

Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space

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Space is not an empirical concept that has been drawn from outer experiences. For in order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me (i.e., to something in another place in space from that in which I find myself), thus in order for me to represent them as outside and next to one another, thus not merely different but as in different places, the representation of space must already be their ground. Thus 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. (A23/B39)¹

Der Raum is kein empirischer Begriff, der von äußeren Erfahrungen abgezogen worden. Denn damit gewisse Empfindungen auf etwas außer mir bezogen werden, (d.i. auf etwas in einem

¹For convenience, references to Kant's texts are given parenthetically in the text, following the standard practice of 'A' and 'B' referring to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Other Kant texts are abbreviated as follows:

- An* *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. V. L. Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978).
CJ *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).
CPR *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. and trans. M. J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
FS "The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures," in *Theoretical Philosophy 1775–1770*, trans. D. Walford and R. Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
JL *Jäsche Logic*, ed. and trans. J. M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
MM *Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. J. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. M. J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
MFNS *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. M. Friedman, in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. H. Allison and P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
P *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. G. Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
PC *Philosophical Correspondence*, ed. and trans. A. Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
VL *Vienna Logic*, ed. and trans. J. M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Page references are to the standard Akademie edition of Kant's works, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vols. 1–29 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–).

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ändern Orte des Raumes, als darinnen ich mich befinde,) imgleichen damit ich sie als außer und neben einander, mithin nicht bloß verschieden, sondern als in verschiedenen Orten vorstellen können, dazu muß die Vorstellung des Raumes schon zum Grunde liegen. (A23/B39)

I

KANT CLAIMS THAT SPACE IS THE *a priori* form of our outer intuition. As I read it, the claim has two parts:

- (i) that it is a condition of the possibility of being perceptually presented with empirical particulars² that we represent the world spatially, and
- (ii) that it is a condition of being perceptually presented with empirical particulars (and/or an objective world) that this spatial representation is *a priori*.

I argue here that a dominant way of reading Kant makes it difficult to make sense of this claim and the role it plays in at least one of his arguments, and suggest an alternative approach. The dominant reading I have in mind is one that holds that, for Kant, we cannot be perceptually presented with, or represent, particular things independently of our applying, or having the ability to apply, concepts, and in particular the categories, to these particulars, and that therefore sees him as proponent of something like the contemporary positions that deny that there can be representational mental content independent of concepts.³ I argue that, for Kant, the application of concepts is not necessary for our being perceptually presented with outer particulars: the *role* of intuition is to present us with particulars, and it does not depend on concepts to play this role. This means that to understand Kant's claim that space is the *a priori* form of our outer intuition, we need to understand why it is a condition of being perceptually presented with outer particulars that we represent them spatially and that this spatial representation is in some sense *a priori*. My aim here is to clarify Kant's notion of intuition and his account of the contribution made to cognition by intuition; this is a necessary preliminary to understanding his account of the role of and need for the *a priori* representation of space. I argue that there are three advantages of my reading. First, it makes sense of the role Kant allocates to intuition as one of the two essential and distinct ingredients in cognition. Second, it gives a more nuanced account of the role of the so-called given in Kant's position than is usually allowed. Third, it makes sense of the above-quoted argument for the *a priority* of space. My argument proceeds in three stages. First, in section 2, I argue against John McDowell's very strong claim that intuition does not make an *even notionally* separable contribution

²As I am using it 'particular' is broader and less specific than 'physical object': "material objects, people and their shadows are all particulars" (P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* [London: Methuen, 1959], 15).

³Falkenstein, for example, says, "For Kant, our senses are insufficient for the perception of particular objects. Perception only occurs when the information acquired by the senses is recognized by us as an instance of an object of a certain kind" (L. Falkenstein, "Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic," in *A Companion to Kant*, ed. G. Bird [Oxford: Blackwell, 2006], 140–53, at 141). For dissenters from this consensus, see R. Hanna, "Kant and Non-conceptual Content," *European Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2005): 247–90; R. Hanna, "Kantian Non-Conceptualism," *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008): 41–64; and S. Grüne, "Begriffe als Regeln der Wahrnehmung" ["Begriffe"], in *Proceedings of the 10th International Kant Congress*, ed. V. Rohden, R. Terra, and G. Almeida (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 255–65.

to cognition.⁴ While perhaps few Kant commentators would sign up for quite so strong a claim (and of course McDowell himself does not present his work as Kant scholarship aimed primarily at textual fidelity), it is an influential view. Showing that intuition makes an at least notionally separable representational contribution does not show that Kant allows that this contribution can be realized in the absence of the application of concepts; this is the next step of the argument, in section 3, where I respond to the considerations from the Transcendental Deduction that lead commentators to think that, for Kant, we cannot be perceptually presented with particulars in the absence of the application of concepts. The final stage of the argument, in section 4, is to show that my reading enables us to make sense of one of Kant's arguments in the *Metaphysical Exposition* for the *a priori* of space. Here I argue, briefly, against Daniel Warren's important attack on interpretations of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* that see Kant as arguing that the representation of space is a condition of the possibility of representing distinct particulars.

I have three caveats about the scope of my argument. The first is that I am not trying to deal with all of Kant's concerns in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. There are a number of things going on in this brief but densely argued section: Kant wants to explain the possibility of mathematical knowledge. He wants to prove transcendental idealism. And he wants to argue for a specific account of our (primary) representations of space and time: that they are non-conceptual and non-empirical. Commentators writing on the *Aesthetic* have also found in it arguments for the claim that space is a condition of the possibility of experience or perception of an objective world,⁵ and/or is necessary to represent objects as distinct from each other and ourselves.⁶ I discuss only one small part of this project: the idea that space is the *a priori* form of our outer intuition. I argue that this idea is easily misunderstood, if we overemphasize the role of concepts in perception.

The second caveat follows closely from the first: I say little here about Kant's transcendental idealism. I comment briefly, at the end of section 3, about how my reading could relate to transcendental idealism, but I mostly assume that the arguments can be conducted within the framework of Kant's empirical realism. This is not because I do not see transcendental idealism as bound up with the issues I discuss here, but rather because of my view of the order of explanation in Kant's account: transcendental idealism is Kant's explanation of the possibility of substantive *a priori* knowledge, which means that the claim that there are *a priori* conditions of being presented with particulars is prior to the claim about transcendental ideality—it is what the idealism supposedly explains.

My third caveat is that while I think there are interesting relations between Kant's position and some aspects of contemporary debates, I do not get into these debates here. I argue that making sense of Kant's position requires seeing that concepts do not play quite as strong a role in his account of our perceptual representation of particulars as is generally thought to be the case, and not that Kant is committed to any specific contemporary positions. There are a number

⁴J. McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 9.

⁵See, for example, P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966).

⁶See, for example, H. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

of different ways in which non-conceptual content is understood in contemporary debates—one thing which recent writers agree about is that there is not an agreed account of non-conceptual content.⁷ I am concerned here to argue only for the attribution to Kant of what Speaks calls ‘relative’, as opposed to ‘absolute’, non-conceptual content.⁸ The idea is that only the latter asserts that perception and belief have an intrinsically different structure; the former merely claims that a subject can have a perceptual representation with a certain content without herself possessing relevant concepts to describe that content.⁹ Further, while, according to this view, what perceptual states a subject might be in does not depend on what concepts she possesses, this need not mean denying that our perceptual states *are* brought under concepts, and that experience, for us, typically is “an actualization of conceptual capacities in sensory consciousness itself.”¹⁰ Rather, what is denied is that experience is representational only to the extent that it is brought under concepts. Applying this to Kant, the idea is not that we need deny that our intuitions *are* brought under concepts (and must be, if we are to cognize an objective world), but that they need to be brought under concepts in order to present us with particulars. I will call the view that we cannot be perceptually presented with a particular independently of the application of concepts *strong conceptualism*, and I will argue that Kant is not a strong conceptualist. The central issue here is about the role of intuition: my aim is to argue that, for Kant, the role of empirical intuition is to present us with empirical particulars, and it does not depend on concepts to make this contribution.

⁷See J. Speaks, “Is There a Problem About Nonconceptual Content?” [“Is There a Problem?”], *Philosophical Review* 114 (2005): 359–98.

⁸Speaks, “Is There a Problem.”

⁹R. G. Heck, “Non-conceptual Content and the ‘Space of Reasons’” [“Non-conceptual Content?”], *Philosophical Review* 109 (2000): 483–523; see also J. Bermúdez, “Non-conceptual Mental Content,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2003/entries/content-non-conceptual/> (2003). Another way to put the point is to say that whereas, as many people think, what beliefs you can have depend on what concepts you possess, what you can perceive does not. My arguments allow but do not discuss the idea that Kant *also* has a role for absolute non-conceptual content. My concern here is with whether, according to Kant, a subject’s perceptually representing those aspects of things that *can* be brought under concepts requires the subject’s having the relevant concepts; whether a subject must have the concepts of roundness, redness, and particularity to perceive a round, red particular. A reason to think that Kant also has an absolute account of non-conceptual content is that he thinks that there are features of our representations of space and time that *cannot* be captured conceptually (see Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism”). A possible view would be to argue that, while he thinks that space and time make a non-conceptual contribution to cognition, and therefore that there is an aspect of our perceptual representation of the world that is intrinsically different from conceptual representation, this could not be realized in a creature that did not have and apply concepts. (This would be similar to Peacocke’s “Autonomy thesis.” See C. Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992]). Note that this means that one could see Kant as thinking that there is absolutely non-conceptual content in the sense of content that cannot be captured intrinsically, while still seeing him as a strong conceptualist in my sense.

