and only through our capacity to represent the affinity does association of the manifold become possible. This unfortunately is not quite right. The transcendental affinity is something we must represent, but in addition Kant is also stating that the transcendental affinity is a condition of our representing anything at all because it grounds a possible empirical affinity or association. What I assume is that Kant is repeating the move he makes in the synthesis of reproduction, where he explains why an empirical synthesis must be preceded by an a priori synthesis. ‘There must therefore be something that itself makes possible this reproduction of appearances by being the a priori ground of a necessary synthetic unity of them.’ (A101) ‘Now it is obvious that if I draw a line in thought, or think the time from one noon to the next, or even want to represent a number to myself, I must necessarily first grasp one of these manifold representations after another in my thoughts. But if I were always to lose the preceding representations … from my thoughts and not reproduce them when I proceeded to the following ones, then no whole representation and none of the previously mentioned thoughts, not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, could ever arise.’ (A102) The transcendental ground that Kant calls affinity is our capacity to hold the manifold together in thought and represent the manifoldness of the given representations in one cognition. And he calls it transcendental, because only if we have represented the manifold thus will an empirical association be possible. Finally, I think it is misleading to suggest that Kant means by the transcendental affinity of the manifold that there is what Kenneth R. Westphal calls a ‘material’ condition of the manifold, whereby quite apart from the activity of the understanding the content of the manifold already has an affinity. Where Westphal is in my view correct is where he suggests that there are in fact ‘material’ conditions in addition to the transcendental powers of the mind to represent and both must be satisfied.
With the outline of the deduction I am able to provide a better understanding of Kant’s transcendental concerns and to show that in the main argument of the deduction he could not have any concern for the nature of the manifold in sensibility beyond its general form. In my view, considering the nature and order of the content in the manifold as a condition of synthesis does not conflict with the general approach that Kant makes in the deduction. Further, because the argument in section II is not exegesis, though it has an important relation to the deduction – its starting premise is the conclusion of the deduction – my argument is clearly supplementary to what Kant provides in the deduction.13

Section I: Synthesis

In Chapter 1, my reading of the sensible nature of cognition was presented along the representationalist lines found in Locke and states that we can know only those representational qualities which are given to sensibility when we are affected by the metaphysical world. But how do we know these representational qualities or how do they become something for us? I think Kant is clear that we do not know them simply by virtue of receiving them, for sensibility does not function in such a way that we can be said to cognise anything. Instead, Kant’s outline of cognition depicts two faculties and, in addition to

for the possible of cognition and self-consciousness. But where I think he is in error is to attribute both conditions to Kant, or at least to make the conclusion be a feature of what Kant is arguing for in the deduction. (cf. Kenneth R. Westphal Kant’s Transcendental Proof of Realism, pp23-5)

13 Throughout the discussion it is important that we keep in mind the distinct meaning of ‘manifold’ as it is found in sensibility from the representation of the manifold as manifold in synthesis. So, while Kant talks of the manifold of sensibility, it should be noted that there is truly a manifold for us only when we represent it, by which I mean to say, when we grasp or understand it as a manifold. However, it is only possible to grasp the manifold as a manifold when we represent and comprehend its manifoldness in an act of synthesis. All the time, when I write of the manifold of sensibility, or of the given content of the manifold, I am in fact considering something that is pre-representational or pre-cognition, i.e., a representation, though not a representation for us.

The manifold of sensibility and the given content in it clearly plays an integral role in the formation of cognition and what we cognise, but while the manifold, its contents, and their order in advance of synthesis are called representations by Kant, they do not represent anything to us except in an act of synthesis. Representation in its strictest cognitive sense is the representation of the manifold as something, which takes place only through the act of the understanding. As Béatrice Longuenesse reminds us, in a very important sense, just as the synthesis of apprehension ‘generates’ the manifold for the subject, in the sense that the manifold of sensible qualities is seen ‘as’ a manifold, synthesis also generates ‘the very intuition of time’. (Béatrice Longuenesse Kant and the Capacity to Judge: Sensibility and Discursivity in the Transcendental Analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason Translated by Charles T. Wolfe; Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1998, p37n) For Kant, it is only in the apprehension of distinguishable qualities that time becomes a reality for the subject. But while apprehension is possible only in a synthesis of a temporal manifold, the form itself (time) is discernible only where there is a further synthesis. Differentiation in time is possible only on account of differentiable sensible qualities, but these differentiable qualities of the sensible manifold are only qualities for us when they are combined in a synthetic whole of representation. Time does represent a whole, but the synthetic whole of representation referred to here is more than the forms of intuition can supply.
sensibility, there is the understanding whose function is an active one in comparison to the passive nature of sensibility. The activity of the understanding Kant calls synthesis:

By synthesis in the most general sense … I understand the action of putting together different representations with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition. (A77/B103)

From this statement I think we should observe:
(i) what we are combining: the ‘different representations’ are the given representational qualities or contents of the manifold of sensibility. That ‘different representations’ should be understood in this way is, for instance, confirmed in §16 of the B deduction: ‘it is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations [emphasis added] that it is possible for me to represent the identity of the consciousness in these representations itself’ (B133).
(ii) and how we are combining it: ‘putting together … with each other’ and ‘comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition’ obviously refers to a unifying act, of putting the given representations together in one representation. But the unifying act of synthesis provides a whole new kind of combination in a single representation as compared to the singular representation provided by representation in space and time. I believe that the act of synthesis is our comprehension of the manifold and displays that the act involves the use of

---

14 The text of the Critique is littered with examples. For instance: ‘Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.’ (A51/B75) ‘Unity of synthesis in accordance with empirical concepts would be entirely contingent, and, were it not grounded on a transcendental ground of unity, it would be possible for a swarm of appearances to fill up our soul without experience ever being able to arise from it. But in that case all relation of cognition to objects would also disappear, since the appearances would lack connection in accordance with universal and necessary laws, and would be therefore be as good as nothing for us.’ (A111) ‘For truth and illusion are not in the object, insofar as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it insofar as it is thought. Thus it is correctly said that the senses do not err; yet not because they always judge correctly, but because they do not judge at all. Hence truth, as much as error, and thus also illusion as leading to the latter, are to be found only in judgments, i.e., only in the relation of the object to our understanding.’ (A293/B350)

15 By ‘singular representation’ I mean to say that intuition is the representation of a whole. Intuition is distinct from sensation and indeed an intuition contains sensation. A singular representation of the manifold is the representation of a multiplicity of sensible qualities, but represents them as a whole. Sensibility receives many kinds of sensible qualities and is only able to represent them together in virtue of the general forms of receptivity, space and time. I take space and time to underlie a possible synthesis in an important way, for the representation of a unified whole will require that all given representation is in some degree of the same kind. This is a different use of ‘singular representation’ from that found, for instance, in the Jäsche Logic (§1, 9:91; 96). Paul Guyer views the passage as follows: ‘In his logic textbook, Kant defines an intuition as a “singular representation,” that is, one that represents a particular object, while a concept is always a “universal (repraesentation per notas communes),’ which represents properties common to many objects. (Paul Guyer Kant London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p54) What is likely intended in the distinction in the Jäsche Logic is that through an intuition there can be cognition of something real or concrete, i.e., a particular. But by means of a concept alone there can only be cognition of the general properties a particular might have. In my approach to intuition ‘singular representation’ means a representation of the whole and that all particulars are represented and grasped together in a single intuition.
concepts, which allows the possibility of our recognising or classifying the given content as something.\textsuperscript{16} The requirement that synthesis is comprehension in one cognition also highlights the involvement of self-consciousness or apperception. But from the initial statement of what Kant understands by synthesis it remains unclear just what we comprehend in one cognition. For an answer I think we should look at A125:

Thus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call nature, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there.

I think this passage gives an indication of what Kant thinks we comprehend in an act of synthesis: because he says we bring ‘nature’ into the appearances in the act of synthesis, I believe he means to say that what we are doing in synthesis is representing and comprehending the manifold as nature or a world. What I take Kant to understand by the comprehension of the manifold in one cognition is that we must represent the manifold as something and this something is nature or a world. It is through an act of synthesis that we comprehend nature or the world, though because we bring nature to the manifold, nature is merely a feature of our representation.

The involvement of self-consciousness as the highest principle of all cognition states an additional feature of the representation of nature. Kant writes, for instance, that the ‘I think must be able to accompany all my representations’ (B131) or that ‘any given intuition must stand under the condition under which alone I can ascribe them to the identical self as my representations’ (B138). In my view, this amounts to saying that not only does the ‘I think’ accompany all representation, but it accompanies representation by being a feature of all representation. In which case, where synthesis is the representation of the manifold as nature or a world, and where self-consciousness is a feature of all representation, it means in representing nature or the world we represent ourselves in that world. Thus, when I cognise the world I cognise it from my place in the world. Admittedly, some of the difficulty with understanding Kant’s argument(s) of the deduction is that it is only through the representation of my own self in the world that I in fact gain a sense of myself and become self-conscious.

\textsuperscript{16} I think Allison’s approach in his paper ‘Kant’s Refutation of Materialism’ (\textit{Monist} 72, 1989, pp190-208) is along the right lines. Our comprehension of the manifold is where, in Allison’s terms, we ‘recognise’ the manifold ‘in terms of … some general description,’ (p192) or, as he also puts it, synthesis is an act of ‘taking as’ (p193). The act of recognising the manifold in terms of a description or taking it as something is, I think, just what Kant means by the comprehension of the manifold or for us to comprehend the manifoldness of the given representations. For us to represent the combination of the manifold is for us to grasp the manifold under some general description or under a concept and thus to understand what it is or what it represents.
Yet at the same time, the representation of one cognition, one experience, or nature is stated to be possible on account of self-consciousness. The difficulty is the result of the presence of two arguments, so-called from the ‘bottom-up’ and the ‘top-down’, which identify the co-dependence in representation between self and the world. Neither the self nor the world can exist without the other and each can be said to ground the representation of the other. In other words, the world is represented on account of self-consciousness and self-consciousness is possible only on account of the representation of the world. I prefer simply to note the co-dependence of self-consciousness and the representation of the world in a way that states when we represent the world we do so self-consciously, meaning that the representation of the self is a feature of that representation or that we represent the world from our point of view.

The unity we represent in synthesis that Kant calls nature or world is also, for him, synthetic or original. Kant states the unity we represent as nature is original and synthetic because, in the act of the understanding, we represent something that was not found in the manifold in sensibility. The manifold in sensibility may be a singular representation in virtue of its form, space and time, but in sensibility we do not comprehend its manifoldness in one cognition. For only in the act of synthesis do we bring concepts and self-consciousness to the representation of the manifold. That is to say, within nature or the world we comprehend objects and events, though we can represent in this way only through the act of combining the manifold in accordance with rules. And, further, there will only be comprehension when we are conscious of the combination. A useful example of what I think Kant meant by the original or synthetic unity is the representation of a moving image in a flick-book. In a flick-book the flicking of the pages can represent a moving image. However, there is an important observation to be made about how the pages can represent a moving image. In the same way as the manifold in sensibility can represent nothing for us, there is no moving image in the individual pages or their collective image in the book, for only in the self-conscious act of representing the unity in synthesis will we represent the moving image when we flick the pages. Merely flicking the pages is insufficient for the representation of the moving image, as it is synthesis alone, i.e., a combination for a single consciousness, that truly ‘brings forth a cognition’ (A77/B103). Kant states that ‘the synthesis alone is that which properly collects the elements for cognitions and unifies them into a certain content’ (A77-8/B103) and so represents the manifold as something. So, by representing the pages together in thought (a synthesis of reproduction) we are able to bring the representation of motion to the flick-book or manifold. A manifold in time might be synonymous with merely flicking the pages of the book, but only in our consciousness of the combination of the pages of the flick-book in
accordance with a rule does the flick-book come to represent something for us. In order to be clear about what takes place in the synthesis of the pages, we do not represent the pages of the flick-book as simultaneous in one representation, but are conscious of their combination in time. This means we are conscious that one image follows the prior image and not merely in the temporal sequence, but in accordance with a rule. In real terms, the consciousness of one image following another in accordance with a rule is the consciousness of a moving image. At all times, what Kant means by the unity represented in an act of synthesis is simply the representation of a moving image and it is a unity for us because the combination of the pages in accordance with a rule is a combination in consciousness. In general, our awareness of the world is the consciousness of the combination of the given manifold in time and in accordance with a rule, meaning we are aware that the manifold follows its prior state in accordance with a rule. In real terms, in the act of representing the pages of the flick-book we are not aware of the book or the pages, nor are aware that we are combining the individual pages, for all we are truly aware of in synthesis is the moving image. In other words, the act of synthesis provides us with our awareness, not of the manifold, but of the world.

Because synthesis brings nature to the manifold and provides us with our empirical standpoint or place from which we know the world, we are not, as far as Kant is concerned, interpreting an independent metaphysical world and doing so in terms of space, time, causality, substance, and so on. For Kant, there is no world to which we apply concepts, or at least not in the application of concepts in an a priori synthesis. Equally so, where I have presented Kant’s claim that synthesis brings nature to the manifold, it is not to suggest that the manifold itself is nature and we are aware of this manifold by applying concepts to it. Rather, the synthetic unity that he calls nature is entirely a product of the act of the understanding, i.e., synthesis. The act itself involves a concept, but the subject does not see an object and apply the concept of substance to it. Instead, a subject simply sees (or apprehends) substance. The application of pure concepts to the manifold provides the basis of an awareness of that manifold in its manifoldness, which is to say, as combined. But, when I represent the combination of the manifold, I really only represent the unity and not that which is unified. In which case, I am not aware of anything until it is represented as a unity and can have no thought of the manifold except through its synthesis. The individual sensations or representational qualities that make up the given manifold are unknown to me, or if they are known, they are known only as features of the objects or features of the world. To see an individual thing is to see it as part of nature and thus as part of a whole, i.e., the world. If objects themselves are unities, then they are individual unities within the whole. These objects
we also represent in relation to ourselves and, when I think of an object, I think of it as independent – from other objects and from myself – and I am able to do so because I think of objects in spatial terms.\textsuperscript{17} What I mean to say is that from my empirical standpoint and relation to the world my awareness of objects is for me to be aware of something independent of myself and other objects. I am able to represent their independence because I represent the objects and my own self as located in space. Thus, space is a necessary condition not only of representing objects, but also in representing my own self, for in part the sense I have of myself comes through the representation of objects as distinct from me in space. In which case, I simply must represent objects as independent if I am to represent at all, especially if, for Kant, self-consciousness is the highest principle and ground of cognition.

To deny that space provides a means for us to think an object as independent would, I think, be to deny the reality of the empirical standpoint. An objects’ spatial and temporal properties, like its colour and texture, or its relations to other objects, are all representational qualities represented in synthesis. But the reality of the empirical standpoint is provided by synthesis because synthesis provides \textit{for us} something that we can take to be real and independent of our own self. What I take Kant’s account of sensible cognition to display is that no other kind of property can be real for the subject from the empirical standpoint apart from what it is possible for us to determine as real in an act of synthesis. The empirical standpoint or our view of the world (where ‘world’ is not meant in the metaphysical sense) is defined by our power to represent. For Kant, it is the power to represent that gives us a world and it is not the case that the world is given to us and we then apply concepts in order to understand that world. Instead, what I am legitimately allowed to call an object is just the kind of thing that I am able to represent in an act of synthesis, for that is the only thing that my power of representation allows me to think of as real – i.e., as an object in the world. This world is also the world in which I understand myself to reside. I have already stated my that understanding of Kant’s claim that self-consciousness (or the ‘I think’) must accompany all representation amounts to saying we represent ourselves in the act of synthesis. From the perspective of Kant’s transcendental philosophy it might be right to say that we know only representational qualities, but for me to think this now from my empirical standpoint, from the place where \textit{I live through} the world, fails to capture the \textit{reality} of my experience. Because of these considerations, I think we need to look at transcendental philosophy as an attempt to

\textsuperscript{17} Kant gives time the primary role as the form of inner sense in the \textit{Critique}, but I think there is a strong case for attributing an important role to space in the possibility of representing the self. I do not believe that the sense we have of ourselves can be restricted to a mere thinking subject in time, but must also feature the sense we have of ourselves as subjects in a spatial world.
explain the possibility of cognition or experience of objects in the following sense: transcendental philosophy aims to address the question of how the (human) sensible subject can get to the point where it is aware simply of a spatiotemporal world of objects and is moreover aware of that world as real. The object of experience is real for the subject because of the standpoint it is able to take to objects in general, so what I think Kant is outlining is the possible reality of the empirical standpoint in general and not the possibility that through our representations we are able to refer to metaphysical reality.

Kant’s project remains transcendental in nature, but if he also stands by the sensible nature of our cognition, then I think he opens the door to questions about the nature of the manifold, which is exactly where I intend to take the discussion in the next section. What I believe is that, in addition to the conditions that Kant lays out for the possible representation of the empirical standpoint, the nature of the given manifold in sensibility is also fundamental to the possibility of the empirical standpoint. The argument of the following section states that experience is contingent, not only upon our capacity to represent, but upon the nature of the given content of the manifold itself. What I argue is that if cognition is the synthesis and representation of the given manifold in accordance with rules and principles, then any account of synthesis and representation must look to explain how it is possible that given content is represented in accordance with a rule. Thus, it is essential that we state and understand what is required of the given content of the manifold for the possibility that we might represent it in synthesis. While Kant may believe that objectivity is defined internally, I think it is wrong to think that the objectivity of representation should be sought only in the subject.18

Section II: The possibility of synthesis

Kant’s idea of synthesis states that in the act of the understanding we combine the content of the manifold. But the kind of combination that I think he has in mind cannot be a merely formal combination, which is to say, it cannot be a merely spatial and/or temporal representation. In virtue of their role as forms of receptivity, all given representation is represented formally and as such is held together in a single unified representation. However, given that cognition for Kant involves both intuition and concept, he is saying that a merely formal representation can provide us with no comprehension of the manifoldness of given content.

---

18 Kant states against Descartes that we do not need to make an appeal to external factors in attempting to determine whether or not our experience is real or objective. The fact that we have a self-conscious experience at all is proof enough for Kant that we have a real and objective experience. Nevertheless, while we may be able to say that our experience is real and objective because representation satisfies the internal conditions, I argue that there are still external factors involved in the possibility of an objective cognition.
representations in one cognition. Instead, the combination that Kant has in mind in the act of the understanding is a rule-governed synthesis of the manifold of sensibility and we must hold the representations together by representing their unity in accordance with a rule. More than this, though, he says that for us to represent the unity of the manifold is at the same time for us to represent the unity or identity of the self. In other words, representing the unity of the manifold in accordance with a rule is the ground of self-consciousness. Yet at the same time, self-consciousness grounds the possibility of representing the combination of the manifold or for that combination to be something for us. In the flick-book example, the flicking of the pages represents the manifold of intuition in time. But in the act of synthesis itself we comprehend the manifoldness of the flick-book in one cognition only by representing the pages of the flick-book together with each other in thought and for ourselves, i.e., only through the consciousness of the combination. What I argue for in this section is that such a combination makes presuppositions about the manifold. In order to represent and combine the manifold in accordance with a rule we are required to differentiate the given content beyond its mere representation in space and/or time. But even mere variation will turn out to be insufficient, for the variation in the manifold needs to be ordered and, indeed, ordered in a way suitable to the rules of synthesis.

The first step towards my conclusion is to demonstrate the importance of content and what the manifold brings to synthesis and to recognise that the given manifold fills a basic need in providing something to combine. Without sensation there is nothing to order or combine and the whole cognitive endeavour would not get off the ground because there is nothing to represent. Furthermore, if we are to combine representations there must be more than one representation to combine. The first presupposition of synthesis, therefore, is a

---

We could debate the manner in which Kant states the representation of a unified manifold as a condition of self-consciousness. Ralph Walker, for instance, in discussing the argument in the first edition, sees Kant as saying that ‘because I must think of myself as a unity, I must also think of my experiences as forming a unity amongst themselves. I must be able to see them as representing a unified objective world. This objective interconnectedness must again be the product of our synthetic activity, and it must be transcendental: Kant christens it the “transcendental affinity” of appearances. It is transcendental, i.e., required for experience to be possible, because it is an immediate consequence (according to Kant) of the requirement that I think of myself as a unity, which is transcendental. But a synthesis which is transcendently necessary cannot be determined solely by concepts acquired from experience, for we could have no experience in advance of the synthesis and hence no means of acquiring the concepts. So, we have the required proof that our judgments about the interrelations of appearances involve some non-empirical synthesis, and can conclude that the categories are at work. The trouble is that we do not have a proof at all, because Kant has made the crucial step, or rather leap, without offering any justification for it. It is very far from obvious that the unity of self-consciousness presupposes any sort of unity in the objective world.’ (Ralph C. S. Walker *Kant* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, pp81-2) Here I am not concerned with the critical appraisal of Kant’s statement of a unity in the world grounding the unity of my own self. Instead, I am concerned with what it will presuppose of the manifold, so I will not question this aspect of Kant’s argument here.
‘manifold’ – a term that immediately implies a multiplicity of contents or qualities\textsuperscript{20} – in order that we have something to combine. From the outset Kant assumes, like his predecessors, that there is what Patricia Kitcher calls a ‘constant and varied stream of stimulation’\textsuperscript{21} – there is a stream of given contents that are given to us through our receptivity and taken up by the understanding in an act of synthesis. Thus, Kant assumes that the manifold contains a multiplicity of kinds of content. Kitcher is right if she thinks that Kant’s act of synthesis is an act of representing the ‘stream of stimulation’ as something. In synthesis we represent a manifold, but we should also observe that synthesis is not merely a case of representing the variation in the manifold as something, for I believe that the kinds of variation found in the manifold are themselves a condition of combining that content and thus representing it as something.\textsuperscript{22}

The second presupposition of synthesis states that combination of different representations proceeds only on the assumption of differentiable qualities in the manifold. At the very least, variation in sensation is a requirement for the possibility of identifying a particular representation and differentiating it from others. Clearly, the differentiation (and so identification) of a particular representation would be impossible if there is nothing to differentiate, as for instance in the following sequence:


The impossibility of combining such a manifold is because it could not represent a manifold at all, for there is no representation of a multiplicity of contents. In textual form the example is not clear, for it must be imagined that the given manifold is always and everywhere in it RED and only RED, with no gaps in between. If it transpires that all given qualities of

\textsuperscript{20} Lorne Falkenstein outlines this point well: ‘Mannigfaltig’ means, literally, many-fold. A manifold is something that has many parts. When Kant characterizes intuitions as a manifold, he is saying that they are collections of many parts or items.’ (Lorne Falkenstein \textit{Kant’s Intuitionism: A Commentary on the Transcendental Aesthetic} Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995, p75)

\textsuperscript{21} Patricia Kitcher \textit{Kant’s Transcendental Psychology} Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p71. I agree with Kitcher in calling this the ‘underlying rationale [to transcendental idealism] ... accepted by the Leibnizian and Lockean traditions.’ (ibid.)

\textsuperscript{22} While Kant provides examples of variation in the manifold, and states only that we can know a priori that there must be sensation, he does not seem to consider in the Anticipations of Perception that variation is in fact a condition of synthesis. Nevertheless, variation of content in the manifold is clearly assumed in the synthesis of reproduction. ‘It is, to be sure, a merely empirical law in accordance with which representations that have often followed or accompanied one another are finally associated with each other and thereby placed in a connection in accordance with which, even without the presence of the object, one of these representations brings about a transition of the mind to the other in accordance with a constant rule.’ (A100) Later in the A deduction he writes: ‘It is, however, clear that even this apprehension of the manifold alone would bring forth no image and no connection of the impressions were there not a subjective ground for calling back a perception, from which the mind has passed on to another, to the succeeding ones, and thus for exhibiting entire series of perceptions, i.e., a reproductive faculty of imagination, which is then also merely empirical.’ (A121)
sensation were the same, and the manifold is as it were full, then there could be no means of combining the given representations at all, because it would not be for us a multiplicity, but only a single representation. For this reason, it must be possible to pick out particular representations in the manifold and differentiate them from others. Otherwise, the order and the sensible qualities themselves would be nothing for us and we would apprehend nothing of at all.

The argument for variation is simple enough. If synthesis is an act of combination it combines something, i.e., particulars. For a subject to combine it assumes that there are distinct particulars to combine and a capacity to represent their distinctness. But, in order that we can distinguish any feature and recognise it as a particular, it is necessary that we can at the very least distinguish it from other particulars. For only then can a particular be a particular for me. Yet for me to distinguish distinct particulars and recognise their distinct features we must also assume something similar, for we can only bring distinct particulars together if we can relate one to another by means of some common ground between them. A common ground for all given representation is at the very least granted on account of the forms of receptivity, space and time, and they allow all particulars to be related to all others. The third presupposition of synthesis states that if we must represent the manifold as a unity, it assumes the manifold has qualities that can be represented as common between all given representations. Common ground means first of all that the given representations of the manifold can be represented as being of the same kind (even if this is only to be represented as a member of the class of things in space and time), but also that as members of the same class they can be held together in representation, whether simultaneously with other representations in space, or through a synthesis of reproduction in time. Here, then, is a further reminder of Kant’s overriding thought for the possibility of cognition:

If every individual representation were entirely foreign to the other, as it were isolated and separated from it, then there would never arise anything like cognition, which is a whole of compared and connected representations. (A97)

And recall too, that for Kant it is only by representing the unity of the manifold that self-conscious awareness possible.

Space and time are unifying features of cognition, but it is also possible to differentiate the contents of the manifold on account of their spatial and temporal qualities. Altering the original example slightly, a more sparsely populated manifold will therefore provide some differentiation of one representation from another:
The altered example provides a definite means of differentiating between contents simply on account of their spatial qualities, e.g., their location in space. If the example is both spatial and temporal, where time runs from left to right across the page, the representation also succeeds in representing the change in the manifold that is essential for the representation of a temporal sequence, which was clearly not possible in the first example. For without the capacity to differentiate one moment to the next we could not represent a temporal manifold or sequence at all, meaning, in addition, that time exists for us only through our apprehension of things determined in time. The idea of change assumes time, but more generally it assumes at least two particulars are linked and held together in a single representation. In other words, the whole of representation is a representation of change in or over time. Time allows for the representation of change whether there are distinct qualities in the particulars themselves, but the change itself will not be represented unless there is a temporal framework from within which to represent it. This can stand for synthesis in general: there is no possible representation of combination without differentiable qualities, but we cannot represent the different qualities of the manifold without combination.

It is tempting to say that synthesis proceeds on the assumption that there is spatial and/or temporal differentiation in the manifold, but the problem in the second example is not the capacity to differentiate a particular, which we seem to be able to do solely on account of its spatial and/or temporal properties. Instead, the problem is that the combination of the manifold, for Kant, proceeds by way of a rule-governed synthesis. Because neither example

---

23 I attribute the particular location a representational quality takes up in space to its empirical determination, so it can be classed as variation in sensation even when each individual quality is the same colour quality, RED. The representation of space determines the manifold only to the extent that any given content will be represented in space, but sensibility cannot determine any particular spatial quality, of extension, location or shape, merely that it is extended, located and shaped. I outline in more detail this feature of the function of sensibility in the first section of Chapter 4.

24 It is not clear to me whether Kant thinks that the association of content in the manifold beyond mere spatial and temporal properties is another kind of common ground. I think we are right to say that space and time are forms that allow not only for the differentiation of content in the manifold, but also ground the recognition of this content because they allow for a singular representation, meaning all given content can be represented together for one consciousness. A concept too can provide common ground by allowing us to recognise and associate different representations as being of the same kind, or perhaps as distinct members of the same class. The mention in the earlier footnote of ‘singular representation’ referred only to a formal common ground that allows (through representation in time) all representations to be held together in a single representation or for a single consciousness. Yet, if there is no common ground between representations, then no such singular
thus far provides any indication that a rule-governed combination of their content is possible, it looks like we must assume further differentiation of content in the manifold beyond their spatial and temporal features. The forms of intuition allow for the differentiation of given representations in spatial and temporal terms and in the second RED example, for instance, the representations were differentiated because of their location in space and time. Nevertheless, the basic forms of intuition allow only for the identification of spatial and temporal characteristics. So, any further distinction or classification of the given representations requires some other general means, but also some other feature of the manifold. For instance:

```
YELLOW
RED
GREEN
```

The fourth presupposition of synthesis therefore states that the manifold must contain differentiable qualities sufficient to classification under a general description or concept in addition to its spatial and temporal qualities. If a given representation is to be considered in any other means – other than spatiotemporally located, extended, and so on – it must have some potentially differentiable characteristic that is not defined solely in spatiotemporal terms. The fifth presupposition of synthesis can be more specific. The manifold must, not only contain differentiable features that can be classified under a general description or concept, but, rather, must be specifically differentiable in a manner defined by the rules of synthesis in general. A manifold will only be suitable for synthesis and a synthesis can only representation is possible. In the discussion of the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason, Kant does hint that further common ground between representations may be useful if not necessary for cognition: ‘If among the appearances offering themselves to us there were such a great variety … that even the most acute human understanding, through comparison with one another, could not detect the least similarity (a case which can at least be thought), then the logical law of genera would not obtain at all, no concept of a genus, nor any other universal concept, indeed no understanding at all would obtain, since it is the understanding that has to do with such concepts. … To the logical principle of genera which postulates identity there is opposed another, namely that of species, which needs manifoldness and variety in things despite their agreement under the same genus, and prescribes to the understanding that it be no less attentive to variety than to agreement.’ (A653-4/B681-2)

Then a little further on: ‘Reason prepares the field for the understanding: 1. by a principle of sameness of kind in the manifold under higher genera, 2. by a principle of the variety of what is same in kind under lower species; and in order to complete the systematic unity it adds 3. still another law of the affinity of all concepts, which offers a continuous transition from every species to every other by a graduated increase of varieties. We call these the principles of the homogeneity, specification and continuity of forms.’ (A657-8/B685-6)

25 We have good reason to demand this, for a merely spatial and/or temporal representation is not a representation that could be significant or meaningful for the subject. For instance, that an object is located here and not there or is prior to rather than simultaneous or following another particular is not significant in its own right. For the representation of a particular in this location to be significant there must be some other aspect to that representation.
take place when this condition is met. It is not possible that just any content can be combined and, further, it is not possible that just any manifold can be combined in accordance with rule by which the combination is only to proceed. 26 It is not sufficient that the varied and fluctuating given content is merely distinct, for it must be distinguishable in an a priori synthesis or combination. Empirical association carries with it no necessity, for any given representation need not conform to an empirical law. However, when the rule or law is necessary, the manifold simply must conform if it is to be represented at all.

