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Chapter 5

Kant on Imagination and the Natural Sources of the Conceptual

Johannes Haag

It is well-known that in his theoretical philosophy Kant puts forward an approach to knowledge involving two 'stems' that necessarily interact to generate knowledge of a world existing independently of the subject of experience. This comprises, on the one hand, the receptivity of our sensibility, somehow responsible for intuitive representations and, on the other hand, the spontaneity of our understanding, conceived as a faculty of conceptual representations. It seems that the differentiation between these two 'stems' aligns quite neatly with the distinction between natural and normative influences on our knowledge respectively.

One of the persisting questions of Kant scholarship, however, is how nature and normativity so conceived can interact in such a way as to produce *empirical* representations that are simultaneously shaped by our conceptual constraints. In other words, while conceptual resources seem to have a significant influence on those representations, at the same time we need to ask how this representational spontaneity can, as Wilfrid Sellars once put it,¹ be 'guided from without' by a receptive sensibility in order to guarantee that the ensuing representations are truly *empirical*. Consequently, sensibility and understanding, the receptive and spontaneous faculties, must *interact* if they are to generate conceptual empirical representations, i.e., normativity constrained by nature.

To make this possible, Kant introduces a further faculty in his system that, guided by the understanding, allows subjects of experience to 'synthesize' or unify the representational input of sensibility into conceptually shaped representations, namely, the faculty of *imagination*. My paper will be devoted to outlining the philosophical theory behind these ideas. Exegetically, it will focus on the *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*, while a broadly Sellarsian interpretation will serve as a systematic background. In this way we can at least begin to do justice to the complex function of the imagination as an intermediary between conceptual norms and nature in Kant's philosophy.

¹ Cf. Sellars (1968, 16).

J. Haag (✉)
Department of Philosophy, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
e-mail: jhaag@uni-potsdam.de

5.1 The Faculty of Presentation

What then is the role of the imagination in Kant's system? In its most general form, it is a *faculty of presentation* (*Darstellung*).² Kant in the third *Critique* introduces the concept of *presentation* as follows:

If the concept of an object is given, then the business of the power of judgment in using it for cognition consists in presentation (*exhibitio*), i.e., in placing a corresponding intuition beside the concept. (CPJ 5:192)

That Kant, in the context from which this quotation is taken, ascribes this activity of presentation *not* to the imagination but to the power of judgment may seem rather surprising, especially since in other places in the same text Kant is very clear that presentation is a (central) business of *imagination*. For instance, in a later paragraph of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* he writes: "[T]he faculty of presentation is the imagination" (CPJ 5:232) (another case in point can be found in the notorious *Deduction of the Analytic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, Cf. CPJ 5:287.) What is furthermore of importance for us is Kant's emphasis on the claim that the faculty of *apprehension* is "one and the same" (CPJ 5:279) with the faculty of *presentation*. Apprehension, however, will in turn be clearly identified as part of the functioning of the imagination. Consequently, for the purposes of the task at hand we are justified in sticking to the *imagination* as the faculty that does the presenting and so to returning to the task of characterizing presentation.

In order to provide a Kantian answer to this question it will be helpful to explicate the meaning of the claim that the faculty of imagination is at the same time the faculty of apprehension. Imagination in Kant's Critical Philosophy is first and foremost the faculty of *synthesis*. Its central epistemological function consists in the synthetic construction of intuitions. It can do this, however, only in accordance with – and with the help of – concepts. In a complex 'threefold synthesis' the imagination takes up the sensibly given material into consciousness and restructures it in accordance with the forms of intuition specific to our (human) sensibility as well as in accordance with the categories. This complex process is called the synthesis of *apprehension*.³

In the course of this process the subject synthetically apprehends the sensibly given material and out of it constructs complex representations that are then *taken* as objects:

Here that which lies in the successive apprehension is considered as representation, but the appearance that is given to me, in spite of the fact that it is nothing more than a sum of these representations, is considered as their object, with which my concept, which I draw from the representations of apprehension, is to agree. (A191/B236)

Are those representations Kant's *intuitions*? Not quite. In the interpretation I would like to defend they serve rather as the sensible objects to which our intuitive

² CPJ 5:232. Cf. 28.1:235 ff.

³ At least in the 2nd edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cf. B162. In the first edition the synthesis of apprehension is only the first part of the threefold synthesis. Cf. A98–100 and Sect. 5.3 below.

representations demonstratively refer. According to this interpretation, which in this respect closely follows Wilfrid Sellars's elaborate interpretation of Kant's conception of intentionality, it is the basic function of intuitions to bring an object before the mind for consideration.⁴ In order to fulfil this task then, intuitions presuppose as it were sensible models construed by the imagination according to recipes of construction provided by the empirical concepts in question – models that are, as Kant writes in the *Schematism*, products of methods for providing concepts with pictures.⁵ Those sensible, representational models (Sellars's *image-models*) – *taken by the representing subject as objects* – thus turn out to be the proper candidates for demonstrative reference. Imagination is thus a faculty that literally provides concepts with pictures made from *sensible* material in accordance with *conceptual* recipes for construction: it is in this sense a faculty of *presentation*.

Let me try to flesh out these rather sketchy remarks thus far in more detail. The exposition will have two parts: firstly, in order to clarify how normativity shapes nature in terms of the specific way in which the imagination synthesizes the material receptively given in the presentation of objects, I will try to elucidate the concept of an image-model and its relationship to intuitive representations in a more systematic manner. At the same time, I will also pay closer attention to the overall picture Sellars gives of this part of the Kantian system. In a second, more explicitly exegetical step I will try to shed further light on the concept of synthesis presupposed in this process, which ultimately provides us with empirical representations of objects of experience.

5.2 Image-Models

The conception outlined above regarding the relationship between image-model and intuition relies heavily on what I take to be Sellars's late, more sophisticated⁶ and thoroughly Kantian conception of perception and, in particular, his concept of an image-model that is introduced in order to make comprehensible the conceptually guided, and at the same time empirically constrained, presenting activity of the Kantian imagination. Image-models are, in the first approximation, complex, three-dimensional images of objects and, as such, are the result of the operation of a conceptually guided imagination on non-conceptual sensory input.⁷ Now, if

⁴ Cf. Sellars (1978a, § 48).

⁵ A140/B179/80.

⁶ Jay Rosenberg and John McDowell, both of whom have worked extensively on Sellars' Kant-interpretation, share this estimation. Cf. Rosenberg (2007b, 240) and McDowell (2009, 114). Rosenberg in this paper gives an excellent sketch of Sellars's theory of perception in general and his conception of image-models as products of productive imagination in particular. The way he relates the latter to Kant's account of the threefold synthesis (*ibid.*, Fn.12) is, however, quite problematic, as we will see below.