¹⁰J. McDowell, “Précis of Mind and World” and “Reply to Commentators” [“Précis”], *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58 (1998), 365–68 and 403–31. As Smith argues, the non-conceptualist need not deny that perceptual experience, for us, is “suffused with concepts,” or that possession of a concept may affect the way something perceptually appears to you. Instead, the claim is that “concepts . . . are irrelevant to what it is that makes any sensory state a perception at all: they are irrelevant to the intentionality of perception, to its basic world-directedness,” (A. D. Smith, *The Problem of Perception* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002], 95).

In the following section, I argue against the McDowellian view of Kantian intuition. In section 2.1, I present textual evidence for thinking that intuition makes a distinct contribution to cognition, and that this contribution is to present us with particulars. In section 2.2, I then consider objections to my view based on conflicting accounts of intuition.

2.1

McDowell argues that Kantian intuitions “are representations of individuals that already involve the understanding, the faculty associated with concepts.” He says that “we might describe intuitions as shapings of sensory consciousness by the understanding,”¹¹ and that “we should understand what Kant calls ‘intuition’—experiential intake . . . as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content.”¹² There are two features of McDowell’s view that I question. First, he claims that intuition does not make an even notionally separable contribution to cognition. Second, he thinks that we cannot be perceptually presented with individuals or particulars in the absence of applying concepts. I argue that intuition does make an at least notionally separable contribution to cognition, and that the contribution it makes is to perceptually present us with individuals.

Prima facie textual evidence against the McDowellian claim that intuition does not make an even notionally separable contribution to cognition is provided by the passages in which Kant simply asserts that intuition makes an independent representational contribution:

[O]bjects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to the functions of the understanding. . . . For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity. . . . Appearances would nonetheless offer objects to our intuition, for *intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking*. (A89/B122–A90/B123; my emphasis)¹³

That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. (B132)

¹¹J. McDowell, “Having the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality” (1997 Woodbridge Lectures) [Woodbridge], *Journal of Philosophy* 95 (1998): 431–91, at 452.

¹²McDowell, *Mind and World*, 9.

¹³An obvious objection here would be to say that, in the context, it is not clear that this passage is Kant’s considered view. After all, he says that “appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity,” but he is going to argue that this is not the case. However, as Paton points out, in the A89/B122 passage Kant says that objects *can* (*können*) appear to us without necessarily having to be related to the functions of the understanding, whereas he considers (and rejects) the possibility that appearances *could* (*könnten*) be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity (H. J. Paton, *Kant’s Metaphysics of Experience* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936], bk. 1, 324n). Compare: *Denn es könnten wohl allenfalls Erscheinungen so beschaffen sein, daß der Verstand sie den Bedingungen seiner Einheit gar nicht gemäß fände* (A90/B123) and *mithin können uns allerdings Gegenstände erscheinen, ohne das sie sich notwendig auf Funktionen des Verstandes beziehen müssen* (A89/B122). In the first, Kant discusses the possibility that objects *could* appear to us without being in accord with the conditions of the unity of the understanding, and goes on to argue that this is not the case. In the second, Kant asserts that objects *can* appear to us without being related to the understanding, and immediately following this he states, as the explanation of this possibility, that “intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking” (A91/B123).

Concepts differ from intuition by virtue of the fact that all intuition is singular. He who sees his first tree does not know what it is that he sees. (VL 905)

In his example of the “savage” who sees a house but does not know what it is, Kant says,

[H]e admittedly has before him in his representation the very same object as someone else who is acquainted with it determinately as a dwelling established for men. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two. With one it is *mere intuition*, with the other it is *intuition and concept* at the same time. (JL 33)¹⁴

Further evidence that intuition makes a separable contribution to cognition is that the first thing Kant argues about our primary representations of space and time is that they are non-empirical and non-conceptual (A25/B39, B136n), and he explains the possibility of our having, in geometry, *a priori* knowledge of the structure of space by saying that space and time are two *sources of cognition*, “from which different synthetic cognitions can be drawn *a priori*” (A39/B56). Space and time are “sources of cognition,” but our primary representations of them are not conceptual; content is given in pure intuition, which Kant thinks is essential for mathematical knowledge. The argument from incongruent counterparts *explicitly depends* on the idea that there can be a difference in the way two things are presented to us *even where there is no conceptual difference*:

We can therefore make the difference between similar and equal but nonetheless incongruent things (e.g., oppositely spiralled snails) intelligible through no concepts alone, but only through the relation to the right-hand and left-hand, which refers immediately to intuition. (4:286)¹⁵

When two objects are congruent, we can move one into the other’s location. Kant thinks that our ability to represent this depends on features of the way we represent space and movement within space which are not descriptive in character.¹⁶

I have given textual evidence for thinking that intuition makes a notionally separable contribution to cognition. Next, I discuss a *prima facie* textual reason for thinking that the contribution made by intuition is to present us with individuals: this gives the most straightforward reading of Kant’s fundamental claim that cognition contains two *jointly essential and individually distinct* ingredients—intuitions and concepts—combined with his definition of intuition, and the role for which he introduces it.

¹⁴Further, Kant says that “judgment is therefore the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it” (A68/B94), which implies that something is represented independent of judgment. And he says in the Aesthetic that we “isolate sensibility by separating off everything that the understanding thinks through its concepts” (A22/B36), which suggests that there is representational content left when we abstract from conceptual contributions, and that the Aesthetic is concerned with this, at least notionally separable, content.

¹⁵See also *MFNS* 4:480. As Jill Buroker says, of course Kant recognizes that we can describe incongruent counterparts verbally, but he “wants to show that we cannot justify the judgment that such objects are incongruent by *conceptual knowledge alone*” (J. V. Buroker, *Space and Incongruence* [Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1981], 81). The argument from incongruent counterparts seems to give reason for thinking that Kant also has an absolute account of non-conceptual content. See note 9.

¹⁶He says of two incongruent counterparts that “nothing will be found in either, when it is fully described by itself, that is not also in the *description* of the other” (P 286; my emphasis); “there are no inner differences here that any understanding could merely think; and yet the differences are inner as far as the senses teach” (P 286).

Kant introduces the two ingredients by contrast with each other: he says that the way concepts relate to particulars is “mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things,” whereas intuition is “immediately related to an object and is singular” (A320/B377).¹⁷ For Kant, concepts are (in some sense) rules (A141/B180), essentially general, and essentially constituents of judgments, and therefore of inferential thinking. For Kant, the generality of concepts means that concepts represent features that, in principle, it is always possible that more than one thing could have. Note that while I take as the most central distinguishing feature of concepts, for Kant, the fact that they are essentially constituents of judgments, and are essentially general, an alternative is to foreground his saying that concepts are rules for synthesis.¹⁸ This raises a question as to whether there are different accounts of concepts to be found in Kant, and whether what governs synthesis in all cases has to be understood as the reflective concepts that are essentially constituents of judgments (the relation between concepts and synthesis is discussed further below, in section 4). My concern is with whether, according to Kant, having and applying concepts *understood as general rules which are essentially constituents of judgments* is necessary for perception of particulars. Clearly, how demanding a characterization of concepts we give affects how robust the thesis of non-conceptual content will be; this characterization of concepts is in keeping with McDowell, who says, “It is essential to conceptual capacities, in the demanding sense, that they can be exploited in active thinking, thinking that is open to reflection about its own rational credentials.”¹⁹

Kant’s notion of intuition is more technical than his account of concepts. As he introduces the notion, the crucial features of intuitions are that they are representations that are immediate and singular. I suggest that the most straightforward reading of immediacy and singularity is that intuitions are representations that involve the presence to consciousness of the particular they represent. In other words, intuitions represent objects *immediately* because they *present* the particular object itself, as opposed to being representations that enable us to think about it whether it is present or not.²⁰ The singularity of intuitions can be understood as the idea that an intuition presents a specific particular thing, again, unlike con-

¹⁷See also A68/B93, A140–41/B180.

¹⁸See Grüne (“Begriffe,” 257–58), who argues that Kant’s account includes different levels of what is involved in the application of concepts, with only the higher levels involving concepts as constituents of judgments. Beatrice Longuenesse argues that Kant uses ‘concept’ in two ways: to refer to the grasping of the unity of synthesis, and as “reflected concepts,” or discursive rules. B. Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 46–47. See also H. Ginsborg, “Lawfulness without a Law: Kant on the Free Play of Imagination and Understanding” [“Lawfulness”], *Philosophical Topics* 25 (1997): 37–81.

¹⁹McDowell, *Mind and World*, 47.

²⁰Kant says that “[a]n intuition is a representation of the sort which would depend immediately on the presence of an object” (P 281). He explains the mediacy of concepts by saying, “since no representation pertains to the object immediately except intuition alone, a concept is thus never immediately related to an object, but is always related to some other representation of it (whether that be an intuition or itself already a concept). Judgment is therefore the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it” (A68/B93). Commenting on this passage, Houston Smit argues that “the immediacy of an intuition can be characterized—*albeit* negatively—as its not relating to an object by means of some other representation of that object” (H. Smit, “Kant on Marks and the Immediacy of Intuition” [“Kant on Marks”], *Philosophical Review* 109 [2000]: 235–66, at 263).

cepts that, since they are essentially general and apply to all the things which fall under them, do not pick out particular individuals.²¹ Intuitions are representations (mental states with intentional content), but they are representations that essentially involve the presence to consciousness of the things they represent.²² Kant thinks it is a feature of our empirical intuition, but not of the notion of intuition, that it involves objects affecting our senses (he thinks that pure intuitions pick out space and time as individuals that do not affect us, and he allows the bare possibility of an intellectual intuition). Finite creatures like us can have singular representations of empirical particulars only if they affect our senses, and thus intuitions are essentially connected to receptivity (here again they contrast with concepts, which are essentially connected with spontaneity).