We can go some way to understanding the relationship between the manifold in sensibility and the representation of the manifold as something in synthesis if we think again about just what we are doing in the act of synthesis. To help with this question I gain some assistance from a recent discussion from Adam Dickerson who attempts to understand the basic character of synthesis by way of two analogies. For each analogy he provides an example and each example is useful for my purposes because they give a clear indication that we must assume an order in the manifold in advance of synthesis because such an order makes synthesis possible. In the first analogy, Dickerson is intent on understanding the supposed spontaneity or originality of the synthetic unity we represent in the act of synthesis. The combination of the manifold we represent is original to the act of synthesis itself, so it is generally supposed that the manifold in sensibility is something quite different to what we represent it as. To understand what we do in an act of synthesis is in a sense to understand this difference. The spontaneity of synthesis, Dickerson writes, is

the representationalist equivalent of the problem that was discussed in later philosophy as the problem of the “unity of judgment” or the “unity of the proposition”. 27

In order to explain this analogy, Dickerson cites a lengthy passage from Russell’s Principles of Mathematics 28 concerning the proposition ‘A differs from B’. The basic observation is that the proposition ‘is essentially a unity,’ different from any possible ‘enumeration of constituents’; “A, referent, difference, relatum, B” is still merely a list of terms, not a proposition. 29 In other words, the unity of the proposition or judgment is distinct from its constituents.

26 Kant stipulates a ‘requirement’ that combination take place ‘in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it.’ (A77/B102; emphasis added)
27 A. B. Dickerson Kant on representation and objectivity Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p110
29 A similar parallel is cited by Dickerson (pp112-3) from David Bell (Frege’s Theory of Judgment Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, p8): ‘just as a sentence possesses a unity quite absent from a mere list of words, so a thought (or judgment, or proposition) possesses a unity and completeness entirely absent from a mere
Dickerson’s second analogy attempts to understand the idea of what it is to grasp a manifold as representing. He views this act of grasping by analogy with the ‘notion of seeing something “in” a picture’ as a face may be seen in the following image.

When the manifold represents something to us, it is when we take it as something. I agree with Dickerson’s view of synthesis insofar as he says we are not in the act of synthesis generating something beyond the image or the manifold itself. Often, the language used to describe the act of synthesis is suggestive of a deeper role for the understanding in the determination of experience. Even the term Kant uses synonymously with synthesis, ‘combination’ is suggestive of some kind of building or construction, as if the original synthetic unity of the act of representation is to place seemingly disparate elements together in an ordered way for the first time. But I do not think that Kant means anything at all like this in his idea of synthesis. However, in order to be clear, I do not think Kant is saying the act of synthesis is an act of simply coming to see the connections of the manifold that are there already, even if the face example lends itself to such a reading.

Dickerson’s reading is sensitive to these issues and consistently argues against the thought that through synthesis we recognise only what is already contained in the manifold; though Dickerson too makes use of similarly problematic terms. For instance, he writes: ‘This [synthesis] is an act of the mind that plays a role in generating the representational content of the subject’s experience’; ‘understanding is an active making of sense, [which] echoes Kant’s provocative remark that “in order to cognise something in space, e.g., a line, I must draw it” (B137)’; aside from Dickerson, remember too, from the A deduction, that Kant says it is the subject who will ‘bring into the appearances that order and regulation in them that we call nature.’ (A125) Nevertheless, despite some awkwardness with the language, of

---

30 A. B. Dickerson *Kant on representation and objectivity*, p3
31 Dickerson provides a similar image of a face; ibid., p14
32 ibid., p1; emphasis added.
33 ibid., p2
‘generating’, ‘making’, ‘drawing’, and so on, I see that Dickerson uses the face example to observe that in fact nothing new is truly generated, for a spontaneous synthesis is simply to grasp something in the given content or manifold. He says: ‘I do not infer to the smiling face from the lines and dots … [for] the smiling face is precisely in the picture.’\textsuperscript{34} He appears to admit seemingly conflicting claims: first, that in an act of synthesis I represent something (the smiling face) distinct from the manifold (the configuration of lines and dots); and, second, that ‘the face is precisely in the picture’. I take him to mean that in an act of synthesis the manifold now represents something to us and it is only by combining the manifold by way of a rule or concept that we can come to see it as representing at all. Despite saying that the face is in the picture, he maintains that where the manifold represents something to us when we combine it through a rule, the unity that this represents is original. He tries to explain this by saying that the smiling face remains distinct from the mere configuration of lines and dots in the manifold. He writes: ‘the face in the picture is smiling, but the configuration of lines and dots is not smiling’;\textsuperscript{35} ‘in using the phrase “the smiling face” I am not talking about the ink marks on the page, but about what is presented by those ink marks’;\textsuperscript{36} seeing something in the configuration of lines and dots is not simply ‘a matter of merely seeing a configuration of lines’.\textsuperscript{37} I have to admit that the distinction in hard to fathom in the face example, and only a little better in the earlier example of the flick-book. The pages of the flick-book do relate and combine together to represent motion, but we only truly grasp that motion, or see the manifold as representing it, when we are self-consciously aware of the combination or where we hold together all the pages and their combination in one consciousness. What I think Dickerson tries to get the face example to display is that the ink marks will only present the smiling face when we hold the whole image together and represent it as an image under a concept.

What Dickerson fails to observe, however, is that the very possibility of seeing the face in the picture is dependent upon not only the appropriate kind of content, but on the particular configuration that content takes up in the manifold. Different images can have different content and configurations, but the configuration in any image will restrict what we can possibly see or represent in that image. In which case, given a different image or manifold with a different configuration, in an act of synthesis we simply could not represent it as a

\textsuperscript{34} ibid., p14
\textsuperscript{35} ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} ibid., p15
\textsuperscript{37} ibid., p20
smiling face. We cannot, for instance, represent the following picture as a smiling face because the content is only suitable for the representation of a light bulb.

The configuration of lines and dots in any image is a condition of our representing it as something, whether that is as a face, a light bulb, or as a world. A major consequence of the relationship the examples imply between manifold and representation of the manifold in synthesis is that the distinction between them has become blurred. It also brings into doubt the claim that to see something ‘in’ the picture is to represent an original a synthetic unity, i.e., something that is found only in the act of the understanding. Dickerson at least is clear enough in his view and he certainly does believe that Kant states a distinction exists between our representation of something in synthesis and the manifold in sensibility. But there are definite problems to be dealt with.

The originality of the synthetic unity is a question I discuss at more length in the following chapter and I only state the main point of my reading here. I agree with Dickerson’s view that there is a distinction to be made, though I am not so sure it is so easily expressed by examples such as the smiling face. I also think Kant is right to say that we do bring the ‘order and regulation … that we call nature’ into our representation of the manifold in an act of synthesis, though I wish to stress that we must be careful in how we read Kant’s intended meaning. In my view, he is right to say we bring the order and regulation into representation. In part this is because it expresses his idea of what it is to represent in general and that in general we must represent the manifold as nature or a world if we are to see it as anything at all. But the statement also acknowledges the distinction between the respective functions of sensibility and the understanding: in sensibility we are passive and do not actively represent the manifold as nature or a world through concepts or rules. In other words, in sensibility we do not see or comprehend anything in the manifold, for that can take place through concepts or rules and is the function of the understanding alone. I take Kant to be saying that it is only
by way of an act of synthesis that we are able to represent the manifold so that it becomes something for us. Thus, he is in a position to say that there is no nature (for us) until we represent it there in synthesis. The combination of the manifold in thought is also the only way in which there can be anything for one consciousness and so the only way in which we can truly comprehend anything at all.

Yet even while the possibility of seeing something in the manifold depends upon the function of the understanding – which represents the manifold as nature or a world (the original synthetic unity) – the possibility of such representation rests on the content and order of the manifold in sensibility. I believe this relationship applies just as much to the representation of nature in general (by way of the pure concepts of the understanding) as to the possibility of representing a smiling face or a moving image in a flick-book. In the examples provided thus far, if a manifold is to represent a smiling face or motion, the possibility rests upon the nature and configuration of the manifold. Likewise, if the manifold is to represent nature, it must be configured in a certain way. In which case, in advance of synthesis the manifold must have an order or unity of some kind, and specifically one that can be represented in accordance, not simply with a rule, but with the rules that define combination (and comprehension) in general. The representation, for instance, of a causal relation is therefore possible only on account of the nature of the respective relata or the kind of representations that are brought into a causal relation in an act of synthesis. Importantly, not just any representation could be held together in such a way so as to represent a causal relation. In Russell’s example it is not stated that the nature of the contents A and B will place a restriction upon the representation of unity in a proposition or upon what relations there can be between A and B. Yet, if the nature of A and B dictates a restriction on the kind of relation that can be represented, then they are themselves determinants of the unity of the proposition. Thus, the nature of A and B place a restriction upon the possible propositions that can be made with A and B as contents. A clearer example of what is meant comes in Dickerson’s own example, ‘Jack loves Jill’. Here the possibility of the kind of unity or the kind of proposition, such as ‘Jack loves Jill’, is dependent upon the nature of the individual contents of that proposition. Also relevant is that not just any content could fulfil the kind of role that ‘Jack’ does in this proposition. For instance, instead of ‘Jack’ and ‘Jill’ we might use ‘Pencil’ and ‘Eraser’ and form the proposition ‘Pencil loves eraser,’ but this is not a possible proposition or at least not a possible meaningful proposition unless ‘Pencil’ is in some way an equivalent kind of content to ‘Jack’. However, ‘Pencil’ would only be an equivalent kind of content if it is one that can meaningfully take on the relation ‘loves’ to another content. In like
manner, representations A and B can only be unified in certain ways relevant or appropriate to their nature or qualities (whatever they may turn out to be). Thus, the very possibility of bringing such contents into a unity of a certain kind (a proposition) is already contained in the contents themselves.

What the latter examples of judgments do not display is that the outcome of synthesis is dependent upon the order of the contents in the manifold. All that has been stated is that the possibility of forming a judgment rests upon the kinds of contents and kinds of relations they can stand in. What the smiling face and flick-book examples display is that the judgment we do form is dependent, not upon the kinds of relation a content such as ‘Jack’ can stand in, but on the relation or order in which it already stands in the manifold in advance of synthesis. Where we represent ‘A then B’ or ‘A is the cause of B’, the representation we form through synthesis of the manifold depends upon the relation in the manifold of A and B. For instance, in the temporal sequence of the manifold of sensibility, that which we represent in synthesis as A must precede that which we represent as B. This is merely one example of the inherent regularity we must presuppose of the manifold in sensibility. The sixth presupposition states that we must assume that the whole of the manifold is ordered in such a way that its order is subject to combination in accordance with the rules that govern all combination.

Representation in space and time determines that the manifold given to the understanding for synthesis has a sensible order, where its contents stand in relations to one another in space and time. But for us to represent the manifold as a unity the order of the manifold must be suitable to the rules of combination in general. The deduction is carried out on the basis of Kant’s assertion that we can only represent the identity or unity of the self through the representation of the unity of the manifold. He displays, then, the internal conditions that make representation of a unified manifold possible, but it is the nature of the given representations and their order in the manifold in sensibility that determines whether the manifold can actually be represented as a unity in an act of synthesis. Now, Kant already talks about the nature of the manifold in advance of synthesis, because he states that the manifold in general is temporal in form, meaning that for any concept to apply it must be sensible in form. Synthesis, for Kant, is possible only if the pure concept is homogeneous with the manifold in general. However, I have displayed that the combination of the manifold by a concept presupposes something more than mere spatial and temporal differentiation in the manifold.38

38 In addition to what I have already said, I do not believe that the homogeneity between concept and intuition can be restricted merely to a statement that the possible application of a concept requires the concept to have a sensible form. As I see it, the problem is that homogeneity of form alone only displays that the pure (sensible) concepts have an application to the manifold in general, or merely to the general form of intuition, and this
Because we are dealing not just with concepts, but the rules that define synthesis in general, we must also presuppose that the homogeneity of the manifold with the pure concepts extends beyond their sensible form.  

In this section I have argued that the mere power in us to represent something, or our capacity to combine the manifold in consciousness, is insufficient for the possibility of an objective cognition. Initially I observed that the recognition of a quality requires variation in the manifold, but when it was considered that to represent the manifold as something or to see something in the manifold requires the combination of qualities under a rule, it quickly became evident that mere variation was insufficient for synthesis. What the possibility of synthesis in fact presupposes of the manifold is that the contents are of a certain kind and are ordered in the manifold. Moreover, this cannot be just any order, but rather must be an order appropriate to the rules of combination in general. In which case, with the deduction Kant does not fully outline all that is involved in a possible objective cognition, for the reality of our world is not determined by the activity of the understanding alone. But in order to be fair to Kant and his own aims for the deduction, with the next section I want to make clear the manner in which I diverge from the stated project of the deduction. I am not presenting an alternative to the deduction, nor an analysis of the argument. Instead, taking into account the wider approach to transcendental philosophy that I work within, my approach to Kant is supplementary, for it engages, not only with the subjective conditions (of what it is to represent in general), but with the question of whether other external conditions of cognition are to be found and whether anything can be stated beyond the claim (in the Anticipations of Perception) that there must be sensation.

That my extensions of Kant’s own conditions are consistent with his more limited transcendental inquiry is also made clear in the next chapter where I present a reading of what makes no stipulation over the given empirical content of the manifold. The given content may well be temporal in form, but simply on account of being temporal in form does not mean that we can, for instance, apply the concept of causality to it. For this possibility we must stipulate further conditions and require content structured in such a way that it is suitable for such concept application. Kant does claim only that there is a homogeneity of form, but this claim is made within his investigation of the subjective conditions of representation; my own claim has widened the field of the investigation into the possibility of cognition and only in this way is it possible to extend the claim of homogeneity.

On account of the fact that the representations are not strictly given individually, but in or as a manifold of representation (as complex, with variation), it is the manifold of representation as a whole, which must be appropriate to a synthesis. The necessity of the categories, which presupposes that all given content is a possible content of synthesis, assumes that the possibility of a synthesis in accordance with a priori rules is already contained in the given manifold as a whole. In a particular instance of a manifold, the manifold will be taken up and combined in accordance with the rules of synthesis, so the manifold may present to the subject a state of affairs. Any state of affairs is highly complex and involves a huge amount of ‘data’, but the representation of that data as a whole (the part of the world in which the subject currently finds itself) is conditional upon the given content as a whole and only then is it a possible content for the representation of a unity, world, or state of affairs.
Kant means by original synthesis. There, I urge a view that makes the distinction between the manifold in sensibility and the synthesis of the manifold in the understanding rest primarily on the distinct functions of each faculty. What this means is that sensibility does not represent anything at all; for only once we grasp the manifold as a whole, and so represent it as a world or nature does the manifold represent something for us. I take this line because I think the possible representation of an original synthetic unity is too closely tied to the particular configuration of the manifold in sensibility to portray the matter as one where the order we represent in synthesis is brought about entirely out of the subject. For this reason I think any reading of Kant needs to reassess just what we take him to mean in saying that we ‘bring into the appearances that order and regulation in them that we call nature.’

Looking further ahead, a point relevant to the argument of Chapter 4 is that in synthesis we do not change the basic configuration of manifold. Instead, we represent as nature only that which is given to us in sensibility and in the order that it is given there. The view of Kant that I present states that the task of synthesis is simply to see the configuration as representing something. Nevertheless, at the same time, synthesis is not so simple an act of representing the configuration to be a mere representation or recognition of what is already there in the manifold. This cannot be the case, for while the configuration is a condition of representing the smiling face or motion, the manifold contains neither a smiling face nor motion. Still, that is likely just a matter of the different functions of sensibility and the understanding and that in sensibility we are never in a position to grasp what is there in the manifold.40

Section III: Two distinct arguments

In the preceding section I argued that the power of the subject to represent something, i.e., the capacity to combine the content of the manifold in an act of synthesis through concepts, is insufficient for the possibility of an objective cognition. Instead, the very possibility of synthesis presupposes an order to the given manifold of sensibility. However, in that argument I gave little indication of what Kant’s deduction amounts to and did not distinguish the argument sufficiently from my own. Overall, I think the transcendental deduction of the categories is limited in its scope and could not possibly provide an answer to the overriding question of this thesis: looking at the deduction alone will not provide a full account of the conditions of an objective cognition or allow us to state whether in addition to internal

40 See the passage from A293/B350 cited above, p36n
conditions there are also external conditions of cognition. In the current section I provide a better indication of the wider investigation into the possibility of cognition and how the argument, or at least the argumentative style, of the deduction allows my investigation and argument to supplement it. I start by making use of Kant’s own example of cinnabar, though in a way appropriate to the argument from the preceding section. I argue that the possibility of representing cinnabar is dependent upon the nature of the manifold in advance of synthesis. Nevertheless, I outline why my analysis of the cinnabar example is largely unfair to Kant’s aim with the deduction and certainly cannot represent the use he intended for it. In the section, ‘On the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination’ it appears that Kant says something similar to my argument from the preceding section. There he states that empirical synthesis assumes the ‘governance of a certain rule to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves’ (A101). But despite appearances, Kant is not saying anything of the kind. Certainly, he assumes, like others before him, that empirical synthesis presupposes regularity in the manifold. However, because the regularity underlies empirical synthesis in general it must be necessary. So, in line with what he has already stated in the preamble to the deduction, he argues that a necessary regularity could only have its ground in the nature of our cognitive faculties. Kant’s argument states that the regularity that makes an empirical synthesis or association possible is a determination of the manifold (in this case) by imagination. In which case, it is wrong to think that Kant is intent on saying the manifold of sensibility in advance of synthesis is subject to a rule; instead, the general statement amounts to saying that in general we must represent a single manifold.

I also want to advise a note of caution: when we read Kant we must not hand over too much responsibility to the determinations of the imagination and the understanding. Certainly, the deduction is limited in scope and attends only to the general role of the imagination and the understanding in cognition, but Kant is nevertheless committed to more. His account of cognition clearly acknowledges that cognition arises from both internal and external sources, and I want to bring specific attention to the preamble to the deduction where we find that Kant admits of two ways in which an object can be determined. What I stress is that this should not be regarded as a choice and we should be careful not to read too much into Kant’s concentration on the transcendental conditions and of the claim that ‘representation alone makes the object possible’ (A92/B125). Instead, I argue that the passage clearly identifies the two origins that together make cognition possible. Moreover, it is quite understandable that one origin is neglected entirely when the driving question of the deduction is ‘whether a priori concepts do not also precede, as conditions under which alone something can be, if not
intuited, nevertheless thought as object in general’ (A93/B125). At the end of the section I consider some passages that might present Kant in a way that makes him appear open to the supplementary reading I propose. But closer examination of the text and a consideration of the general nature of his arguments merely display that he has no concern for the nature of the content in the manifold and does not argue that it must be of a certain kind for the possibility of synthesis. The examples also provide us with a better understanding of Kant’s transcendental concerns and applying this to the main argument of the deduction he could not have any concern for the nature of the manifold in sensibility beyond its general form. In my view, it also leaves the possibility that considering the nature and order of the content in the manifold as a condition of synthesis does not conflict with the general approach that Kant makes in the deduction.

In section II I outlined the relationship between the rules of synthesis and the manifold in sensibility. From this outline I believe it is possible to say that the rules of synthesis place a restriction upon the manifold, for the manifold must be ordered in a certain way if it is to be possible for us to represent it’s manifoldness in synthesis. Nevertheless, the nature of the manifold places a restriction upon representation, for it is the particular sequence or order of the manifold that determines what we represent or what instances of the rules of synthesis we encounter. For instance, that I now consciously represent ‘A then B’ is on account of the fact that the manifold presented for synthesis contains content A followed by B. The manifold in sensibility must be of a kind that is (in general) suitable for synthesis and the very possibility of synthesis relies upon the kind of order in the sequence in the manifold – thus, there is a form of harmony between the manifold and the rules of synthesis in general. Synthesis is conditional on the kinds of sensible quality found in the manifold, but these qualities must present themselves in the manifold in a certain way and the manifold could not present a random collection of contents. Kant’s own example of cinnabar is sufficient to demonstrate:

If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light, now heavy … then my empirical imagination would never get an opportunity to think heavy cinnabar on the occasion of the representation of the colour red; or if a certain word were attributed now to this thing, now to that, or if one and the same thing were sometimes called this, sometimes that, without the governance of a certain rule to which the appearances are already subjected in themselves, then no empirical synthesis could take place [emphasis added]. (A100-101)

In my view, the ability to represent cinnabar relies upon the underlying consistency and coherence of the contents in the manifold. Of course, there might be cases where the content
of the manifold presents now red, now black, now light, now heavy, and so on, and may present contents suitable to synthesis. Yet in order to become something for us in synthesis these contents would need to present a sequence that we could represent or combine in accordance with a rule. But does Kant agree and is this what he is arguing for in the deduction? One way to interpret the passage is to suggest that what he appears to be saying is that the very possibility of representing cinnabar or thinking it ‘on the occasion of the representation of the colour red’ (A101) presupposes that the representations in the manifold in sensibility are already subject to a rule. We might think this because the possibility of having a definite idea of it and the properties it has appears to depend on the nature of the manifold in sensibility. After all, for us to form the idea of heavy, red cinnabar will be difficult, if not impossible, if the qualities in the manifold keep changing and moreover changing in some way that we cannot understand or represent in accordance with a rule or with the idea of heavy, red cinnabar. For Kant, then, like others before him, empirical association would merely presuppose regularity in the appearances already. However, to read Kant as suggesting the nature of the manifold in sensibility determines the possibility of representing cinnabar or any other empirical association completely misrepresents his argument. In reading him we must remember the very general nature of the argument, for his interest lies not in the possibility of this or that empirical association, but in the possibility of empirical association in general. The rule to which Kant refers in the passage to which appearances are already subjected in themselves is a rule that governs empirical association in general and applies to any possible empirical representation. So, in order to be clear, where Kant assumes, like his predecessors, that empirical association presupposes regularity in the appearances, he in fact differs from those predecessors, not only in the kind of regularity he presupposes, but also in the manner that he accounts for it. As it is appearances, and not things in themselves, that we are dealing with, Kant thinks he can present the ground of the regularity as a necessary rule with its origin in our own cognitive faculty. But without taking due care and attention to Kant’s argument, and starting from the position I developed in the preceding section, it is easy to think (in contrast to Kant’s claim of a necessary rule) that the very possibility of our having an idea of cinnabar is in fact dependent upon the nature of the

41 Béatrice Longuenesse provides evidence of the theme in Kant’s predecessors: ‘The requirement [regularity] stated here seems reasonable, and agrees to that extent with the doctrine of Hume or of any empiricist, sceptical or not, regarding the association of ideas: representations would not be associated if they had not first presented themselves in relations of constant conjunction or succession, “in conformity with a rule”. There must, therefore, be a given regularity of representations if imagination is to apply its own rules of reproductive association.’ (Béatrice Longuenesse Kant and the Capacity to Judge, p39)

42 My argument in Section II above will nevertheless present Kant as committed to the other form of regularity that may more easily place him alongside his predecessors who assumed regularity in the appearances already.
manifold and only on the basis of the content found in the manifold will it be possible that we represent cinnabar as red.

Now, while due care and attention must be taken in the analysis of Kant’s argument and what we attribute to him here, his own intentions do nothing to detract from either the argument of Section II or the use I make of the cinnabar example. For, if the sensible representations of cinnabar in the manifold were not such that in our association of one representation with another we could not represent their identity, we are not simply stating that no identity is presupposed in the given manifold, but that no identity \textit{could be} presupposed. Where there is no identity of qualities in the manifold in advance of synthesis, we could not represent an identity in the combination and association of contents in the manifold, regardless of the presupposition of thought in a synthesis of reproduction. Thus, it is logically impossible to represent the identity of this cinnabar with what I have seen before when there is no repetition of qualities in the manifold. The same will be found to be the case for the formation or representation of a rule-governed connection or association. It will be logically impossible to form the representation of a rule-governed association of contents in the combination of the manifold if the contents in their sequence in the manifold do not present themselves as a pattern appropriate to the rule in question. No manifold that is devoid of repetition or pattern, for instance, where cinnabar is now red, now black, now light, now heavy, could possibly conform to a rule, whether it be pure or empirical.\footnote{The discussion to follow glosses over a significant objection: there may in fact be no repetition of stimuli for the human subject and cognition may take place given ‘the curious fact that we are able to recognise and identify objects even though they present themselves to us in very many different and changing variations of conditions (of perspective, position, distance, motion, illumination, overlap with other patterns, etc., etc.).’ (Peter Krasurer ‘Kant’s Schematism of the categories and the problem of pattern recognition’ \textit{Synthese} 33, 1976, p176) These issues are not new: Mark Sacks (\textit{Objectivity and Insight} Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) notes that Hume was concerned with such considerations and most likely Kant was as well. ‘[E]ven if the properties of objects were not changing, the impressions would still be changing constantly. Lighting conditions, subjective constitution, relative location, all mean that it hardly ever happens that we see a given tree or patch of grass in the same way twice. Given the instability of impressions, it is unclear how fixed associations of resembling and contiguous properties could be formed’ (ibid., p65) It might be necessary to reduce the condition of the repetition of stimuli from a qualitative \textit{identity} to a qualitative \textit{similarity}. Part of the issue is not merely the repetition of individual stimuli, which in many respects doesn’t seem to be the issue in point (for the repetition of individual stimuli seems to take place – the repetition of colours, for instance) but rather it is the repetition of a manifold, so of the repetition of ‘something consisting of or comprehending \textit{many and different} items or parts or elements,’ which is Krasurer’s understanding of ‘manifold’ (p184). The objection amounts to one of simplicity: the example given does not reflect the complexities of the human sensible \textit{manifold} and the variety of sensible qualities it contains. The example to some extent fails to acknowledge the question posed of how a ‘varied and fluctuating stream of cognitive states’ can be represented by the subject in one cognition.}
of intuition.’ (A105) But, if I am right, the understanding could not effect anything at all unless the manifold is in general suitable to such a synthesis. Under the circumstances where the manifold is not suitable to synthesis of such a kind, then representation and consciousness of the unity of the manifold is not possible. In which case, following Kant’s own reasoning, where the representation of the unity of the manifold makes possible the representation of the identity of my own self, the nature of the manifold must also ground the possibility of self-consciousness. Further, as much as we should attend to his argument in the deduction, there are very good reasons for looking to supplement what Kant provides there.

I am aware that the analysis I provide of the cinnabar passage is largely unfair to the argument of the A deduction. For instance, in the section, ‘On the synthesis of the reproduction in the imagination,’ he intends to demonstrate two closely related points: firstly, that an empirical synthesis (or association) is possible only on account of an a priori synthesis; and, secondly, that reproduction in thought is an a priori condition of synthesis and cognition. To demonstrate the second point he gives the example of drawing a line in thought:

[I]f I were always to lose the preceding representations (the first part of the line …) from my thoughts and not reproduce them when I proceed to the following ones, then no whole representation and none of the previously mentioned thoughts, not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, could ever arise.

(A102)

What I understand Kant to mean is that empirical association in general would be impossible if we do not hold in thought the preceding representations and thus represent a manifold as a manifold in time. Seeing a manifold as a manifold can be as simple as saying we see a multiplicity, but in order to see a multiplicity we must hold the distinct elements of the manifold together in thought. I must represent A and B in one thought, for otherwise in thinking A I am not also thinking B. And only where I hold together in thought or in a single representation both A and B am I in a position to compare A with B or make some association of them. For this reason, I think we should see Kant as saying that only when we represent the sensible qualities as a complete series in a temporal sequence can we at the same time associate those contents. I believe he means to say that the idea of an empirical association in general presupposes that this impression is related to a prior one, yet we can only ensure that this is the case if we in general hold representations together in some way and so reproduce them in a single temporal manifold. In which case, Kant is saying that there must be a necessary reproductive form of synthesis, a constant rule by means of which I can grasp one representation after another in my thoughts. Kant is looking to ‘demonstrate’ that our
intuitions will only provide cognition through a combination of the manifold that makes a ‘thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction’ (A101) possible. The demonstration comes in the example of drawing a line; so, for the possibility of drawing a line in thought, like any other empirical association, it is necessary that I ‘first grasp one of these manifold representations after another in my thoughts.’ (A102) For Kant, that our cognitive faculties function in just this way precedes the possibility of any empirical synthesis or association and his argument extends beyond the possible representation of A and B to the possibility of empirical representation in general. But for Kant to say that an empirical synthesis presupposes an *a priori* synthesis is not merely to say that we must represent in this way in general. Instead, I think we should add, that when he says we hold representations together and reproduce them in thought we in fact represent a single multiplicity or manifold for all possible representation. As I read Kant, he is saying that the rules of synthesis are the rules we need if we are to represent an empirical whole or empirical world (nature), which is the unified association of all (possible) empirical content. And with the cinnabar example, Kant likely has a more general point in mind: the representation of what I represent now as identical with what I represented a moment before, is a condition of representation in general. A synthesis of reproduction is in general what makes this representation possible.

Kant’s argument in the deduction more generally cannot be about the regularity of the manifold or find its ground in the nature of the manifold in sensibility, because he requires the regularity to be necessary. He is very aware that the only means of securing such a necessity is if we provide the rule and the combination ourselves through (in this case) the imagination. So, like ‘every necessity,’ (A106) the constant rule that makes it in general possible to grasp representations one after another in my thoughts must have a transcendental ground. However, because the very possibility of synthesis in practice presupposes something of the manifold in sensibility, we can only conclude that, while the act of synthesis needs to have a constant form if it is to represent the combination of the manifold, the capacity to effect a synthetic unity is not merely down to the capacity of the subject to represent in general. The very possibility of representing the regularity of the manifold is possible on account of both the capacity to represent and the nature of the content and order in sensibility in advance of synthesis.