⁷ Sellars introduces this activity of the imagination by way of "phenomenological reflection" (Sellars 1978a, §§ 3, 27), but the implications of the concepts thus gained will prove paramount and, moreover, they are in line with what Kant has to say about the empirical activity of the productive imagination.

image-models were the result of a conceptual shaping of strictly non-conceptual sensory input via the activity of what Sellars, following Kant, calls⁸ the *productive imagination*, then we should start by asking: what is the nature of the sensory input fed into this shaping? Purely receptive *sensations* (or sense-impressions) are conceived upon first analysis as states of perceiving subjects, which are the *effect* of our senses being affected by external objects. Moreover, these states themselves *contain* the *sensibilia* which the perceiving subject conceives as the properties of the objects of perception. As sensations, they are “non-conceptual states of consciousness... none of which are apperceived” (Sellars 1968, 10).⁹

Given this picture of the *material* upon which the productive imagination operates, what happens to it in the synthesizing process? The synthesizing activity of the productive imagination *forms* this receptive sensory input such that it becomes the qualitative content of a spontaneously, and hence conceptually-structured, complex *image* of a three-dimensional object. This object is represented with its sensory properties and is pictured from the perspective of a perceiving subject. Image-models are thus the conscious shapings of the unconscious receptive input that is situated below the line which separates not only receptivity from spontaneity but also sub-conscious mental states from conscious ones.¹⁰

But in what sense is the content of those images conceptually shaped? Image-models themselves are conceptual as well as sensory. The productive imagination could not form image-models unless it did so according to recipes provided by the understanding – recipes that are part of our empirical concepts of objects.¹¹ Those recipes are therefore designed to play a role exactly corresponding to Kant’s concept of an empirical *schema*: “This representation of a general procedure of imagination in providing an image of a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept.” (A140/B179/80)

The schema is thus a conceptual recipe for forming those sense-impressions restricted by the Kantian *mathematical*, though *not* the *dynamical* categories and their corresponding transcendental schemata.¹² Image-models, consequently, are the result of a spontaneous, conceptual shaping of sensations, which in turn is the result of our receptive faculty being affected by things-in-themselves. Consequently, the properties of the image thus construed are only¹³ their *sensibilia*. They comprise,

⁸ Cf. Sellars (1968, 4; 1978a, §§ 1, 28–36).

⁹ We will find that this statement is in need of elaboration with respect to the Kantian approach. Cf. below Sect. 5.5.

¹⁰ For the metaphor of a line that is supposed to separate what is situated ‘above’ it (in the sphere of the conceptual or spontaneous) and that what lies ‘below’ it as *purely* receptive cf. McDowell (2009).

¹¹ Sellars (1978a, §31). Cf. the discussion in McDowell (2009, 114).

¹² Sellars does not make this important difference explicit, but ultimately gives a description of the role of empirical and transcendental schemata that fits this Kantian distinction when he distinguishes “empirical structure” from “categorical” features” (Sellars 1978a, § 39) Cf. *ibid.*, §§ 22, 24. For the distinction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* cf. A160/B199.

¹³ Cf. Sellars (1978a, §22).

however, not only the properties actually perceived, but also the merely imagined sensible properties that we represent the object as having:

We see the cool red apple. We see it as red on the facing side, as red on the opposite side, and as containing a volume of cool white apple flesh. We do not see of the apple its opposite side, or its inside, or its internal whiteness, or its coolness, or its juiciness. But while these features are not seen, they are not merely believed in. These features are present in the object of perception as actualities. They are present by virtue of being imagined. (Sellars 1978a, §21)

Image-models are a blend of features seen *and* features imagined, a “*sensing-cum-imaging* a unified structure” (*ibid.*, §24). They are what we *take to be* the objects of which we are directly aware in sensory or, as Sellars sometimes puts it, perceptual consciousness: “[A]lthough the objects of which we are directly aware in perceptual consciousness are image-models, we are not aware of them as image-models” (*ibid.*, § 27). The mental states, which are the *takings* of those image-models as objects, are what Sellars calls ‘perceptual takings’¹⁴ and what Kant – or at least the Kant of the Sellarsian interpretation introduced above – calls *intuitions*.¹⁵ Hence, intuitions are the *takings* of the image-models *as* objects of experience in a demonstrative thought, and image-models in turn are, again in Kantian terminology, the appearances that are taken to be objects in an intuition of an object of experience.¹⁶

Intuitions are distinct from image-models since more is necessary for taking something to be an object of experience than to merely ascribe to it sensible properties. Intuitions represent their objects with causal and dispositional properties that we “do not see *of* [those objects]... though we see them as having them” (Sellars 1978a, §22), whereas image-models only contain properties of actual or possible sensory experience. Intuitions furthermore are representations of objects of experience whose *esse* essentially is not *percipi*, while image-models are representations of objects whose *esse* is *percipi* in that they are essentially perspectival objects.¹⁷ Image-models are, as it were, objects without objectivity: they always incorporate the perspective of the perceiving subject.¹⁸ The schemata that provide the recipes for their construction are never just schemata of objects but always of objects “in such-and-such relation to a perceiver” (Sellars 1978a, § 34).

Most importantly, intuitions are *not* sensory representations: they are representations that serve to make a conceptually-laden demonstrative reference to an image-model, which is taken to be an object of experience, thereby “bringing a particular object before the mind for its consideration” (Sellars 1978a, § 48). In an intuition we take a complex sensory object to be an object of experience. In this way, an intuition can serve as the subject of a perceptual judgment that guarantees direct

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Sellars (1976, § 53; 1978a, § 10, 50).

¹⁵ Cf., for instance, Sellars (1976, § 24).

¹⁶ Cf. the quote above from A 191 / B 236.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.* § 28; Sellars (1976, § 51).

¹⁸ Cf. Sellars (1978a, § 28).

contact between the ensuing judgment and what we take to be (part of) the world outside via its demonstrative aspect (though what we take to be part of the world outside is ultimately not in any meaningful sense ‘out there’¹⁹).