This straightforward explanation of the defining features of Kantian intuition fits neatly with the role for which he introduces intuition: that of *giving* us the objects about which we think. In contrast, the role of concepts is enabling us to *think* objects (to make judgments about them). The point could be put by say-

²¹Jaakko Hintikka suggests that immediacy and singularity are not distinct criteria. J. Hintikka, "On Kant's Notion of Intuition," in *The First Critique: Reflections on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. T. Penelhum and J. J. MacIntosh (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1969), 38–53, at 42. It seems to me that they are different, since, at least on the face of it, it could be that what was immediately present was simply sensation, or an unorganized manifold. In contrast to this, Kant thinks that what is immediately present to us are spatially located things with discriminable spatial boundaries. Hintikka also suggests that Kant's notion of intuition is close to what we would call a singular term, as does Charles Parsons, although Parsons argues against Hintikka's view that the singularity and immediacy criteria are not distinct, and understands immediacy in terms of presence to the mind (C. Parsons, "The Transcendental Aesthetic," *Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. P. Guyer [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 62–100). As Manley Thompson, Robert Howell, and Kirk Wilson point out, seeing intuitions as like singular terms makes Kant's notion of intuition inappropriately conceptual; intuitions are not linguistic expressions. See M. Thompson, "Singular Terms and Intuition in Kant's Epistemology" ["Singular Terms"], *Review of Metaphysics* 26 (1973): 314–43; R. Howell, "Intuition, Synthesis, and Individuation in the *Critique of Pure Reason*" ["Intuition, Synthesis"], *Noûs* 7 (1973): 207–32; K. Wilson, "Kant on Intuition," *Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1975): 247–65. Smit argues that Hintikka, Thompson, and Howell are wrong to understand immediacy as a matter of not relating through marks, because, he argues, Kant allows both intuitions and concepts to have marks; on his view, the marks of intuitions are relevantly like tropes, in that they involve presentation of a property as part of an object, where the property is represented as a single instance, rather than as general (Smit, "Kant on Marks," 238, 255).

²²Kant's rejection of the Cartesian conception of experience—according to which mental states of awareness, experience, or perception can be fully characterized in a way that is entirely internal to the subject, and makes no reference to anything external to the subject—is most clearly seen in his refutation of idealism (B274–79, Bxxxix–Bxli), but, I argue, can also be seen in his notion of intuition. A similar view is presented by Marcus Willaschek, who argues that Kant's account of intuition must be understood in terms of an externalist account of mental content (M. Willaschek, "Der transzendente Idealismus und die Idealität von Raum und Zeit" ["Der transzendente Idealismus"], *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 51 [1997]: 537–64, at 546–47). I disagree with Willaschek with respect to the idea that this feature of intuition must be understood, in the first instance, *causally*—that which object an intuition presents depends on which object caused the intuition. Rather, I think the more fundamental Kantian notion (which, unlike Willaschek's analysis, would include pure intuition) is that of the *presence* to consciousness of the object (and of course, in addition, Kant thinks that spatiotemporal objects can be present to our consciousness only by causally affecting us). A further disagreement is that Willaschek thinks that it is only in combination with concepts that intuitions refer to objects ("Der transzendente Idealismus," 546, 558–59). Willaschek argues that, without concepts, intuitions have a *merely causal* relation to objects, and this, it seems to me, fits less straightforwardly with immediacy and singularity than does my reading.

ing that the role of intuition is that of ensuring that our thoughts latch onto the world—that we succeed in referring to objects.²³ Referring to an object is most standardly taken to mean something which happens at the level of *thought*: having a thought which succeeds in latching onto the object. Referential *thought* clearly involves concepts. On the other hand, there is a less demanding sense in which an object can be directly related to or present to consciousness: an object can be perceptually presented to me in such a way that I am in a position to attend to it, to focus on it, and to do things to it. This is what, I argue, intuition supplies, and is what, Kant thinks, thought alone cannot ensure. Against the Leibnizian-Wolffian view that objects are individuated by complete intellectual determination, or by complete individual concepts, Kant thinks that concepts cannot uniquely individuate, and that it is intuition alone that enables our mental representations to latch on to individual things. He says that “all thought . . . must ultimately be related to intuitions, thus, in our case, to sensibility, since there is no other way in which objects can be given to us” (A19/B33), and, “For every concept there is requisite . . . the possibility of giving it an object to which it is to be related. . . . Now the object cannot be given to a concept otherwise than in intuition” (A239/B298). Kant thinks that concepts alone cannot put us in direct cognitive contact with their objects because they are essentially general, and therefore, on their own, cannot secure reference to particular individual things.²⁴ This is why thought without intuition cannot be objectively valid. For our thoughts to succeed in relating to objects we must be consciously presented with (at least some of) those very individuals. For us, this can happen only as a result of their affecting our senses, but note that it is not merely the fact that intuitions involve objects causally affecting us that enables them to refer uniquely to objects; it is the fact that intuitions are individual representations (presentations to consciousness) that essentially involve the presence of the thing represented. Kant does not introduce intuition as having a merely causal or information processing role (in this respect, the difference between intuition and sensation, discussed below, is crucial), but rather says that it enables cognition to be objectively valid through *giving* us objects.

In contemporary debates, one of the purposes for which non-conceptual content is invoked is that of fixing the reference of demonstratives, and/or accounting for the object-directed nature of perceptual experience. It is argued that there must be conscious representational states that are prior to thought, to which we can appeal in explaining how it is that we have thought of an object.²⁵ It seems to

²³See Howell, “Intuition, Synthesis,” 213.

²⁴As Gordon Brittan points out, Kant thinks that “[h]owever extensive *our* description of the object, it is always possible that this description refers to distinct individuals, which differ from one another with respect to a property which has not yet been mentioned, or, in the case of ‘incongruent counterparts’, which are distinct even if all of their intrinsic properties are in common” (C. G. Brittan, “Kant’s Philosophy of Mathematics,” in *A Companion to Kant*, 222–35, at 231). Brittan argues that seeing the role of intuition as that of giving us objects applies to pure intuition as well—the point of Kant’s account of pure intuition is to give geometrical propositions referents (C. G. Brittan, *Kant’s Theory of Science* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978]). Kant does not think that thought can latch onto only those things that are directly presented to intuition, but where something is not, itself, directly presented to intuition, we can individuate it only if it is causally related to something that is directly presented to intuition.

²⁵J. Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 6, 45, 122; Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, 84.

me that this is the role for which Kant invokes intuition; he says that there must be an ingredient in cognition that is essentially distinct from concepts, involves the presence of the experienced object, is prior to thought, and is necessary for us to be presented with the objects about which we think (A19/B33, A51/B75, *P* 4:282). As one of the two (jointly essential and individually distinct) ingredients of cognition, intuition makes a contribution to our representation of the world, and the role for which Kant introduces it is that of giving us immediate presentational access to the objects about which we think. One of Kant's fundamental thoughts is that the kind of direct contact with objects that involves particular things being present to consciousness is essential for cognition; intuition is what links our concepts to the world through directly (immediately) presenting particular (singular) things to our consciousness.

2.2

Having given textual support for thinking that intuitions alone can present us with particulars or individual things, I now consider some of the textual evidence against this. I first consider this with respect to the notion of intuition alone, to the extent that this is possible; in the next section, I look at objections to my view that arise when the Transcendental Aesthetic is read, as it must be, in the light of the Transcendental Deduction. In terms of Kant's initial presentation of the notion of intuition, probably the most obvious objection to my reading is Kant's famous claim that intuitions without concepts are blind. Other objections are based on Kant's alleged rejection of the "Myth of the Given," and on his account of synthesis.

Probably the most widely accepted textual basis for rejecting my reading is Kant's famous claim that:

Intuition [*Anschauung*] and concepts [*Begriffe*] therefore constitute the elements of all our cognition [*Erkenntnis*], so that neither concepts without intuition corresponding to them in some way, nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition. . . . Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. *Thoughts without content [Inhalt] are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.* . . . The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. Only from their unification can cognition arise. (A50–51/B74–75; my emphasis)

Clearly, this passage does not support McDowell's extremely strong claim that intuition does not make an even *notionally* separable contribution to cognition, and as Robert Hanna argues, a lot depends on how *cognition* is understood in the context of the passage.²⁶ Understood as empirical knowledge (something that only

²⁶Hanna, "Kant and Non-Conceptual Content." If all representationally significant mental content is cognition, then this passage implies that we cannot have representationally significant mental content without both the ability to apply concepts and the possibility of these concepts being related to intuitions. But if cognition is taken to be something more specific—such as objectively valid judgment—then there could be representational mental content that is less or thinner than cognition, and it is arguable that this is Kant's intention. In many places Kant separates out different levels of what is involved in cognition, suggesting that cognizing proper involves the understanding, but that there are levels of mental representation that are less than this. For example:

concept-possessing rational adult humans have in fully-fledged form, and which is Kant's main concern) cognition is clearly more than perception. Further, it is an essential part of Kant's view that to cognize an object is *more* than just to think about it; thinking is not objectively valid in the absence of a possible connection with intuition because it lacks a possible object (a referent). So cognition is *more* than thinking (Bxxviii, B146), but it is clearly Kant's view that thinking makes an at least notionally separable contribution to cognition.²⁷ Since he thinks that one of the two essential ingredients of cognition—thinking or using concepts—makes a notionally separable contribution, his statement of the necessary co-operation of thought and intuition for cognition cannot be taken to rule out receptivity's *also* making a notionally separable contribution.