The cinnabar example is interesting because it demonstrates a point that both Kant and I appear to agree upon: empirical association presupposes regularity in the manifold. For my purposes the cinnabar example allows me to restate the argument from the preceding section: the representation of the identity of cinnabar presupposes that the contents of the manifold are
of a certain kind and are ordered in a certain way. However, Kant uses the example to make a more general point about the possibility of empirical synthesis (association): in order to associate different representations we presuppose that they are already subject to a rule, for we could not combine something that is one thing on one occasion and something else on another, ‘now red, now black, now light, now heavy’ (A100). But the general nature of Kant’s argument indicates that for cognition to be possible we not only presuppose the rule that combines this or that representation, for instance, of cinnabar or the parts of a line; rather, we must also presuppose a rule that combines appearance in general. For the rule that combines in general is the rule that makes a ‘thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction’ (A101) possible, which is, for Kant, the only kind of combination that will provide for cognition. In accordance with the outline of synthesis I provided in section I, I take Kant to mean that the rules that we must presuppose are the rules we need if we are to represent an empirical whole or empirical world (nature), i.e., an association of all (possible) empirical content. Thus, it is clear that Kant’s argument cannot be about the regularity of the manifold or fall back on the nature of the manifold in sensibility, because he requires the regularity to be necessary and the only means of securing such a necessity is if we provide the rule and the combination ourselves through (in this case) the act of the imagination. So, he says, like ‘every necessity,’ (A106) the constant rule must have a transcendental ground.

In the preceding section I argued that the possibility of representing the regularity of the manifold is possible on account of the nature of the content and the order of the manifold in sensibility in advance of synthesis. But it needs to be made clear that my claim assumes the act of synthesis has a specific form. In which case, all I have proceeded to do is to ask how synthesis is possible whilst assuming the success of the deduction and thus where synthesis is understood as an act that takes place in accordance with a set of necessary rules. Moreover, I have no interest in replacing Kant’s deduction with an argument of my own. Quite the opposite must in fact be true, for my argument is premised on the conclusions of the deduction. What my argument amounts to is a statement that – in practice - the act of synthesis presupposes something of the content of the manifold and specifically that its possibility requires a harmony between the rules of synthesis and the content in the manifold. If there is no such harmony, then no synthesis will ever take place and there would never be anything like cognition. Thus, I conclude that there is more to be said about how cognition is possible than Kant can possibly provide with the deduction. Nevertheless, and however true my argument may be, in what follows it is still essential that we must give primacy to the argument of the deduction. For it from the analysis (in the deduction) of the function of the
understanding and what the understanding determines in representation that much of my argument here and in what follows is premised upon.

I indicated at the outset of the current section that I want to advise a note of caution in how we read Kant’s deduction and the wider commitments he makes in outlining a specifically sensible account of cognition. Foremost in this regard is that when we read the *Critique* we must not hand over too much responsibility in cognition to the determinations of the imagination and the understanding. It is imperative that we remember the deduction is limited in scope and attends only to the general role of imagination and the understanding in cognition. The possibility of cognition rests on far more than our capacity to represent in general and in the preamble to the deduction Kant provides a clear example of what else is involved:

There are only two possible cases in which synthetic representation and its object can come together, necessarily relate to each other, and, as it were, meet each other: Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible. If it is the first, then the relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*. And this is the case with appearance in respect of that in it which belongs to sensation. But if it is the second then since representation in itself (for we are not here talking about its causality by means of the will) does not produce its object as far as its existence is concerned, the representation is still determinant of the object *a priori* if it is possible through it alone to cognise something as an object. (A92/B124-5)

The passage is most often and rightly seen as Kant deliberating over the two possible sources of the necessity of synthetic representation and clearly he stakes his position on the latter, where representation makes the object possible. But there is a need to make clear just what he takes the two options to be: by the first, I think Kant intends a model of cognition where ‘object’ picks out things in themselves and would seemingly require some form of pre-established harmony between the (metaphysical) objects or things in themselves and our manner of representation in order to guarantee the possibility that ‘synthetic representation and its object can come together, necessarily relate to each other, and, as it were, meet each other’. The second, Kant’s own view, is a model where ‘object’ picks out appearances. In his view, the necessity of our synthetic representation and its agreement with the object will be guaranteed because the very nature of representation makes the object possible. As is common for Kant to do, he reads his predecessors’ positions through his own, so after seemingly accommodating pre-established harmony as a ground of necessity he immediately rejects it and comes to say that the relation of representation to object (things in themselves) is
only empirical and not a priori. For my own purposes, it is the statement immediately following that I find most interesting: ‘And this is the case with appearance in respect of that in it which belongs to sensation.’ This is a statement that Kant agrees with: as I read it, he is saying there is an empirical relation between appearance (or that in the appearance which belongs to sensation) and the things in themselves or metaphysical objects. These matters are worth lengthy discussion, but I would like only to take note at this stage of Kant’s acknowledgment that cognition arises from both internal and external sources. Thus, from this passage we can say, for Kant, there are two ways in which an object is determined and any account of the possibility of cognition must consider both.

I wish to advise a note caution for how we read this passage from the preamble to the deduction and Kant more generally: the passage should not be regarded as a choice with regard to the determination of an object in its entirety; the deduction is not intent on accounting for all features of cognition, but merely the transcendental conditions of cognition. As Kant proceeds to highlight in the remainder of the passage, the driving question of the deduction is ‘whether a priori concepts do not also precede, as conditions under which alone something can be, if not intuited, nevertheless thought as object in general’ (A93/B125). Hence, it is quite understandable, just as was found in the Aesthetic, that anything empirical is entirely ignored in his transcendental investigation into the necessary ground of cognition in general, which Kant believes could only be found in the nature of the cognitive faculties themselves. Even so, if I am right in my argument in Section II, the nature of the manifold in sensibility and the relation of that manifold to the metaphysical world will also play a fundamentally crucial role in making cognition possible.

But are there any indications that Kant might, at the very least, be open to the supplementary argument and analysis of the conditions of cognition I have proposed? I want now to discuss this possibility through an analysis of three passages; the first is from the Anthropology, the second is a marginal note from Kant’s own copy of the First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment, and the third is from the Critique itself.

In the Anthropology under the heading ‘On Sensibility’s Power of Making Connections Because of Affinity,’ he states ‘affinity’ to mean ‘the connection of the manifold by virtue of its origin from one ground.’ (Anthropology 7:176-7; 52) The passage continues by outlining an example of appropriate social etiquette in conversation, which specifically notes that we should not allow the conversation to jump around in an unconnected manner. He then writes:
Whether in silent thought or in conversation, there must always be a theme on which the manifold is strung, so that understanding too must be operative in it. In such a case the play of imagination still follows the laws of sensibility, which provides the material, and this is associated without consciousness of the rule but still in keeping with it. So the association is carried out in conformity with understanding, though it is not derived from understanding. (Anthropology 7:177; 52)

It is possible that Kant means only to say that understanding is operative in the manifold, because that is the only way that there can be a theme on which a manifold is strung, yet there is a suggestion of something else in this passage: that there must be a theme in the manifold already, perhaps because only then can the understanding be operative, i.e., grasp, for instance, the theme of the conversation. He says that, if the ideas in conversation were to jump around and presented to us ‘a succession of ideas having no objective connection,’ then we would simply be left ‘wondering’ what the conversation was about or be left thinking that the speaker is dreaming (Anthropology 7:177; 52). Thus, a theme stands as a condition of conversation, and while the conversation must be carried out ‘in conformity with understanding,’ Kant would seem to suggest that the theme would have its origin elsewhere. A little further on he writes:

Understanding and sensibility, for all their dissimilarity, join together spontaneously to produce knowledge, as intimately as if one had its source in the other, or both originated from a common root. (Anthropology 7:177; 53)

A doctrine of pre-established harmony immediately springs to mind. Is Kant seriously entertaining such a possibility? He continues:

But this cannot be – at least we cannot conceive how heterogeneous things could sprout from one and the same root. (Anthropology 7:177; 53)

I think Kant admits that there must be something homogeneous between sense and understanding, but from the preceding examples it is difficult to see how this could merely be the homogeneity of a spatiotemporal form. The very possibility of conversation and the possibility of grasping what is being said would surely require more than the very basic forms of sense to be homogeneous with the understanding for us to comprehend the theme of the conversation. But what he appears to caution is any attempt to discover the root in respect of sense. Without any further discrimination of what Kant intends here by ‘sense’ the passages from the Anthropology do not sit well with the Critique, which may well only be the result of Kant’s concentration in the Critique on purely transcendental matters. Nevertheless, there is a
more likely explanation for what Kant is saying at this stage of the *Anthropology*: there is a distinction in the A deduction between a synthesis of apprehension in the intuition, of reproduction in imagination, and of recognition in the concept – here I think by sense, Kant means apprehension; so, by sense he does not mean receptivity, but nor does he mean by it an act, as we find in the imagination or the understanding. Imagination and the understanding, Kant notes in the *Critique*, arise from the same root, but with apprehension or sense he seems to acknowledge the difficulty of making the same statement and presumably is warning us not to go in search of the common root between the understanding and sense (apprehension).44 For my own purposes, if by sense he does mean apprehension, then I am likely in error if I take these passages as evidence of Kant’s openness to my argument. But even while the passages on affinity in the *Anthropology* are not perhaps what I hoped they might be (i.e., an indication of Kant’s openness to my supplementary argument), there are other passages that remind us of his commitments to receptivity and that receptivity is integral to the possibility of cognition:

> For what kind of sensuous intuition there will be depends not only on the constitution of the object represented but also on the constitution of the subject and his receptivity; and his thought (his concept of the object) follows from this intuition. (Anthropology 7:141; 21)

My second textual example comes in a marginal note Kant makes to his *First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment*:

> Could Linnaeus have hoped to outline a system of nature if he had to worry that if he found a stone that he called granite, this might differ in its internal constitution from every other stone which nevertheless looked just like it, and all he could hope to find were always individual things, as it were isolated for the understanding, and never a class of them that could be brought under concepts of genus and species? (First Introduction 45 20:216; 18)

The marginal note concerns the needs of the subject in cognition: a subject must represent the manifold as a unified whole and this is achieved by means of an assumption the subject makes, that ‘nature is thought of as a system’ (First Introduction I 20:214; 17). In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant outlines a further transcendental principle that grounds the possibility of cognition, but the marginal note appears to highlight that a systematic nature cannot just be a

---


45 *First Introduction to the Critique of the power of Judgment* in *Critique of the power of judgment* Edited by Paul Guyer; Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000
presupposition of thought. Rather, it is an indication that individual things could not be thought by the understanding, so we must also assume that where the understanding is operative there are no individual things, or at least not only individual things. A subject must think the objects (stones) as possible objects of a unified representation in order to be able to represent them in a synthetic whole. However, the possibility that the stones are linked to all other particulars in a single representation presupposes something about the stones themselves. If there was no commonality to the stones and only a nature or world of individual things, any such thing is necessarily ‘isolated’ from the possibility of being brought into a synthetic unity. Where nature consists only of individual things with no common qualities object to object – with nothing that could identify an object as part of a class of objects – no concept whatsoever would be possible for more than a single object. Thus, any possible concept could only ever have a single concrete member of its class and the ‘multiplicity’ of infinite empirical laws or concepts he writes of in the Critique of Judgment would never be unified. Nevertheless, in the marginal note and the general outline of the transcendental principles of the Critique of Judgment the most likely view of Kant is again that he is concerned solely with the transcendental conditions that make cognition possible. That this is the most likely view is I think confirmed in the appendix to the Dialectic, in the section, ‘On the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason,’ which clearly lies close to the theme of the third Critique:

If among the appearances offering themselves to us there were such a great variety – I will not say of form (for they might be similar to one another in that) but of content, i.e., regarding the manifoldness of existing beings – that even the most acute human understanding, through comparison of one with another, could not detect the least similarity (a case which can at least be thought), then the logical law of genera would not obtain at all, no concept of a genus, nor any other universal concept, indeed no understanding at all would obtain, since it is the understanding that has to do with concepts. (A653-4/B681-2)

But Kant is not presenting an argument similar to my own; rather, here is another transcendental deduction. He continues:

The logical principle of genera therefore presupposes a transcendental one if it is to be applied to nature (by which I here understand only objects that are given to us). According to that principle, sameness of kind is necessarily presupposed in the manifold of a possible experience (even though we cannot determine its degree a priori), because without it no empirical concepts and hence no experience would be possible. (A654/B682)
For this deduction, like that of the understanding, ‘reason does not beg but commands, though without being able to determine the bounds of this unity.’ (A653/B681) The transcendental and general nature of the argument in the Critique of Judgment and the appendix to the Dialectic in the Critique should guide the reading we make of the marginal note. The most suitable reading means any attempt to present the Linnaeus example as an example of Kant’s openness to my own argument is, like the reading of the Anthropology, misguided. Kant might well be open to my argument, but in the marginal note, the Critique of Judgment and the appendix to the Dialectic in the Critique he is concerned with purely transcendental matters.

The third example comes from the Critique itself and concerns a ‘synopsis of sense’ to which ‘a synthesis must always correspond’. Here is the passage in full:

If every individual representation were entirely foreign to the other, as it were isolated and separated from it, then there would never arise anything like cognition, which is a whole of compared and connected representations. If therefore I ascribe a synopsis to sense, because it contains a manifold in its intuition, a synthesis must always correspond to this, and receptivity can make cognitions possible only if combined with spontaneity. This is now the ground of a threefold synthesis, which is necessarily found in all cognition: that, namely, of the apprehension of the representations, as modifications of the mind in intuition; of the reproduction of them in imagination; and of their recognition in the concept. Now these direct us toward three subjective sources of cognition, which make possible even the understanding and, through the latter, all experience as an empirical product of understanding. (A97-8)

There is great deal to contend with in this passage, but I am most interested in what Kant meant by ‘synopsis of sense’, the ‘synthesis’ to which it corresponds, and just what correspondence means in this context. The ‘synopsis of sense’ is a difficult notion because Kant mentions it only twice in the Critique, in the passage above, and prior to it at A94:

There are, however, three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul), which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of the mind, namely sense, imagination, and apperception. On these are grounded 1) the synopsis of the manifold a priori through sense; 2) the synthesis of this manifold through the imagination; finally 3) the unity of this synthesis through original apperception. In addition to their empirical use, all of these faculties have a transcendental one, which is concerned solely with form, and which is possible a priori. We have discussed this with regard to the sense in the first part above, however, we will now attempt to understand the nature of the two other ones.

Initially Kant appears to place the synopsis of sense in the threefold synthesis, thus as apprehension. Yet he also admits that the synopsis of the manifold has already been dealt with
in the Aesthetic. I think that Kant gives a clear indication of how we should understand the manner in which the synopsis of sense or of the manifold can seemingly belong to the discussion in the Aesthetic and yet also to the synthesis of apprehension: he states that, in addition to their empirical use, these faculties have a transcendental use. But if we are speaking of what is transcendental, then we are speaking only of that which sensibility in general provides for cognition. In which case, I think all that the synopsis of sense could possibly refer to is the mere form of the manifold in sensibility and the form of apprehension in a synthesis of the manifold. Sensibility may, as Kant says, provide a manifold, but ‘can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained in one representation, without the occurrence of such a synthesis.’ (A99) We have in apprehension merely the ‘synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides.’ (A99-100) I think we can only see Kant as saying that the transcendental form of sensibility is what we apprehend in general in the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition and allows Kant to say that the synopsis of sense (that he identifies with apprehension) has already been discussed in the Aesthetic. The most plausible reading of ‘synopsis of sense’ is as the transcendental form of sensibility or the manifold of sensibility in general; and when we ‘take together’ the manifold of sensibility, and only then truly apprehend time and (in general) the succession of impressions in time, we have a synthesis of apprehension.

As for the ‘synthesis’ which corresponds to the synopsis of sense, there are two possibilities: first, the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination or second, the synthesis of recognition in the concept. It might be that we need only follow through the order of Kant’s argument, so whatever synthesis it is that corresponds will be the next stage in the argument or process and act of synthesis. While there is a case for attributing the correspondent synthesis to reproduction in the imagination, the harmony of form between imagination and the understanding means that it hardly matters which is in Kant’s thought, for if one corresponds the other should too.

But what does Kant actually mean by ‘correspond’ in this context? In order to answer this question I think we need to continue as I have done in my reading of synopsis of sense and assume the transcendental nature of the argument will provide the clue to understanding what he means. Therefore, stripping away anything empirical, we are left with the bare form of the synopsis of sense (the transcendental form of sensibility) and the bare form of imagination and the understanding (the a priori rules of synthesis). But by doing so, the only correspondence that could be found between a synopsis of sense and the rules of synthesis would be the transcendental form of sensibility itself. In other words, the only means by
which either the synthesis of reproduction or the synthesis of recognition could correspond in a transcendental sense is if they have a common sensible form.

The term ‘correspond’ appears at several points through the A deduction and frequently in passages that also talk of the concept of an object: ‘concept of an object that is given in intuition’ (A93/B126); ‘concepts of objects in general’ (A93/B126); ‘a priori conditions of a possible experience’ (A95); an object ‘thought of only as something in general = X’ (A104); ‘the concept of an object’ (A104). The passages that most clearly support my reading of what is meant by the correspondence between synthesis and the synopsis of sense are from A92-3/B125 and A95:

But there are two conditions under which alone the cognition of an object is possible: first, intuition, through which it is given, but only as appearance; second, concept, through which an object is thought that corresponds to this intuition. (A92-3/B125)

It is entirely contradictory and impossible that a concept should be generated completely a priori and be related to an object although it neither belongs itself with the concept of possible experience nor consists of elements of a possible experience. For it would then have no content, since no intuition would correspond to it through intuitions in general, through which objects can be given to us, constitute the field or the entire object of possible experience. An a priori concept that was not related to the latter would be only the logical form for a concept, but not the concept itself through which something would be thought. (A95)

The object of experience is not intuition, but, whatever the object is, it must correspond to intuition and, more particularly, the concept of an object in general must correspond to the intuition in general, i.e., it must correspond to the transcendental form of sensibility. The object in question is the product of synthesis and where Kant states that an ‘intuition would correspond to it [i.e., the object] through intuitions in general,’ by ‘in general’ I think he can only mean that the correspondence is between the transcendental form of sensibility and the a priori concepts or rules of synthesis. Moreover, if the concept of an object in general is not, for Kant, the logically possible concept of an object, then, as the concept of a real object it involves a relation to intuition, I think this relation can only be a correspondence of the transcendental form of sensibility and the same sensible form in the concept. In any case, and irrespective of the reading I provide of synopsis of sense and its correspondence to synthesis, I think it is quite clear that Kant is again engaged in a transcendental argument that could not be construed as a statement about the nature of the manifold that fits the argument I presented in the preceding section. So, like the first two examples, I have again found no indication that he might be open to my supplementary argument. Overall, each of the examples provides
some initial hope, but in the end they merely provide for a better understanding of the transcendental nature of Kant’s arguments both in the deduction and in his Critical philosophy more generally.46

In my view, the analysis of synthesis in Section II does not conflict with the general approach that Kant makes in the deduction and we are free to state that the manifold must be ordered in a manner correspondent to the rules of synthesis. Kant does commit to a correspondent relation between the form of the manifold in sensibility and the rules of synthesis. Nevertheless, within his argument this relation amounts only to a common sensible form between the rules of synthesis and the manifold in sensibility. Kant’s argument states that the regularity which makes an empirical synthesis or association possible is a determination of the manifold by our own cognitive faculties. In which case, it is wrong to think that he is intent on saying the manifold of sensibility in advance of synthesis is subject to a rule; instead, the statement amounts to saying that in general we must represent a single manifold. Even so, it remains possible to distinguish this conclusion and Kant’s argument in the deduction from my own analysis of the possibility of synthesis. Thus, my argument should be seen as a supplement to the deduction rather than a challenge to it.

In this chapter I have argued that the power of the understanding to represent, i.e., the capacity to combine the given content of the manifold in an act of synthesis through concepts, is insufficient for the possibility of an objective cognition. Instead, the very possibility of synthesis presupposes an order or unity in the given manifold of sensibility. I started in the first section with a brief sketch of synthesis and what I think Kant believes takes place in the act of combining the manifold in one cognition. In very simple terms, synthesis is the cognitive act through which we come to see the manifold as something or to see something in the manifold. Moreover, the act in general is for us to represent the manifold as nature or a world. Following the outline of synthesis, I turned in Section II to my primary concern and

46 Restricted to the relation between the rules of synthesis and the manifold in sensibility I think Kant says only that there is a common sensible form. If, instead, we were to consider the relation of representation to the metaphysical world, then there are perhaps more options, the most obvious of which might be the appeal to affection. Nevertheless, the appeal to affection and the sensible nature of cognition more generally stands outside the main arguments of the deduction in the Analytic and the exposition of space and time in the Aesthetic, so neither example would aid the understanding of those arguments and what Kant is trying to display with them. I also believe it is best to avoid the positive sense of noumena suggested by Kant in the ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ section of the Critique, for there Kant in fact warns against dividing things into a world of phenomena and a world of noumena, where the latter are known through pure understanding. Instead, I believe the best means of exploring the possibility that Kant is committed to some form of correspondence between the rules of synthesis, the manifold of sensibility and the metaphysical world is through an analysis of the respective functions of sensibility and the understanding. It is through an analysis of the functions of sensibility and the understanding that I believe we can gain the strongest suggestion that Kant embraces the isomorphic or correspondence relation between representation and the metaphysical world found in Locke.
investigated what the idea of synthesis presupposes of the manifold. I think Kant is right to assume that there is variation in the given manifold and thus to see synthesis as the attempt to represent and combine the variation in the manifold as something. But the problem for synthesis is that variation alone is insufficient for us to represent the manifold as something. Rather, the content of the manifold must be ordered in some way and not just in space and time. However, because the act of synthesis is to represent the manifold in accordance with a rule, the possibility of such combination presupposes that the content of the manifold has an order suitable to the rules of synthesis. In Section III I tried to be fair to Kant and distinguish his general argument from the extensions that I make to the question of how synthesis is in general possible. In addition to being fair to Kant I also wanted to show that his argument does not conflict with my own. I believe that Kant’s concerns in the deduction – i.e., to outline the general form that representation must take and that we must have a general capacity to represent in order that we can represent a single unified whole for self-consciousness – show that he has no concern for the nature and order of the manifold in sensibility. In which case, I think it is possible to say that the manifold is ordered in advance of synthesis without conflicting with the general approach that Kant makes in the deduction. In other words, my argument is supplementary to what he provides in the argument of the deduction. The main reason for extending my argument beyond what is found in the deduction is the aim of addressing the representationalist position outlined in chapter 1 and that the best way of reading Kant is along the representationalist lines found in Locke. At this stage in my argument, and from my analysis of synthesis, it looks possible to say that Kant can be seen to accept that the reality of representation is due to more than the mere power or capacity to represent in general. Nevertheless, the analysis of synthesis is not yet complete and I have to contend with Kant’s claim that the unity of representation is original to the act of synthesis. The challenge is to read Kant in a way that he can consistently hold, not only that cognition depends upon our general capacity to combine, but that it depends upon the suitability of the given content of the manifold in sensibility to combination of this kind.
Chapter 3: Original synthesis

In the preceding chapter I argued that synthesis presupposes an order, regularity or unity in the manifold of intuition prior to synthesis. Moreover, I argued that this order, regularity or unity must be harmonious with the rules of synthesis. For instance, I observed that the very possibility of representing the manifold in a causal relation presupposes that the manifold is already ordered in a manner appropriate to such a rule. While I think this view is the right way of reading Kant, I nevertheless acknowledge that it presents significant difficulties for reading the particular sense in which he states that unity is original to synthesis or that we bring unity (or nature) to the manifold in the act of the understanding. What I present in this chapter is a reading of Kant that remains consistent with his claim that we bring unity to the manifold or that unity is original to synthesis, yet also retains the conclusion from the preceding chapter. Through a careful reading of the text I show that it is possible to say there is unity in the manifold in advance of synthesis and that unity is original (for us) in the act of the understanding.

In the literature a significant reading of what Kant meant by an original synthesis is the ‘strong’ reading that Paul Guyer makes of Kant’s argument from the unity of consciousness, which stipulates a more substantial relationship between pure concept and the manifold of intuition and specifically that the understanding imposes its form on the manifold. In the strong view, it is assumed that the manifold in sensibility is without unity or merely presents a collection of diverse representations in need of combination. Thus, whatever there is in the manifold of intuition, something is added to it in representing its

---

47 Kant most commonly refers to the ‘original synthetic unity of apperception,’ but also in the A and B editions of the deduction writes of ‘original apperception’; ‘original combination’; ‘original sources’ or capacities of the mind; an ‘original ground’; an ‘original relation to possible experience’; and, referring to sensibility, an ‘original receptivity’. Originality is, I think, used for different reasons. One prominent reason is as a means of saying that the function of the mind, whether this is the understanding or sensibility, is not determined by anything other than the nature of the faculty itself. That the ground of the function is determined by the nature of the faculty itself is also a means for Kant to secure the necessity required for the rules of combination – and only as such does he believe they are able to ground a possible self-consciousness. When originality is stated in relation to the function of the understanding it can be a statement that the function of the understanding is distinct from sensibility and part of an argument for a two faculty model of cognition – a response, perhaps, to Leibniz. In making a distinction between the respective functions of sensibility and the understanding Kant is able to say that given the distinct function of the understanding and its act of combining the manifold in consciousness the representation of the understanding is clearly distinct from the representations of sensibility. With reference to self-consciousness and apperception, originality has two possible applications. The obvious one is that they arise only through the activity of the understanding and therefore are original to its function. But self-consciousness and apperception are at the same time the original ground of a possible cognition because they are the very means by which it is at all possible for me to cognise something as an object. Amidst all that Kant says of an original act, ground and form of cognition, I think it remains possible to read Kant in a manner that does not attribute the unity of cognition in its entirety to the mind, or that in practice the synthetic unity we represent is due to both internal and external factors.

48 See Paul Guyer *Kant and the claims of knowledge*, especially pp132-9
combination in synthesis. Further, the combination is not suggested by the given manifold itself or, if it was, then the combination could not be necessary; hence, the combination could not underlie the possibility of a combination in or for self-consciousness. According to Kant, the combination must be necessary, for only then is there any guarantee that the unity of apperception or self-consciousness can accompany all representation. But if the combination cannot be given as necessary, then it can only be provided if through the act of the understanding we impose our form of thought on the manifold.

I think there are significant difficulties with the strong view, notably, that it does not appear consistent with the main use that Kant thinks we make of concepts in the act of synthesis or combination. In the first section of this chapter I argue for a weaker sense of the use that we make of concepts, one where synthesis is an act of subsumption or of representing the manifold under a rule. I display this weaker sense through an analysis of the use that we make of a concept in representing the manifold and argue that the function of the understanding is simply the capacity to represent the manifold under a concept. In this weaker sense the understanding provides the general form of thinking and through the categories defines the way in which we must think if we are to think the manifold at all.\(^{49}\) I argue further that the general and transcendental concerns that Kant has in the deduction show that he is intent only on outlining the necessity of the application of the categories for a possible comprehension of a manifold, which is a statement that stands independently of what the manifold may itself be like. It is not my intention to disregard the passages that are suggestive of the strong view, but instead to read them in a manner that is more suited to the idea of synthesis as subsumption: ‘subsuming under rules,’ Kant says, is for us to determine ‘whether something stands under a given rule … or not.’ (A132/B171) In addition, I believe it is still possible in the weak view that the categories present the original ground of cognition and the ground of a possible comprehension of the manifold, for as Kant says it is only when we represent the manifold under the categories that there is anything (an object, world, nature) for us at all.

In Section II, I recognise that the weak view inevitably leaves questions regarding the manifold unanswered. Here I ask whether Kant really does provide only an outline of the general form of thinking. There is at least one point in Kant’s argument in the deduction

\(^{49}\) The weak view asserts that the necessity of the categories confirms their status as forms of thinking in general, i.e., the forms by which it is possible for a being such as ourselves (i.e., a being with a discursive form of cognition) to comprehend anything at all. For Kant, there is an implicit restriction on human spontaneity and what it can be thought to produce ‘out of itself’: unlike God, human beings do not have, as Pierre Keller notes, the ‘ability to create things out of nothing. We can only have thoughts and perform actions in relation to information that is somehow given to us.’ (Pierre Keller *Kant and the demands of self-consciousness* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p158)
where he appears to suggest a more stringent requirement for the possibility of self-consciousness and seemingly a definite requirement for the manifold beyond its mere temporal form. In §16 of the B deduction he states that the ‘I think must be able to accompany all my representations’ (B131). However, the problem with such a strong statement is that it appears to set a universal requirement for the empirically determined content of the manifold. The question that remains unanswered from the weak view is how it is possible to represent the manifold under the categories if we must assume that all possible empirically determined content in a manifold must stand under a rule. My own argument from the preceding chapter provides an obvious answer to this question, but it is not the only answer we can give. There are two possibilities: either the faculty of representation determines the possibility of subsuming the manifold under a concept or the manifold is given in a manner suitable to synthesis. I argue that the latter is the better option and for two main reasons: firstly, it fits more easily with the ideas of synthesis, combination, the application of a concept, and the subsumption of the manifold, as well as the general and transcendental nature of Kant’s argument; secondly, for the subject to impose an order on the empirically determined content it receives dislocates what we represent, not only from the nature of the empirical manifold itself, but also from the metaphysically real object that produced it in us. I think the second point is too much to concede in a theory of sensible cognition that seemingly places so much emphasis on the empirically determined ‘matter’ of cognition.

Section I: The weak view of original synthesis

In order to understand what the categories bring to the manifold, or the sense in which we must think that they bring something to the manifold, we must understand why Kant thinks we need a function of the understanding in the first place. Or to put it another way, in what way is the function of sensibility thought by Kant to be insufficient for cognition? And why should we think that through sense alone we can never know or comprehend anything at all? To start with, that he makes a distinction between sensibility and the understanding asserts that the kind of self-conscious recognition that we call cognition of nature cannot be provided by sensibility alone. But to understand why Kant makes the distinction between the faculties and why he opts for a two-faculty model we need to understand why he thinks that no cognition can take place in sensibility or simply insofar as we are affected. I think he opts for the two-faculty model because he views the function of sensibility as passive receptivity and consequently as a faculty that does not represent by means of concepts. Because sensibility
does not represent by way of concepts, Kant is aware that through sensibility we can never
differentiate and recognise anything. Instead, he is clear that the capacity to differentiate and
recognise requires us to bring the representations of sensibility under a concept. Thus, for the
possibility of our comprehending anything, there must be a further faculty of representation
that allows us to differentiate and recognise features of representation: this faculty is the
understanding and it represents the manifold of sensibility under a concept by way of an act
that Kant calls synthesis. To make clear just what it is we need from concepts, I think we need
only consider that recognition is only possible for us if we are able to differentiate the
properties of the manifold in the sense that we can recognise what they are. In other words,
Kant is saying it is absurd to suggest I can comprehend and recognise anything without at the
same time knowing what it is.