The conceptual content of intuitions enables them to figure in Sellars’s theory as perceptual *takings* in the full sense of that term, namely, as having a proto-judgmental form.²⁰ That is why, as Sellars points out, we may think of this kind of taking as believing, although we must think of it as ‘believing in’ rather than ‘believing about’ or ‘believing that’²¹:

What is taken or, if I may so put it, believed in is represented by the complex demonstrative phrase; while that which is believed about the object is represented by the explicitly predicative phrase which follows. Perceptual takings, thus construed, provide the perceiver with perceptual subject-terms for judgments proper. (Sellars 1978a, § 10)

Again, this sharply distinguishes intuitions from image-models, which do not serve as means of reference to objects, but as those (mis-taken²²) objects themselves. As McDowell correctly puts it: “Sellars does not consider claim-containing occurrences that are themselves shapings of sensory consciousness” (McDowell 2009, 122).

Naturally, there are further questions concerning the relationship between image-models and intuitions. One may ask: can the recipe (schema) used in the generation of the image-model be simply identified with the “demonstrative conceptualization” (Rosenberg 2007a, 273) (that is, the intuition), as Jay Rosenberg claims? I am skeptical and would like to suggest instead that this particular use of concepts and their correlated schemata guides the activity of the productive imagination, which generates *both* the construction of image-models and the demonstrative reference to this image-model as an object of experience. Indeed, Sellars claims that the productive imagination “is a unique blend of a capacity to form images in accordance with a recipe, and a capacity to conceive of objects in a way which supplies the relevant recipes” (Sellars 1978a, § 31).

But here the capacity to conceive of objects should not be identified with the capacity to demonstratively refer to objects (although the latter presupposes the former). It should be understood as the capacity to use concepts in general – a capacity that is presupposed not only in the construction of image-models, but equally so in the forming of an intuitive representation of an object. This explains why Sellars himself proceeds by speaking about concepts and schemata without mentioning demonstrative reference:

Kant distinguished between the concept of a dog and the schema of a dog. The former together with the concept of a perceiver capable of changing his relation to his environment implies a family of recipes for constructing image models of perceiver-confronting-dog. (Sellars 1978a, §31)

¹⁹ Cf. Sellars (1968, 48/9; 1963, 97).

²⁰ Cf. Sellars (1978b, 280/1).

²¹ Cf. Sellars (1982, 87).

²² For the conception of mis-taking cf. Sellars (1982, 109).

There is no reference here to the use of concepts in their capacity to intuitively refer to an object, but only to concepts and the related schemata. Both concepts and schemata are simply presupposed in ‘providing concepts with images’ *and* in intuitive reference.

I am prepared to endorse much of what Sellars has to say about the role of imagination in both the construction of image-models and the conceptualization of those image-models in an intuition, which is in turn conceived as a complex demonstrative device in the language of thought. Furthermore, I am willing to accept this account as an adequate reading of Kant’s conception of schematization in its a posteriori guise. While I have defended these claims at length in other publications,²³ here I will take these parts of Sellars’s interpretation largely for granted – both as philosophically enlightening and as exegetically adequate.

5.3 Synthesis

With this elucidation of the schematizing activity of the productive imagination in mind let me now turn to the second task at hand: Kant’s theory of *synthesis*. In the first edition of the *CPR* from 1781, Kant introduces a synthesis of apprehension as the first part of a “threefold synthesis” (A97) that not only requires apprehension, but also a synthesis of reproduction and a synthesis of recognition. The concept of apprehension thus helps differentiate a complex synthetic process into its different aspects, which each have to be taken into account in the explication of any synthesis – empirical or a priori – that can be ‘brought to concepts’ (cf. A78/B103) and thus give us conscious representations of objects. In this complex ‘threefold synthesis’ the imagination takes up into consciousness the sensibly given material and restructures it in accordance both with the forms of intuitions specific to our (human) sensibility (space and time) and in accordance with the categories of the understanding (made suitable for our sensibility or, as Kant puts it, schematized). This threefold synthesis is thus Kant’s term in the A-Deduction for the process that gives us both image-models and intuitions in, I would argue, much the same way as outlined above. In the second edition from 1787 this product of a synthesis brought to concepts is called a *combination* (*Verbindung*):

But the concept of combination includes, besides the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, also the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold. (B130/1)

Combination, as a unity of synthesis according to the first edition, requires each aspect of the threefold synthesis and, in particular, the synthesis of recognition that unites the other syntheses by means of concepts. In the second edition, however, this combination is achieved by the synthesis of apprehension *alone* (guided by apprehension), which is now defined as “that combination [*Zusammensetzung*] of the

²³ Cf., for instance, Haag (2007, Ch. 7 and 8).

manifold in an actual empirical intuition, whereby perception, that is, empirical consciousness of the intuition (as appearance), is possible" (B160).

The role of the concept of a synthesis of apprehension in the second edition has therefore changed in two decisive ways. Firstly, it is broader since it now covers the whole synthetic process leading to combination, rather than just the first part of a synthetic process that has to be supplemented by a synthesis of reproduction and a synthesis of recognition, as in the 'threefold synthesis' of the first edition. Hence, it facilitates by itself consciousness of the intuition *qua* appearance, i.e., of a representation taken as an object rather than a representation taken as a representation.²⁴ While, secondly, at the same time, its scope of possible application is significantly diminished since this synthesis is now explicitly restricted to *empirical* synthesis.²⁵ The second edition's synthesis of apprehension takes up impressions and synthesizes them into perceptions, i.e., conscious representations.²⁶

In what follows I will be concerned mainly with the synthesis of apprehension of the first edition, i.e., the synthesis of apprehension as either an a priori or empirical first step in a complex threefold synthesis, the entirety of which alone can afford us conscious experience.²⁷ I will, accordingly, restrict my use of the term synthesis of apprehension to Kant's use in the first edition unless otherwise indicated. Only when speaking again at the general level of observation (with which I first began) will I use the term "apprehension" in the broad sense required for characterizing the imagination as a faculty of presentation *and* apprehension, which implies the entire un-intentional activity of imagination-cum-understanding we are now about to investigate in some detail.

However, even if for the purposes of this elucidation we concentrate on the narrower concept of the first edition, we encounter quasi-definitional claims that do not fit very well with the other elements of the threefold synthesis. The problem becomes apparent as soon as we ask what exactly the role of the synthesis of apprehension is within the threefold synthesis. Kant, by way of maintaining the necessity of this aspect of the threefold synthesis, writes:

Every intuition contains in itself a manifold which can be represented as a manifold only insofar as the mind distinguishes the time in its sequence of one impression upon another; for each representation, in so far as it is contained in a single moment, can never be anything but absolute unity. In order that unity of intuition may arise out of this manifold (as is required in the representation in space) it must first be run through, and held together. This act I name the synthesis of apprehension because it is directed immediately upon intuition, which does indeed offer a manifold, but a manifold, which can never be brought about [bewirkt; J.H.] as such, and as contained in a single representation, save in virtue of such a synthesis. (A99)

²⁴ Kant, through the addition of "as appearance", directs attention to what we have learned to call the act/object-ambiguity.