It might still be argued that, while intuition makes a *notionally* separable contribution, the blindness claim means that this contribution cannot be to present us with individuals/particulars. However, while the metaphorical term 'blind' on its own might suggest something that is in no sense representational, given Kant's *definition* of intuition, intuitional blindness *cannot* mean that intuitions are not *singular representations* because Kant *defines* intuitions as immediate singular representations, and the role he accords to them is that of *giving* us objects. Lorne Falkenstein is one of the few supporters of the strong (standard) reading of the blindness claim who sees how inconsistent it is with much of what Kant says in the Aesthetic. He takes blindness to mean that intuitions are not individual representations, and following this through, he is driven to saying that, for Kant, our representations of space and time are "*concepts* of the forms of intuition"²⁸ and to denying that intuitions are singular representations (or else to denying that they are distinct from concepts). This is clearly some distance from the text, but Falk-

The *first* degree of cognition is: *to represent* something;

The *second*: to represent something with consciousness, or *to perceive* (*percipere*);

The *third*: *to be acquainted* with something (*noscere*), or to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to *sameness* and as to *difference*;

The *fourth*: to be acquainted with something *with consciousness*, i.e., to *cognize* it (*cognoscere*). Animals are acquainted with objects too, but they do not *cognize* them.

The *fifth*: *to understand* something (*intelligere*), i.e., to cognize something *through the understanding by means of concepts*, or to *conceive*. . . .

The *sixth*: to cognize something through reason, or *to have insight* into it (*perspicere*). With few things do we get this far. (*JL* 64–65)

²⁷And it is arguable that the kind of thinking that is less than cognition—such as transcendent metaphysics—is still representational mental content in some sense. This would be disputed by those who read Kant as thinking that transcendent metaphysics is barely intelligible, including McDowell, who explains Kant's saying that thoughts without concepts are empty by saying that "for a thought to be empty would be for there to be nothing that one thinks when one thinks it; that is, for it to lack what I am calling 'representational content'. That would be for it not really to be a thought at all" (McDowell, *Mind and World*, 3–4). While transcendent metaphysics, for Kant, is less than cognition, it is problematic to say that it is not really thought at all, especially given the role it plays in his ethics. Rather, empty thoughts are ones for which there is no possibility of our securing referents, and which therefore are not what Kant calls objectively valid and do not qualify as cognition proper.

²⁸L. Falkenstein, *Kant's Intuitionism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 63; my emphasis; also 59.

enstein argues that we simply cannot make everything Kant says about intuition cohere. He thinks that Kant is inconsistent between using ‘intuition’ to mean raw data and using it to mean experience of individual objects, and that in the latter case it involves concepts, because it is not blind.²⁹ He says that if intuitions are singular representations or perceptions, they are not distinct from intellectual representations but are a subset of them.³⁰ As Falkenstein notes, his reading straightforwardly contradicts Kant’s *singularity* criterion of intuition (A31–32/B47, A320/B377, A713/B741), as well as Kant’s claim that concepts are necessarily general, which are very serious deviations from the text. However, Falkenstein thinks that if we do not see intuition as raw sensory input, then intuitions involve mental *processing*, which he sees as in tension with Kant’s statements about both the *receptivity/passivity* of sensibility and the *immediacy* of intuition. He concludes that we cannot make everything Kant says here cohere.

Falkenstein’s view seems based on thinking that only raw sensory input, and not singular representations, could be immediate and essentially connected to receptivity. On my reading, immediacy is understood as saying that, unlike concepts, intuitions are representations that essentially involve the presence to consciousness of the object represented, and this is compatible with this requiring some processing. The relational view of perception is not undermined by the existence of cognitive processing. In contrast, raw sensory data need not be immediate, in the sense that they might not be given to consciousness, and might play a sub-personal role.

Similarly, the claim that intuitions centrally involve objects affecting us (that sensibility is essentially receptive) does not mean denying any role to mental processing. We do not have to see Kant as either forced to deny that mental activity is necessary to arrange and represent the data of the senses spatiotemporally, or forced to assert that this activity involves conceptualizing. Further, it is indisputably Kant’s view that our minds make a contribution to the representation of empirical intuitions through organizing them in the framework of a *a priori* intuition, and Kant does not take this to undermine either immediacy or receptivity. The receptivity claim says that intuitive representations are the way they are because of the way objects are, and because objects affect us. Consider a tomato affecting our senses (putting aside possible distinctions between primary and secondary qualities). We perceptually represent the tomato as round and red because it is round and red, and its roundness and redness affect our senses. However, color and shape are processed in different processing streams, and the visual system needs to “reassemble” or bind information from the different streams in order

²⁹He says that “Kant’s views on the blindness of intuition and the necessity of intellectual synthesis for cognition . . . entail that even the perception of singular objects or mereological wholes must involve synthesis under the categories and so cannot be non-intellectual” (Falkenstein, *Kant’s Intuitionism*, 58). Wilfred Sellars, similarly, sees Kant’s notion of intuition as confused between an account of singular representations (which are in some sense conceptual), and a sheer manifold of receptivity (which is not conceptual) (W. Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968], 3–7). As I argue below, this confusion arises only if, unlike Kant, we fail to distinguish between the roles of sensation and intuition.

³⁰Falkenstein, *Kant’s Intuitionism*, 70.

to represent a single round red thing.³¹ Processing that is not conceptualizing is involved in this, but this does not undermine the idea that we represent the tomato as round and red because it is round and red and its roundness and redness affect our senses. If we allow that the existence of processing or synthesizing that is not conceptualizing would not conflict with either receptivity or immediacy, we can hold onto *all* of Kant's criteria for intuitions, whereas on Falkenstein's reading, we either have to drop the claim that they are singular representations or that they are essentially immediate and given to receptivity. It is obviously preferable to have an interpretation that allows us to keep all of Kant's criteria, but if we have to drop one of them, Falkenstein goes for the less obvious choice. That intuitions are *singular* representations is Kant's most central definition of them, maintained throughout the critical and post-critical writings and lectures on logic. On the other hand, that intuitions involve receptivity is a feature merely of *our* intuition, and not of the very notion of intuition (which includes *a priori* intuition, as well as the bare possibility of an intellectual intuition). Falkenstein gives up one of the most central features of intuitions, as Kant introduces them, on Kant's central claim about the nature of our primary representations of space and time, as well as on his main arguments in the Transcendental Aesthetic.³² Clearly, it would be preferable to read blindness in some other way, and other possibilities are that they are not fully subject to normative epistemic evaluation, are not fully available to *self*-consciousness, or simply are not represented as "systematically related to other appearances in one knowledge."³³ I will come back to this later.

Related to Falkenstein's concerns about processing, another objection might be that intuitions involve synthesis, and synthesis, for Kant, is governed by concepts. One of the main texts appealed to by McDowell is Kant's saying that: "The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgment** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**,

³¹The relevance of bringing in what is known through relatively recent empirical research might be questioned, but it seems to me significant that Kant would not need to regard empirical research into the binding problem as falsifying his account of intuition as singular representations, or the role for which he introduces them—securing unique reference to the objects about which we think. Westphal in fact suggests that "Kant's account of perceptual synthesis is his response to what is now called the 'binding problem' in neurophysiology of perception: 'in the midst of our plethora of sensations, how do we identify any one object or event as the source of several sensations, both within any one sensory mode, and across sensory modes?'" (K. Westphal, *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism [Kant's Transcendental Proof]* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 89). While arguing that this problem arises at both the level of perception and at the level of conceptualizing, Westphal, unlike me, denies that perception could represent a determinate object in the absence of at least the *a priori* concepts.

³²Falkenstein states explicitly that the blindness thesis is incompatible with the way Kant presents his project in the Transcendental Aesthetic (Falkenstein *Kant's Intuitionism*, 56). He argues that not only Kant's singularity criterion, but also Kant's main arguments for space and time being intuitions are inconsistent with the blindness thesis, because they depend on saying that space and time are presented as particulars. He says that Kant must either admit that time is not singular, or that it is grasped by the intellect, and that the intellect does not grasp only general representations. He makes similar claims about the arguments based on the infinity of our representations of space and time, and concludes that the blindness thesis makes "nonsense of Kant's arguments in the Metaphysical and Transcendental Expositions" (Falkenstein, *Kant's Intuitionism*, 58). This looks to me like a strong objection to his reading of the blindness thesis, if an alternative is available.

³³Wilson, "Kant on Intuition," 258.

which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding" (A79/B104–05). This is taken by McDowell as expressing the thought that "enjoying intuitions—having objects in view—is to be understood in terms of the same logical togetherness in actualizations of conceptual capacities that makes sense of the unity of a judgeable content."³⁴

The nature and role of synthesis, particularly in relation to intuition, are complicated topics, but one response to this is to say that synthesizing is not the same as conceptualizing.³⁵ To say that *we* perform syntheses that *are* governed by the categories (and other concepts), and indeed that we must do this if we are to be able to apply the categories (and other concepts), is not to say that synthesis *per se* is governed by concepts (unless, perhaps, we understand concepts in a much looser way than the constituents of judgments with which McDowell is concerned). In the passage, Kant is talking about the perceptual experience of typical rational adults who *do* possess concepts; it does not follow from the claim that the intuition of such perceivers involves synthesis in accordance with concepts that synthesis, *per se*, requires concepts (understood as constituents of judgments) or that intuitions are not representational unless they are synthesized in accordance with concepts. At one point Kant says that "[a]ll combination . . . is an action of the understanding, which we would designate under the general title *synthesis*" (B129–30), but most of the time he attributes synthesis to the imagination,³⁶ and he does not define it as something that essentially involves concepts. He says that:

By **synthesis** in the most general sense, however, I understand the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition. . . .

Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently see, the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul. . . . Yet to bring this synthesis **to concepts** is a function that pertains to the understanding. (A77–78/B103)

Of the threefold syntheses in the A Deduction, only the third, the synthesis of recognition in a concept, explicitly involves concepts; the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction are attributed to the imagination (A98–102, A115–16).³⁷

³⁴McDowell, "Précis"; "Woodbridge," 439–40.

³⁵Although concepts always involve synthesis, it does not follow that synthesis always involves concepts. It is arguable that thinking that synthesizing and conceptualizing are the same thing would make it difficult to make sense of the Schematism, if, for example, it is thought that schemata are rule-governed ways of synthesizing without themselves being rules in the sense of reflected concepts. Pendlebury argues that schematizing involves preconceptual synthesis (Michael Pendlebury, "Making Sense of Kant's Schematism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55 [1995]: 777–97). The idea seems to be that the way we pre-conceptually synthesize introduces normativity, or proto-normativity, into the content of perception in a way that makes it possible to bring the normativity of concepts to the content of perception. However, the relation between synthesis, schemata, and concepts is not an issue that can be resolved here. See D. Bell, "The Art of Judgement," *Mind* 96 (1987): 221–44; and Ginsborg, "Lawfulness."

³⁶The B129–30 passage can easily be read as saying that it is *combination*, a *species* of synthesis, that is an action of the understanding, rather than saying that all synthesis is an act of the understanding; this would make it consistent with Kant's frequent attributions of synthesis to the imagination (A78/B104, A118, A119, A120, A123, A124, B151).

³⁷In his discussion of the synthesis of recognition in the concept, Kant seems to think that we would not have a representation in intuition without the recognition in a concept. He says that

In his discussion of the first level of synthesis Kant says that:

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for **as contained in one moment** no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity. (A99)

He also says that the synthesis of apprehension in intuition is necessary for this (A99). The passage shows that the way intuition presents us with particulars is more complex than I have suggested so far, in that it involves not just space, but time as well. Kant says that we do not have an intuition (singular representation) without a synthesis, and that we do not have an intuition (singular representation) without the representation of time, but this would show that apprehension requires concepts only if either the representation of time required concepts, or synthesis *per se* requires concepts.

Essential to understanding the role of synthesis is being clear about the difference between intuitions and sensations in Kant. Part of the motivation for McDowell's position, which he claims to find in Kant (although not developed as fully or consistently as he would like), is the rejection of the so-called Myth of the Given.³⁸ Paul Abela also finds the rejection of this "Myth" in Kant:

Kant is also challenging the deep-seated epistemic commitment to the idea of an information-bestowing connection between a self-authenticating sensible given . . . and the world. The priority Kant assigns to judgment is, on my view, intended to banish the idea of *any* epistemic intermediary between belief and the world.³⁹

Along similar lines, Sally Sedgwick argues that "[w]hat we learn from the transcendental deduction is that the 'raw' or unsynthesized data of sensation is not a possible object of thought for us; it therefore has no role to play in the justification of our empirical judgments."⁴⁰ She sees Kant as rejecting "the assumption shared by Locke and Hume that the proper object of empirical knowledge is the undetermined or pre-conceptualized content of sensation."⁴¹

"[w]ithout consciousness that that which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain" (A103; thanks to Stefanie Grüne, personal correspondence, for this objection). Kant's account of these three "levels" of synthesis is tricky. For one thing, is the consciousness with which he is concerned here representational consciousness of a particular, or the recognition of a full-blown (fully objective) object that involves self-consciousness? The immediately following discussion (A105) suggests the latter. Also, notice that Kant does not say that the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction would be *impossible*, or would fail to result in representational content, but that they would be *in vain* (*vergeblich*), and I take it that we can read this as saying that they would be in vain with respect to *objectively valid cognition* or empirical knowledge of objects.

³⁸McDowell introduces the Myth of the Given as the idea that "the space of reasons, the space of justifications or warrants, extends more widely than the conceptual sphere," or that "there must be relations of ultimate grounding that reach outside the conceptual realm altogether" (*Mind and World*, 7, 25). Also, see P. Abela, *Kant's Empirical Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 35.

³⁹Abela, *Kant's Empirical Realism*, 35.

⁴⁰S. Sedgwick, "McDowell's Hegelianism," *European Journal of Philosophy* 5 (1997): 21–38, at 27. Like McDowell, she thinks that "what is given to us in receptivity already has a *conceptual content*" (*ibid.*, 22).

⁴¹Sedgwick, "McDowell's Hegelianism," 29. McDowell and Sedgwick also agree in thinking that Kant does not reject the Given as consistently or fully as Hegel does. Sedgwick restates the famous

McDowell, Abela, and Sedgwick base their accounts on the Sellarsian critique of classical concept of a sense datum.⁴² However, the “Given” to which they do not want to attribute an epistemic role is understood as self-authenticating, private/mental/inner, raw/unprocessed, brute sensation, and this is nothing at all like Kant’s notion of intuition. Kant does *not* give an epistemic role to *sensations*,⁴³ but it does not follow from this that Kantian intuitions are dependent on concepts for their role in presenting particulars. Although Kant is not entirely consistent in what he says about sensations, in the first *Critique* his dominant view seems to be that sensations are nonintentional or nonreferential;⁴⁴ they do not, themselves, present objects to the mind, but “refer to the subject as a modification of its state” (A320/B376), whereas intuitions are immediate, singular representations that essentially involve the represented object.⁴⁵ Further, intuitions are not “self-authenticating,” since having an object given to us (perceiving a particular) is not sufficient for knowledge or cognition. However, it does not follow from the fact that intuitions are not sensations that intuitions require concepts in order to present us with individuals; if the difference between *sensations* and *intuitions* were that *intuitions* involve concepts, then Kant would not define intuition as he does, in opposition to concepts.

Kantian claim as “*sensations* without concepts are blind” (ibid., 33; my emphasis). Thus, her argument appeals to the indisputable view that Kant (at least in the first *Critique*) does not think that *sensations* present us with objects, but this does not show that *intuitions* do not present us with particulars.

⁴²For differences between McDowell and Sellars’ disagreements with Kant, see E. Watkins “Kant and the Myth of the Given,” *Inquiry* 51 (2008): 512–31; and G. Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2006), 193–207. As Bird emphasizes, Kant does not have an anti-skeptical, foundationalist epistemology of the sort that is Sellars’ main target.

⁴³This is perhaps too strongly put, since a lot will depend on what is meant by ‘an epistemic role’. For an account of the contribution made by sensation, see Watkins “Kant and the Myth of the Given.”

⁴⁴This is in contrast to his more careful account in the third *Critique*, where he says, “When [something determines the feeling of pleasure or displeasure and this] determination of that feeling is called sensation, this term means something quite different from what it means when I apply it to the presentation of a thing (through the senses, a receptivity that belongs to the cognitive power). For in the second case, the presentation is referred to the object, but in the first it is referred solely to the subject and is not used for cognition at all, not even that by which the subject *cognizes* himself. . . . [In the second case] the word sensation means an objective presentation of sense. . . . The green color of a meadows belongs to *objective* sensation, i.e., to the perception of an object of sense; but the color’s agreeableness belongs to *subjective* sensation, to feeling, through which no object is presented . . .” (*Cf* 206). Kant contrasts sensation and intuition in the *Anthropology*, where he says that of all the senses, sight “receives its sense organ as being the least involved (because otherwise it would not be mere sight). Consequently it comes nearer to being a pure intuition (the immediate idea of a given object without admixture of evident sensation)” (*An* 156).

⁴⁵See Westphal, *Kant’s Transcendental Proof of Realism*, 44; and R. George, “Kant’s Sensationism,” *Synthese* 47 (1981): 229–55. As George explains, sensations are nonintentional in the sense that, although they may be objects (of thought or attention), they do not *have* objects: “Condillac, Reid, and also Kant held that if one is aware of a sensation, one is aware of something, but that one is not, in such a case, aware of anything *other* than one’s act or state” (ibid., 235). I agree that this is Kant’s dominant account of sensation in the first *Critique*, but unlike George, I think that it is entirely consistent with thinking that intuitions present us with particulars. George reads Kant as thinking that all reference to objects requires judgment, and similarly, Westphal seems to think that the synthesis that brings about the referential and representational role of sensations must be a function of judgments, which, I am arguing, makes the role of the Aesthetic puzzling.

It might be argued that Kant's view is that neither intuitions nor concepts alone can give us a direct perceptual presentation of a particular. In other words, the fact that Kant thinks concepts alone cannot supply distinct perceptual particulars does not mean that he thinks intuitions alone could do so either; the point about the mutual dependence of intuitions and concepts could be that both ingredients are necessary. The idea could be that in order to perceive a particular we need sensation to provide a given manifold of input, and concepts to carve up and organise this manifold. The problem with this is that Kant does not say just that intuitions are *necessary* for our being able to presented with individual things, but that intuitions are *immediate, singular representations that give us objects*, and he distinguishes them from sensations. The mutual dependency claim is not that concepts and intuitions are mutually necessary for *perception*, but for *cognition*. He does not say that the role of intuition is to provide a sensory manifold for concepts to work on, but that it gives us objects, and he says that what enables it to play this role is the representation of space and time. Rather than arguing that it is the application of concepts that distinguishes representations that present us with particulars from sensations, Kant in fact says that it is the *a priori* and *intuitive* (non-conceptual) representation of space (and time) that plays this role—that enables us to be presented with outer appearances.