In truth, the role that concepts play in the possibility of recognising the manifold as
something is more complex than the simple capacity to differentiate and recognise what
something is. Concepts are fundamental for the comprehension of the manifold, for without
them I would not have been able to represent the manifold as something. But, when I
represent through concepts in an act of synthesis, Kant says I bring the manifold to the unity
of self-conscious awareness, which is possible only if I can bring the manifold under a
concept in the combination of the manifold in consciousness. For only if I can represent the
manifold and represent it in one consciousness is it possible that I represent it in relation to
the identity of my own self. I can therefore have no representation and recognition of the
given manifold without it at the same time being something for me. If we think that we can
cognise through sense alone we ignore a fundamental feature of the understanding and the
role that concepts play in the possibility of comprehending the manifold as something. This is
why he says that we cannot represent the combination of the manifold without having
combined it ourselves (B130) and why he says at A125:

Thus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we
call nature, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of
our mind, had not originally put it there.

But it is important to make clear that Kant is at the same time saying the use of concepts is
what makes self-consciousness possible. Consider the following passage where he
demonstrates the need for a concept in representation:

Thus the mere form of outer sensible intuition, space, is not yet cognition at all; it only
gives the manifold of intuition a priori for a possible cognition. But in order to
cognise something in space, e.g., a line, I must draw it, and thus synthetically bring about a determinate combination of the given manifold, so that the unity of this action is at the same time the unity of consciousness (in the concept of a line), and thereby is an object (a determinate space) first cognised. (B137-8)

It is easy to suppose that the example of drawing a line demonstrates Kant’s belief that there is a need for combination and that the manifold is not yet cognition until it is combined: so, in order to represent the line I must combine and thus hold together all parts of the line in a single unified representation. For if I did not hold together in a single representation all parts of the line, then I could not be said to represent the line (the whole) at all. But the B137-8 passage is not dealing with the mere reproduction of the manifold: instead, Kant is saying, not only that I must combine, but that I can only bring about the combination and representation of the line through a concept. More importantly, without the determinate combination of the manifold through a concept, that he believes at the same time represents the unity of consciousness, this combination is ‘not yet cognition at all’. Here Kant uses the idea of drawing a line as an example of how the combination of the manifold through a concept must at the same time represent the unity of consciousness. But while a unity of consciousness may be possible through the determinate combination and representation of the line – a combination made possible by the concept of a line – we must remember that Kant is not asking after the possibility of this or that unified representation and accompanying unity of consciousness. Rather, he is asking after the unity of consciousness in general. Yet, in the same way that the concept of a line underlies the possible combination and representation of the line in one consciousness, Kant is saying that there must be a concept(s) that underlies the possible combination and representation of the manifold in general and through which makes the unity of consciousness in general possible.

The nature of the manifold stands outside of this condition, for the necessity of a concept underlying combination in general makes a statement only about the role of a concept in the possible representation and comprehension of the manifold. To represent a manifold at all – as something for me – I must represent it under a concept. So, even if I was able to determine that there was some kind of unity in the manifold in advance of synthesis, Kant’s argument (if sound) would remind us that mere unity in the manifold of sensibility is insufficient for cognition. And not only because we could not recognise what it is, but because without the representation of a concept we would not be able to bring it to the unity of self-consciousness and thus it would be nothing for me. It will always remain for Kant necessary that we combine the representations in the manifold ‘in one consciousness,’ or, as
he also says, to add one representation to the others and be conscious of their synthesis. Yet whenever we represent the manifold it is to ‘subsume’ the manifold under a concept and always this is just what it means for us to combine the manifold in consciousness.

Kant’s idea of the function of the understanding assumes that knowledge requires the subject to recognise the manifold under a concept or description. He therefore implicitly rejects the idea of cognition through mere receptivity where it is conceived as nothing more than ‘intuitive knowledge’. Such ‘knowledge’ would not be possible for Kant because it can never stand in relation to the identity of the self; it can be, in other words, nothing for me if I do not at the same time represent my own self and relate nature in general to my point of view. Immediately, therefore, we have a clear sense in which the ‘undetermined’ nature of the manifold in sensibility is really only due to the lack of comprehension from us. All that Kant means to say, when he states that the manifold or appearance in sensibility is ‘undetermined,’ is that we do not represent what the manifold is or that in sensibility we do not represent the manifold in a combination in consciousness. In other words, the ‘undetermined’ manifold of sensibility is nothing for us. Consequently, careful attention must be given to the manner in which we attribute unity to the manifold in sensibility. For Kant is saying that the manifold is ordered, regular or unified only when it is thought in relation to the understanding (in relation, that is, to the unity of self-consciousness). However, the order in relation to the understanding is an order for us; and, I believe, it is quite possible that the manifold is ordered independently of any relation to the understanding. But in order to be clear, I would not like to say that the representation in sensibility is indistinct and is yet made distinct through the activity of the understanding, for an ‘indistinct’ representation suggests that there is something to the representation in sensibility, even though it is not quite clear enough for us to discern. Instead, Kant says that there is nothing at all to discern in sensibility, or anything that might even come close to being discerned; for we can only discern anything when it is something for me, i.e., when it is represented in a combination under a concept in consciousness. 51

---

50 ‘The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called appearance.’ (A20/B34) An object is ‘determined,’ i.e., becomes something for us, only by way of a concept through which it is brought to the unity of self-consciousness.

51 I would hesitate to follow Béatrice Longuenesse’s use of ‘indistinct’ in the following passage in case I misrepresent the relationship that Kant depicts between sensibility and the understanding or suggest that he thinks in sensibility we do have some sense, apprehension or ‘intuitive knowledge’ of the manifold in sensibility alone. She writes: ‘The previous analyses lead me to characterise Kant’s claim about judgment as follows. The primary function of the combination of concepts in a judgment is to reflect in discursive form a synthetic unity first present in the sensible given in a form that is intuitive, continuous, indistinct.’ (Béatrice Longuenesse Kant and the Capacity to Judge, p73) At a very basic level Leibniz appears to state that recognition is possible without concepts and, as he writes in the Discourse on Metaphysics, even ‘without being able to say in what its differentiae or properties consist’. (G. W. Leibniz Discourse on Metaphysics Translated by Peter G. Lucas and
By drawing a distinction between two faculties of representation, Kant is able to present an idea of synthesis that involves a distinction between a mere modification of sense and the thought through synthesis of that modification and what it represents. Given the function of sensibility, the representations of this faculty can never represent anything for us and never represent the combination of the manifold in consciousness. The manifold may be a multiplicity, but as such it merely contains the content as it arises in sensibility and represents for us no recognition of the sequence and order it takes up in the manifold. I think Kant would agree that we cannot say what that multiplicity is until we represent it in one consciousness, so until then the manifold is as good as nothing for us and really should not be called an order, regularity or unity at all. Even so, I think there is still room for the conclusion I made in the preceding chapter. For it remains necessary that there is something in the manifold in advance of synthesis which makes the representation of the manifold in synthesis possible – if this is to be called an order, regularity or unity of the manifold in sensibility, then I think we should be cautious and think of it only as an intrinsic interconnectedness between the variations in the manifold. This intrinsic interconnectedness assumes no self-conscious recognition or comprehension of the manifold, but as the example of the face displayed in the preceding chapter, what this interconnectedness amounts to is immensely difficult to express, and perhaps it should not be expressed at all, for that would seemingly assume some form of conceptualisation and thus the activity of the understanding.

I have already noted\(^\text{52}\) that I think Henry Allison is reading Kant along the right lines when he says an act of synthesis is for us to ‘recognise’ the manifold ‘in terms of’ what Allison calls ‘some general description’\(^\text{53}\) or, as he also puts it, an act of ‘taking as’.\(^\text{54}\) But when we say we recognise what the manifold is, what do we recognise and represent the

---

\(^{52}\) Leslie Grint; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961, §XXIV, p41.) The Discourse on Metaphysics was never available to Kant, but Robert McRae notes that the Discourse, or at least the passage relevant to ‘intuitive knowledge,’ is a restatement of what is found in the Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas and the New Essays on Human Understanding, which were both available to Kant. (See Robert McRae Leibniz: Perception, Apperception, and Thought Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976, p71)) ‘Intuitive knowledge,’ at times appears for Leibniz to be knowledge without understanding and concepts. With such ‘knowledge’ Leibniz is not claiming that sensibility has a function of understanding, but it is, nevertheless, unclear whether Leibniz has a clear idea of what such knowledge is like if it does not involve concepts. There is not always agreement in the literature over the precise nature of Kant’s objection to Leibniz’s account of cognition, and it may simply have been on the grounds of the impossibility Kant would perceive for ‘intuitive knowledge’. Even so, no matter what this objection amounts to, Kant still would have rejected any suggestion that ‘intuitive knowledge’ is cognition of anything, for he firmly believes that knowledge requires that we recognise the manifold under a concept. He may not have read Leibniz’s view as an attempt to give sensibility a function of understanding, but if Leibniz did believe sensibility had the capacity to recognise it would be an error in Kant’s eyes. The crux of the argument is that mere receptivity and a form of cognition conceived as nothing more than ‘intuitive knowledge’ cannot be brought under a concept in consciousness and be something for me.

\(^{53}\) See p37n above.

\(^{54}\) Henry E. Allison ‘Kant’s Refutation of Materialism’, p192

\(^{54}\) ibid., p193
manifold as, especially when we take all the categories together? The short answer is ‘nature’ – recall what Kant says at A125: ‘we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them we call nature’. But what, we may ask, does he mean by ‘nature’? The concept of nature in general gets its outline in the Analytic of Principles, which follows the deduction of the categories, and only here do we really come to understand just what Kant thinks takes place in the determination of the manifold. Overall, the determination of the manifold is where time truly becomes a form of nature, for only then can the manifold (time) be represented as something within which objects exist or persist, interact and co-exist with other objects. As I understand Kant, the categories are deemed necessary for only if we use them to represent time as the possible form of things persisting, succeeding and interacting can we possibly represent an object or world of objects at all, and only then do we truly represent an object as something in time. The Analytic of Principles and the outline of the transcendental time-determination it contains also allows us to see that Kant’s statement of necessity goes beyond the ground of the unity of combination in consciousness to the necessity of representing ourselves standing in a relation to an object in time. For only by representing my own self in relation to an object in time does my understanding ever stand in a general relation of ‘significance’ to an object and do I determine my own existence in time. In §25 of the B deduction Kant curiously seems to state an awareness of myself as an intellectual being or an intelligence when he acknowledges an awareness of my own self as spontaneous, a ‘spontaneity of which alone I am conscious’ (B157n), and at times he may refer by the ‘I think’ to this intelligence. Nevertheless, it also appears fundamental to how he views the possibility of my representing an object in time that the act of representing brings about the ‘determination of my existence, [which] can only occur in correspondence with the form of inner sense … and I therefore have no cognition of myself as I am, but only as I appear to myself.’ (B157-8) What I take the result to be is that the representation of nature is in general a unified representation of subject and object. Consequently, accompanying every representation of an object is the representation of my own self and it is the determination of the manifold by way of the categories that makes this representation in general possible.

I think it is also right that we consider this determination of the manifold as a feature of what Kant meant by the original ground of representation: the possible ‘significance’, i.e., the possibility of my understanding being in a relation of significance to an object, is merely a feature of how I represent and is something that arises only when I represent in the manner that the faculty of representation (of necessity) dictates. But such an object, and the representation of its relation to my own self, could not possibly be found in the representation
of sensibility, for it arises only through the application of the categories to the manifold. It is, then, only in the Analytic of Principles that we understand in what way Kant thinks it is right to say we bring nature to the manifold. As I read Kant, when we subsume the temporal manifold under the categories we represent an object in time and represent the necessity of the succession of the manifold or successively apprehend it (i.e., we see the passage of time through the relation of things to time). In doing so we represent an object as persisting in or through time, whether changed or not, and in this representation of the succession of the manifold we can see that the succession itself follows a rule. In other words, it is only if we combine the manifold of intuition in general as a form within which there can be objects that persist and succeed one another in time that we ever represent and comprehend the manifold as nature at all. Moreover, in Kant’s view, the unity we comprehend can only arise through the synthesis or combination that we effect by representing the manifold under the categories. And, if this form of representation is necessary, we seemingly have no choice but to see the act and its form as the original ground of the comprehension of the manifold.\(^{55}\)

Here, then, from Kant is a statement of how I must conceive of nature if I am to represent it; the statement comes in the form of a transcendental condition for the activity of the understanding in general: quite simply, this is how the understanding must function if it is ever to provide for the comprehension of the manifold. If ever we are to represent a manifold it is as nature, as a world of objects in time, and to represent the necessity of our successive representation of it – for only by representing its necessity (that the manifold could not have been otherwise) could we comprehend an event, i.e., something that happened. We could not do this if the manifold could have been otherwise than we represented it to be. But this is really as much as Kant can say – he is restricted in his transcendental inquiry to a statement of the transcendental function of the understanding and thus an outline of what it is for the understanding to combine, subsume or apply a concept to the manifold in general. What happens in general when we apply the categories is that we represent the manifold under a

\(^{55}\) Kant writes variously of ‘the determination of the inner sense’ (A142/B181), ‘a determination of time’ (A210/B255), ‘determined in time’ (B275), and frequently, of ‘time-determination’ which inevitably causes some confusion. But we should not mistake what Kant is saying here; for he is not suggesting that we apply the categories and determine time alone. Rather, as this is a transcendental inquiry setting out the transcendental conditions of representation, and thus all that we can determine a priori, he can only be outlining the form that the determination of the manifold must take in general. Kant is not saying we determine time in general; but instead, by stating the necessity of the transcendental determination of time, or that we must determine objects in time, he is in fact only outlining the general nature that the determination of the manifold must take, i.e., how we must in general represent the manifold if it is to represent nature for us. In which case, what Kant means by the representation of the (temporal) manifold under the ‘general description’ (defined by the categories as a whole) is the representation of nature in general. The transcendental function of the understanding, therefore, is an act of synthesis where we take the manifold as nature or a world. It is the way in which (the only way for Kant) we can comprehend the manifold and when we do comprehend it we represent and recognise it as nature or a world of objects.
concept, which, as the Analytic of Principles displays, amounts to a determination of time as nature. If Kant is right in how the categories function in their application to the manifold and that only by these means can we represent an object in time, then he truly would have displayed their necessity or, as I said previously, their indispensable use in the comprehension of nature.

As I have approached Kant in this section it has been for the purpose of stating that the necessity of the categories has only to do with the possibility of our comprehension of nature in general; in other words, the categories are necessary because of what they allow us to represent (in general), i.e., the unity of the self and the unity of a manifold that we can comprehend as nature or a world of objects. Thus, to think, as I have done in the preceding chapter, about what intuition must be like in order that a concept may apply to it misses the nature of Kant’s argument. Instead, in the weak view we can see that Kant is intent only on outlining the function of the understanding as a basic capacity to represent or comprehend a manifold by subsuming it under the categories. In which case, he simply outlines the necessity of the application of the categories for a possible comprehension of a manifold (a claim that stands independently of what the manifold itself may be like). In this way, the categories truly do present the original ground of cognition as the ground of a possible comprehension of the manifold, for as Kant says it is only when we represent the manifold under the categories that there is anything (an object, world, nature) for us at all. The categories therefore stand as the original ground of the comprehension of nature and, more importantly, nature itself arises for us only on the condition that we represent the manifold under the categories. Overall, the weak view states that the function of the understanding is to bring the manifold to consciousness, or to comprehend it, and that the understanding can only do this if it represents or subsumes the manifold under the categories. Their necessity does not immediately imply that their form is imposed on the manifold or that the unity they define is only found in us. Instead, the necessity of the categories refers only to their role in a possible cognition of nature and that only by thinking the manifold through the general form by which we can only determine (or subsume) the manifold is it possible that I see the manifold as something. By ‘object’ we should understand Kant to mean an object of cognition, so evidently something that arises only in our cognition (representation) of it – if, at times, he writes of an ‘undetermined’ object he merely means that we have not taken up the manifold, appearance, or object in one consciousness in an act of synthesis, meaning that it can be nothing for us. Thereby, we are in a position to say, like Kant himself does, that the categories and the
activity of the understanding ‘first and originally makes experience possible as far as its form is concerned.’ (A128)

In relation to the wider argument of the thesis, I believe the weak view is consistent with my argument from the preceding chapter where I stated that the manifold is ordered in harmony with the rules of synthesis and only if it is ordered in this way is synthesis in fact possible. I am able to claim consistency between the respective arguments because of the general and transcendental nature of Kant’s inquiry, within which any claim that the manifold of intuition is not or cannot be a unity really only amounts to a matter relating to the respective functions of the cognitive faculties and the possibility of comprehending the manifold as unified. Moreover, if I am right in stating Kant’s argument as the weak view – to state only the necessity of representing the manifold under a concept – then we will be able to find a clear sense in which synthesis and its order can be called original, yet also maintain that the manifold is already ordered in advance of synthesis.

**Section II: Two objections to the strong view of original synthesis**

In Section I, I developed a reading of synthesis based on the use we make of concepts in the act of comprehending the manifold and stated a preference for the weak view, where Kant is intent only on outlining the function of the understanding as a basic capacity to represent or comprehend a manifold by subsuming it under the categories. In other words, I believe he simply outlines the necessity of the application of the categories for a possible comprehension of a manifold and makes no claim about the manifold itself. In this section, I expand upon the reading I developed in Section I and give further reason to support it as Kant’s view through a close examination of the text, particularly B163-5. I continue to maintain on the basis of the text that the strong view does not sit well with the idea of synthesis or combination as the application of a concept to intuition or the subsumption of the manifold under a concept; and, moreover, the strong view does not seem suitable to the general and transcendental nature of Kant’s argument. I then go on to argue that the most suitable reading that allows for a connection to the metaphysical world is the weak view. Indeed, the strong view only succeeds in dislocating representation from the metaphysical world that produces it in us. The idea that we impose our form of representation on the manifold leads to the position where the relations we represent between the contents of the manifold have nothing to do with the metaphysical things that produced the contents in the first place. I argue that this is too much
to lose for a supposedly sensible cognition and for the possibility of calling our representations real.

Despite my overall objection to the strong view and my preference for the weak, I think there is still a little way to go before it is fully clear just what Kant himself intended. To begin with in this section I look to assess whether it is realistic to suppose that he proposed a view of sensible cognition where the categories can apply with necessity to the empirical manifold because the faculty of representation imposes its form on the manifold. In other words, does the text of the _Critique_ realistically support the strong view? For anyone intent on taking this proposal seriously it is incumbent upon them to discuss certain passages, such as A125 (cited previously) or this one from B129-30:

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

Consider too:

I must abstract from the way in which the manifold for an empirical intuition is given, in order to attend only to the unity that is added to the intuition through the understanding by means of the category. (B144)

The understanding therefore does not find some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but produces it, by affecting inner sense. (B155)

While I have already given an alternative reading of originality and the idea that we bring nature to the manifold, which would apply in equal measure to each of these passages, I would like again to defend the weak view in a critique of the strong. One consideration that favours the weak view is that none of these passages should be read in isolation from the surrounding argument. By contrast, however, a difficulty for the weak view could be the theme Kant sets for the deduction in the preamble – A92-3/B124-5 – where he indicates his commitment will be to a view in which representation makes the object possible. Here too he
states that representation is the determinant of the object a priori, because it is only through an a priori determination that the cognition of an object is possible at all. The theme is implicit to both the A and B deductions, but is given a more explicit reminder at the end of the B edition deduction:

Now there are only two ways in which a necessary agreement of experience with the concepts of its objects can be thought: either the experience makes the concepts possible or these concepts make the experience possible. The first is not the case with the categories (nor with pure sensible intuition); for they are a priori concepts, hence independent of experience (the assertion of an empirical origin would be a sort of generatio aequivoca). Consequently only the second way remains (as it were a system of the epigenesis of pure reason): namely that the categories contain the grounds of the possibility of all experience in general from the side of the understanding. (B166-7)

Another passage that is helpful in any attempt to understand what Kant says here in §27, and his argument in the deduction more generally, is found immediately preceding it in the second starred section of §26, running from B163-5. The B163-5 passage as a whole is helpful for an assessment of the strong view and for some might appear quite suggestive of Kant’s adherence to it. Consider the following from B164:

For laws exist just a little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding, [just] as appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being, insofar as it has senses.

The passage cited, and the section B163-5 from which it is taken, are a reminder that in cognition we are, for Kant, dealing only with representation. However, because we are dealing only with representation, he is able to say the nature of what we represent is subject only to the rules of representation and cannot be subject to the ‘lawfulness of things in themselves’ (B164). I think we should put Kant’s position as follows: the only lawfulness of an object for the understanding is the lawfulness by means of which the object can be an object for that understanding in general. Thus, he says, that object can only fall under the laws that the understanding itself ‘prescribes’ (B163). The B163 passage starts, though, with a ‘riddle’:

Categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances, thus to nature as the sum total of all appearances (natura materialiter spectata), and, since they are not derived from nature and do not follow it as their pattern (for they would otherwise be merely empirical), the question now arises how it is to be conceived that nature must follow them, i.e., how they can determine a priori the combination of the manifold of nature without deriving from the latter. (B163)
In response, Kant writes:

It is by no means stranger that the laws of appearances of nature must agree with the understanding and its a priori form, i.e., its faculty of combining the manifold in general, than that the appearances themselves must agree with the form of sensible intuition a priori. For laws exist just a little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding, [just] as appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being, insofar as it has senses. The lawfulness of things in themselves would necessarily pertain to them even without an understanding that cognises them. But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves. As mere representations, however, they stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes. (B164)

He then proceeds to state that ‘all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories’ (B165) before clarifying that the categories merely relate to ‘nature in general,’ so while they cannot be said to govern any particular empirical determination, all particular laws will nevertheless ‘stand under them [the categories].’ (B165)

Kant’s response is roughly as we should expect and to some extent a sensible approach to the ‘riddle’. If, in cognition, we deal only with appearance or representation, then he is quite right to say what we represent will have a nature and form determined by the nature of the faculties of representation – i.e., sensibility and the understanding. Moreover, given that he says we only have the capacity to represent an object, the object that I do represent can only stand under the laws by means of which I am able to represent anything at all. Thus, it appears quite right for Kant to declare that the laws of appearance must in general agree with the understanding and its a priori form. Still, as Kant himself indicates, this is only to state the necessity of the application to representation.

Of the two major concerns I have with B163-5, the first relates to the restriction, not only of the prescription to representation, but the restriction to representation in the ‘riddle’ itself. In a sense I do not believe that Kant answers the riddle he sets, because the riddle appears to be based on a form of criticism that was frequently levelled at Kant by his contemporaries, but would also have been a question that detained his predecessors more generally. However, their criticism of Kant is likely prefaced by an assumption: that nature is distinct from the concepts we use to represent and understand nature. So, on the basis of the assumption – i.e., that nature is transcendently real – I think they would be asking Kant on what grounds can concepts, which belong or have their origin in the faculty of representation, ‘prescribe’ anything to something distinct from the faculty of representation? Kant, of course,
denies the distinction between representation and nature, for he says what we call nature arises only in our representation of it. That nature arises (for us) in this way, through our representation of it, I have agreed with already in Section I. However, I agree only on the basis that the originality of nature relates to the comprehension of nature alone. The ‘riddle’ and the question that detained Kant’s predecessors still has an application in something close to its original form, for there is no clear sense in which the form of representation can have an application to something that is empirically determined, i.e., determined by something other than the faculty of representation. The problem is that, if we do not answer the question in a manner close to the methods adopted by his predecessors, instead stating that the faculty of representation prescribes to representation, then I think it closes the door on the connection of representation to the metaphysical world. I believe that for the subject to impose an order on the empirically determined content it receives has dire consequences for the reality of representation and we open up a gap between representation and the metaphysical world that produces the empirical manifold of cognition. I think this is too much to concede in a theory of sensible cognition that seemingly places so much emphasis on the empirically determined ‘matter’ of cognition.

The second concern is, instead of B163-5 suggesting that the understanding imposes a form on the manifold, that the nature of sensibility (or perhaps the imagination) determines the possibility that the understanding can prescribe laws to the manifold. The concern relates to what Kant means by ‘representation’ when he states that as such a representation would ‘stand under no law of connection at all except that which the connecting faculty prescribes.’ (B164) If ‘representation’ refers only to the manifold in sensibility in general, then Kant may simply be presupposing something about the function of sensibility that allows the understanding to prescribe laws. But if this is Kant’s intention, instead of providing an example of the strong view, B163-5 merely provides an example of the general nature of Kant’s argument. For the only sense in which the manifold in sensibility could be in harmony with the pure concepts of the understanding is with regard to its sensible form – nothing more can be said of the function of sensibility, for that is all that sensibility can determine of the manifold a priori.

The only point through B163-5 where Kant comes close to the strong view is most likely at the end where he appears to confirm what was said in §16; here at B165 he again states that the empirically determined appearances will all stand under the categories:

The pure faculty of understanding does not suffice, however, to prescribe to appearances through mere categories a priori laws beyond which rests a nature in
general, as lawfulness of appearances in space and time. Particular laws, because they concern empirically determined appearances, cannot be completely derived from the categories, although they all stand under them. Experience must be added in order to come to know particular laws at all; but about experience in general, and about what can be cognised as an object of experience, only those a priori laws offer instruction. (B165)

Here Kant admits that a particular law is determined both by the categories and empirically by the metaphysical world. Yet whatever the empirical determination that makes the particular laws possible, they must all fall under the laws of experience in general. In other words, Kant states that the empirically determined appearances – experience – in general stand under the a priori laws of the understanding (the categories). But how can something that is empirically determined be subject to a necessary rule that has its origin in the activity of the understanding and cannot be derived from the empirically given? To understand just how this is possible we must first start with conformity to sensibility and remind ourselves from the passage at B164 that appearance ‘must agree with the form of sensible intuition a priori.’ In addition, from Kant’s argument in the Aesthetic, we should remember that it is in virtue of being received that the representations of sensibility are sensible in form, meaning that even while the affection of sensibility is an empirical determination the empirical determination must have a necessary a priori sensible form. A particular representation in the manifold of sensibility is determined both empirically, by the metaphysical world, and a priori, by the receptivity of sensibility. But in all possible cases, the representation will be sensible in form – so, no matter what the empirical determination, it will always, as it were, fall under the a priori form of sensibility. 56 Given the receptive nature of the function of sensibility, Kant is fully justified in stating that the particular representation falls under the a priori form of receptivity, but he seemingly also makes the further claim that any empirical representation will fall under the laws of the understanding as well. However, I do not believe this is what Kant intends to say at B165. The clue to his intention is found in what comes before it:

Now that which connects the manifold of sensible intuition is imagination, which depends on the understanding for the unity of its intellectual synthesis and on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension. Now since all possible perception depends on the synthesis of apprehension, but the latter itself, this empirical synthesis, depends on the transcendental one, thus on the categories, all possible perceptions, hence everything that can ever reach empirical consciousness, i.e., all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories, on which

56 I assume this is what Kant means by ‘original receptivity’ (A100).
nature (considered merely as nature in general) depends, as the original ground of its necessary lawfulness (as *natura formaliter spectata*57). (B164-5)

This passage indicates that Kant is foremost concerned with the form that nature will take in our cognition of it and gives a reminder that an empirical synthesis presupposes an a priori one. So, synthesis in general, and therefore all empirical cognition, must have a transcendental ground. In which case, all particulars must stand under the categories, though only because that is the very condition of representing anything at all. The only other possibility from the evidence of the B163-5 passage would be to suggest that Kant believes it is unproblematic, for a concept will have application to the manifold simply in virtue of its temporal form. But I do not think we can possibly say that a pure concept has a necessary application to the empirical manifold solely on account of its temporal form. Consider a passage from the introduction to the Analytic of Principles where Kant makes reference to the conditions under which an object (in general) may be in harmony with the pure concepts of the understanding. With the passage, he notes a ‘peculiar thing about transcendental philosophy’ (A135/B174):

that in addition to the rule (or rather the general condition for rules), which is given in the pure concept of the understanding, it can at the same time indicate *a priori* the case to which the rules ought to be applied. The cause of the advantage that it has in this regard over all other didactic sciences (except for mathematics) lies just here: that it deals with concepts that are to be related to their objects *a priori*, hence its objective validity cannot be established *a posteriori*, for that would leave that dignity of theirs entirely untouched; rather it must at the same time offer a general but sufficient characterisation of the conditions under which objects in harmony with those concepts can be given, for otherwise they would be without all content, and thus would be mere logical forms and not pure concepts of the understanding. (A135-6/B175)

In what follows Kant offers a general characterisation of the means by which a pure concept can have an application to the temporal manifold; he says the application is possible by way of the transcendental schema. The transcendental schema, however, as a *transcendental* ‘time-determination,’ provides a characterisation for the conditions under which the pure concepts can have application *merely* to the manifold in general. But if the transcendental application of the pure concept to the manifold in general (i.e., to time) is the *sufficient* [my emphasis] characterisation of the conditions under which objects in harmony with those objects can be given,’ are we assuming that the categories have an application to the empirical manifold and can represent the empirically given content in the manifold solely on account of its

57 Guyer/Wood, editors’ note: “‘Nature formally regarded,’” i.e., nature considered with regard to its form rather than its matter.”
representation in a temporal form? I think we must assume this. However, if Kant’s reference here to a *sufficient* condition is also supposed to cover the representation of the empirical content of the manifold, then I think he is mistaken, for that would appear to assume the empirical content can be brought under a pure concept and determined by the transcendental schema solely on account of its temporal form. If we were to allow this, and state the only significant feature of the manifold required for the application of a concept is its temporal form, then seemingly we would be able to apply any concept whatsoever to that manifold so long as it is temporal in form. In that case, and irrespective of what other features there may be in the manifold, I think Kant would be committed to saying that any concept, so long as it is temporal in form, can provide us with a representation (i.e., comprehension, a ‘taking as’) of that empirical manifold. In my view, however, and because of these difficulties, I think we should instead see that Kant’s argument is of a transcendental nature. In which case, if he is only presenting an outline of the nature of the application of pure concept to the manifold in general, then he makes no claim at all that the pure concepts can have application to the empirical manifold solely on account of its temporal form.