²⁵ This is made entirely clear in B162 Fn.

²⁶ Cf. A320/B377.

²⁷ What this concept is designed to cover, nevertheless, has not simply become obsolete in the second edition. It should be taken as belonging to the 'loss' Kant refers to in the *Preface* to the second edition concerning which he explicitly refers the reader back to the first edition. Cf. B XLII.

This quote contains many important clues and one inaccuracy. Firstly, the manifold, which every intuition contains in the way outlined in the first quoted sentence, is the manifold of an intuition that is already subject to a synthesis. Kant is asking for the conditions of the possibility of a given sensory consciousness of a manifold. He is not indicating a genetic starting point for the synthesis under investigation, in which case he would have to refer to the manifold as (synoptically) presented by receptivity.

Secondly, only if those impressions are ordered in time will we potentially distinguish the manifold as such. I say 'potentially' since this has to be understood as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the distinctive consciousness of a manifold as a manifold. Other conditions have to be fulfilled, notably the successful synthesis of reproduction and recognition, i.e., the two other parts of the 'threefold synthesis'.

Thirdly, if they were not ordered in this way (i.e., if there was no *succession* of moments but only single moments), then every one of these moments would contain only such representations as constitute an *absolute unity*. This notion of an absolute unity refers back to the reason Kant gave for the necessity of a spontaneous synthesis, namely, that otherwise no knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) would be possible, since in this case "each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation" (A97). It will be necessary to come back to this topic of absolute unity, however it should be clear already that such unity cannot be the unity of a *synthetic complex*.²⁸ The only remaining alternative would thus seem to be that this unity is a unity that is absolute because it is *not complex at all*, i.e., a representation that is not itself the representation of a manifold, although it must be able to become *part* of such a representation.

Fourthly, a definite complex representation is the intuition that is supposed to unite these representations *qua* absolute unities into a unitary representation of this manifold *as a manifold*. Although not every intuition is obviously a representation of a complex, every intuition itself must consequently be a complex representation. Fifthly, this unity of a complex representation is to be secured by the act of running through (*Durchlaufen*) and the holding together (*Zusammennehmung*) of the manifold. And here we run into the exegetical difficulty mentioned above: the synthesis of apprehension in this quote is assigned two different tasks – running through and holding together a given manifold – but only *one*, namely, the running through, ultimately defines its role in the threefold synthesis.

²⁸ Could it be, alternatively, a unity of a merely *synoptic complex* provided for by the purely receptive "synopsis of sense" (A97) (cf. below Sect. 5.5)? This is also implausible because it would mean a duplication of structures that is superfluous at best and incoherent at worst: we would have synoptically structured complexes *embedded* as isolated parts in synthetically structured complexes. In this case a meaningful relation between the forms of receptivity and the forms of intuition would be lost: the hypostasis of structured receptive input would amount to rational psychology, which is not in any way transcendently founded. Moreover, the argument that justifies the introduction of forms of receptivity connects them to forms of intuition and we would not have *these* forms of intuition unless we had *these* forms of receptivity (whatever they might be). Without them, this connection would get completely lost, which would be fatal to the overall transcendental justification of the picture. For more on the topic of synopsis cf. below 5.5.

5.4 A 'Threefold Synthesis'

This claim about the restricted role of the synthesis of apprehension as part of the threefold synthesis can be substantiated by investigating the further deployment of the synthesis of apprehension in the A-Deduction and its relation to the other parts of this complex synthetic process. As Kant makes clear in his "deduction from below" (in A 119 ff.), this synthesis is a function of imagination, an "active faculty for the synthesis" (A 120) that is "immediately directed upon perceptions" (ibid.). And he continues saying: "Since imagination has to bring the manifold of intuition into the form of an image, it must previously have taken the impressions up into its activity, that is, have apprehended them." (ibid.)

This taking up of impressions into the activity of spontaneity is the task of the synthesis of apprehension and is explicitly distinguished from the generation of a "connection of the impressions [Zusammenhang der Eindrücke]" (A121): the first operation corresponding to the running through, the second to the holding together of the first definition of the synthesis of apprehension. For this second operation we consequently need a further activity, this time the "reproductive faculty of imagination" (ibid.; emphasis added), that is, the synthesis of reproduction. But before something can be reproduced, Kant seems to reason, it must be taken up into the faculty that does the reproducing. Those two synthetic steps are indeed "inseparably bound up with" (A102) each other so intimately that together they constitute the "transcendental faculty of imagination" (ibid.). However, they can be abstractly distinguished as different aspects of one comprehensive synthesis.

Yet even then the synthesis remains incomplete: a further step, making the synthesis truly 'threefold', is needed. This would be the *synthesis of recognition*. It answers a problem on which Kant elaborates in the 'Deduction from below':

If, however, representations reproduced one another in any order, just as they happened to come together, this would not lead to any determinate connection of them, but only to accidental collocations [Häufen]; and so would not give rise to any knowledge. Their reproduction must, therefore, conform to a *rule*, in accordance with which a representation connects in the imagination with some one representation in preference to another. (A121; emphasis JH)

To provide us with objective representations, i.e., knowledge (*cognitio*), the synthesis must reproductively synthesize according to a rule. This rule determines how the apprehended and reproduced representations should be 'brought into an image' (cf. A120). According to my Sellarsian picture, the rule determines how the apprehended representations are united into image-models that serve as a reference for the corresponding intuitive representation of an object of experience. This rule is therefore nothing else than the empirical concept (containing the schema) that guides the synthetic activity of the productive imagination. And the aspect of the threefold synthesis that ensures its being executed according to a rule is the synthesis of recognition.²⁹

²⁹ When introducing the synthesis of recognition Kant puts this in terms of the synthesis guaranteeing the identity of a synthesized object. He phrases the solution to the problem from A 120 explicitly in terms of the synthesis of recognition in A124. For more on the synthesis of recognition cf. Haag (2007, 220 ff.).

This aspect makes clear why Kant can refer to the understanding in one (prominent) place as a "faculty of rules" (A126). However, this part of the threefold synthesis may seem less inseparably bound up with the other two in the sense that it might be possible for there to be non-rational creatures with a faculty of imagination that comprises only the first two aspects (depending on their additional ability for associative connection), whereas creatures capable of apprehending only in the sense under discussion would not be able to find their way around in the world.³⁰ At any rate, for finite rational beings such as us, the synthesis *has* to be threefold. Otherwise we would not have intuitions of objects of experience, i.e., objects that are synthesized in accordance with schematized categories, as Kant aims to prove in the 'deduction from below' – the culminating part of the A-Deduction.