Abela sees Kant's response to the "Myth" as essentially tied up with his rejection of Cartesian internalism about mental content, but this part of the rejection of the "Given" is compatible with thinking that intuition presents us with particulars independently of the application of concepts. We can agree with Abela that Kant thinks that "determinate inner representation" requires the direct presence to consciousness of objects⁴⁶ without thinking that this presence necessarily requires *judgment*, or the application of concepts. Abela puts much emphasis on the idea that judgment introduces increasing determinateness to cognition,⁴⁷ but it does not follow from this that there is no distinct perceptual representation without judgments, and there are three reasons to think this is not the case. First, Kant says that we represent objects as outside us and in space, and in space "their form, magnitude, and relation to one another is determined, or determinable" (A22/B37). So he thinks that representing objects spatially involves representing them with some degree of determinateness (as located, as having size, shape, and spatial relations to each other) and he says that our primary representation of space is not conceptual, which surely means that these determinations are not primarily conceptual. We do not need concepts in order to represent objects as located; rather, this requires ordering the input of the senses in terms of a framework provided by the (non-conceptual) *a priori* intuition of space. Second, when Kant talks about determination he usually means conceptual specification rather than the production of a distinct perceptual representation, and the idea that judgment introduces increasing awareness of which concepts apply does not imply that judgment is necessary for there to be anything distinct perceptually represented. Third, as part of his rejection of the idea that the difference between concepts

⁴⁶Abela, *Kant's Empirical Realism*, 36.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 60

and intuitions is one of degree, Kant states that both concepts and intuitions can be distinct and indistinct.⁴⁸ Concepts become more distinct as we become aware of their partial or subordinate concepts (*VL* 834), whereas intuitions are distinct when we can discriminate their parts.

At the center of McDowell's rejection of the Myth of the Given is the idea that only what has conceptual content can be within the space of reasons, and can play a role in justifying beliefs.⁴⁹ The merits of this view are much discussed in the literature on non-conceptual content, but for our purposes here two brief comments will suffice. First, since relative non-conceptual content does not claim that the contents of perceptions have an intrinsically different structure from the content of beliefs, there is no obstacle to its allowing that perceptual experience has the kind of representational content it needs to be able to serve as reasons for belief.⁵⁰ Second, as we have seen, the role of intuitions in Kant's epistemology is not that which McDowell and Sellars want to deny sensation. I have suggested that when Kant says that it is through intuitions that objects are *given* to us, his concern with givenness is with the objects being directly presented to our consciousness, rather than with unprocessed mental data. The role of intuitions is not to provide sensory input that provides external "guidance" to our cognition (as perhaps may be the role of sensations),⁵¹ but to present us with objects.

There is one more aspect of McDowell's view which should be mentioned here; this will take us on to the discussion of the role of concepts, which is the subject of the next section. McDowell follows Sellars in arguing that intuitions involve the understanding because "intuitions in the dominant Kantian sense are representations of *thises* (or *thats*); more fully, of *this-suches* (or *that-suches*), which makes it unavoidably clear that even though they are immediately of objects, such representations already involve the understanding."⁵² An objection to my view, and

⁴⁸See Grüne, "Begriffe," 260–62. Kant says that "intuition and concept do differ in kind; for they do not pass into each other, no matter how much our consciousness of the two and their characteristics increases or diminishes. For the greatest lack of distinctness in the conceptual way of presenting (e.g., if the concept is that of right) still leaves what is different in kind about that way of presenting and has to do with that fact that it originates in the understanding; and the greatest distinctness of intuition does not in the least bring it closer to concepts, since intuition resides in sensibility. Moreover, logical distinctness and aesthetic distinctness are as different as day and night, and aesthetic distinctness [may] occur even if we do not present an object through concepts at all, i.e., even if our presentation is an intuition and hence sensible" (*CJ* 226n43). Kant says that my representation of the milky way is indistinct when I represent it as a whitish streak, but when I can (with the help of a telescope) distinguish the individual stars it becomes distinct (*JL* 35). As Grüne points out, since our intuition is spatiotemporally structured, the way we discriminate the parts of distinct intuitions is spatiotemporal in nature; we discriminate particulars by perceiving their spatial boundaries, and we perceive them distinctly when we can spatially discriminate their parts ("Begriffe," 261–62).

⁴⁹It is arguable that Kant does in fact think that there is a serious problem in seeing how singular non-conceptual representations can be such that they fit our concepts and can be brought under judgments, and it is because he sees this as a problem that he introduces schematism, as an intermediary between concepts and intuitions. This would mean that we cannot appeal to there being a possible worry with seeing how intuitions could be brought into the space of judgments to deny that Kant sees singular non-conceptual representations as making an essential contribution to our experience of the world.

⁵⁰If Kant also has an absolute account of non-conceptual content, then, in his defense, we can draw on those considerations in the contemporary literature given for thinking that there can be normative justification of perceptual judgments without inferential reasons.

⁵¹See Watkins "Kant and the Myth of the Given."

⁵²McDowell, "Woodbridge," 460; Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics*, 1–3.

defense of McDowell's, might be made on the grounds that while intuitions are singular representations they must have general aspects, and that perceiving these requires having concepts. The locution 'seeing as' is frequently taken to express a conceptualized way in which a property is presented; Hannah Ginsborg, for example, argues perceiving an object *as* red and *as* a cube involves representing it as having a quality that is common, or at least potentially common, to other objects.⁵³ If we accept that representing an object as red involves representing it as having the property of redness, and that representing an object as having a property involves representing it as having a general feature that, in principle, other objects could have, to this extent I agree with the conceptualist that we cannot represent a thing as a red cube without having the relevant concepts. However, we should not run together the idea of there being some determinate way that the object looks to the subject with the idea of the subject's representing the object in a way that involves recognizing its features as properties other things could have.⁵⁴ We can distinguish between two different ways in which a property could feature in perceptual experience. On the one hand, a quality could be presented in a creature's perceptual experience (could be available to be attended to, could make a difference to the way things look to the creature, and could have implications for how the creature will act) and, on the other, the property could feature in experience in a way that involves it being *recognized as a property*—as something that other objects could have. If a creature can discriminate a thing on the basis of redness, that might give us grounds to think that the distinct intrinsic quality of redness features in its experience, and in that sense that it perceives a red thing and it perceives the redness of the thing. But we need not think that it perceives the thing *as being red* in the sense that it recognizes the redness of the thing as a property that other things could share. Without concepts, we cannot represent things as having general features. A crucial point that follows from this is that concepts are necessary to represent an object *as an object*. However, it does not follow from this that concepts are necessary to perceive particulars; this takes us onto the subject of the next section, the role of concepts in the Transcendental Deduction.

3

Probably the most obvious reason for reading Kant as a strong conceptualist is the Transcendental Deduction, where he argues that both the possible application of the concept or thought of the self, and the concept(s) of an object in general (the categories), play a necessary role in the unity of consciousness that is required for experience of an objective world. If these concepts are necessary for the unity of consciousness, and the unity of consciousness is necessary for experience of an objective world, then we cannot be presented with objective particulars without

⁵³H. Ginsborg, "Empirical Concepts and the Content of Experience" ["Empirical Concepts"], *European Journal of Philosophy* 14 (2006): 349–72. Grüne agrees with Ginsborg that Kant's view is that we cannot perceive a thing as having properties without concepts, but denies that we need to perceive things as having properties in order to perceive them (Grüne, "Begriffe").

⁵⁴As Smith says, "If all that is meant by the slogan 'all seeing is seeing as' is that in order to see something it must look a certain way to the subject, the proposition is easily accepted, but it does not follow from this that 'seeing-as' has to be understood in terms of 'recognizing as', 'classifying as', or 'conceptualizing as'" (Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, 114–15).

at least some very general concepts.⁵⁵ While Kant presents the Aesthetic before the Deduction, it does not follow from this that either can be fully understood in the absence of the other, and it is arguable that while intuition makes a *notionally* separable contribution, this contribution is not actually separable, and ultimately depends on the understanding; for expository purposes he makes an abstraction that cannot really be made.⁵⁶

I want to make two preliminary points about the Deduction. First, Kant's concern in the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions is with what is involved in making objectively valid *judgments* about objects (A62/B87), so, on the face of it, the necessary conditions for which the Deduction argues will be necessary conditions of thought/concept application/judgment or cognition proper, and not mere perception. And since Kant says that by 'experience' he means empirical cognition (B147), conditions of the possibility of experience are conditions of the possibility of *cognition*, not merely conditions of something like phenomenal consciousness. This means that to say that something is a condition of the possibility of experience is not to say that it is a condition of the possibility of any kind of conscious representational state at all.⁵⁷ So, for example, when Kant says that the Deduction will show that without the categories "nothing is possible as object of experience" (A93/B126), it is possible that he is talking about what is necessary to have full blown cognition (empirical knowledge) of objects, rather than saying that perception requires these concepts. The second point is that Kant does not always clearly distinguish between *consciousness* and *self-consciousness*, or rather, he frequently uses the term *Bewußtsein* to refer to self-consciousness, which is clearly his main concern in the argument of the Deduction.⁵⁸ Kant explains the unity of consciousness with which he is concerned in terms of the subject's awareness of

⁵⁵Note that this would count only against a relatively strong non-conceptualist thesis; it would undermine not the idea that there could be representationally significant non-conceptual content, but only the idea that a creature that has no concepts at all can be in representational mental states. See notes 9 and 15. This means that, on the one hand, those who insist that, for Kant, having conscious experience requires having and applying concepts should not infer from this that Kant's account thereby excludes the possibility of there being aspects of our perceptual experience that cannot be captured conceptually because even if certain general concepts were necessary for perception of an object, it would not follow from this that the content of a subject's perceptual experience could not outstrip her conceptual capacities. On the other hand, arguing that, for Kant, there are aspects of perceptual experience that cannot, in principle, be conceptual, would not show that he thinks that a subject could have conscious experience in the absence of having and applying concepts.