As I read Kant, the reference at B164-5 to imagination and its role in making the connection between sensibility and the understanding lays the ground for what comes in the Analytic of Principles and specifically the Schematism. It is, he says, the transcendental schema – which is ‘always only a product of the imagination’ (A140/B179) – that is required to mediate between the (intellectual) pure concept and the (sensible) manifold of intuition and ultimately determines the manifold.

After what has been shown in the deduction of the categories, hopefully no one will be in doubt about how to decide the question, whether these pure concepts of the understanding are of merely empirical or also transcendental use, i.e., whether, as conditions of a possible experience, they relate *a priori* solely to appearances, or whether, as conditions of the possibility of things in general they can be extended to objects in themselves (without any restriction to our sensibility). For we have seen there that concepts are entirely impossible, and cannot have any significance, where an object is not given either for them themselves or at least for the elements of which they consist, consequently they cannot pertain to things in themselves (without regard to how and whether they may be given to us) at all; that, further, the modification of our sensibility is the only way in which objects are given to us; and finally, that pure concepts *a priori*, in addition to the function of the understanding in the category, must also contain *a priori* formal conditions of sensibility (namely of inner sense) that contain the general condition under which alone the category can be applied to any object. (A139-40/B178-9)\(^{58}\)

---

\(^{58}\) See also A145-6/B185: ‘the schemata of the concepts of pure understanding are the true and sole conditions for providing them [the pure concepts] with a relation to objects, thus with significance …’
I think this passage indicates the ground upon which Kant believes the application of pure concept to the empirically given manifold of intuition is in general possible. The application is possible only if the category has some form of possible application to the manifold in general, i.e., to the form of inner sense, time. For Kant, the concept must be sensible and in that way alone does it stand as the general condition of applying to any possible object. If I am right to state this formal condition of the concept as a general condition of our applying a concept to the manifold, then B163-5 seemingly does state that the agreement of concept with appearance is down to an agreement or harmony between the concept and the form of appearance in sensibility. Thus, within the confines of his transcendental inquiry, I think B163-5 is quite possibly an admission that the passive determination of form by sensibility makes the correspondence of intuition to concept in synthesis possible and allows that the understanding can prescribe laws.

Despite some isolated comments, that are in any case open to interpretation, Kant’s outline of synthesis and the application of pure concepts to intuition does not appear to be a statement consistent with a view where the understanding actively imposes its form on the manifold. Moreover, I do not think there is any need for us to think Kant believes the understanding imposes its form on intuition, for the general and transcendental nature of the inquiry indicates that he only intends the correspondence or harmony as an outline of what a concept brings to comprehension in general. Overall the text provides no clear indication that he thinks there is some kind of activity in the understanding that makes the intuition conform to the understanding’s form of representation. All that suggests itself is that the possibility of prescribing laws to representation is in fact predicated on the function of sensibility, thus on the form of inner sense, time. I believe the sensible view to take of B163-5, and of the argument of the deduction more generally, is to read it in conjunction with what he says about the subsumption of the manifold under a concept or rule:

If the understanding in general is explained as the faculty of rules, then the power of judgment is the faculty of subsuming under rules, i.e., of determining whether something stands under a given rule (A132/B171).

In all subsumptions of an object under a concept the representations of the former must be homogeneous with the latter, i.e., the concept must contain that which is represented in the object that is to be subsumed under it, for that is just what is meant by the expression “an object is contained under a concept.” (A137/B176)

In the preceding I have read Kant’s argument in such a way that it does not say anything about the nature of the manifold beyond its general form except to say that, if the manifold is
to be something for me, then it must be represented in a certain way: under a concept, unified in one consciousness and determined in time. In other words, we must represent the manifold as nature if we are to comprehend it at all. But does Kant really stop there in his outline of the transcendental nature and function of the understanding? There is at least one point in Kant's argument in the deduction where he clearly suggests a more stringent requirement for the possibility of self-consciousness and seemingly a definite requirement for the manifold beyond its mere temporal form. In §16 of the B deduction he states that the ‘I think must be able to accompany all my representations,’ (B131) but it is what he means by ‘all my representations’ that is of interest and finds clarification in what follows. Kant goes on to say that it is only possible for me to represent the identity of my own self if I can unite those representations given in intuition in self-consciousness. I must, for the possibility of representing the identity of my own self, be able to bring whatever representations that are given to me in intuition to self-consciousness or to represent them together in one consciousness. He says, if there were representations given in intuition that I could not represent as ‘my representations [where I am ‘conscious of their synthesis’ (B133), then] … I would have as multicoloured, diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious.’ (B134) He then writes:

Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as given a priori, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes a priori all my determinate thinking. (B134)

Here I believe Kant states, not only that it is in principle possible to represent that which is given in intuition for me, but that it is necessary that I can do so, because the very possibility of representing the identity of my own self depends on it. Thus, the categories must have application to all possible representations of sensibility. I think the literature generally assumes that Kant must make reference here to empirically determined representations or that his claim must at least extend to it, even if it was not intended as such. In the preceding chapter I made the same assumption.59 Either way, whether Kant made reference to the empirically determined representation or not, it is necessary that the categories are extended to the empirical manifold; for, if they could not represent the synthesis or combination of the empirically given, then there would be no possibility of representing the identity of the self or,

59 It is also worth considering that Kant says the categories have only an empirical employment, which means for Kant that the categories have their real employment only in relation to the sensible manifold in general: ‘Consequently the categories do not afford us cognition of things by means of intuition except through their possible application to empirical intuition, i.e., they serve only for the possibility of empirical cognition. This, however, is called experience. The categories consequently have no other use for the cognition of things except insofar as these are taken as objects of possible experience.’ (B147-8)
in other words, for the I think to accompany all my representations. Moreover, irrespective of whether Kant states the necessity of a possible application to all given representation, we must ask if this demand can be met and, if so, how it is met. This is a question, not only pertaining to the exegesis of Kant’s argument and his intended meaning for the application of concept to intuition, but a question pertaining to his account of cognition insofar as it is stated to be sensible, i.e., empirically determined by something other than the faculty of representation. I believe we must ask this question of Kant even if we read him only in the weak sense; for as soon as we ask how synthesis is possible in practice we engage with a question of how a pure concept can have an application to the empirically given content of the manifold and not just to the sensible manifold in general.

In trying to answer the question of how the demand can be met I assume two options. In the first instance, we could seek to explain the underlying harmony between the categories and all possible representation by supposing that the faculty of representation itself determines that the manifold is in harmony with the rules of synthesis by imposing its form. The second option is to say the empirically given representation in the manifold is (by some other means) already in harmony with the rules of synthesis and is in harmony independently of any function of the faculty of representation. Up to now I have mainly presented my objection to the strong view (and the first option here) on the basis of my reading of the text and because the weak view fits more easily with the ideas of synthesis, combination, the application of a concept, and the subsumption of the manifold along with the general nature of a transcendental inquiry. Nevertheless, there is a further substantial objection to the strong view and the idea that in synthesis we impose our form on the manifold. If we suppose that there is some (unspecified) manner in which the faculty of representation does impose its form on the manifold, then there is a clear danger that in cognition we become detached from the metaphysically real that produces the empirical content of the manifold. My concern is with the connection, or lack of it, in the strong view between representation and the metaphysical world that produces the ‘matter’ of representation in us. While Kant does not claim that we have knowledge of the metaphysical world in any direct sense, the metaphysical world is nevertheless central to the way in which he accounts for the possibility of sensible cognition.

It is possible to see three steps to Kant’s argument: first, concepts alone do not provide significance (i.e., cognition of an object), so we have to assume an object is given; second,  

\[60\] Perhaps the function of the faculty of representation is like the ‘schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances’: it’s ‘form is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty.’ (A141/B180-1)
‘the modification of our sensibility is the only way in which objects are given to us’
(A139/B178); third, the pure concepts must have a necessary application to the manifold of
intuition, to the given in general; and when we think of Kant’s model in practice, then ‘given’
must also state a relation to the metaphysical object which affects sensibility. On the basis of
affection Kant believed he was able to say that we know things, i.e., metaphysical objects, yet
only as they appear or by way of the representations they (the metaphysical objects) produce
in us. However, if the representation of empirically determined content of the manifold
involves our imposing form upon it, then I think we risk losing all significance from the
connection that the manifold has to the metaphysically real. Moreover, if we lose the
connection it would indeed be strange to say we know (those metaphysically real) things, yet
only as they appear to us or as we represent them.

I do not think Kant is in any position to state anything other than a connection to the
metaphysical world. Thinking again of the possible application of a pure concept to the
manifold, I repeat that it would be a mistake to think that a concept can have an application to
the manifold solely on account of its temporal form. As I have said, this would seemingly
allow for any concept to apply to the manifold so long as it is temporal in nature. However, if
we deny that a concept need only be temporal in form in order to provide us with a
comprehension and determination of the manifold (the determination of an object in time),
then we are saying there is something else (another feature or quality) in the manifold which
determines whether it is possible for a concept to apply or subsume an intuition under a
concept. Nevertheless, to suggest that a feature of the empirically determined manifold makes
subsumption possible is in my view quite a sensible view to take. Moreover, this condition of
the manifold should be obvious when it is considered that not just any manifold could be
represented and determined as an object in time, for instance, in the case of representing a
line, a dog, or for that matter a causal relation between the contents of the manifold. In Kant’s
example of drawing a line in thought he states, in order to comprehend the line, that we
represent all parts of the line together in thought (i.e., reproduce them) and that we represent
all the parts under a concept. But this general requirement for the activity of the cognising
faculty in representing the line does not detract from the additional requirement in the
manifold – i.e., the manifold must contain all those parts already if we are to represent them
together in thought and under a concept. In which case, and however we present Kant’s view,
any reading must take into account that in practice the application of a concept – whether it is
pure or empirical – will be restricted by the nature of the empirically given manifold. Recall
too that the example of the line was representative of the combination of the manifold in
general. So now, where we assume a feature in the manifold that makes the representation of the line possible, so too must we presuppose a feature in the manifold more generally that allows for the application of the pure concepts. My claim is that this condition is not met by the mere form of sensibility in general, meaning the application of a concept is conditional on the nature of the empirically given manifold of intuition and the empirical manifold must be appropriate to the concept if it is to be subsumed under it. There is, in other words, a harmony between those concepts under which we (of necessity) subsume the manifold and the empirically given manifold.

The circumstance where a necessary concept applies to all possible content, over and above its general form of representation, is clearly significant. Moreover, if pure concepts are necessary and have an application to the manifold in general, then, where the manifold must be more than temporal in form for the subsumption of it under a concept, we are in fact stating a general feature of the manifold that is not determined by the faculty of representation. In other words, the general feature of the manifold is determined by the metaphysical world. Attributing the nature of the empirical content of the manifold to the metaphysical world is I think the most appropriate way of reading Kant and it falls neatly in line with the definitions that he provides at the outset of the Aesthetic. It also explains why I have not simply referred to the empirical manifold, but to the empirically given or empirically determined content of the manifold. Nevertheless, aside from the origin of the nature of the empirical, there is another important consideration about the nature of the empirical manifold: if a general feature or quality of the manifold is in harmony with a necessary rule of representation, then the possibility of that rule or concept determining the manifold in time presupposes that the manifold could not have been otherwise than it is. Following the same analysis, it is possible to say that even in the example of the ship in the Second Analogy, it is the nature of the empirically determined manifold which ensures that the sequence is represented as a necessary succession and could not have been otherwise. The application of the concept in fact makes an assumption about the empirical manifold and requires for its possibility that something other than the faculty of representation provides the kind of empirical content of the manifold that we can bring under a necessary rule of succession.

To help explain why a feature of the manifold cannot be otherwise for the possibility of applying a pure concept I think it will be useful to consider the example of a necessary relation, ‘If A then B’. In any particular instance of this representation we are assuming (from the above) that the possibility of determining the manifold under a concept depends upon the empirical features or qualities of the manifold. However, in this case one such feature must be
the relation of A to B in the manifold in advance of synthesis and this relation is necessary. But note that I can only comprehend A if A is in fact a feature of the manifold and comprehend B if B is a feature of the manifold. Similarly, I can only comprehend the succession of the manifold, that B follows A, if B follows A in the empirical manifold itself. What must also be stated is that in order to comprehend the necessity of the succession it is necessary that whenever the empirical manifold presents me with A it must succeed this with a presentation of B and, moreover, not be able to do otherwise. For only if the succession could not have been otherwise will it be possible on all occasions that I represent A followed by B. In other words, because the faculty of representation does not determine when I represent now A, now B or the order they take up in the empirical manifold, the representation of A followed by B as necessary is only possible if on all occasions where A is in the manifold, B is found to follow. As such, the representation of the necessity of the succession presupposes that A followed by B is a general feature of the empirical manifold that could not have been otherwise. As an empirical determination, the necessity of the relation between A and B in the empirical manifold is not a feature of that manifold determined by the faculty of representation. Instead, it can only be an external determination of sensibility by the metaphysical world. I think, if we deny this kind of determination of the empirical manifold by the metaphysical world, then we commit to a view where the events in the world of our representation have little or nothing to do with the metaphysical world. To say anything else makes it very difficult to consider that A and B, and the relation between them, are real, for, in the circumstance where the relation between A and B is imposed on the manifold, it would have nothing to do with the metaphysical world which produced those contents in the manifold to start with.

The most suitable reading that allows for a significant connection to the metaphysical world is the weak view. In contrast, the strong view seems only to result in the dislocation of representation from the metaphysical world that provides us with the ‘matter’ or content of cognition. However, there is a major consequence of siding with the weak view: postulating the requirement of a significant relationship between representation and the metaphysical world makes an assumption about the metaphysical world. For we are, not only stating that the empirical manifold could not have been other than it is for the representation of a necessary succession, but stating that the metaphysical world must be structured in such a way that it can produce just this kind of content in the manifold of sensibility. In the following chapter I argue that the metaphysical world can account for the empirical content of the manifold that is in harmony with the rules of synthesis only if it is isomorphic with the
general nature of representation. I would be quite disconcerted if Kant was unable to
determine how something that is externally determined by the metaphysical world also
conforms to the rules of synthesis. But given the general and transcendental nature of his
inquiry I do not believe that he is concerned to make this kind of connection between the rules
of synthesis and the nature of the empirical manifold. Nevertheless, I think Kant’s limited
cconcern with the possibility of representation in general provides some freedom to explore the
relation of representation to the metaphysical world.

Knowingly or not I believe Kant is implicitly committed to a necessary relation
between the categories and the empirically determined manifold that is not accounted for by
the constant form of receptivity or the understanding. I have argued in this chapter against any
suggestion of the mind imposing its form of representation on the manifold. In addition, I
think the most suitable explanation of the relation of the categories to the empirically
determined manifold is where the manifold is already in harmony with the rules of synthesis.
Moreover, I believe that this feature of the empirically determined manifold is consistent with
Kant’s claim for an original synthesis and that we bring nature to the manifold in the act of
the understanding. It is possible to say this because Kant’s statement of originality I believe
relates only to the distinct functions of sensibility and the understanding; consequently, unity
is original and arises for us only in our comprehension of the manifold. If I am right that the
general nature of Kant’s argument meant he never intended to make any claim about the
empirically determined content of the manifold, then there is a possibility that any statement
of a positive role for the metaphysical object and the empirical content it produces in us
presents no conflict with his view. This is helpful given the line of interpretation I proposed in
Chapter 1 where I suggested that we consider Kant’s endorsement of Locke’s view of sensible
cognition as a good reason for thinking Kant also intended to provide a positive role for the
metaphysical object in his own account of sensible cognition.
Chapter 4: Isomorphism

In Chapters 2 and 3 I argued that synthesis is only possible where the content in the manifold of intuition is in harmony with the rules of synthesis. From Kant’s own clear commitment to sensible experience we also know that the content of the manifold is produced in sensibility when it is affected by the metaphysical world. Thus, the possibility of objective cognition rests on the capacity of the metaphysical world to provide content that we can represent in synthesis and presupposes a harmony of function between the metaphysical world and the cognitive capacities of the subject (both sensibility and the understanding). At the very least, because it is impossible for the subject to provide content for itself, the metaphysical world must function in such a way in interaction with sensibility to produce a manifold of content. However, because there are strict rules for the representation of a manifold (the categories), the metaphysical world must function in conjunction with sensibility to produce, not only content, but content that is suitable for synthesis in accordance with the categories. The purpose of the current chapter is to investigate what the harmony of function might amount to and what a manifold suitable to synthesis presupposes of the metaphysical world.\(^\text{61}\) I argue

\[^{61}\text{A commitment to a harmony of function between the general nature of representation and the metaphysical world is not unheard of in the literature. Edward Caird, for instance, writes: ‘although we are obliged to admit that, from the point of view of the thing in itself as apart from our consciousness, we can see no reason why it should affect us in any special way; and though we cannot, therefore, from this point of view, deny that it might affect us in such a way that we could never bind the sense-data into the unity of distinct perceptions, made up of definite elements standing in definite relations to each other; yet we can indirectly exclude this possibility from the point of view of the knowing mind, when we consider what is necessary for knowledge.’ (Edward Caird The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant Second Edition, Volume 1; Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1909, pp334-5) Caird is saying that whatever the relation our sensibility has to the metaphysical world, Kant is committed to saying that it provides us with content suitable to synthesis. It is the relationship of the metaphysical world to sensibility that is ‘necessary for knowledge,’ for it is the only ground upon which the categories could have application to any and all possible sensible content. Other suggestions of isomorphism and harmony between representation and the metaphysical world can be found, for instance, in Norman Kemp Smith’s discussion of A125: ‘Many points in this strange doctrine [that we bring nature to the manifold] call for consideration. It rests, in the first place, upon the assumption of a hard and fast distinction, very difficult of acceptance, between transcendental and empirical activities of the mind. Secondly, Kant’s assertion, that the empirical manifolds can be relied upon to supply a satisfactory content for the schemata, calls for more adequate justification than he himself adduces. It is upon independent reality that the fixity of empirical co-existences and sequences depends. Is not Kant practically assuming a pre-established harmony in asserting that as the mind creates the form of nature it can legislate a priori for all possible experience?’ (Norman Kemp Smith A Commentary to Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1918, p267) J. N. Findlay also presents the thing in itself with a positive role in making cognition possible: ‘Things in themselves, Kant informs us, must necessarily be bound together by laws of their own (B164), grounded in their own essences. But, as mere presentations, they will have to be subordinated to the laws which our connective faculty prescribes. This faculty is the (Productive) Imagination which depends on the understanding for the unity of its intellectual syntheses, and on sensation for the multiplicity of data that it apprehends. Special laws are not, of course, deducible from the categories: they rest on experience, and must further rest, though Kant does not specially stress the point, on the unknown natures and laws of connection among things in themselves, which must all somehow be translated into our phenomenal arrangements.’ (J. N. Findlay Kant and the Transcendental Object: A Hermeneutic Study Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, p155)\]
that the relationship between representation and the metaphysical world is a form of structural correspondence or isomorphism.

In Section I, I present the main argument in favour of isomorphism. I argue for isomorphism on the basis of two main premises, firstly, that sensibility has a fixed and passive function; and, secondly, that an object can only produce an effect relative to its own nature. On the basis of the first premise, it is possible to say the metaphysical world accounts for any qualitative differences in our representation. On the basis of the second, it is possible to say that the differences in the manifold reflect a difference in the metaphysical world that produced it. But, as I have said, these are not just any qualitative differences. Instead, these qualitative differences, when taken together, must be suitable to synthesis. What I argue is that the metaphysical world can determine a manifold suitable to synthesis only if it is structured in a manner correspondent to these rules. I conclude that a relationship of this kind is the most advantageous for Kant to adopt, particularly if Kant wishes to regard representation as objective and real. This conclusion is in line with the previously stated aim of the thesis to display representationalism as the most appropriate means of reading Kant.62

In the following two sections I turn to an objection: we can never know that the structural correspondence and isomorphic relation is one to one, representation to the metaphysical world. This objection has two sides: in Section II, I deal with the first, where it is considered that we are not receptive to all aspects of the metaphysical world or that the metaphysical world is more than we represent the world of representation to be. While I think we have to admit the possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be, I argue that the very possibility of cognition demands that there are certain restrictions in place for such a circumstance. In which case, I argue that it is still possible to

---

62 A point of clarification: to say there is a structural correspondence between the general features of representation and the general features of the metaphysical world does not mean that each form is the same or even similar. Kant also assumes that in the affectation of sensibility the metaphysical world does not pass over its properties or general form: ‘it is incomprehensible how the intuition of a thing that is present should allow me to cognise it the way it is in itself, since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation’. (Prolegomena 4:282; 34) Kant’s view is I think best expressed by way of analogy with the function of the eye: the eye (retina) is affected by light, but none of the properties of light, nor the properties of those things which light has reflected from, are passed into the eye. The representation produced is of another form entirely, though a correspondence between affecting object and modification of the subject is still to be found. (This correlation between object and modification may need to be qualified with respect to the modern view of colour perception, which indicates no actual correlation. See Evan Thompson, Adrian Palacios, and Francisco J. Varela (‘Ways of Colouring: Comparative Colour Vision as a Case Study for Cognitive Science’ in Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception Edited by Alva Noë and Evan Thompson; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002): ‘there is no mapping from physical stimuli to phenomenal colour space that is sufficient to ground objectivism.’ (p369) Thompson, et al, reject both the objective and subjective (‘internally generated qualities that the animal projects onto the world’ (p396)) approaches to colour perception, opting rather for an ‘enactive’ view where ‘colours are properties of the world that result from animal-environment co-determination’ (pp396-7). This is obviously an empirical concern, and may nevertheless bear no relation to other, possibly a priori, features of cognition.)
maintain an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world. In Section III, I consider the second aspect of the main objection, where the world of our representation is more than the metaphysical world. I admit that this is troublesome for isomorphism, but I am really only concerned to address whether Kant commits to a view where representation is more than the metaphysical world. My attention focuses on the argument from incongruent counterparts in the *Prolegomena* where he argues for the non-reducibility of spatial relations and seemingly leaves us to conclude that the representations of sensibility are something more than the metaphysical world can be. Such a statement, however, I believe misrepresents Kant’s argument in the *Prolegomena* and also runs counter to the idea of a passive sensibility. In addition, the reading of the *Prolegomena* that states representation to be more than the metaphysical world makes a further erroneous assumption: that for Kant the metaphysical world is an intelligible world of objects with intrinsic properties alone that can be known only through pure understanding. Certainly, there are difficulties with the idea of knowing anything through the understanding alone, but the real sticking point for this reading of Kant is that an intrinsic nature is inconsistent with the capacity of the metaphysical world to affect us. Instead, if the metaphysical world is to affect us it must have extrinsic properties, i.e., powers or relations, and I think the most suitable view that incorporates this consideration is again found in Kant’s appeal to Locke.

**Section I: Isomorphism between representation and the metaphysical world**

The proposal of an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world is not always seen in a favourable light or as a valid reading of what Kant himself believed. Ralph Walker, for instance, thinks the proposal of an isomorphic relation is likely inconsistent with some of Kant’s central claims: it is inconsistent with the a priori status of space (and time), and so with the idea that sensibility determines the relation of one object to another; isomorphism would appear to make us responsive to the metaphysical world, which is likely inconsistent with the supposed unknowability of things in themselves; and it is inconsistent with the activity of the mind in cognition and what the activity implies, i.e., that ‘everything we are aware of is simply the product of the mind’s own activity.’\(^6\) Despite these supposed inconsistencies, Walker is to some extent sympathetic to the proposal of isomorphism and his suggestion is that were we to limit the possible functions of sensibility to a single function, it might just

\[^6\] Ralph C. S. Walker ‘Kant on the Number of Worlds,’ p840
sustain a determinate relationship between appearances and things in themselves; and that
determinate relationship will ensure that what is given to us empirically is fixed by the in-
itself, and is not under the arbitrary control of the subject.64

However, such a proposal must stand up to the limitations of our knowledge. Thus, the real
objection to isomorphism is our inability to state the nature of the function of the
metaphysical world in the affection of sensibility. Walker writes:

The nature of the function must lie beyond the limits of possible experience, since it is itself
the determinant of a relationship between what is non-empirical and what is empirically
available.65

In contrast to Walker, I think there is an argument to be found for isomorphism and it is
important that we do try and find it. I find it is important for two reasons: firstly, because I
believe isomorphism is a condition of cognition: for only under the circumstance that the
metaphysical world is isomorphic with the general form of representation in the
understanding can the metaphysical world produce in sensibility a manifold that can be
subsumed under the categories; and, secondly, because an isomorphic relation between
representation and the metaphysical world appears to me to be the only means by which we
can legitimately call representation real. In addition, if we continue to view Kant’s arguments
in the Analytic and the Aesthetic as transcendental in nature – where Kant is concerned most
to outline the form that representation must take if is to be at all possible to represent anything
– then the inconsistencies lose some, if not all, of their weight. I think it is quite possible to
read the a priori status of space and the unknowability of things in themselves in a manner
that is consistent with isomorphism. Moreover, I do so by continuing the theme that I
introduced in Chapter 2, where I stated that correspondence is not only consistent with the
activity of the understanding in synthesis, but is in fact a condition of its possibility.

With my argument for isomorphism I do not seek to reject Walker’s assessment of
what the limits of possible experience mean for Kant. Instead, I build an argument from what
Kant says about the function of sensibility and the relationship between the rules of synthesis
and the manifold in sensibility. From the preceding we know that the possibility of synthesis
or of subsuming the manifold under the categories depends upon a correspondence between
the rules of synthesis and the nature of the manifold. But now the question arises: what
determines that the manifold is in harmony with the categories? As I read Kant, the manifold
is determined by a combination of the function of sensibility (i.e., receptivity) and the

64 ibid.
65 ibid., p841
capacity of the metaphysical world to produce in us content suitable to synthesis. The passive nature of sensibility clearly demands that the function of this faculty provides only the general form of representation and quite simply it represents only what it receives or that which is produced in it. So, if sensibility is passive, then the representation of the manifold relies upon the effect that the metaphysical world has on sensibility. The major step towards a statement of isomorphism comes from the fact that the effect on sensibility must reflect the nature of the metaphysical world. In what follows I defend the proposal that the manifold reflects the metaphysical world, firstly, by examining the nature and function of sensibility and, secondly, by outlining that an object in general can only effect a response relative to its own nature. If I am right to say that the manifold produced by the metaphysical world reflects that world, then, on account of the fact that the manifold can only be subsumed if it is in harmony with the rules of synthesis, it is also possible to say that the metaphysical world is structurally correspondent to the rules of synthesis. But I will only be able to maintain the isomorphic relation between sensibility and the metaphysical world if I can show that the effect of the metaphysical world reflects the nature of that world.

I think we can show that the effect in sensibility reflects the metaphysical world by way of an analogy of sensibility with a mathematical function. In his book on Kant, Adam Dickerson makes use of a mathematical analogy in order to explain the nature of synthesis. I would like to do something similar to explain the function of sensibility – the mathematical function I have in mind is that of a square root. In the analogy, the mathematical function represents the function of sensibility and the distinct properties of the metaphysical world are numbers. To begin with, we can observe that the number the mathematical function generates is a product of both the original number and the nature of the function. But it is possible to say more than this if we assume – like sensibility – that the mathematical function is fixed or ‘constant’. If the general form that the mathematical function allows is simply the representation of a number relative to its function, which in this case is the square root of the original metaphysical number, then the function will represent the square root irrespective of what number the mathematical function is given. The mathematical function determines only that when we are affected that we represent the square root of that which is given. In which case, the number generated in any particular case is determined by the metaphysical number that is originally given. From the fixed nature of the mathematical function we can say, given

66 See A. B. Dickerson Kant on representation and objectivity, p59
67 Certain allowances will need to be made for the fact that I state the nature of the properties of the metaphysical objects (which should be unknowable) and that the qualities of the manifold are also numbers. I do not assume that the properties of the metaphysical world will be the same as the qualities of representation for Kant.
68 In the Aesthetic, Kant says, space is the ‘constant form of this receptivity’ (A27/B43).
the same number, the function will generate the same representation; for instance, whenever the number 9 is given the function will always generate the number 3. Thus, the possibility of variation in the manifold or the possibility of generating a different number presupposes that the original number given to the mathematical function is different. In which case, by way of the analogy, it is possible to say that, for the possibility of variation in representation, there must be variation in the properties of the metaphysical world. For where sensibility is of a fixed nature, and where the metaphysical object or property of the metaphysical world is the same, it means the representation of the manifold will always be the same.

What the analogy also displays is that the metaphysical number can only produce an effect relative to its own nature, because the number represented by the mathematical function is always a determination of the original metaphysical number. For example, mediated by the mathematical function of a square root it is only possible that when the original number is 9, the outcome is 3. And, if we change the metaphysical number, then the number we represent will differ accordingly, i.e., it will differ relative to what the metaphysical number changes to. So, where 9 produces 3, 16 would produce 4 and 25 would produce 5. Whatever the original number, then, the outcome is always a reflection on whatever that original number was. In like manner, for sensibility, what I represent is simply a matter of what the metaphysical world produces in sensibility and where there is variation in the manifold we must assume that this variation is produced by and reflects the distinct properties of the metaphysical objects that produce an effect in sensibility. So, wherever we find qualitatively distinct representations in the manifold of sensibility, these representations will always be made possible by, and reflect, the qualitatively distinct properties of the metaphysical world.

But the determination of the manifold by the metaphysical world does not only determine the nature of the particular qualities we represent. For just as sensibility is passive to what kind of particular qualities it does represent, sensibility is also passive to the particular relation an object or quality has to any other quality or object in the manifold. So, in the analogy, where the mathematical function is presented with a series of metaphysical numbers, say, 9, 25, 16, the mathematical function can only represent the series 3, 5, 4 following the order that the metaphysical numbers are first given to it. If the original order or series of numbers had been different, then the order or series generated would differ accordingly, i.e., it will differ relative to the original number series.