These observations concerning the inseparability of the three aspects of the threefold synthesis point to another feature of its first part: the synthesis of apprehension alone cannot, through simply taking up our impressions into the activity of the imagination, generate *conscious* representations (*perceptiones*). For a representation to be conscious more is needed, as Kant forcefully contends in the argument from associability in A121/2 where he logically ties consciousness to the possibility of apperceptive consciousness and the related synthesis of recognition.³¹ Here,

Rosenberg claims that the synthesis of apprehension alone could produce image-models, while the synthesis of recognition is only needed to afford us intuitive representations in Sellars's sense (Rosenberg 2007b, 240). The third aspect of the threefold synthesis, the synthesis of recognition, in his view, is reserved for "perception across time" (ibid.). (Kant indeed does talk about identity through time in this context. But identifying this with the task of recognition amounts to confusing a particular argument for the synthesis of recognition with the description of its contribution to the threefold synthesis.)

Furthermore, Rosenberg's account seems misguided in a number of other ways: the synthesis of apprehension is nothing more than the taking up into consciousness of the manifold of receptivity; for the construction of image-models the impressions must be reproduced. Otherwise we would have only isolated sense-impressions. (Cf. Kant's example of the drawing of a line in thought in A102.) The synthesis of recognition likewise cannot be omitted in the generation of image-models. It is needed for executing the recipes for construction, that are not part of the intuition of an object of experience, say, of a dog, though they *are* part of the corresponding concept of *dog*. (This last remark refers back to my repudiation of Rosenberg's claim that the recipe (schema) used in the generation of the image-model should simply be *identified* with the "demonstrative conceptualization" (Rosenberg 2007a, 273), that is, the intuition.)

³⁰ Cf. the letter to Marcus Herz from May 26, 1789. McDowell quotes this letter in support of his claim that "our sensibility should be something non-rational animals also have" (McDowell 2009, 117). Accordingly, this claim is introduced by McDowell as a constraint for any successful account of sensory consciousness.

³¹ In brief, I take Kant to argue that representations could not be conscious unless they are associable. For representations can be only conscious through their combination into a complex. Associability, however, is the presupposition of such a combination. Conscious representation, hence, presupposes associability and cannot be thought without it – which must, consequently, be conceived as a condition of the possibility of conscious representation. To this end, however, it has to be provided with an objective, not merely subjective ground. If associability is a purely subjective ground it has to be supplemented by a corresponding 'affinity of appearances' (A122) that turns out to be guaranteed by the unity of apperception, i.e., self-consciousness. Cf. Haag (2007, 241–247). The relationship between apperception and (empirical) synthesis of recognition is discussed in ibid., 239 f.

apprehended representations become conscious only *as constituent parts of an intuition*, which implies that the threefold synthesis must complete the synthesis of complex representations (intuitions) before *any* consciousness of the synthesized parts becomes possible. Only then can we, in a further *abstractive* step,³² become conscious of the parts that constitute this unitary manifold *as parts* of a manifold.

If this consideration is correct, it will follow that the threefold synthesis itself is merely a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of the *consciousness of the sensible aspects* of an intuition as such, even if it would of course be a necessary and sufficient condition for *sensory consciousness*. Furthermore, it would put into question the possibility of there being non-rational creatures, at least in the way brought up above (i.e., creatures limited to the first two steps of the threefold synthesis).³³ Consequently, the ascription of consciousness to non-rational *animals* Kant allows for in the letter to Herz from May 1789 should be read as an ascription on a level of abstraction *different* from the one at which his discussion of the threefold synthesis is located. It is an analogous measure that presupposes conceptually synthesized representations, and therefore cannot elucidate the conceptual means used in the description of their synthetic constitution.³⁴

5.5 The Synopsis of Sense

If the task of the synthesis of apprehension was the taking up of impressions in the activity of imagination, why is it still called a synthesis, which originally was introduced as an “act of putting different representations together” (A 77 / B 103)? This may not appear so strange if we remember that the synthesis of apprehension is merely one *aspect* of a complex synthetic act. The denomination thus would reflect its being part of a synthetic act and highlight the fact that it is the imagination (the faculty of synthesis) that does the apprehending. We can perhaps shed further light on this denomination if we turn to two closely related questions of crucial importance for the discussion of sensory consciousness and its conceptual shaping: (1) What are the impressions taken up into the activity of the imagination and (2) are they changed in undergoing this procedure?

³² I think that this abstraction would have to be very much like what McDowell suggests in 2009, 119–122. What this analysis deliberately leaves out, of course, is the alternative concept of a *receptive* sensation. If the present account of synthesis of apprehension should turn out to be correct, receptive sensations obviously would not be accessible to a comparable abstractive approach.

³³ This should serve as a powerful reminder of the fact that the metaphorical talk about ‘steps’, while sometimes necessary for elucidating the details of the threefold synthesis, is ultimately misleading, since it suggests that each step could take place independently of the following. To call the three parts of this synthesis ‘aspects’ is more adequate.

³⁴ This is meant as a clarification of my assessment of this subject matter in Haag (2007, 231 Fn). If correct, it will count against the use McDowell makes of the continuity between the sensory consciousness of animals and rational beings.

The first part of the question has to take into account the synopsis of sense that I already mentioned in passing. What is this synopsis? It is a concept that appears only in the A-Deduction, where it is sharply distinguished from any kind of synthesis.³⁵ Synthesis is always a function of the imagination (i.e., a function of the understanding taken in a certain way), whereas synopsis does not require any activity of the imagination and hence no synthetic activity. Synopsis is a function of sense and sense without synthesis is sense without spontaneity, in other words, sense as sheer receptivity. Synopsis is, therefore, a function of sheer receptivity.

An exact exegetical analysis of the background of the frequently neglected³⁶ concept of synopsis is beyond the scope of this paper,³⁷ however, I must at least sketch some considerations relevant in this context. This is important because the synopsis of sense proves to be the key ingredient in a conception of conceptually shaped empirical consciousness that guarantees that the conceptual normativity of this process is duly guided by nature ‘from without’. While synopsis is not a synthesis, it nonetheless involves some sort of structuring of given sensory material, as Kant makes clear in the only other mention of synopsis shortly afterwards:

If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is a whole in which representations stand compared and connected. As sense contains a manifold in its intuition, I ascribe to it a synopsis. But to such synopsis a synthesis must always correspond; receptivity can make knowledge possible only when combined with spontaneity. (A97)

If synopsis *corresponded* to synthesis with respect to its being a faculty that unites otherwise distinct and isolated representations, we could certainly conclude that some order is already imposed on the manifold ‘in intuition’ by the corresponding synopsis of sense.