⁵⁶This is part of Christian Wenzel's defense of the McDowellian position (C. H. Wenzel, "Spielen nach Kant die Kategorien schon bei der Wahrnehmung eine Rolle?" ["Spielen nach Kant"], *Kant Studien* 96 [2005]: 407–26).

⁵⁷I follow Ameriks in thinking that the argument of the Deduction is not directed to the global (Cartesian) skeptic, and does not argue that the categories are necessary for phenomenal consciousness. See K. Ameriks, "Kant's Transcendental Deduction as a Regressive Argument," in his *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 51–66. Kant specifically addresses the Cartesian skeptic, if at all, elsewhere—in the Refutation of Idealism.

⁵⁸For helpful discussion of the different ways Kant talks about consciousness, see Steve Naragon, "Kant and Descartes on the Brutes," *Kant-Studien* 81 (1990): 1–23. As Naragon points out, not only Kant's talk about consciousness, but also his notion of inner sense, is tricky. If inner sense involves being aware of yourself as having a conscious life, then it seems that Kant thinks that animals lack this (despite having perceptual representations of particulars): they have awareness of the world but not awareness of themselves, and in this sense they are not conscious of themselves. See also K. Ameriks, *Kant's Theory of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 239–55.

her unity and identity, which involves awareness of herself as *subject* and as a *unified* subject (B133). What is a condition of the transcendental unity of apperception, i.e., the synthesis according to the categories, is a condition of *self-consciousness* and thought about an objective world, which means that it is at least possible that what the Deduction argues to be conditions of the unity of consciousness in the experience of an object concern *self-consciousness* only, and are not conditions of having a perceptual consciousness in any sense.

However, these points might not be thought to carry much weight in the light of the numerous passages in which Kant says that we cannot *represent objects* in the absence of applying the categories, and that it is unifying representations under the concept of an object in general that gives *relation to an object*. Here are some examples:

An **object**, however, is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is **united**. Now, however, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object. . . . (B137)

The synthetic unity of consciousness is therefore an objective condition of all cognition, not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object but rather something under which every intuition must stand **in order to become an object for me**, since in any other way, and without this synthesis, the manifold would **not** be united in one consciousness. (B138)

[W]ithout that sort of unity [of synthesis in accordance with concepts] . . . necessary unity of consciousness would not be encountered in the manifold of perceptions. But these would then belong to no experience, and would consequently be without an object, and would be nothing but a blind play of representations, i.e., less than a dream. (A112)

These passages support thinking that once we read the Aesthetic in the light of the argument of the Deduction, we will see that its contribution is not really separable from conceptualizing.

The rethinking of the Aesthetic in the light of the Deduction has recently been discussed in detail by Longuenesse, who argues that, for Kant, since space and time stand under the unity of apperception, our representation of space and time is dependent on the understanding, and that an imaginative synthesis, in which the understanding affects sensibility, generates the unity, unicity, and infinity of our representation of space.⁵⁹ While this raises an obvious worry about undermining Kant's dualities of sensibility and understanding, receptivity and spontaneity, intuition and concept, her reading makes sense of otherwise puzzling parts of the text. In the problematic footnote at B160n, Kant says that:

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** of the manifold given in accordance with the forms of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis,

⁵⁹B. Longuenesse, *Kant and the Human Standpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), chs. 1–3.

which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. (B160n)

Here, Kant says that the unity of sensibility precedes all concepts, *but presupposes a synthesis that does not belong to the senses*, and also that space, as object of study of geometry, contains more than the form of intuition. In other passages, Kant says that to the extent that the synthesis of imagination is an exercise of spontaneity, the imagination is “a faculty for determining the sensibility *a priori*” and that the transcendental synthesis of the imagination is an “effect of the understanding on sensibility” (B152). As Longuenesse points out, despite his fundamental commitment to the duality and independence of the faculties, Kant clearly does say that understanding affecting sensibility generates at least some aspect of our representations of space and time. To reconcile this with his apparently conflicting view that sensibility is essentially independent of spontaneity, Longuenesse suggests that while our representations of space and time as the forms in which sensible manifolds are given have qualitative features that are entirely independent of any activity of the understanding, they have other features that are not independent, specifically, the unity, unicity, and infinity of space that are necessary for the unity of consciousness, and that are necessary for thinking of space as the object of study of geometry (as Kant suggests in the B160n quotation above). She says that

our “capacity to judge” . . . determining our sensibility . . . generates the representation in imagination of one, undivided space and one, undivided time, within which all spatial or temporal extension is to be delineated. The capacity to judge promotes space and time from mere forms of manifoldness to forms of the unity of the manifold.⁶⁰

While bringing space and time under the transcendental unity of apperception might be necessary to generate our representation of the unified objective space that is the object of study of geometry and is required for Newtonian physics, for this reading to be consistent with Kant’s fundamental duality of sensibility and understanding, it must be that there is some aspect of our representation of space which is not dependent on this. Longuenesse’s reading allows this, since it allows us to distinguish between space as one of the forms of manifoldness and the unified objective space that is object of study of geometry. We can allow that there are two “levels” of our representation of space: first, the ordering representation, the form of outer sense, which enables us to be presented with empirical particulars as uniquely located in an oriented and egocentrically-centered, three-dimensional framework, and second, the representation of a unified objective space as the object of study of geometry, which results from the first level being brought under the transcendental unity of apperception. Attributing to a creature the capacity to represent space in the former sense does not require that it can represent space in the latter sense.

⁶⁰Longuenesse, *Kant and the Human Standpoint*, 73. Notice that to say that space and time are brought under the unity of apperception is not the same as to say that they are brought under the categories. Wayne Waxman argues that it is important to distinguish between the understanding as a faculty of unity or apperception, and the understanding as a faculty of discursive representations, and that the unity of space and time require the former, but not the categories. He argues that apperception is the ground of the categories and therefore is not brought about by them. W. Waxman, *Kant and the Empiricists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 71–77.

Similarly, I suggest that to make the way Kant presents the role of intuition consistent with the Transcendental Deduction, we should allow for a similar two-level distinction with respect to our representation of external particulars. We can distinguish between perceiving a particular (having a singular representation of an individual thing outside me) and representing a particular *as an object* in the full-blown sense of something that is grasped as a causally unitary, spatiotemporally persisting substance whose present complex of interrelated properties are a function of its causal nature and its causal history, which is in thoroughgoing law-governed community with other objects, and which is made of stuff that cannot come into or go out of existence absolutely. If we call the latter representing *an object* (as Kant does in the Deduction), then we can allow that creatures that are not capable of representing objects in this sense are capable of perceiving particulars, in the sense of spatially continuous and unified individuals existing outside the subject and located in space.⁶¹

Distinct perceptual particulars are things that are represented as outside and other than the subject (unlike sensations), but they could be shadows, or spots of light; they need not be objects. Even when the things the creature is perceptually presented with are in fact objects, the non-concept-having creature is arguably not in a position to represent them *as* objects. For example, on the basis of my being perceptually presented with an apple, I could think either, “that object is red” or “that patch is red” or “that redness is round.” The redness to which roundness may be attributed, the apple to which redness may be attributed, and the patch to which redness may be attributed will have different principles of continuing identity over time, and different properties will be attributable to each of them. Without something that determines what counts as a subject of properties for me, what principles of unity subjects have, etc., it is not determinate what *object* I am thinking about, even though there is a perceptual particular to which I am attending. Kant thinks that the *a priori* concepts of an object in general determine what counts as an object for me (B1 28–29), and this is necessary for me to have *thought* about the object, and to attribute properties to it in empirical concept application. This gives us a perfectly clear sense in which the categories are necessary for anything to be *an object for me*, which is distinct from thinking that the categories are necessary for me to be perceptually presented with a particular.⁶²

Consider a creature whose actions indicate that it sees a located, spatially unified thing that it can discriminate from other things, and which it can track. Attributing to the creature the capacity to perceptually discriminate the thing does not require thinking that it can think of the thing as a spatiotemporally continuous and causally unitary substance, or that it can make general use of or attribute to other animals thoughts about the thing and its interactions in a general causal

⁶¹Note this is not the contrast between a mind-independent object and something that is an object of consciousness but might exist only in the mind. Rather, both in the case of merely perceiving an objective particular, and in the case of perceiving an objective particular as an object in the full-blown sense, what is perceived is mind-independent and outside the subject.