If representation does reflect the nature of the metaphysical world, both for the qualities of representation and the order and relations between them, then we can make the next step in the argument for isomorphism between representation and the metaphysical
world. As I have already stated, for the manifold to be subsumed under the categories, the determination of content in the manifold needs to be more than a simple determination of a diverse manifold. Instead, the possibility of synthesis requires that the qualities and their order determined by the metaphysical world must be an order suitable to the rules of synthesis. In which case, if the nature and order of representation in the manifold is reflective of the nature of the metaphysical world, which has been determined in the mathematical analogy, then the possibility of cognition presupposes that the metaphysical world reflects the rules of synthesis. For on no other basis could the metaphysical world produce content suitable to synthesis. Thus, the metaphysical world is structurally correspondent and isomorphic with the general nature of representation.

In the case of the causal relation, ‘If A then B’, considered in Chapter 3, I have already stated that the representation of the necessity of the relation relies upon a correspondent relation in the manifold. Now, though, we must extend this relationship of correspondence to the metaphysical world and assume, in general, that any representation of change from one moment to the next is in fact a reflection of changes in the metaphysical world itself. In the mathematical function example the ordering of representation in the sequence 3, 5, 4 was entirely due to the ordered sequence of numbers in the metaphysical world, 9, 25, 16. Now, for the casual sequence the determination of the sequence must be equally dependent upon the ordering of the correspondent features in the metaphysical world, i.e., the relation of A* to B*. But, in a causal example, there is an important difference: the sequence is necessary. For when a subject represents ‘If A then B’, the subject not only represents A followed by B and A as the cause of B, but presupposes that when I am given content A, then I must also be given content B. In other words, the possibility of representing ‘If A then B’ not only demands that the metaphysical world provide the content in this order, but further that the content can be represented in a causal relation. In representing a causal relation we are presented with a case where, given content A, we (of necessity) represent B to follow. However, because we do not represent or project the consequent out of ourselves, the representation of the content B is like any content and its order in the manifold, i.e., a product of affection by the metaphysical world. In which case, the necessity of ‘If A then B’ that we find in the given manifold is determined by the metaphysical world. The necessity of ‘If A

69 A* and B* are the metaphysical correlates of A and B; so, just as 9 gives rise to 3 and 16 gives rise to 4, I assume that A* is what gives rise to A and B* is what gives rise to B.

70 Causality is not just a case of one thing always following another, but instead a case where A gives rise to B and the nature of A alone ensures that B will follow. Thus, it is something in the nature of A that produces B and of necessity brings about the state of affairs, B. This is what Kant means by representing the necessity of the succession and this is what we represent in the world when we represent it in a causal manner.
then B’ states that it is a requirement upon the metaphysical world to produce content B for us whenever it has first produced content A. But the only way in which B will necessarily follow A in representation (i.e., follows in all possible cases) is if it is always the case that B* follows A* in the metaphysical world, i.e., there is a necessary relation in the metaphysical world between the object or property A* that produces A and the object or property B* that produces B. Thus, the correspondence of representation and the metaphysical world does not merely assume that there are objects or properties A* and B* in the metaphysical world that corresponds to the representations A and B. Rather, it assumes that the relation of A* and B* is structurally correspondent to the causal relation represented between A and B. The possibility, then, of our representing a causal world in general presupposes that the metaphysical world is structured in a correspondent manner.

As I have said, isomorphism is not the most favoured of views of Kant and a common objection is that the proposition of correspondence between representation and the metaphysical world is inconsistent with some of Kant’s other claims. One criticism, that the unity and objects of representation are original to (and are products of) the activity of the mind, has already been dealt with in Chapter 3. I now want to spend a little time considering two more criticisms, first that isomorphism conflicts with the a priori status of space and, second, that our being responsive to the metaphysical world is inconsistent with Kant’s unknowability principle. In contrast to the apparent conflict of isomorphism with the a priori status of space, I show that there is no conflict at all, for the a priori status of space states that the function of sensibility provides only the general form of representation. In addition, I think our being responsive to the metaphysical world is a desirable feature of cognition, rather than something we should look to avoid.

I think the most appropriate means of defending isomorphism and showing it is consistent with his main claims is to remember that the nature of Kant’s inquiry is transcendental. As I read Kant, when he describes space as an a priori form of intuition, I believe he is thinking of space as a transcendental ground of representation, the meaning of which is best understood in a manner close to the outline I provided of the transcendental nature of the categories in the preceding chapter. In the Aesthetic, like the Analytic, Kant is concerned most of all with the form that representation must take if it is to be at all possible. Thus, in the Aesthetic (which presents Kant’s outline of sensibility), is the simple thought that there needs to be a general form of receptivity, i.e., a way in which we can receive and represent what is
given through our receptivity. In other words, Kant is saying we can only represent the empirical relation of one representation to another if we have the general capacity to receive and represent anything at all as external. Which is why Kant says at A23/B38, that ‘the representation of space cannot be obtained from the relations of outer appearance through experience, but this outer experience is itself first possible only through this representation.’ Here I think he intends an equivalent relation between the general form of representation and empirical content to that found in his deduction claim that any empirical association presupposes an a priori synthesis. As I read Kant, he means to say that our general capacity to represent anything as external to another object, or to my own self, presupposes that we must first have the general capacity to represent something as external or in space; the representation of space is presupposed or underlies the possibility of representing any object as external. However, if space merely underlies the possibility of representation, then it follows that the a priori status of space means that sensibility functions only to determine the general form of representation in the manifold. In other words, space does not determine the particular external relations any object may stand in.

Now consider what Kant says at the outset of the metaphysical exposition of space in the Aesthetic. He writes:

> By means of outer sense (a property of our mind) we represent objects as outside us, and all as in space. In space their shape, magnitude, and relation to one another is determined or determinable. (A22/B37)

In this passage I think that Kant intends to say that, as the form of receptivity and outer representation in general, space is merely a form in which an object can be determined, i.e., a form in which it is possible to represent empirical instances of the relation of one object to another. The form of intuition, space, as the very condition of representing an outer object in general, determines the general form that representation will take, making, for instance, the

---

71 The requirement that space is a constant form of our power to represent can be given an additional explanation by the general notion of cognition at the heart of the Critique: cognition and self-consciousness are possible only where it is possible to represent the given in a unified whole and thus in a single representation for one consciousness. In the Aesthetic, Kant’s attempt to outline space and time as a priori intuitions is at the same time a simple statement saying there must be a way of receiving and representing what is produced in sensibility. It is to recognise that the only means in which it is possible to represent what is given to us as a unity is if there is a constant form of receptivity and power to represent what is received. Without a general form, i.e., space, there would be no common ground by means of which one representation could be linked to another and thus represented in a single representation for one consciousness. As I noted in chapter 2, the representation of distinct qualities requires not only that one quality is distinct from another, but also that we can find common ground between them. Empirically speaking, we may be aware of a variety of forms of receptivity which we represent as different kinds of sensory representation – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory – but something more general is required in order to unify all sensory representation. Space is what fulfils this unifying role and the very possibility of cognition rests on the fixed nature and function of sensibility, i.e., a consistent form of receptivity and power to represent what we receive.
representation of extensive magnitude and external relation possible. But never will the
function of sensibility determine an objects’ particular magnitude or relation in space. Instead,
sensibility merely provides a form in which it is possible to determine an object and makes
possible certain kinds of determination, though always without determining any particular
feature of an object. One such feature is the representation of location. In this case, the a priori
status of space means that an object must have a location and says nothing of what that
particular location may be. Overall, I believe Kant’s outline of space as a general form of
intuition makes no claim about particular qualities, but only about the general and
transcendental nature of representation – i.e., of what form representation must take if we are
to represent in general. Moreover, if this exhausts what Kant understands by the function and
capacity of sensibility to represent in general, then in all cases of the cognition of objects
something else must determine the particular location of an object in space.

At this point in the Aesthetic, Kant is dealing only with the ‘pure form of sensibility’
that ‘is also called pure intuition.’ (A20/B34-5) Stripped away, then, is everything that
‘belongs to sensation’ (A20/B34) and the pure form of intuition is separated (in the
representation of an object) from ‘that which the understanding thinks about it [the object]’
(A20/B35). It is, in other words, to consider the intuition of an object ‘without an actual
object of the senses’ (A20/B35). However, the general and transcendental nature of the
inquiry does not mean that Kant says nothing about an actual object or its origin – this he
specifies at the outset of the Aesthetic: ‘the object is given to us’; ‘it affects the mind’; we
‘acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects’ (A19/B33); and
we might also consider from the Introduction to the Critique: ‘how else should the cognitive
faculty be awakened into exercise if not through objects that stimulate our senses and in part
themselves produce representations’ (B1). The commitment to the sensible origin of the
content of the manifold and cognition more generally does not, though, play any role in the
arguments that follow, except for Kant to consider that the a priori form of representation is at
the same time a constant form of our receptivity – which is to say, space is the form of our
cognitive relation to the metaphysical world and defines the manner in which we lie open and
cognitively receptive to the objects that affect us.

However, if the sensibility merely determines the form that this receptivity and
representation will in general take, then it does not determine the particular configuration of
the manifold at one time or another. Instead, the determination of the empirical (particular)
feature is left entirely to the metaphysical world and the effect it has on sensibility. Clearly,
then, the a priori determination of the manifold by sensibility in no way implies that the mind
determines some or any of the particular features of the manifold. The significant empirical features of the manifold, for instance, that an object is located here and not there and in such and such a relation to other objects, can only be determined by the metaphysical world. Moreover, there is a clear case for saying that these empirical features are significant because of the relation it has to the metaphysical world, though I am not saying that it is significant simply because it is related to and determined by the metaphysically real. Rather, I think we can safely say, for instance, that the particular location of an object in space is significant, because the alternative would appear to provide no indication or explanation as to why we represent an object in this location or even the function that location serves for us.

The isomorphism that I postulate is a decidedly non-trivial relation between representation and the metaphysical world, for we do not derive the isomorphism in the sense that we might extract an empirical concept; instead, the isomorphic relation obtains between representation and the metaphysical world because the metaphysical world produces it simply by affecting (the receptive) sensibility. This is the same theme that Van Cleve finds in H. J. Paton, C. D. Broad, and J. N. Findlay, where we require that the relations R and R* under which any interesting isomorphism is to hold be subject to the following constraint: whenever R holds between a and b, it does so because R* holds between the correlates of a and b. Not only must there be an isomorphism, but also things must be related in the phenomenal order as they are because things are related in the noumenal order as they are.\(^{72}\)

In my view, we are in a very important way responsive to the metaphysical world: whatever the manifold is like in practice, i.e., when we represent actual qualities, the order in which we find them is all due to the effect that the metaphysical world has on sensibility. Moreover, rather than being something we might like to avoid, for us to be responsive to the metaphysical world is actually a desirable feature of cognition and allows us to retain the idea of knowledge as a finding out about the world. In the first instance, being responsive to the metaphysical world is useful because it gives us something to represent, but it is especially desirable given that the origin of what we represent is mind-independent, i.e., with something that is in the strictest possible sense, real. Recall that the simple transcendental statement of the deduction indicates only that something is real for us when we represent it in synthesis; but as a transcendental statement it does not make any commitment to the origin of what we represent. Of course, when we represent in practice, we can only represent something as real through an act of synthesis when the manifold is suitable to that act. It is, therefore, quite

\(^{72}\) James Van Cleve Problems From Kant, p159
appropriate to our desire for a real and objective cognition that the metaphysically real world is what provides us with just such a manifold suitable to synthesis. Consequently, we are now in a position to say that, for the determination of the manifold to be something real for us, it must be produced by the metaphysical world and the metaphysical world must stand in an isomorphic relation to the rules of synthesis. Moreover, I believe only an isomorphic relation can sustain Kant’s claim that we know the world as it appears. After all, it would be impossible to call our representation an appearance if it bears no cognitive relation to the metaphysical world, which would inevitably be the case if the mind imposed its form of representation on the manifold or simply ordered it in whatever manner it pleased. But where Kant makes a point of stating that sensibility is passive he admits (in sensibility at least) that the opposite is true.\(^73\) He commits to saying, not only that the order of the manifold is determined by the metaphysical world, but that the manifold produced in us is also suitable to synthesis.

In order to be clear, I am not saying that a subject who is responsive to the metaphysical world has any knowledge of the metaphysical world itself or, as Kant says, of things as they are in themselves. The content of representation may well be rooted in the nature of the metaphysical world, but according to Kant we only ever know representation, i.e., what the metaphysical world produces in sensibility. I think this aspect of his thought is clear in the Prolegomena:

There are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves, but are acquainted only with their appearance, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses. (Prolegomena 4: 289; 40)

Admittedly, Kant, following Locke, expresses the relationship between representation and the metaphysical world in a slightly awkward fashion when he states that we are acquainted with ‘their appearance’. Yet it is clear he intends for the metaphysical ‘thing’ to have a role in our cognition. As I have stated already in Chapter 1, I do not believe there is any point in which we can suggest Kant to imply that we have knowledge of things as they are in themselves. Instead, I think he consistently states that we have knowledge only of things as they appear to us – by which I believe we should generally take him to mean that we know only the content the metaphysical world has produced in us. I also believe that isomorphism simply expands

\(^73\) We can say something similar for the understanding. In my outline of synthesis as subsumption in the preceding chapter I already displayed that the understanding, like sensibility, does not order as it pleases, but merely represents what is given to it under a concept.
upon what Kant means when he says we know things, yet only as they appear or how they affect us.

In this section I have been able to find an argument for isomorphism and show that isomorphism is consistent with the a priori status of space, the unknowability of things in themselves, and also provided a positive reading of how we are able to call our representations real.\textsuperscript{74} I believe an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world is the most advantageous for Kant to adopt, particularly if he wishes to regard representation as objective and real. Moreover, if I am right, then I think I have completed the previously stated aim of the thesis, which was to assess whether the most appropriate means of reading Kant is as a form of representationalism similar to that presented by Locke. In other words, Kant is committed to a view of cognition where representation is considered real because of its relationship with the metaphysical world. And just like Locke, because we are, for Kant, passive in our receptive capacity, we deal only with what is ‘offered to the mind’:

\textit{the understanding can} no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas set before it do therein produce. As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them.’ (Locke \textit{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding} Book II, Chapter I, 25; p45)

But before I conclude my thesis, there is a further objection to isomorphism that must be addressed: can we maintain that there is a one to one correspondence of representation with the metaphysical world. The objection has two sides: in Section II, I consider that the metaphysical world may be more than we represent the world to be; in Section III, I consider a reading of Kant where he intends that the world of representation is more than the metaphysical world can be. While I think we have to admit the possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be, the very possibility of cognition demands that there are certain restrictions in place in such a circumstance. In addition, the world of representation will only be thought to be more than the metaphysical

\textsuperscript{74} At the empirical level it will be possible for us to represent the manifold in different ways, as it were, effecting different forms of isomorphic relations. But at a more general level, where we have but one form of representation – that is for Kant necessary for representation in general – I think we are limited to a single isomorphic relation. If the function of sensibility is fixed in this way, then, given the same metaphysical object or metaphysical property, the same quality will be represented in the manifold. For the mind to map representation to the metaphysical world in different ways assumes either that the function of representation involves some level of choice or a variation in the function itself, both of which might well be found in the empirical capacity to represent, though not in the pure form of representation in general.
world when we consider that the metaphysical world is an intelligible world that can be known only through pure understanding. Certainly, there are difficulties with the idea of knowing anything through the understanding alone, but the real sticking point for this form of the objection is that an intrinsic nature is inconsistent with the capacity of the metaphysical world to affect us. To affect us, the metaphysical world must have extrinsic properties and I think the most suitable view that incorporates this consideration is again found in Kant’s appeal to Locke.

**Section II: The metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be**

The argument in the first section of this chapter I think gives good reason to believe that the relation a is R to b in representation can only arise in the manifold because a* is R* to b* in the metaphysical world. In Section I, my argument leant heavily on an analogy with the mathematical function of a square root and the idea it provides of a constant function and form of receptivity. From the analogy it was stated that a single feature of the manifold in sensibility can only be provided by a single feature of the metaphysical world. Thus, given a constant function, when we put the same data into the mathematical function the result is always the same, so the only way in which we would represent anything different is where the original data changed. In which case, I concluded that, irrespective of what we happen to represent, representation will always reflect the original data given to the mathematical function on a one to one basis; and so too, by way of the analogy, does the empirically determined manifold in sensibility relate to the metaphysical world on a one to one basis. I assume this correspondence is the only possibility when an object in general can produce an effect relative to its own nature and any feature of the manifold will reflect a correspondent feature of the metaphysical world that produced it. My argument is reinforced by the way in which Kant understands the general function of sensibility – in my view, he gives a clear statement that sensibility provides only the general form of representation, thus a form in which an object is determinable. Consequently, Kant leaves nothing in the determination of an object beyond the general form in which it is to be determined to the function of sensibility. In like manner to the function of sensibility, the function of the understanding is in no position to determine what we represent, but only that, if we are to represent, we must do so by subsuming the manifold under the categories. But where the act of synthesis plays no determining role beyond subsuming the manifold under the categories, for the possibility of synthesis, the understanding demands a manifold in harmony with the rules of synthesis.
However, a manifold suitable to synthesis is one that is empirically determined by the metaphysical world and not by the understanding. Yet the metaphysical world can only produce a manifold suitable to synthesis if it is correspondent in form with the rules of that act. For only then could the metaphysical world provide a manifold that reflects both its own nature and the rules of synthesis. Thus, a is R to b because a* is R* to b* in the metaphysical world.

The conclusion of Section I assumed a very neat form of isomorphism, but it is wise to consider that the cognitive relation of representation and sensibility to the metaphysical world might not be quite so uniformly structured. What needs to be considered is whether there is still good reason to think that a is R to b because a* is R* to b* in the metaphysical world when there is the possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be. In the circumstance where the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be there will be features of the metaphysical world that we are not receptive to or do not have the capacity to represent in synthesis. Consequently, under that circumstance, it appears quite wrong to maintain a one to one isomorphism between representation and the metaphysical world. A major problem in making an assessment of isomorphism is the fact that we do not know the nature of the metaphysical world. Thus, I think we have to agree with Ralph Walker’s concerns and assume that the limits of our possible experience present a clear difficulty for maintaining the existence of a neat one to one isomorphism. For it appears certain that there is no way for us to say one way or the other whether we are receptive to all features of the metaphysical world. It is possible that we do not stand in such a neat one to one cognitive relation to the metaphysical world, but the strength of Walker’s criticism is simply that we will never know if this is the case or not. In which case, the assessment of isomorphism must take in all possibilities for the metaphysical world. I have already stated that isomorphism is possible assuming a neat relation of representation to the metaphysical world, but is it possible to maintain isomorphism when the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be?

---

75 Kant seems to admit of this possibility in the Amphiboly: ‘Thinking in itself, to be sure, is not a product of the senses, and to this extent is also not limited by them, but it is not on that account immediately of any independent and pure use, without assistance from sensibility, for it is in that case without an object. And one cannot call the noumenon such an object, for this signifies precisely the problematic concept of an object for an entirely different intuition and an entirely different understanding than our own, which is thus a problem itself. The concept of the noumenon is therefore not the concept of an object, but rather the problem, unavoidably connected with the limitation of our sensibility, of whether there may not be objects entirely exempt from the intuition of our sensibility, a question that can only be given the indeterminate answer that since sensible intuition does not pertain to all things without distinction room remains for more and other objects; they cannot therefore be absolutely denied, but in the absence of a determinate concept (for which no category is serviceable) they also cannot be asserted as objects for our understanding.’ (A287-8/B343-4; emphasis added)
I think it is possible to give a positive answer to this question and maintain an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world. In addition, I believe the argument I present in this section is aided by the argument of Section I. What I propose to give particular attention to is the outline of the function of the faculty of representation: as I have shown, the passive function of sensibility leaves responsibility for the particular nature of the manifold to the metaphysical world; and the function of the understanding does not determine the structure of the manifold, for it merely subsumes what is already found there and represents the manifold under the categories. But, because the faculty of representation provides only the general form of representation, it remains true, however diverse the metaphysical world may be and however it is actually structured, that the structure and function of the metaphysical world must at least give it the capacity to affect and produce a manifold for us that we can subsume under the categories. We are not, then, looking for all possibilities for the metaphysical world, but just those possibilities consistent with producing a manifold in us that is suitable to synthesis. I think this limits the possibilities considerably. What I am saying is that, even if the nature of the metaphysical world is more extensive than representation (with more kinds of object or property than we can receive) or is structurally different to our general form of representing, that nature and structure must be of a kind that consistently provides a manifold suitable to synthesis. For in no other way would cognition and self-consciousness be possible. This section is an attempt to outline some of these possible features of the metaphysical world and display the restrictions on their relation to our cognitive capacities if they are to ground the determination of a manifold suitable to synthesis. Though we might never know it, it is even possible that the metaphysical world is not at all isomorphic with the basic form of representation. However, from the conditions already stated – the nature of sensibility and the fact that an object can produce an effect relative to its own nature, even that non-isomorphic structure must still be able to consistently produce a manifold suitable to synthesis. As I understand the limitation, if there is no structural isomorphism there must nevertheless be a possible combination implicit within the structure of the metaphysical world that does correspond to the general rules of synthesis. For only if there is an implicit combination in the metaphysical world could it produce in us a manifold suitable to synthesis. Considering all the possibilities, though, I think the limitations converge, one way or another, on an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world. However we conceive of the metaphysical world, the general nature and function of the faculty of representation (both sensibility and the understanding) still indicates that the manifold is determined by the metaphysical world. So, in all cases, the possibility of
cognition is sustained by the metaphysical world and its capacity to provide us with a manifold suitable to synthesis.

The possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be could play out in various ways, though only some of these will provide for the possibility of a manifold in us that is suitable to synthesis. Of the various options open to us there are two broad categories: firstly, where we are receptive only to part of the metaphysical world; secondly, where we represent all of the metaphysical world, just not in all its complexity. Starting with the first category, where we are receptive only to part of the metaphysical world, I would like to consider again the mathematical function analogy from Section I, but this time with an added feature to the metaphysical world: the metaphysical world comprises not just numbers, but apples as well. Apples, though, are not of a nature that can be taken up by a mathematical function, so while they may be real objects in the metaphysical world, because we are not receptive to them, an apple will produce no content for representation. But if the apples were to stand in some relation to numbers and impact upon what numbers there are and the relation of one number to another in the metaphysical world, then there could be a problem. For, through their relation to numbers, apples would consequently have an impact on what the metaphysical world provides for representation. To some extent, the case where apples do not impact on numbers, but merely live out their lives doing what apples do, is not problematic. Where an apple has no impact on what numbers there are or their relations in the metaphysical world, it is still possible that a correspondence exists between representation and part of the metaphysical world (the numbered part) and that the numbered part continues to provide a manifold for us that is suitable to synthesis. It is just odd to suggest that we know the world as it appears when we do not stand in a cognitive relation to all parts of that world and in such a case it may no longer be right to call our cognition real.

But are matters different when apples do impact on numbers in the metaphysical world? If this is the case, would it be possible to postulate an isomorphism between representation and the metaphysical world and would the metaphysical world produce in us a manifold suitable to synthesis? Consider again the example of the causal relation, ‘If A then B’. As I previously outlined, where the properties of the metaphysical world, A* and B*, stand in a relation where given A*, B* follows, then that relation in the metaphysical world is

76 Admittedly a third possibility would be a combination of these two categories.
77 The relationship fulfils the requirement that Kant sets for synthesis – all possible representation is subject to the categories. Yet given the possibility he mentions in the Amphiboly of ‘more or other objects,’ he does not set any requirement that all features of the metaphysical world must have the capacity to affect us and be taken up in representation under the categories.
thought to produce in the manifold ‘If A then B’. However, there might arise a problem if there are objects or properties of a kind X* that do not affect sensibility, yet impact upon the objects or properties of A* and B*. For instance, if some object or property of a kind X* is able to produce B* without any A* ever being present, then sensibility would represent B without any preceding A. Equally so, if some object or property of a kind X* is able to produce A* without B* following, then sensibility would represent A without B following. The problem is, not only (in the circumstance where X* produced B*) that our representation would fail to reflect the metaphysical world\textsuperscript{78}, but also, that B could not be represented under the concept of causality. In the circumstance where the determination of the manifold generally comes about through the activity of X* on A* and B*, the manifold could be to us merely a random series of objects appearing, moving and disappearing in ways that we cannot comprehend or categorise; for Kant that would clearly not be a representation of nature or a world. Rather, his view is that we can represent nature only through subsumption and the synthesis of the manifold under the categories. But if there is no possible connection of one content with another in the manifold or at least no possible connection under the categories, then there is no means of representing their unity under a concept and thus to represent them as objects or a world of objects. If it was an isolated case that appears as an uncaused event in a generally rule-governed world, then we might be able to work with that. However, if the determination of the manifold by the indirect action of X* was widespread, then it might transpire that no unified representation of content under the categories would be possible at all.

The example appears to indicate that the only possible way in which apples could impact on numbers (and we still represent the unity of the manifold under a rule) is where the unexplained and unconnected phenomenon is an isolated or occasional case. While we would likely be able to pass over occasional unexplained phenomena we would not be able to pass over a manifold that is entirely without any possible combination, i.e., where no representation can be connected with any other. Nevertheless, there is a possible response to the causal example and what I have concluded from it. For is it not in fact possible to represent the existence of X even though we are not directly receptive to X*? What I mean to say is that X could be represented as an unseen object by us and we could determine that it has properties of such and such a kind on the basis of the behaviour of the other objects we

\textsuperscript{78} This assumes, firstly, that we cannot represent a relation with an equivalent in the metaphysical world if we are not able to represent one of the relata in that relation; and second, that we can only represent the relata if it affects us.
represent in the world.\textsuperscript{79} Gravity is perhaps the most obvious case of an unseen object or feature of the world we represent. However, as a feature that we can represent of a law-governed world, gravity too must conform to the rules of synthesis, so gravity is represented as a (law-governed) feature of the world even if it is unseen. Yet, while we fill in the gaps in postulating such an object or feature of the world, any individual instance of gravity in our world still has its origin in the metaphysical world and the possibility of representing gravity relies upon the nature of the metaphysical world in the same way that the representation of ‘If A then B’ relies upon the metaphysical world. So, in like manner, considering the mathematical function analogy, when apples impact on numbers we will represent the impact they have on numbers even if we do not represent the apples themselves. For wherever there is interaction in the metaphysical world with the metaphysical objects that do affect us, this interaction will be reflected in some way in the manifold, which makes it possible to represent an unseen object (i.e., the apples). Nevertheless, the crucial point to observe for my argument is that, for the apples to be represented in a law-governed representation of a world, the interaction they have with numbers in the metaphysical world must be of a kind that we can represent the effect of that impact under the categories. For if we could not represent the impact of apples on numbers under the categories, then it could not feature in our representation of the world and it would leave us with an unexplained phenomena. In the circumstance where the interactions in the metaphysical world itself are unable to sustain a law-governed representation the metaphysical world is likely not law-governed itself or, if it is, it is in a manner not in any way correspondent or conducive to our own laws of representation. In which case, I do not think that we need to specify the conditions under which apples may interact with numbers. For where the metaphysical world is more than we can represent, the possibility that the interaction of apples with numbers is consistent with representation will be evident from what we represent in our cognition of numbers, and it is sufficient to say that in this case the nature of the metaphysical world is no obstacle to our representing it.\textsuperscript{80}

In a different circumstance, what would be missing from the manifold and the representation of it in synthesis would be the continuity of a law-governed succession of representation that flows from one representation to the next. In our representation of the

\textsuperscript{79} In such a case the activity of the mind does fill in the gaps, but postulating unseen objects is quite different from the mind imposing its form on the manifold.

\textsuperscript{80} This likely returns me to the initial conclusion from the casual example – I can represent ‘If A then B’ only if there is a correspondent relation between A\textsuperscript{*} and B\textsuperscript{*} in the metaphysical world. In like manner, I can only represent gravity or an unseen object in the world of representation on account of the relations between objects in the metaphysical world.
world we represent houses, cars, shops, universities, mountains, rivers, oceans, and people, along with their continual interactions – according to Kant, this world is a possible world for us because it is a world that is held together in representation by rules, laws or concepts. But, if we could not hold the manifold together under rules, laws or concepts and represent the succession of the manifold under a necessary rule, then there would not be any houses, cars, shops, universities or people to visit them. The experienced world does not jump around; instead, it flows. An example can be found in Kant’s discussion of the sensation of intensive magnitudes. He says, for example, there is no interruption in the constant flow of warmth felt by the subject and the transition from one state into another is also continuous. Kant also says the ‘generation’ of a synthesis of sensible qualities in time ‘is a progress in time, [and] the continuity of which is customarily designated by the expression “flowing” (“elapsing”).’

(A170/B212-3) Central to his idea of cognition and what we represent through an act of synthesis is that a synthesis of the manifold represents the continuity of the sensible qualities where the current state of affairs follows or flows from the preceding state. And where we represent the necessity of the succession we grasp the manifold as a world, as if the things in the world are interacting in an independent world. In such a world, objects do not come in and out of existence without explanation and they are extended through time in a causal sequence with events and states of affairs contingent upon other prior events and states of affairs. Where they are not causally continuous there is reason to believe that it is an illusion, hallucination, dream or simply a case where something else is going on that we cannot currently explain.