Yet, as we learn from the *Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection* of the CPR, the structuring in this case – while (like all structuring) it has to be an instance of determination and determinable or, as Kant puts it, form and matter – it can also take place in an order in which form, unlike *conceptual* form, *precedes* matter. In what sense can determination precede the determinable, i.e., form precede matter? Kant elucidates this with admirable clarity in the *Eberhard-Streitschrift*, writing that the characteristic receptivity (*eigentümliche Receptivität*) of the mind (*Gemüth*) is an innate disposition to receive sensory affection.³⁸ It is the mere disposition to react (in no sense spontaneously but merely passively) when acted upon and affected by things-in-themselves. This is the sense in which even the synopsis of sense can be a priori, as Kant puts it in A94. Synopsis of sense would thus be understood, alternatively, as the process of structuring or its result.³⁹

³⁵ Cf. A94.

³⁶ An exception is Waxman (1991, 228–225). Waxman interestingly sees as part of the role of synopsis the purgation from form that I will ascribe to the Synthesis of Apprehension.

³⁷ But compare my attempt in Haag (2007, Ch. 4).

³⁸ Cf. 8:222.

³⁹ The concept of synopsis shares this particular ambiguity with the concept of synthesis that can be used (and is used by Kant) likewise to alternatively represent the process or the product of synthesis.

Although, as we have seen, in the faculty of sense form precedes matter, I now want to turn first to the material aspect of this activity in sheer receptivity. The first question raised by Kant's characterization of synopsis certainly concerns the nature of the manifold that sense receptively orders through its synopsis, i.e., its *affective input*. Hardly anything more can be said about this manifold than that our receptivity is affected by it. To say more would compromise Kant's strict opposition to the possibility of knowledge of the nature of the things-in-themselves, by which we are affected in non-empirical affection. All we can accordingly know is that we have to think this original manifold of affection for transcendental-philosophical reasons related to guidedness and passivity. Thus, in cases like this, it is justified to claim *that* such an affective input has to be assumed since it is a condition of the possibility of experience: without it, we would lose a necessary sense of guidance from without. Nonetheless, we are not entitled to make *any* meaningful assumptions as to the *nature* of this affective input.

Very similar things must be said about the *products of the synopsis of sense*, which Kant calls "impressions" (A120; A121) in the 'Deduction from below', referring to the manifold of sense *preceding* any synthesis. We can know nothing about the nature of these impressions, as this would mean knowing something substantial (as opposed to purely formal or transcendental) about something that is essentially non-synthesized. We know, however, that we do in fact have such synoptically structured impressions presenting a manifold "for intuition" (B145) that has to be "given *prior to* any synthesis of understanding and *independent of it*" (ibid.; my emphasis). As these quotes indicate, the purely receptive input is not completely left out of the second edition. Earlier in its *Transcendental Deduction* Kant even takes up – what in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* would have been – the forms of receptivity and the products of the synopsis of sense. At the very beginning of §15, he writes:

The manifold of representation can be given in an intuition which is purely sensible, that is, nothing but receptivity; and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in our faculty of representation, without being anything more than the mode in which the subject is affected. (B129)

Kant's picture of sensory consciousness therefore implies the existence of completely non-synthetic, non-spontaneous and a fortiori neither conceptual nor intentional sensory structured *material*, namely, the *synoptically structured impressions of sheer receptivity*. With Kant we can distinguish a *manifold for intuition*⁴⁰ from an *intuition of a manifold*, i.e., a manifold *not for intuition* (as the material on which the synthesis of productive imagination can operate) but a conscious manifold *for us qua subjects of experience*. Notice that the products of the synopsis would be sensations completely located below the line that separates the realm of spontaneity from that of sheer receptivity. As such, they cannot be structured by space and time as forms of intuition in the sense elucidated above, namely, as themselves the products of an a priori synthesis. To suggest they were would be tantamount to saying that the

result of this supposed structuring through receptivity was a structuring through spontaneity after all. It seems, accordingly, that the affective input would be structured by what we might along with Sellars call *forms of receptivity* as opposed to the *forms of intuition* that form the synthetic process.⁴¹

The first part of our above question concerning the nature of the impressions taken up into the activity of the imagination via the synthesis of apprehension therefore has a quite straightforward answer: the items taken up can only be the synoptically structured, purely receptive sensations. If this is correct, it will imply an answer to the second part of the question concerning whether those impressions are changed in undergoing this procedure? For, what is taken up into the activity of the imagination by the synthesis of apprehension *cannot* survive this process or, to put it more cautiously, at least cannot survive it unchanged. We settled earlier⁴² on a picture of the *absolute unity* of the products of this taking up as being not at all complex, i.e., as being themselves representations that are not the representation of a manifold. It is precisely in this spirit that Kant writes:

Apprehension by means merely of sensation occupies only an instant, if, that is, I do not take into account the succession of different sensations. As sensation is that element in appearance the apprehension of which does not involve a successive synthesis ..., it has no extensive magnitude. (A167/B209)⁴³

The receptive sensations, in being taken up into the activity of the productive imagination, therefore lose the structure they had eventually gained through the synopsis of sense, i.e., by means of the forms of receptivity. It is an important aspect of the synthesis of apprehension that it purges the receptive sensations of this structure. The resulting sensations are thus already a product of spontaneity. They are, in this sense, *spontaneous sensations*. It follows that we have a second kind of sensation that must be distinguished carefully from the products of mere receptivity: the concept of sensation as the spontaneous product of the synthesis of apprehension.

But why do these sensations have to be of *absolute unity* in the first place? Some authors (including, in all likelihood, Sellars)⁴⁴ have attributed this claim to Kant's adherence to the sensualistic proclivities of his time. But this interpretation misses the point, neglecting the interplay of form and matter (a Kantian principle of reflection⁴⁵) at this stage of the transcendental reflection: sensations can be neither temporally nor spatially complex since they must serve as matter for the forms that structure them. To be complex at this level of analysis would *mean* to have temporal or spatial extension. This then is the reason for their occupying 'only an instant': they do not have a temporal or spatial extension because otherwise they would be

⁴¹ Cf. Sellars (1968, 29). Sellars, of course, criticizes Kant for not paying attention to this very distinction. If my interpretation is correct, however, in this context Sellars fails to do full justice to the subtlety of Kant's approach.

⁴² Cf. p. 10 above.

⁴³ Cf. A145/B184, 16:662, 18:268.

⁴⁴ Cf. Sellars (1968, 27) and Henrich (1976, 17).

⁴⁵ Cf. A266f./B322f.

⁴⁰ B145.

already formed. Rather, they are simple or atomistic states that contain exactly one monadic sensory quality.

It is important to notice that the same cannot be said for the *receptive sensations* as they are taken up in spontaneity. For even after they have lost their purely receptive synoptic structure, they themselves might have properties stemming from their being affections of our receptivity by things-in-themselves. Due to the inaccessibility of unsynthesized reality, i.e., reality-in-itself, we can neither rule out nor confirm that they are already structured complexes, which have only gained a further layer of structure from the forms of receptivity. The *spontaneous* sensations, on the other hand, should be identified with the concept of sensation that Kant refers to in the 'Stufenleiter' as a conscious representation (perception) "which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state" (A320/B376).

This characterization is in line with Kant's first introduction of the concept of apprehension at the very beginning of the A-Deduction, which classifies products of apprehension as "modifications of the mind in intuition" (A97). And this again seems to take up the theme from the *Transcendental Aesthetics* where colors, as paradigmatic sensations, are classified as being "not properties of bodies to the intuition of which they are attached, but only modifications of the sense of sight, which is affected in a certain manner by light" (A28) and sharply distinguished from space, which "as condition of outer objects, necessarily belongs to their appearance or intuition" (ibid.).

And yet there are important conceptual differences: we have here, I would like to suggest, two different *ways of conceiving* what – ontologically speaking – is ultimately one and the same entity. The underlying ontology is the ontology of sensations as modifications of *empirical* subjects (whereas receptive sensations are to be thought of as modifications of transcendental subjects). In the *Transcendental Deduction*, these modifications of the empirical subject are considered from the perspective of transcendental-philosophy, while in the quote from the *Aesthetics* they are viewed from the perspective of natural science mechanistically conceived.

In *transcendental perspective* those modifications serve the purpose of providing matter, which, via forms of intuition, schematized categories and empirical concepts, can be formed into image-models that can then be taken (in an intuition) as objects of experience. From the *perspective of natural science* they are the result of the affection of the senses of an empirical subject brought about by the purely spatio-temporally extended objects of empirical reality – an affection that can be completely described by means of mechanistic natural science (the successor concept of matter *sub specie scientia naturalis* would then be "force as the concept of mechanics" (Sellars 1968, 45).⁴⁶)

Given the discussion of the concept of an image-model and its difference from the concept of intuition (namely, image-models being perspectival arrangements of sensibly given material according to a recipe, while intuitions are the taking of those

⁴⁶ Sellars simply identifies this scientific concept of color as secondary quality with the transcendental concept of "the real which is an object of sensation" (B 207), which, if there is something to my considerations, amounts to a confusion.

very models as the objects to which we demonstratively refer), there are, strictly speaking, *two* transcendental conceptions of empirical sensation that are blended in this characterization: one as matter in appearances (i.e., as matter determined through forms of intuition) and another as matter for a represented object. The first would come into play in the construction of image-models, the second in the intuitive reference to objects of experience.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that *any* class of sensations (given it has a certain manifold) could fulfill the role of matter in this context: unlike the forms of intuition (space and time), the concrete character of sensation is completely arbitrary. From the transcendental perspective we only need *some* matter – *whatever* quality it might encompass.⁴⁷ Those modifications can therefore play their transcendental role while being nothing but largely arbitrary modifications of empirical subjects. We can conceive of them *either* (taking a transcendental viewpoint) as a result of the synthetic taking-up of the structured sensations of receptivity by the transcendental subject *or* (in describing empirical reality *as* reality) as produced by the empirical subject's being affected by objects that are located in space and time (just like ourselves *qua* empirical subjects).

In both perspectives, however, the sensations would, ontologically speaking, be modifications of the *empirical* subject. For even from the transcendental viewpoint they are conceived as modifications of the subject taken as an empirical subject (since they would be conscious representations and there can be no consciousness of the modifications of the transcendental subject). As modifications of a subject, conscious representations must be appearances, whereas the existence of the conscious subject is not mere appearance.⁴⁸

Where does that leave us concerning the *continuity* between the sensations of receptivity and the sensations of spontaneity? Talk of the synthesized sensations being the *same sensations* as the receptive sensations turns out to be profoundly inadequate for a number of reasons. Firstly, we cannot know anything about the existence of a meaningful continuity between the two kinds of sensation due to the inaccessibility of the transcendental subject's modifications as they are in themselves. Secondly, there need not be any continuity concerning their qualitative content between receptive sensations and the products of the synthesis of apprehension, which are the result of the completely arbitrary subjective disposition of an empirical subject. And, thirdly, since sensations that are products of this kind of synthesis are not in any way formally structured, continuity in form is likewise excluded.

Continuity in form being excluded, qualitative continuity remains completely arbitrary and ultimately unnecessary. Moreover, given the items that could answer this question are inaccessible, there seems to be no meaningful way left of talking about a continuity between both kinds of sensations: we cannot say that spontaneous sensations are sensations of receptivity taken as something else. Whatever the

⁴⁷ Sellars, of course, would deny just that, since he sees space and color as inextricably bound up with each other. But Kant has an interesting argument against this to the effect that we only need *some* matter, but exactly *this* kind of form. For a discussion compare Haag (2007, 142–150).

⁴⁸ Cf. B157/8.

material basis for the synthesis of apprehension, it is changed so radically that there is no way back from synthesized sensation to receptive sensation – not even by (Sellarsian) analogy.

5.6 Synthesis a Priori and the Concept of Guidance

But is this separation not too strict? Through the synthetic process that leads to the construction of image-models and, in the last instance, objects of experience, we certainly have provided for the normative-conceptual structuring of the world-as-perceived. But, in so doing, are we not losing all philosophically interesting contact with the happenings below the line that separates spontaneity and receptivity in this way? Will not, in other words, the loss of a meaningful way of talking about the *same* sensations be linked with the loss of any meaningful concept of guidance from without?