In the latter case, we might look to postulate an unseen object or force in the world or at least set it up for further investigation. But in all cases, I believe the ground of what we represent and the continuity in representation from one moment to the next lies with the metaphysical world that produces the manifold in us. Thus, in the case where apples do impact upon numbers we will represent that impact and do so as part of a casually continuous representation of a world only under the condition that the apples stand to numbers in a relation correspondent to what we can represent. Alternatively, where there is no clear way in which the interaction of apples with numbers in the metaphysical world can be represented by us, it would only be possible that we represent the numbers alone, though without any connection between them in the manifold. However, for us to represent the numbers alone without the relation to some unseen object would not sustain a manifold suitable to synthesis; unless, that is, our faculty of representation imposed its form on the manifold. But such an active role in determining the manifold in synthesis has already been expressly ruled out.
The second broad category in which the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be does not consider that there are somewhat mysterious objects hidden away in the metaphysical world, always unknown to us and existing even without any interaction with the objects that we do stand in cognitive relations to. Instead, the second broad category considers that we stand in a cognitive relation to all objects in the metaphysical world, but we do not represent all aspects of them or their full complexity. One example is blindness; another, knowledge of the genus class, but not the species that falls under it. In the case of blindness, a person’s representation of the world is seemingly unaffected by their inability to visually represent the world and were I suddenly to become blind my world would not suddenly shrink or lose objects; instead, I would lose just a certain aspect or feature of those objects. For the blind person there are qualities in the world that they are not able to represent, but unlike the first broad category, it is clear that a change in one kind of quality, the colour of an object, has no impact upon the other qualities they may have or the integrity and possible unity of representation. The colour of an object has, for instance, no impact upon the texture of an object. Instead, they are represented together as features of the same object through their representation in space, but because each of our five senses is a class of its own, it means that no single sense can impact or interfere with the representations of any other. Because there is no instance where the particular colour of an object is related to how an object feels, it means for the blind person that two objects that are qualitatively the same apart from colour cannot feel any different and will be regarded as qualitatively identical. Sensibility might more generally present a case analogous to blindness where we would not have the capacity to receive features of metaphysical objects that would allow us to distinguish between them. Metaphysical objects C* and D* may well be distinct objects with distinct properties, but the limitations of sensibility may mean that we are unable to reflect these distinctions in our representation of the world.

A similar failure to represent qualitatively distinct metaphysical objects as distinct would also arise in situations where we have the capacity to represent the genus class within which C* and D* are found, but not represent C and D as distinct species of the class. For instance, we may have the capacity to represent the genus, smartphone, but fail to distinguish between Apple’s iPhone and Samsung’s Galaxy S3 and would simply represent them as identical. In each example we are presented with the possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent it to be, but I find neither case problematic for isomorphism or for stating that the representation is real or objective. I do not regard the examples as problematic, because in each case what we do not represent (or stand in a cognitive relation to) cannot
impact upon what we do represent. In the latter example, we need only consider that anything that is true of the genus will be true of any species within that class. Thus, our knowing the species does not represent any possibility of our having conflicting information with anyone who knows only the genus class. If I come to know a species, then I merely add to what I already know about the genus.

The final case of how the metaphysical world might be more than we represent our world to be is to suppose that in the metaphysical world there is no basic structure correspondent to the general form of representation. Here I imagine a case where in general the sensible subject does not have the capacity to represent in a form correspondent to the most basic nature of the metaphysical world, but has instead a capacity to represent in a form that corresponds to a distinct combination of those basic features. The relation I imagine – between the basic features of the metaphysical world and the combination of these features in a further distinct form – is along the lines of the distinct representations of nature in modern physics, which distinguishes the quantum level from the macroscopic: the quantum level is the most basic form of the metaphysical world and the macroscopic level is a distinct form of combining those basic features. Thinking of the relation along these lines indicates that our cognitive relation to the metaphysical world comes through an implicit combination of the basic form of the metaphysical world in another form or at another level. However, it is one thing to say that there is an implicit combination for the metaphysical world at another level and another to display that there is such a relationship.

Nevertheless, if we remember some of the premises of the argument in section I, then I think we can outline just why an implicit combination at another level must be assumed. Firstly, we are passive beings and the manifold is determined by the metaphysical world; and secondly, the effect produced in us is relative to the nature of the metaphysical world. Other than the implicit possibility of combining the metaphysical world (or manifold produced by the metaphysical world), I do not believe there is any other means in which it can reasonably be stated that the metaphysical world affects sensibility and produces a manifold relative to its own nature, but yet a manifold suitable to synthesis. The problem we will always have, if we do suppose that there is no correspondence of form between representation and the metaphysical world, is in explaining how a manifold that reflects the metaphysical world is suitable to synthesis. For as I have argued, if there are no causal relations in the

---

81 We assume either: (i) that in the metaphysical world the basic features combine in a distinct form and the combined objects affect sensibility and produce a manifold that reflects the combined form, and this combined form is correspondent to the rules of synthesis; or (ii) the basic features of the metaphysical world affect sensibility and produce a manifold that reflects that basic form, yet implicit within that determination of the manifold is the possibility of representing at a different level.
metaphysical world, and where the manifold reflects this, then we are consequently presented with a manifold that could never be subsumed under the rule of cause and effect. In other words, it would never be possible to determine that the manifold, as Kant says, ‘stands under a given rule’ (A132/B171) and presents an instance of that rule.

The example discussed above of a causal relation between A and B displays the impossibility of anything other than a close correspondence between representation and the metaphysical world. The necessity of the relation ‘If A then B’ demands something quite specific for the representation of contents A and B in a causal relation and this can only be achieved if the properties that produce these contents in the subject are themselves in a correspondent relation. For only then can they be subsumed under the rule. In which case, the particular relations of representational content in the sensible manifold will always reflect the relations of the properties of the metaphysical world to one another.

However, the problem, when we assume that there is no structural correspondence, is that it should not be possible for the manifold to reflect that kind of metaphysical world and at the same time be suitable to synthesis. But the only means of maintaining this kind of relationship between representation and the metaphysical world – where the metaphysical world can produce a manifold suitable to synthesis – is if the basic features of the metaphysical world can be combined under the rules by which we represent in general. Yet, for this to be possible when the basic structure of the metaphysical world is not isomorphic to the rules of representation, it means that the general nature of the metaphysical world must implicitly contain the possibility of this other combination already. In which case, while the nature of the metaphysical world does not allow for a one to one correspondence to its basic features, it is implied that there could be a correspondence of representation to a distinct grouping or combination of the basic features of the metaphysical world. I believe we can make something of this possibility if we think of the relationship between the most basic form of the metaphysical world and the form of representation along the lines of the relationship between the quantum and the macroscopic levels in modern physics.

The analogy is useful because it gives a clear example where one structural form relates to another as its ground. In the analogy, the laws and interactions of atomic-scale objects sustains the law-governed behaviour of objects at the macroscopic level; so, just as

In the case where we represent X as an unseen object it is possible only on account of some relations in the metaphysical world between X*, A* and B* - it would also indicate that ‘If A then B’ is not in fact a causal relation, for if we represent an unseen object in relation to A and B and specifically as a cause of one or other of them, then we would not also represent a causal relation between A and B or at least not continue to do so. Experience might be such that we can represent the unseen object X now, but had been unable to do so previously, which would seem to be a case where new experience presents a reason to revise our previous understanding and representation of the world.
modern physics states that cars and trains behave in the way they do because of the way the world is at the quantum level, by analogy the world of representation is reliant upon the way things are in the metaphysical world. In the analogy, there may be no one to one general structural correspondence of representation to the basic structure of the metaphysical world, but however the metaphysical world is structured at its most basic level (the quantum level in the analogy) it must be a form already suited to representation at the macroscopic level. 83

The modification is not entirely appealing. While an analogy with quantum and macroscopic levels is used to explain the relationship, in reality we could be appealing to the presence of who knows what kind of relations and properties in the metaphysical world. However, the analogy with modern physics and quantum theory I think does provide some comfort, for it allows us a means for comprehending what the relationship might be like between the metaphysical world and representation in the extreme case where the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be. But further, the analogy also provides a good reason to call representation real – we can call representation real on account of the relation it has to the metaphysical world, which might not ordinarily have been thought possible when I suggested that there may in fact be no structural correspondence at all. The apparent relationship between representation and the metaphysical world might well mean in the strictest terms that representation presents to us no state of affairs at all. However, this kind of assessment of the reality of representation is just as true as the assessment that modern physics might make of nature – cognition of cars and trains is just a phenomenon produced by

83 As I read Kant, I do not believe he engages with all these possibilities, though I think he does commit to a metaphysical world that is more than we can ever represent our world to be. Yet the absence of any cognitive relation to some objects in the metaphysical world and our complete ignorance of them does not seem to register with Kant as problematic: the passage cited from the Amphiboly in the above footnote admits the possibility of ‘more or other objects,’ but he does not consider this a problem for the possibility of sensible cognition and for calling representation real and objective. Further, it is unclear whether he supposes that we stand in a cognitive relation to the metaphysical world as a whole or just part of it. But while he does acknowledge that we know (metaphysical) things or stand in a cognitive relation to them, we do not know them as they are in themselves. One interpretation of Kant, from Langton, reads Kant as saying we can know the extrinsic properties of things (what he calls ‘appearance’), yet not their intrinsic properties (what he calls ‘thing in itself’). (See Rae Langton Kantian Humility) Following this line from Langton, our cognitive relation to the metaphysical world would therefore be a relation only to the extrinsic properties. I am sympathetic to Langton’s reading, but I think we should be sure to consider the extrinsic (relational) properties as features of the metaphysical things and that it is these extrinsic features that we stand in a cognitive relation to. I specifically say that we stand in a relation to the extrinsic properties, because I think Kant is clear that what we do know is known through the effect it has on our sensibility. Langton believes that Kant makes a distinction between substances, which are bearers of intrinsic properties, and their relational properties; and further, that he claims we have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties. This inevitably leaves open the possibility of claiming that we know the extrinsic properties of things, but I think Kant still says enough of how these things are given to us to insist on a cognitive distance between what we know or represent and the things themselves. In terms of the current discussion, what seems to come closest to Kant’s thought is that we are receptive to the extrinsic properties of metaphysical objects and not to their intrinsic properties. Moreover, I do not think it is right to read ‘thing in itself’ as a thing with intrinsic properties alone; rather, I think Kant’s passive sensibility assumes not only a cognitive distance, but that the things that affect us have extrinsic properties, for that is the only way in which they could have the power to affect us. I will say more on this in Section III.
the underlying interaction of atomic-scale objects. It can be suggested that the macroscopic level may be no representation of any actual thing at all, and that instead it is merely an ‘arbitrary’ placing of phenomena together in order to represent a world for us. However, what suggests that the macroscopic grasp of the tables and chairs or snooker balls is a valid or even a real and objective representation of nature is that our relationship with the metaphysical world through sensibility sustains just this representation. At the quantum level there is no hitting or even touching of one thing with another, but however things are at the quantum level, their interaction makes our representation of the interaction of snooker balls at the macroscopic level possible and real. In this model, I believe the possibility of representing the world at different levels arises only because of a close connection between the levels in a similar way to the manner in which the reality of the interaction of objects we represent at the macroscopic level is sustained by the relations and interactions of atomic-scale objects. In which case, however it looks at the macroscopic level and regardless of the fact that strictly these objects and their interactions are the mere appearance of reality, the representation has a definite ground in the reality of the atomic-scale objects. The representation of nature may not be real in the strictest sense because it does not correspond to the nature of the metaphysically real, but our representation is far from being arbitrary: on the one hand, the form of representation is, for Kant, the very definition of what it is for a cognitive being such as ourselves to represent in general; and on the other hand, the possibility of our representing nature is dependent upon the kind of content that the metaphysical world produces in sensibility. While the metaphysical world at the correspondent macroscopic level may have no causal relations, or at least no causal relations between objects that correspond to the objects we represent, the metaphysical world must still be constructed as a whole to account for the appearance of such relations in representation. Quite how the metaphysical world and sensibility function together to produce such a representation will never be known, but for the possibility of cognition the metaphysical world must function in harmony with sensibility. Moreover, because the manifold must be (implicitly at least) of a form suitable to synthesis.

---

84 See Ralph Walker: ‘Did Kant perhaps have another reason for thinking that for every physical thing there was some thing in itself, or set of things in themselves, that matched it closely enough to allow an “intimate union” of the kind just discussed? One problem is that it is not very clear what could be meant here by “every physical thing,” since on any view the boundaries between macroscopic physical objects are largely arbitrary [emphasis added] and adopted because we find them convenient. For Kant, the physical reality is a complex of fields of force, and the matter thus constituted is infinitely divisible, though not made up of an infinite number of parts, nor of a finite number of simple parts either. On the other hand, noumena, when composite, are said to be made up of simple parts. To make matters worse, the universal quantifier in “every physical thing” implies that there is a totality of physical things, but the First Antinomy shows that there is no such totality.’ (Ralph Walker ‘Kant on the Number of Worlds’, pp837-8)
under the categories, I think the harmony of function still indicates an isomorphic relation exists between representation and the metaphysical world.

From the considerations I have made for each of the two broad categories I do not think the possibility that the metaphysical world is more than we represent it to be is as damaging as it first appears. The damage is minimal because we are still able to use the same set of premises considered in Section I: the function of the faculty of representation provides only the general form of representation; it is the metaphysical world that determines the manifold in space; for it to be represented as something, whatever is given to sensibility, must fall under the categories; and whatever is given is only ever a reflection of the metaphysical world. Thus, the metaphysical world must be correspondent to representation (in part at least). Here I have argued that cognition is also possible when the form of the metaphysical world is distinct from the form of representation, but only where there is an implicit possibility of representing the basic features of the metaphysical world in a distinct form or at some other level. I think we must say this about the basic form of the metaphysical world, because the very possibility of cognition and representation under a concept places a restriction upon what the nature of the manifold is like and consequently upon the manner in which the metaphysical world functions in relation to sensibility. I do admit that we can never know whether the relations we represent are real or that representation stands in a direct correspondence with the basic structures of the metaphysical world. Instead, all we can know is that our representation is sustained by a relation to the metaphysical world and the reality of our representation is determined by the fact that representation is a reflection of what goes on in that world. Accounting for the different possibilities where the metaphysical world is more than we represent our world to be, I still think we can hold on to the non-trivial version of isomorphism that Van Cleve finds in Paton, Broad and Findlay, where a is R to b because a* is R* to b* in the metaphysical world.

If we are able to maintain the sense of isomorphism I have just suggested, it may still be possible to retain a modicum of the reality and objectivity that Kant attributes to representation. It may be the case that there are metaphysical objects that do not affect us; or that qualitatively distinct metaphysical objects produce for us representations that are qualitatively indistinct, due to the limitations of our faculty of representation (sensibility and the understanding). But whichever view we take of the metaphysical world and how it can be more than we represent it to be, any view must account for the fact that it is the metaphysical world that produces content in us that is suitable to synthesis. It is surely significant that amidst all that the metaphysical world is (its laws and properties and interactions), it still
functions to provide us with a manifold suitable to representation in the understanding under the categories. Moreover, if the properties of the metaphysical world did not combine and function to produce such a manifold, then we would either have a world with a lot of unexplained phenomena or no world at all – because then we would not be able to represent the manifold as something (i.e., combine it under the categories).

In the current section I have considered the possibility that there may be no one to one correspondence between representation and the metaphysical world, with the metaphysical world being more than we represent our world to be. An associated objection to isomorphism is where representation may contain more than is found in the metaphysical world. A statement of this kind features in Kant’s argument from incongruent counterparts, where, for instance, he claims that incongruent counterparts such as left and right are features merely of representation and not of things as they are in themselves. Thus, it is thought that Kant presents a case where relational properties are not reducible to the intrinsic properties of things in themselves. In which case, we must assume that sensibility adds something to the object in representation. In Section III, I argue for a different reading of incongruent counterparts and the general argument of the Prolegomena. I read incongruent counterparts as an acknowledgement of the error of Leibniz’s model of sensible cognition; but when Kant presents his own model it is through a transcendental critique of the power to represent in general. In this new model he presents only an account of the function of the faculty of representation and outlines just what it is to represent in general. Such an account makes no assumptions about things in themselves and limits our conception of it to the mere cause of appearance.

**Section III: Representation is more than the metaphysical world**

In this section I complete the analysis of the major objection to isomorphism, i.e., the impossibility of our ever knowing whether there is a one to one mapping of representation to the metaphysical world. The second aspect of the objection is the possibility that the world of representation is more than the metaphysical world and therefore assumes the possibility that the faculty of representation adds something to representation that has no correspondent feature in the metaphysical world. I think the second aspect of the objection has the potential to be more controversial. Quite simply, it leaves us looking for an explanation for features of experience or the world in a place where we ordinarily would not wish to look, i.e., in the mind. The prospect of features in representation having no correspondent feature in the
metaphysical world is alarming, because it makes it difficult to understand the function that these features of representation serve for cognition. If we represent objects in space and thus in a location, yet the location that an object takes up in space bears no relation to the metaphysical object that produces the representation in us, just what function does representing an object here or there actually serve? I think such a possibility is quite inconsistent with an objective and real representation. In this section I make no attempt to dispel any of the problems that arise in the circumstance where there is no correspondence between the features of representation and the metaphysical world. Instead, my intention is to argue that Kant does not present a view of sensibility where the function of that faculty adds something to representation that has no correspondent feature in the metaphysical world. Consequently, isomorphism remains a possible reading to make of the relationship he takes to exist between representation and the metaphysical world.

To some extent, I have already provided good reason for reading Kant’s view of the faculty of sensibility as passive and not as a faculty which functions in a way that adds something to representation. However, my response to the second aspect of the objection cannot be as straightforward as an appeal to the preceding analysis of the function of sensibility. Rather, a more thorough response is required, because Kant seemingly presents an argument that conflicts with my previous analysis. The argument in question is from incongruent counterparts, an argument he clearly uses to reject the Leibnizian principle of the reducibility of relations. A standard reading to make is to assume that when Kant states his solution, i.e., that space is merely a feature of sensible representation, the solution incorporates the Leibnizian idea of a purely intelligible entity. By retaining the idea of a purely intelligible thing in itself it is assumed Kant must be saying there are features in representation that do not have a correspondent feature in things in themselves. In what follows, to fulfil the aim of showing that Kant’s account of sensibility does not assume a faculty that adds something to representation, I present a different reading of the argument in the Prolegomena and indicate that the general and transcendental nature of the inquiry he makes into the possibility of representation in fact does not retain the idea of a purely intelligible thing in itself. As for the use that Kant makes of incongruent counterparts in §13 of the Prolegomena, we could follow him and say it is to allow those who cannot rid themselves of the idea that space and time attach to things in themselves to ‘get free of the conception’ (4: 285; 37). Certainly, he does aim to display the impossibility that spatial relations are relations between real things and have their ground in the intrinsic properties of those things. But I think the incongruent counterparts example is part of a wider aim to set
aside the Leibnizian model altogether and not simply to make modifications to it. If we fail to read Kant in this way and instead retain elements of Leibniz’s model, specifically the purely intelligible things in themselves, I think it is inevitable that we would come to the conclusion that sensibility must add something to representation. However, if we take Kant’s lead, not only with the argument through §§6-12, but in his general admission that any inquiry into the possibility of cognition must start with a critique of the power of reason to represent in general, then we will discover that Kant’s ‘solution’ does not conflict with the idea of sensibility as a faculty with a function of passive receptivity. Whatever we think this ‘solution’ is, it is most of all a statement about representation, of what it is to represent and the conditions under which it is in general possible to do so. Thus, for instance, when he says we represent sensible intuitions and not things in themselves it is a conclusion grounded on an analysis of the nature of representation in general and of how we must function in general if we are to represent anything at all. Consequently, it would not allow us to make any statement about things in themselves. Nevertheless, the conclusion of his transcendental inquiry also requires us to view sensibility as passive and, as a result, the only idea we can have of a thing in itself is as the cause of appearance. The limits of what it is possible to represent allow only this idea of a thing in itself and nothing that would equate to the idea of an intelligible entity with intrinsic properties alone. In any case, the odds are stacked against the possibility of a thing in itself that is a purely intelligible object, for no such object with intrinsic properties alone could ever produce an effect in sensibility.

On the face of it, Kant uses incongruent counterparts as a means of refuting Leibniz’s principle of the reducibility of relations. Leibniz had believed that relations between things are derived from and reducible to the intrinsic properties of those things. But with incongruent counterparts Kant gives an example where there are relations that do not reduce to, or have their ground, in intrinsic properties. While there are different instances of the incongruent counterparts argument in the Critical and pre-Critical writings that seemingly run to different conclusions, Jill Vance Buroker believes that there is a theme that connects each instance and that the later instances build upon the previous conclusions. Yet, in contrast to Buroker’s belief, I think that the presentation of incongruent counterparts in the Prolegomena is, not only a definite departure from the previous instances, but also a departure from the pre-Critical philosophy as a whole. Clearly, there are important similarities in the instances of incongruent counterparts, though what really sets the argument in the Prolegomena apart from the pre-Critical efforts is the use that Kant makes of it. According to Buroker, Kant uses
incongruent counterparts, not only to state that we know only appearance or sensible representation, but, further, that the sensible things we represent do not even correspond to the metaphysical world. She makes this conclusion on the basis that incongruent counterparts display that the ‘formal features of sensible entities differ from the formal features of intelligible entities in not being entirely dependent on their non-relational properties.’

Buroker also phrases the conclusion ‘in epistemological terms’: ‘sensibility must be a distinct and independent source of knowledge.’ In other words, if the outer relations do not correspond to some feature of the things themselves, then they must be the result of sensibility. I think she is wrong to make such a conclusion, for I do not believe that Kant makes such a use of incongruent counterparts in the §13 of the *Prolegomena*.

I do not think we can deny the truth of the argument from incongruent counterparts as a means of displaying an error in Leibniz’s attempt to ground outer relations in the intrinsic properties of things. But however true this error may be, it is how we understand the next step of Kant’s argument that is crucial and, in contrast to Buroker, I think there is another way in which we can read Kant’s objection to Leibniz and the alternative he proposes. I think she fails to see the other alternative, because she mistakenly assumes that Kant has a place in his philosophy for a purely intelligible thing in itself which underlies appearance. If he had

---

85 Jill Vance Buroker *Space and Incongruence*, p100
86 ibid.
87 I agree with Allison’s assessment that in all the instances of incongruent counterparts in Kant’s writings, the target is always to refute the Leibnizian theory of space. But in the example of incongruent counterparts in the *Prolegomena* Allison sees Kant arguing, not only to refute the Leibnizian theory of space, but for the transcendental ideality of space. Yet Allison thinks incongruent counterparts are quite unable to do this. I agree that incongruent counterparts will not ground any claim of ideality, but not with his belief that Kant is in fact intent on using incongruent counterparts to make such a move in the *Prolegomena*. Instead, contrary to Allison, the ‘solution’ Kant refers to in §13 merely refers to the features of the argument and its conclusion from §§6-12 that preceded the incongruent counterparts example. (See Henry E. Allison *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* 1st Edition, pp99-102)
88 Buroker observes a passage associated with incongruent counterparts in the Amphiboly of the *Critique* (A284/B340; see Jill Vance Buroker, *Space and Incongruence*, pp84-7). I think there is the possibility that she also misreads what Kant says in that section of the *Critique*. In the Amphiboly Kant does state his agreement with the analysis that Leibniz makes of intrinsic properties and relations, but Kant also states that he is willing to accept this only insofar as we are able to talk of such things. Yet it looks like he wishes to forbid this talk altogether. According to Kant, we come to the concept of a thing in itself as intrinsic when we abstract from our own idea of a spatial object, but given that space is a form of intuition and not a form of the relation of things in themselves, this idea of a thing in itself does not fit with the Leibnizian notion at all: ‘And this would all be correct, were it not that something more than the concept of a thing in general belongs to the conditions under which alone objects of outer intuition can be given to us, and from which the pure concept abstracts. For these show that a persistent appearance in space (impenetrable extension) contains mere relations and nothing absolutely internal, and nevertheless can be the primary substratum of all outer perception.’ (A283-4/B340) If I am right, then this consideration will presumably apply in a similar way to Kant’s objection to the principle of indiscernibles. In the literature, both Buroker and Van Cleve consider that Kant simply accepts the principle of indiscernibles for things in themselves, yet not for appearance. In contrast, I think that Kant is saying in the Amphiboly that IF there is an intelligible world, as Leibniz suggests, THEN the identity of indiscernibles applies. In which case, because it is far from clear whether Kant does endorse the principle of indiscernibles for
made only this alteration to the model of sensible cognition, then he would indeed be in the position Buroker presents: ‘phenomenal objects are governed by a system of relations independent of those [noumenal] objects’. Yet, for phenomenal objects (appearances) to be governed by an independent system of relations, it would require sensibility to be a ‘source’ of cognition in what can only be an active sense – which is a view that runs contrary to his idea of sensibility as a faculty of passive receptivity.

To avoid the conflict within Kant’s own statements I think we need to take a different line. I propose that we read the argument in the *Prolegomena* as saying, through incongruent counterparts, that Kant is able to acknowledge the Leibnizian model does not work and that he throws it out only to start again. What I mean to suggest is that Kant is not simply replacing the Leibnizian account of spatial representation and still assuming that underlying these sensible representations there are purely intelligible (non-spatial) substances. The solution, for Kant, is an entirely new model where we represent sensory intuitions and not things in themselves. But this proposal is something quite different to Buroker’s reading of Kant, for the resulting model of sensible cognition does not find a place for a purely intelligible thing in itself. Instead, I think Kant’s proposal states only that cognition is sensible in nature and that what we cognise is given through sense. On the basis of his analysis of what it is to represent in general (and so of the function of sensibility and by what means we are able to receive and represent anything at all) all he thinks we can assume is that there is a cause of appearance. This is because the possibility of appearance rests on the relation of some thing, unknown to us as it is in itself, to sensibility; thus, the possibility of appearance rests on our capacity to receive and represent. When Kant sets Leibniz’s model aside and starts over he addresses himself to a transcendental critique of the power of reason or of our capacity to represent in general. He concludes that the nature of representation determines that when we represent we represent only sensible intuition and not things in themselves; but this is merely to state that we do not and cannot cognise things in themselves and can assume nothing of the nature of this thing beyond its transcendental status as the cause of appearance. Because the conclusion is grounded on the exposition of the faculty of representation it

---

89 Jill Vance Buroker, *Space and Incongruence*, p100
90 Buroker frequently refers to sensibility as a ‘source’ of cognition, as Kant has a tendency to do himself, though I caution against a positive, active sense of this faculty; instead, sensibility is a source of cognition because it provides the means by which (i.e., receptivity and consequent representation in space and time) that an object can be given to us.
precludes the possibility of stating either that things in themselves are intelligible entities with intrinsic properties alone or that things in themselves are non-spatial (as Buroker assumes).

In §13 of the Prolegomena Kant states his ‘solution’:

[1] These objects are surely not representations of things in themselves, and as the pure understanding would cognise them, [2] rather, they are sensory intuitions, i.e., appearances, whose possibility rests on the relation of certain things, unknown in themselves, to something else, namely our sensibility. [3] Now, space is the form of outer intuition of this sensibility, and the inner determination of any space is possible only through the determination of the outer relation to the whole space of which the space is a part (the relation to outer sense); that is, the part is possible only through the whole, which never occurs with things in themselves as objects of the understanding alone, but does occur with mere appearances. [4] We can therefore make the difference between similar and equal but nonetheless incongruent things (e.g., oppositely spiralled snails) intelligible through no concept alone, but only through the relation to right-hand and left-hand, which refers immediately to intuition. (4: 286; 38)

[1] is the view that Kant rejects on the basis of the incongruent counterparts example, though also on account of the argument through the preceding §§6-12. [2] is the alternative that he proposes; as I read Kant, ‘things in themselves’ in [1] does not equate to the ‘things, unknown in themselves’ in [2]. But instead of thinking that [2] is stated on account of the incongruent counterparts, it is in fact stated on account of [3] and [3] repeats what Kant has argued through §§6-12. [4] contains a further statement of the inadequacies of the Leibnizian model; we cannot make incongruence intelligible through a concept alone. [4] also applies the reasoning in [3] to the case of incongruence; but in doing so it does not state a difference between representation and the intrinsic nature of the thing in itself. Instead, it states only that incongruence can be demonstrated through an intuition.

The main points of the argument through §§6-12 run as follows. §6: the possibility of pure mathematics presupposes ‘some basis for cognition’ (4: 280; 32). §7: mathematical cognition ‘must present its concept beforehand in intuition and indeed a priori, consequently in an intuition that is not empirical but pure’ (4: 281; 32). If we can ‘discover this pure intuition and its possibility,’ (4: 281; 33) then we can explain how this science is possible. §8: But how is it possible to intuit something a priori? Ordinarily, an ‘intuition is a representation of the sort which would depend immediately on the presence of an object’ (4: 281-2; 33). Yet to ‘intuit a priori … the intuition would have to occur without an object’ (4: 282; 33) or the intuition would need to ‘precede the object itself’ (4: 282; 34). But how is this possible? §9: In §8 Kant stated that an intuition depends on the presence of an object and what this means becomes clearer in §9: he states that an object is present when it is given (i.e., through sense) and intuition is the way in which an object is given. However, if this intuition was to represent
things as they are in themselves, then I would not intuit that thing a priori: ‘it would always be empirical’ (4: 282; 34). Remember from §8 that Kant says when I intuit a priori it is without an object being present; yet here in §9 he is saying that the cognition of a thing in itself occurs only when the object is present and given to me - the only relation, or the only way in which we could conceive of the relation, of a thing in itself to my representation is if it is given to me. Thus, if it is not possible ‘for my intuition to precede the actuality of the object’ (4: 282; 34) when that object is a thing in itself, then my intuition can only ‘occur as an a priori cognition … if it contains nothing else except the form of sensibility, which in me as subject precedes all actual impressions through which I am affected by objects.’ (4: 282; 34) Because there is an a priori form of sensibility, all that I can ever represent that is given to me I will represent through that form. Further, because intuitions which are possible a priori can never relate to things in themselves, but only to objects of our senses, if we represent in general only through a form of intuition that is a priori, then when we represent we do not represent things in themselves, but only sensible intuitions or appearances. §10: we must assume that, if we intuit only by means of the form of sensibility, which is a priori, then we cognise things only as they ‘appear to us (to our senses)’ (4: 283; 34) – this assumption is necessary if we are to grant the possibility of synthetic a priori propositions. If we take away everything empirical, which belongs to sensation, then we are left with the pure forms of intuition, which ‘can never themselves be eliminated’ (4: 283; 35); ‘but, by the very fact that they are our intuitions a priori, they prove that they are mere forms of our sensibility that must precede all empirical intuition.’ (4: 283; 35) §11: the problem is solved. But: ‘This faculty of intuiting a priori does not, however, concern the matter of appearance – i.e., that which is sensation in the appearance, for that constitutes the empirical – but only the form of appearances, space and time.’ (4: 284; 35) Kant then challenges anyone to suggest how it would be possible to know ‘before all acquaintance with things, how their intuition must be constituted’ (4: 286; 36). It is completely comprehensible how this is possible, though for Kant it is only comprehensible so long as objects are taken merely for appearances. §12: this supplements Kant’s argument, as does §13 with the example of incongruent counterparts. In §12 Kant provides a clear indication that the argument runs in the opposite direction to the original argument of the Aesthetic: thus, in the Prolegomena it is the very possibility of pure mathematics which proves the a priori status of the intuitions of space and time. Geometers, if they were not working with an intuition that is given a priori – as the form of intuition in general – would present only propositions with ‘empirical certainty’; but, because their propositions can be
proven, it ‘presupposes a representation of space and time that can only inhere in intuition, that is, insofar as the latter is not bound by anything’ (4: 285; 36).