To find a way to prevent this, we must invoke the a priori dimension of the synthesis of apprehension and, with it, the formal aspects above *and* below this line. In the first edition's *Transcendental Deduction* Kant is very explicit about the a priori function of the synthesis of apprehension. Without such a synthesis, he writes, “we should never have a priori the representations either of space or time” (A99). And he continues: “They can be produced only through the synthesis of the manifold which sensibility presents in its original receptivity. We have thus a pure synthesis of apprehension.” (A99/100)

Without such a synthesis we would have no relation to what is presented through ‘original receptivity’ to the subject of experience and hence no consciousness of either space or time. In the words of the B-Deduction: we would have “forms of intuition” (B160 fn.), but no “formal intuition” (ibid.) of space and time. I interpret Kant’s distinction between the forms of intuition and formal intuition as corresponding to my Sellarsian distinction between forms of receptivity and forms of intuition respectively.⁴⁹

The synthesis of apprehension, accordingly, must have an a priori use, since our forms of intuition are a priori forms. In this pure synthesis a manifold is somehow synthesized into representations of space and time.⁵⁰ Let me now give a brief sketch of this process of a priori synthesis since the way it ought to be conceived will serve to provide a way out of the problem outlined above of our losing contact with the ‘below the line’ elements of sensory consciousness.

First of all, it must be acknowledged that the synthetic process cannot provide us with intuitive representations of space and time unless we expand it (in the spirit of

⁴⁹ Since Kant often uses form of intuition for what he calls formal intuition in B160 fn., I have decided not to use his somewhat confusing terminology in this case, but rather to stick to Sellars’s terminological suggestion instead.

⁵⁰ These (undetermined) *intuitive* representations of space and time have to be distinguished carefully from the (determined) *concepts* of space and time based upon them. Cf. e.g. A25/B39.

the B-Deduction) to encompass the entirety of the threefold synthesis – or, at the very least, apprehension and reproduction must be taken together.⁵¹ Furthermore, we would also seem to need the synthesis of recognition, as the synthesized representations would then be conscious representations. This is, however, not a major problem since we have to think the aspects of the threefold synthesis together anyway.

The problem with an a priori synthesis of a manifold is that it is not easy to see on what kind of *matter* this synthesis should operate. We do not have any formal manifold in the sense of a given manifold of forms.⁵² The forms of receptivity are not given, save by their product, the receptive sensations. The only manifold that provides material for a synthesis of apprehension is therefore the formed material that is given to our spontaneity by the synopsis of sense – a thoroughly *a posteriori* product. How can we get from there to a pure synthesis of an a priori manifold? The solution seems to lie in a use of *abstraction* that, as it were, purifies the synoptically given manifold by concentrating on the process of synthesis and neglecting its material content. Kant illustrates this concentration on the manner or mode in which the material is given in apprehension in § 24 of the B-Deduction:

We cannot represent the three dimensions of space save by setting three lines at right angles to one another from the same point. Even time itself we cannot represent, save in so far as we attend, in the drawing of a straight line (which has to serve as the outer figurative representation of time), merely to the act of the synthesis of the manifold whereby we successively determine inner sense, and in so doing attend to the succession of this determination in inner sense. Motion, as an act of a subject (not as a determination of an object), and therefore the synthesis of the manifold in space, first produces the concept of succession – if we abstract from this manifold and attend solely to the act through which we determine the inner sense according to its form. (B154)

What Kant describes here is not an abstract separation of the formal and qualitative content of a given representation, but rather a concentration on the procedural character of the act of synthesis. That he talks about the concept of succession and not about time as a form of intuition (formal intuition) should not deter us from the application of the method described to the intuition of time (or space), since this undetermined intuitive representation, even on Kant’s description, would be a necessary precondition of the determined concept of time as succession.

In the act of synthesis we therefore have to concentrate on the properties that belong solely to the formal aspects of sensibility. To this end, we abstract from the qualitative aspects apprehended in the synthesis as well as from those formal aspects that do not belong to sensibility but solely to understanding (and which are, consequently, not aspects of the act that gives us forms of intuition but rather a priori concepts). If we proceed in this way, we are left with what amounts to formal intuitions of time and space. This abstractive account is therefore able to explain

⁵¹ Which could, by the way, help to explain the lapse on Kant’s part in the original characterization of the synthesis of apprehension: he might have been preoccupied with a priori synthesis.

⁵² Vaihinger tried to defend this line of interpretation. R.P. Wolff interpreted Kant along similar lines, but correctly judged it a failure – unfortunately, however, as a failure on Kant’s part, and not on the part of his interpretation. Cf. Vaihinger (1892, 102–111) and Wolff (1963, 218–223).

why we come to have pure intuitive representations of space and time only *after* using them as forms of intuition in the schematizing of the categories in the modeling of image-models. These intuitions are a priori since we understand through the act of abstraction that they are the forms that underlie each and every intuitive representation. Otherwise we could not have obtained a consciousness of them through this kind of process.

How is this a priori synthesis of apprehension supposed to restore the contact to the synoptical elements below the line that separates receptivity from spontaneity – a contact that guarantees the ‘guidance from without’ required by the conceptual order? Since the qualitative aspects of our sensory consciousness above and below the line cannot be used for this purpose, we should now heed its formal aspects not only above the line but also below it. I have noted before that it is not possible to give any direct characterization of these forms. But now we can substantiate the previously empty, indirect characterization of those forms of receptivity as *being of a kind that produces synoptically structured representations, which are able to serve as the basis for a synthesis producing exactly our forms of intuition*. In other words, we would not have synthesized exactly *these* forms of intuition by a synthesis that is both a priori *and* transcendental unless we had been given material synoptically *formed like this* “manifold which sensibility presents in its *original* receptivity” (A100; my emphasis).

Though the inaccessibility of the below the line aspects is guaranteed in this description of the relation of formal aspects above and below that line which separates sheer receptivity from spontaneity, the contact between the two pairs of forms (forms of receptivity and forms of intuition) is of a kind completely different from the relation between the receptive and spontaneous sensations. This is mainly due to the fact that the transcendental status of forms of intuition sharply distinguishes them from objective sensations. There is a transcendental argument for the *existence* of sensations (as matter of experiences), but there is no such argument as to their concrete nature. Yet, in the case of forms of intuition, there *is*, in Kant’s opinion, such an argument (e.g. in the case of space, from the necessity of thinking something distinct from us).⁵³ It is therefore exactly *those* forms of intuition that we have to synthesize in order to be able to intuitively refer to objects of experience. And this fact is explained by our sensibility being characterized by exactly *these* forms of receptivity.

Those representations then, which we *de facto* entertain in perception of empirical reality, are representations dependent on the synoptically given material that is structured by the forms of receptivity in their individual formal aspects – their individual shape and their individual duration. Furthermore, what is structured in this process is in turn due to our being affected by things-in-themselves. Given both these claims, it seems reasonable to conclude that the idea of a conceptually, and hence normatively, laden process being ‘guided from without’ is done justice in the Kantian system.

⁵³ Cf. Haag (2007, 142–150).

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