Kant’s argument aims to determine that space is an a priori intuition or the form of all sensible intuition. As the form of all intuition it is the form through which it is possible to represent what is present or given to us. Things in themselves can only be given to us and must therefore precede the object in intuition. But because space is an a priori form, which could not precede the representation of things in themselves, it means when we represent outer things in general through space we cannot be representing things in themselves. Instead we have cognition only of sensible intuitions or appearances, i.e., the effect of the (unknown) object on sensibility. Yet whatever we think this ‘solution’ is, it is most of all a statement about representation, thus, of what it is to represent and the conditions under which it is in general possible to do so; the ‘solution’ is a statement of how our cognitive faculty must function in general if we are to represent anything at all. The conclusion, that we can know sensible qualities and not things in themselves must be read with this transcendental inquiry in mind. As I read Kant, he is merely saying that the nature of sensibility dictates, not that things in themselves are non-spatial, but rather only that we do not cognise things as they are in themselves. As to what things may be like in themselves, we can never know.

On my reading of he argument in the Prolegomena, Kant makes no implicit acceptance of the Leibnizian model and no commitment to a purely intelligible thing in itself with intrinsic properties alone that can be known through pure understanding. Moreover, all that can be known about things in themselves instead relies upon what the transcendental critique tells us about the nature and function of sensibility. Accordingly, for Kant, the only way in which we can conceive of the thing in itself is as the cause of our sensible intuitions. But, in order that we do not simply make this statement on the basis of his assumption that cognition is sensible in nature, it is important to be clear about what allows him to conclude in this way. Irrespectiv of what Kant says in §9 of the Prolegomena about sense and affection, we must remember that §§6-12 present an argument from geometry. Geometry, he says, requires a priori intuition, for it presupposes ‘some a priori basis for cognition’ (4: 280; 32), i.e., a faculty of intuiting a priori. But a faculty of intuiting a priori, as Kant goes on to say in §11, does not ‘concern the matter of appearance – i.e., that which is sensation in the appearance, for that constitutes the empirical – but only the form of appearance, space and time’ (4: 284; 35). In which case, that faculty of intuiting a priori cannot provide the content or matter out of itself. Thus, the matter must be given to us, and because the forms of intuition
are forms through which something can be given\textsuperscript{91}, they will precede ‘all actual impressions through which I am affected by objects.’ (4: 282; 34) But such is the nature of intuition, as a priori in form, it cannot precede the objects themselves, which therefore must remain ‘unknown in themselves’ (4: 286; 38); yet because the faculty cannot produce matter from itself, and the object must be present or given to us through affection, we can at least conceive of these unknown objects as the cause of our intuitions. To propose that we can at least know that there are unknown objects that affect us is clearly supported by Kant in the Amphiboly. In this section, he says that that the only way in which the understanding can think a thing in itself is

as a transcendent object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance), and that cannot be thought of either as magnitude or as reality or as substance, etc. (since these concepts always require sensible forms in which they determine an object); it therefore remains completely unknown whether such an object is to be encountered within or without us, whether it would be cancelled out along with sensibility or whether it would remain even if we took sensibility away. If we want to call this object a noumenon because the representation of it is nothing sensible, we are free to do so. But since we cannot apply any of our concepts of the understanding to it, this representation still remains empty for us, and serves for nothing but to designate the boundaries of our sensible cognition and leave open a space that we can fill up neither through possible experience nor through the pure understanding. (A288-9/B344-5)\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{91} The only way in which there can be an a priori intuition is if it precedes the object; but if it precedes the object, then it must precede any cognition of an object, and can only then be considered as the form of intuition in general, not of things in themselves.

\textsuperscript{92} I am reluctant to turn to the preceding section of the Critique to which the Amphiboly is appended to defend my reading of Kant. The ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ section is, in a similar way to the Amphiboly, interested in the possibility of a purely intelligible knowledge of things. In support of the prospect of a non-sensible thing in itself that acts on sensibility is the passage at A249: ‘Now one might have thought that the concept of appearances, limited by the Transcendental Aesthetic, already yields by itself the objective reality of the noumena and justifies the division of objects into phaenomena and noumena, thus also the division of the world into a world of the senses and of the understanding…’ And something similar is presented at B306: ‘Nevertheless, if we call certain objects, as appearances, beings of sense (phaenomena), because we distinguish the way in which we intuit them from their constitution in itself, then it already follows from our concept that to these we as it were oppose, as objects thought merely through the understanding, either other objects conceived in accordance with the latter constitution, even though we do not intuit it in them, or else other possible things, which are not objects of our senses at all, and call these beings of understanding (noumena).’ But Kant is clearly resistant to any attempt to draw this distinction between these different kinds of cognition and their supposed objects. He says, we can make a division of concepts, but not objects, because we ‘cannot determine any object for the latter’ (A255/B311). And we cannot determine any object for the latter, for irrespective of whether it is knowledge of sensible or non-sensible things, there is in each case the need for intuition. In the ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ section Kant is really only concerned to address the following question: ‘Whether our pure concepts of understanding do not have significance in regard to the latter [noumena, things in themselves], and whether they could be a kind of cognition of them?’ (B308) It is, then, a question of the possibility of cognition and a critique of the possibility of purely intellectual cognition or cognition through pure understanding alone. Even if our concept of appearance assumes a positive concept, the cognition of such an object of the understanding still assumes ‘a special kind of intuition,’ which we can never know to be possible and even if it was possible we would never have any insight into what its nature might be, for we are restricted to demonstrating our concepts in sensible intuition. Thus, he argues against the positive sense of noumena and instead states that ‘the doctrine of sensibility is at the same time the doctrine of noumena in the negative sense’ (B307), i.e., the limit and boundary of the possible application of our concepts of the understanding and the limit of what it is possible for us to call object. In which case, ‘[t]he division of objects into phaenomena and noumena, and of the world into a
The conclusion Kant draws at the start of this passage – that we can conceive of the thing in itself only as the cause of appearance – is the result of our reflection on the nature of the faculty of representation. However, the limitations of what we can determine through transcendental reflection mean that the only idea we have of the cause is an empty one: we only state this cause of appearance from what we know of the function of sensibility, which, as passive, presupposes it. If sensibility cannot provide matter to represent, then something other than sensibility must produce it in us. Kant also says the idea serves as the notion of noumenon in the sense that it bounds what we can represent, because, as the cause of appearance, it cannot itself be appearance, though what its nature may be can never be known. Conceived merely as the cause of appearance, the idea of a thing in itself gives no ground from which Kant could extend to the idea of a purely intelligible (non-spatial) substance. It simply does not follow from Kant’s assertion that space is a mere form of sensible intuition that things in themselves are non-spatial. In which case, the only sense in which we can conceivably say that things in themselves are not spatial or not in space is by recognising that they are not and never could be objects of sensible intuition. As to what they may be in themselves, we can never know.

Aside from the explicit statement that the idea of the thing in itself is the cause of appearance, the Amphiboly provides further reason to suppose that Kant does not conceive of world of sense and a world of understanding, can therefore not be permitted at all <in a positive sense>.

world of sense and a world of understanding, can therefore not be permitted at all <in a positive sense>?

(A255/B311; ‘in a positive sense’ was added in B). I think we can propose something slightly different in the Amphiboly, for even while he makes the same claim as is found in the ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ section – that the idea of an object as noumena serves only in a negative sense to bound our sensible cognition – through reflection on the function of sensibility it is clearly correct for Kant to say the cause of appearance cannot be appearance itself. However, postulating a ‘cause’ of appearance is troublesome, for the idea of ‘cause’ in this instance is the idea of a relation that cannot be determined in relation to any object, for the relation stands outside sensible intuition and would therefore require some form of non-sensible intuition to demonstrate or determine its relation to the object. See A243/B301: ‘From the concept of a cause as a pure category (if I leave out the time in which something follows something else in accordance with a rule), I will not find out anything more than that it is something that allows an inference to the existence of something else; and in that case not only would there be nothing through which cause and effect could be distinguished, but further, since the possibility of drawing this inference also requires conditions about which I would know nothing, the concept would not even have any determination through which to apply to any object.’

(Buroker notes a tendency in the literature to mix up the relation of Kant’s unknowability principle with the non-spatiality of things in themselves: some claim that Kant has no grounds for making the non-spatiality claim in the first place, others that the non-spatiality claim conflicts with the unknowability principle, and other readings suppose that non-spatiality follows from the unknowability principle. (See Jill Vance Buroker Space and Incongruence, pp92-3) Buroker suggests, in contrast to the literature, that instead of deriving non-spatiality from the unknowability principle, the unknowability of things in themselves in fact follows from their non-spatiality. (ibid., p111) I think there is a greater error in the literature, for it very much looks like Kant actually presents no such claim of non-spatiality at all.

(A289/B346) But this is the idea of ‘a merely logical form without content’ and does not fit with the Leibnizian notion of a purely intelligible object.

(A289/B346) But this is the idea of ‘a merely logical form without content’ and does not fit with the Leibnizian notion of a purely intelligible object.

At the end of the Amphiboly, Kant does note again an idea of a thing in itself abstracted from our ‘way of intuiting … that nevertheless seems to us to be a way in which the object exists in itself (noumenon).’

(Buroker suggests, in contrast to the literature, that instead of deriving non-spatiality from the unknowability principle, the unknowability of things in themselves in fact follows from their non-spatiality. (ibid., p111) I think there is a greater error in the literature, for it very much looks like Kant actually presents no such claim of non-spatiality at all.

(A289/B346) But this is the idea of ‘a merely logical form without content’ and does not fit with the Leibnizian notion of a purely intelligible object.
the thing in itself as a purely intelligible entity. He says that there is nothing in our power of representation in the understanding which allows us to ‘indulge in intelligible worlds, or even in the concept of them’ (A289/B345), and never are we justified in extending the understanding beyond its sensible ‘vocation’. When we do ‘indulge in’ such speculation, and postulate a world known through concepts and constructed along intelligible lines, it is the result of a mistaken (transcendental) use of the understanding. In addition, I think there is an implicit suspicion of the idea of a world with objects that ‘conform themselves to concepts,’ despite the explicit statement to the contrary in the Amphiboly. To some extent this is speculation and it is difficult to truly ascertain whether Kant did hold such a view. He demonstrates, for instance, the inadequacies of the purely intelligible conception of the world with the example of different raindrops that are qualitatively the same and distinct in intuition, yet indistinct at the noumenal level. But the idea, that at the noumenal level there are no indistinguishable objects (that there cannot be many rain drops that are qualitatively the same), seems to present an absurdity for him. The common view is to read Kant as simply restating our inability to cognise through concepts alone and the need to demonstrate a concept in intuition. Even so, I still suspect that Kant has reservations about the very possibility of a purely intelligible world, but even he seems resigned to the fact that the limitations of our own power to represent in sensibility and the understanding seems to require that we can never entirely rule out the possibility of a non-sensible intuition of the metaphysical world. From what he says in the Amphiboly I get the impression that Kant believes it is only possible to say is that ‘our function for thinking would still be without significance with regard to it,’ (A286/B342) for it would only be a function for thinking without a faculty of intuition. In which case, he is merely saying that we could not think an object through the understanding alone and not stating the impossibility of a purely intelligible or intrinsic object. It is seemingly not enough that the faculty of representation determines our inability to ‘create a new field of objects beyond those that come before [us] … as appearances’ (A289/B345). For while Kant does not adopt the Leibnizian idea of a thing in itself in his model of sensible cognition, with the argument of the Amphiboly he seems to think we are incapable of ruling it out. All it allows is that there is an unknown thing in itself that causes appearance and that is where Kant’s argument appears to stop.

I think there is a further step that he can and, perhaps even, does make against the possibility of a purely intelligible thing in itself. I believe we can extend the argument if we remember that, for Kant, sensibility is passive. Now, though, we should ask: what must we assume about the metaphysical world for the possibility of cognition when sensibility is
passive? I believe the passive nature of sensibility displays that the metaphysical world cannot be a merely intelligible world of things in themselves, for a world with intrinsic properties alone could not possibly produce in sensibility an effect that we can represent as incongruent counterparts. For the possibility of representing an incongruent counterpart, the respective functions of receptivity in sensibility and synthesis in the understanding demand something quite specific of the metaphysical world and I do not believe that this can be met by a purely intelligible or intrinsic object. If Buroker had been right and there were intelligible substances underlying appearances, then it would indeed have been right to specify that there can be no correspondence of representation with the intelligible object. But the very possibility of representation precludes this possibility. I think it is also possible that Kant’s considered view is just what I suggest. This is shown implicitly in §9 of the Prolegomena, but more explicitly in his appeal to Locke in the second Note following §13. As I outlined in Chapter 1, I think Kant shares the same notion of appearance found in Locke and assumes the same kind of relationship between appearance and the metaphysical world, but merely extends appearance to cover all features of representation. All of which assumes that the objects of representation are more similar in kind to the metaphysical world than the Leibnizian intelligible entities could ever allow. At the very least, for the possibility of representation, the things in themselves that affect us must have extrinsic or relational qualities, for only then will they have a power or capacity to affect sensibility and produce a manifold in us. That this aspect of Kant’s thought does not feature heavily in the Prolegomena argument is because he is more focussed on refuting the Leibnizian views on space, sensibility and the idea of an intelligible world that can be known through pure understanding alone.

The prospect of representation that is more than the metaphysical world is damaging to the possibility of isomorphism. But I do not think that this applies to Kant, for the faculty of representation is in no position to add anything to representation: sensibility merely

---

95 I am grateful to Langton for her discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic or relational properties in both Leibniz and Kant for this understanding: ‘We have knowledge of the forces, the “external presence” of substances. Can we know those substances as they are in themselves, i.e., can we have knowledge of the intrinsic properties of substance? That all depends. We can in principle have knowledge of whatever affects us: that is what Receptivity implies. So we can have knowledge of the intrinsic properties of substances only if they can affect us. Kant’s reply to the question of whether we can be affected by the intrinsic properties of substance must be: no. For the intrinsic properties of substance are independent of the causal powers and dynamical relations that unite substances together in a world. The way things are intrinsically does not determine the way they are relationally. Relational properties do not supervene on the intrinsic properties of substances.’ (Rae Langton Kantian Humility, p126) And consider this passage from Leibniz: ‘a substance never has the power through its own intrinsic properties to determine others different from itself.’ (New Essays on Human Understanding Translated and Edited by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p382)
provides the general form of receptivity or the manner in which we receive and represent the
effect of the metaphysical world on sensibility and the understanding merely subsumes the
given manifold under the categories. As I read Kant, there is no occasion where it is possible
that there could be more to representation than there is in the metaphysical world. The
irreducibility of spatial relations to intrinsic properties only stands as an objection to
isomorphism if Kant does hold to the idea of a thing in itself as intrinsic in nature. But it is
clear that in his main arguments he really does not wish to say anything at all of things in
themselves beyond their being the cause of appearances, i.e., the basic claim that cognition is
sensible in nature. Nevertheless, if it is possible to say that there are things in themselves that
affect us (itself a conclusion from the outline of sensibility), and that we cannot specify their
nature as intrinsic alone, then I think Kant does remain open to isomorphism. With his nod to
Locke in the *Prolegomena* it is quite possible that he goes beyond this and considers
representation to be isomorphic to the metaphysical world. With the endorsement of Locke,
Kant perhaps asserts more than he generally allows himself in the *Critique*, but I think it does
give an idea of what he thinks the relation is between representation and its (metaphysical)
cause and what he truly understands by the sensible nature of cognition. Whatever Kant
means by transcendental idealism and the transcendental ideality of space and time (along
with the objects we represent in space and time), it is certainly not an idealism where what we
represent is free from any determination by the metaphysically real world. We do, as Kant
says, know things, but only as they appear or as they affect the senses and I think this
relationship should be understood in the same manner to Locke’s relationship of secondary
qualities in the objects themselves to the sensible qualities that we represent.
Conclusion

In this thesis I have argued that Kant’s model of cognition is best considered as a modified version of Locke’s representationalism. Initially I drew the parallel between Locke and Kant on the suggestion of Kant himself in the *Prolegomena*. Taking him at his word, Kant commits to four main points: (i) the content of cognition is given through sense and we are passive to what we receive; (ii) we are aware only of ideas in us and we cannot extend our cognition beyond them; (iii) the ideas we have represent no quality of the metaphysical things that produce the ideas in sensibility; (iv) the ideas are reducible to their causes, meaning there is an isomorphic (and representational) relation between the idea in sensibility and the metaphysical thing that produces it. (i) to (iii) are easy to find in Kant, but (iv) is less obvious and troublesome, because isomorphism is generally thought to be inconsistent with Kant’s main doctrines. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 I present a reading of Kant’s main doctrines that is, not only consistent with an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world, but the most appropriate reading given the general task he sets for the *Critique*.

In my argument I have shown that the parallel between Kant and Locke is defensible, so long as we read Kant in a certain way; but given that his aim for the *Critique* was a transcendental critique of the power of reason to represent in general, I believe the weaker view I present stands closer to his intentions than the stronger view that is more often found in the literature. I argue that Kant is not, as the strong view suggests, grounding objectivity solely on the basis of the cognitive faculties, and nor does he assert that the categories have a universal application to the manifold because they somehow impose their form on it. Instead, Kant is merely stating that the categories have an indispensable use in the representation of the manifold, which is a statement that stands independently of what the manifold itself may actually be like. In addition, the weaker reading I give presents a clear indication of what function our mode of representation serves for cognition – our faculties serve to represent what the metaphysical world gives to us and, on account of the passive nature of sensibility, what we represent reflects the nature of the metaphysical world. On the weaker view, sensibility provides only the general form in which an object can be determined and the understanding only the capacity to subsume the manifold under the categories. In which case, all content is provided by the metaphysical world and, given the general function of sensibility and the understanding, it can only be the metaphysical world which determines the order and unity the content takes up in the manifold. Thus, the metaphysical world also determines that the content in the manifold is suitable to synthesis, which I argue is possible.
only if the metaphysical world is isomorphic to the rules of synthesis. What is more, the isomorphic relation of representation to the metaphysical world is central to the possibility of calling representation real.

Into the general debate of what Kant meant by transcendental idealism I have added a genuine alternative that is sympathetic to his characterisation of transcendental philosophy as well as his commitment to the sensible nature of cognition. My view engages with Kant in a narrow sense by reading transcendental philosophy as a concern for the nature of representation and the faculties that make it possible in general. Yet at the same time my reading allows space for a wider view that involves claims about the metaphysical world and its relation to representation. My view also presents a definite advantage over other views because I have provided a means of avoiding some of the usual problems associated with the thing in itself and its role in Kant’s philosophy – this has been possible because I have shown that he is able to postulate the thing in itself on the basis that the faculties of cognition cannot provide content for representation. In other words, the thing in itself has a central role in making representation possible.

The proposal of an isomorphic relation between representation and the metaphysical world means that we might need to rethink certain aspects of Kant’s philosophy including his apparent claim of non-spatiality for things in themselves. On the basis of what he concludes in the Amphiboly and his rejection of Leibniz, I prefer to think that he made no such claim at all about things in themselves. However, given the possibility of extending what he says about a cause of appearance to an isomorphic relation, I think that Kant might need to admit at least the possibility of a correspondent spatial form in the metaphysical world, yet it will never be known whether this is actually the case. Buroker observes that anyone

at all sympathetic to Kant would point out that the hypothesis of two corresponding spaces smacks of the worst in speculative metaphysics, since it proposes a kind of pre-established harmony between sensible phenomena and things in themselves. That is, the hypothesis does not account, in acceptable epistemological terms, for how such a correspondence could take place.\(^9\)

Buroker is right that, with the Critique, Kant aims to address what is wrong with this kind of speculative metaphysics. But the argument that I have presented allows me to make an interesting response. While we can (due to the limitations of our cognitive powers) never know anything of the things in themselves, i.e., their properties and structural form, my argument nevertheless presents a clear explanation of the hypothesis of a pre-established

\(^9\) Jill Vance Buroker *Space and Incongruence*, p98
harmony that is acceptable ‘in epistemological terms.’ Moreover, the harmony of representation with the metaphysical world is acceptable because it stands as a condition of the possibility of synthesis and cognition in general. In quite what sense the harmony of representation with the metaphysical world might be called ‘pre-established’ is uncertain and it is not clear just how Kant would react to such a prospect. Pre-established harmony presents a question that would certainly benefit from a longer treatment of the relation of Kant to Leibniz and a more substantial examination of what Kant saw as the problem with the Leibnizian model and just what he intended with his response to it. I think it is also worth considering that, if Kant is open to significant features of Locke’s philosophy, then it is quite possible that he may be more open to aspects of Leibnizian thought than he often indicates. In addition to the supposed non-spatiality claim and the relation to Leibniz, a longer treatment of the view I have presented here would be able to give a clearer indication of what Kant thinks about affection and just how he thinks his philosophy presents a response to Hume.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kant’s Works

(With exception to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which uses the standard A/B pagination to refer to the first and second editions, the pagination referenced is to the standard German edition of Kant’s works, *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (later German) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900-….) (3:321; 78, for example, refers to page 321 of volume 3 from the Academy edition, and page 78 of the English translation.)

*Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* Translated by Mary J Gregor; The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974


*First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment* in *Critique of the power of judgment* Edited by Paul Guyer; Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000

*Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770* Translated and Edited by David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992


*Lectures on Metaphysics* Translated and Edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001


*On a Discovery According to which Any New Critique of Pure Reason Has Been Made Superfluous by an Earlier One* Translated by Henry Allison in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781* Edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002

Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics: That will be able to come forward as science
Translated and Edited by Gary Hatfield; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

Other Primary Sources

Berkeley, George Principle of Human Knowledge Edited by Roger Woolhouse; London:
Penguin Books, 1988

Descartes, Rene Meditations on First Philosophy
in Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings Translated by John Cottingham, Robert
Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988

Fichte, J. G. Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre
in Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings (1797-1800) Edited and
translated by Daniel Breazeale; Indianapolis/London: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.,
1994

Hume, David A Treatise of Human Nature Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge; Oxford: Clarendon
Press, 1978

Leibniz, G. W. Discourse on Metaphysics Translated by Peter G. Lucas and Leslie Grint;
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961
- The Monadology in The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings Translated by
  Robert Latta; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898
- New Essays on Human Understanding Translated and Edited by Peter Remnant and
  Jonathan Bennett; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982

Locke, John An Essay Concerning Human Understanding Edited and abridged by John W.
Yolton; London and Melbourne: Dent/Everyman’s Library, 1976

Spinoza, Benedict de Ethics Edited and translated by G. H. R. Parkinson; Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2000

Wolff, Christian Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General Translated by Richard J
Blackwell; Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc./The Library of Liberal
Arts, 1963

Secondary Sources

Allais, Lucy ‘Kant’s One World: Interpreting “Transcendental Idealism”’ British Journal for
the History of Philosophy 12, 2004, pp655-84

Allison, Henry E. ‘The Non-Spatiality of Things in Themselves for Kant’ Journal of the
History of Philosophy 14, 1976, pp313-21
- The Kant-Eberhard Controversy Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973
- Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defence 1st Edition; New Haven and
  London: Yale University Press, 1983
- Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defence 2nd Edition; New Haven
  and London: Yale University Press, 2004
- ‘Reflections on the B-Deduction’ The Southern Journal of Philosophy 25, 1986,
  Supplement, pp1-15
- ‘Kant’s Refutation of Materialism’ *Monist* 72, 1989, pp190-208

**Ameriks**, Karl ‘Recent work on Kant’s Theoretical Philosophy’ *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19, 1982, pp1-24


**Baldner**, Kent ‘Causality and Things in Themselves’ *Synthese* 77, 1988, pp353-73


**Beiser**, Frederick C. *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987


- ‘The Trouble with Kant’ *Philosophy* 74, 1999, pp587-594


**Brook**, Andrew *Kant and the Mind* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994


**Cassirer**, Ernst *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* Translated by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951
**Chipman**, Lauchlan ‘Kant’s Categories and their Schematism’ in *Kant on Pure Reason* Edited by Ralph C. S. Walker; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982

**Collingwood, R. G.** *An Essay on Metaphysics* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940


**Collins, James** *Spinoza on Nature* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984


**Dickerson, A. B.** *Kant on Representation and Objectivity* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

**Dryer, D. P.** *Kant’s Solution for Verification in Metaphysics* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966


**Falkenstein, Lorne** ‘Kant’s Argument for the Non-Spatiotemporality of Things in Themselves’ *Kant-Studien* 80, 1989, pp265-83
- *Kant’s Intuitionism: A Commentary on the Transcendental Aesthetic* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995
- ‘Localizing Sensations: A reply to Anthony Quinton’s Trouble with Kant’ *Philosophy*, 73, 1998, pp479-89


**Friday, Jonathan** ‘Dugald Stewart on Reid, Kant and the Refutation of Idealism’ *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 13, 2005, pp263-86


**Gardner, Sebastian** *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* London: Routledge, 1999


**George, Rolf** ‘Transcendental Object and Thing in Itself’ *Proceedings of the 4th International Kant Congress* (Gerhard Funke) Volume 2.1 Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1975, pp186-95
- ‘Kant’s Sensationism’ *Synthese* 47, 1981, pp229-55
Globerman, M. ‘Kant on Receptivity: Form and Content’ Kant-Studien 66, 1975, pp313-30
- ‘Conceptuality: An Essay in Retrieval’ Kant-Studien 70, 1979, pp383-408

Gram, Moltke S. ‘How to dispense with things in themselves (1)’ Ratio 18, 1976, pp1-16
- ‘How to dispense with things in themselves (2)’ Ratio 18, 1976, pp107-23
- The Transcendental Turn: The Foundation of Kant’s Idealism Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1984

Greenberg, Robert Kant’s theory of a priori knowledge University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001

Grier, Michelle Kant’s Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001

Guyer, Paul Kant and the claims of knowledge Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987
- ‘The Rehabilitation of Transcendental Idealism’ in Reading Kant Edited by Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl; Oxford: Blackwell, 1989
- Kant London and New York: Routledge, 2006


Horstmann, Rolf-Peter ‘Why Must There Be a Transcendental Deduction in Kant’s Critique of Judgment?’ in Kant’s Transcendental Deductions Edited by Eckart Förster; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, pp157-76
- ‘Transcendental Idealism and the Representation of Space’ in Reading Kant Edited by Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl; Oxford: Blackwell, 1989


Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich ‘On Transcendental Idealism’ Translated by Brigitte Sassen in Kant’s Early Critics: The Empiricist Critique of the Theoretical Philosophy Edited by Brigitte Sassen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (Originally published in David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus Breslau: Löwe, 1787, 209-30)


Kitcher, Patricia ‘Discovering the Forms of Intuition’ The Philosophical Review 96, 1987, pp205-48
- Kant’s Transcendental Psychology Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990
- ‘Kant’s Epistemological Problem and its Coherent Solution’ Philosophical Perspectives (Nous Supplementary) 13, ‘Epistemology’, 1999, pp415-41

Körner, Stephen ‘The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions’ in Kant Studies Today Edited by Lewis White Beck; La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1969

- ‘Kant’s Schematism of the categories and the problem of pattern recognition’ Synthese 33, 1976, pp175-92


Lipson, Morris ‘Objective Experience’ Nous 21, 1987, pp319-43


McRae, Robert Leibniz: Perception, Apperception, and Thought Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976


Potter, Elizabeth ‘Kant’s Scientific Rationalism’ (a commentary to Margaret D Wilson’s ‘The “Phenomenalisms” of Berkeley and Kant’) in *Self and Nature in Kant’s Philosophy* Edited by Allen W Wood; Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984


Quinton, Anthony ‘The Trouble with Kant’ *Philosophy*, 72, 1997

Radner, Michael and Radner, Daisie ‘Kantian Space and the Ontological Alternatives’ *Kant-Studien* 78, 1987, pp385-402


Robinson, Hoke ‘Two Perspectives on Kant’s Appearances and Things in Themselves’ *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32, 1994, pp411-41
- ‘KantianAppearances and Intentional Objects’ *Kant-Studien* 87, 1996, pp448-54

Rogerson, Kenneth ‘Kant on the Idealility of Space’ *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 18, 1988, pp271-86
- ‘Kantian Ontology’ *Kant-Studien* 84, 1993, pp3-24


Sacks, Mark *Objectivity and Insight* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000

Sassen, Brigitte *Kant’s Early Critics: The Empiricist Critique of the Theoretical Philosophy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000


Sellars, Wilfred ‘This I or he, or it (the thing) which thinks’ in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 44, 1971, pp5-31

Smith, Norman Kemp *A Commentary to Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’* London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1918


Swing, Thomas Kaehao *Kant’s Transcendental Logic* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969

Thomson, Garrett ‘The weak, the strong and the mild readings of Kant’s ontology’ *Ratio* (New Series) 5, 1992, pp160-76

Thompson, Evan; Palacios, Adrian; and Varela, Francisco J. ‘Ways of Colouring: Comparative Colour Vision as a Case Study for Cognitive Science’ in *Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception* Edited by Alva Noë and Evan Thompson; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002

Van Cleve, James *Problems from Kant* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

- ‘Kant on the Number of Worlds’ *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18, 2010, pp821-43

- *Kant’s Criticism of Metaphysics* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975


Watkins, Eric *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005


Westphal, Kenneth R *Kant’s Transcendental Proof of Realism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004


Wojtowicz, Randy ‘The metaphysical expositions of space and time’ *Synthese* 113, 1997, pp71-115