⁶²This enables us to say something more about the sense in which intuitions without concepts are blind; although something is perceived, it is not perceived *as* having properties, and therefore *as* being an object of a particular kind. Now we can even respond to Kant’s saying that without the categories my representations are less than a dream: I do dream about objects.

order. The creature might be able to perceptually discriminate and act on a spatially unified thing without understanding the thing's causal unity—perhaps it does not represent the plant growing on the rock as a separate thing from the rock, since they appear spatially continuous, and perhaps it could not recognise or track the thing if it were to be changed by collisions with other things or natural processes of growth and transformation. On this account, the non-human animal (assuming it lacks concepts but has some way of representing space) that perceives its environment represents the world in the sense that it has relational mental states that present it with parts of the world—it does not have an inner display of non-intentional, raw sensations. However, it does not represent an objective world in the sense that it does not represent the world as a law-governed complex that it thinks of at a detached level as existing unperceived/independently of it. In Kantian terms, this means that it cannot be self-conscious.

An obvious objection to this is that appealing to what it is plausible to say about non-human animals cuts no ice, given that Kant is not concerned with them.⁶³ Kant may have had implausible views about animals. However, while Kant does not say much about non-human animals, he does not *deny* that they are conscious or that they perceive the world, and in some of the few places where he explicitly mentions them, he says the opposite.⁶⁴ In discussing the different levels of cognition he explicitly allows the first three levels to apply to non-human animals, including “to represent something with consciousness, or *to perceive*” and “*to be acquainted* with something [*noscere*], or to represent something in comparison with other things both as to *sameness* and as to *difference*” (*JL* 64–65). He does not allow to non-human animals the higher levels, which include cognizing something “*through the understanding by means of concepts*,” and says that “[a]nimals are acquainted with objects too, but they do not cognize them” (*JL* 645). Similarly, while he denies that the ox can see a gate *as a gate*, he clearly says that it *sees* the gate (*FS* 59), and he says that “[w]hat we can quite correctly infer *by analogy*, from the similarity between animal behavior (whose basis we cannot perceive directly) and man's behavior (of whose basis we are conscious directly), is that animals too act according to *presentations* (rather than being machines, as Descartes would have it)” (*CJ* 464). Kant thinks that perceptual representation of particulars requires synthesizing in the sense of

⁶³Wenzel dismisses the kind of argument I have been considering, saying, *Kant hat beim Verfassen der Kritik der reinen Vernunft einfach nicht an Tiere und Kleinkinder gedacht* (Wenzel, “Spielen nach Kant,” 425).

⁶⁴In arguing that we could not derive necessity from experience, as this would be to “substitute subjective necessity, that is, custom, for objective necessity,” Kant explains subjective necessity in terms of the idea that “we may *expect* similar cases (*just as animals do*)” (*CPR* 13; my emphasis). While Kant notoriously thinks that we have only indirect duties to avoid giving animals pain, he clearly thinks they experience pain (*MM* 6:443). And his attribution of the (pathological) power of choice to animals implies that they have consciousness (A534/B562; A802/B830). In a letter to Marcus Herz, Kant says that, without the conditions necessary to represent an object, “I would not even be able to know that I have sense data; consequently for me, as a knowing being, they would be absolutely nothing. They could still (if I imagine myself to be an animal) carry on their play in an orderly fashion, as representations connected according to empirical laws of association” (*PC* 11:52). See Naragon, “Kant on Descartes and the Brutes,” and Ameriks, *Kant's Theory of Mind*, 242–45. Ameriks argues that Kant's claim that animals can physically distinguish between two items (but not logically distinguish them) involves attributing to them not only behavior, but also conscious representations.

active processing, combining, grouping, and associating of the manifold input of the senses, but it does not follow that this must involve concepts, and Kant allows animals to have subjective expectations of similarity and difference (*CPR* 5:12), which surely involve associating and combining. He thinks that for cognition of an objective world—grasping the world as objective and (empirically) mind-independent—to be possible, intuition must be synthesized in ways that are governed by concepts.⁶⁵ However, this does not rule out the possibility of association that is not based on concepts (understood as constituents of judgments), or that this association could enable us (and other creatures) to perceive spatial particulars or outer appearances. In fact, I have suggested that such a view is needed to make sense of the role of intuition in Kant's account. As Kant presents his view in the Aesthetic, he thinks that an egocentric, oriented, three dimensional frame of reference that enables us to locate particulars is a necessary condition of being presented with the things about which we think. The rethinking of the Aesthetic in the light of the Deduction does not undermine this, and does not make the role of intuition dependent on the application of concepts. Kant thinks that representing space and time as objective and unified in the way which is required for thought about an objective world requires that space and time be brought under the transcendental unity of apperception, but it does not follow from this that space and time require the categories to play their role in allowing us to be presented with particulars, or securing unique reference to particulars.⁶⁶ The latter would, while the former need not, undermine Kant's claims about the fundamental dualities of sensibility and understanding, intuition and concepts.

It might be argued that perceiving a particular requires perceiving it as persisting over time, and that tracking an object across time requires sortal concepts, or causal criteria. However, a simpler tracking across time is possible—one that follows spatial unity. A creature that had only the ability to track in this manner could presumably not discover that caterpillars turn into butterflies, or what happened to the wood in the fire, but it could follow an insect, or a shadow, moving in front of it. It would have a primitive representation of persistence (relatively continuous spatial boundaries across time) sufficient to perceive a particular despite not having the understanding of persistence that, Kant thinks, is involved in cognizing an object as existing unperceived as part of a law-governed objective world: recognition of an object as a causal unity that is made up of stuff that does not come into or go out of existence absolutely and is in thoroughgoing causal community with other objects.⁶⁷ Compatible with the role of the categories in cog-

⁶⁵Further, he thinks that the synthesis that makes empirical concept application possible requires that there is a synthesis that is governed by concepts containing necessity and universality; not only, Kant thinks, does representing an objective world require the structure and generality introduced by concepts, it requires *a priori* concepts.

⁶⁶See Campbell for an argument that the causal unity that is essential to physical objects is necessary for representing the connectedness of space, but not for any representation of space at all (J. Campbell, "Objects and Objectivity," in *Objectivity, Simulation and the Unity of Consciousness*, ed. C. Peacocke [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 3–20; J. Campbell, "The Role of Physical Objects in Spatial Thinking," in *Problems in the Philosophy and Psychology of Spatial Representation*, ed. N. Eilan, R. McCarthy, and M.W. Brewer [Oxford: Blackwell, 1993], 65–95, at 13, 17).

⁶⁷A similar response can be given to an objection that says that we cannot make sense of the idea of being presented with particulars in the absence of concepts, because individuating requires con-

nizing an objective world, we can allow that Kant thinks that our representation of space provides us with an egocentric frame of reference or phenomenal field with a specific (Euclidean) structure and orientation, which enables us to represent objects such that we can pick out, uniquely locate, and track them.

I said in the beginning that I take the question about the respective roles of intuition and concepts in our cognition to be largely independent of Kant's transcendental idealism, but it might be objected that my argument concerning the Deduction undermines his transcendental idealism, in that it undermines his account of the role of the application of the categories in the constitution of objects, and therefore will lead to an extremely deflationary interpretation of his idealism.⁶⁸ There is no agreed interpretation of transcendental idealism, and both extreme phenomenalist and extremely deflationary, non-metaphysical readings still have strong support amongst commentators.⁶⁹ The position I have put forward here is compatible with a strong (metaphysical) interpretation of transcendental idealism according to which the forms of our intuition determine the way particulars are presented to us, which means that what we are presented with is not the way things are in themselves, and is only mind-dependent appearances of things.⁷⁰ On this view, the mind-dependence comes in primarily because of the roles of the *a priori* forms of our intuition, and this is the way in which Kant presents his argument for his transcendental idealism, which is supposed to be completely established

cepts; the idea is that there is no concept-independent answer to the question "how many things are in front of me?" I do not want to debate the merits of this philosophical view, but rather to point out that we do not need to attribute it to Kant. As I see it, it is compatible with Kant's view that location and spatial unity present us with particularity at a basic level (one that can, of course, be challenged by what we learn about the causal unity of things—that, for example, a parasite and its host are really two creatures, and not one, as they initially appear) that can be tracked across time.

⁶⁸Thanks to Katrin Flikschuh, in conversation, for this objection.

⁶⁹An example of the oscillations in interpretations can be seen in McDowell's recoil from his extreme idealist reading in *Mind and World* to an entirely non-idealist reading in "The Woodbridge Lectures." For phenomenalist readings, see J. Van Cleve, *Problems From Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*; P. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). For metaphysical non-idealist readings, see A. Collins, *Possible Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); R. Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and R. Langton, *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). For epistemic deflationary readings, see Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*; Abela, *Kant's Empirical Realism*; H. E. Matthews, "Strawson and Transcendental Idealism," in *Kant on Pure Reason*, ed. R. C. S. Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 132–249; H. Robinson, "Two Perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994): 411–41; G. Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1974); G. Prauss, *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971). For my attempted reconciliation of the extremes of deflationary and phenomenalist readings, see L. Allais, "Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45 (2007): 459–84.

⁷⁰Consider scattered objects such as the top of the table plus the base of the lamp on it, or more radical scattered objects that do not bind features from the same location: "The redness at this location, the squareness at that location, and the uprightness from a still further location could all be put together to give a single 'object token'" (Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness*, 67). Campbell considers (in order to reject) the hypothesis that there is no objectively correct way for the visual system to bind, and that the way it binds determines what sorts of objects are in a subject's environment. Irrespective of whatever may be said for or against this view, it shows the possibility of a radically idealist view according to which the way we combine the sensible input using our representation of space to represent particulars is in no way a reflection of the way things mind-independently are.

in the Aesthetic. We do not have to think that our *a priori* conceptual framework would introduce idealism in order to think that Kant is a strong idealist, since the limitation of our concepts to what is given in intuition is sufficient for this,⁷¹ but it could also be argued that in addition to the way in which our *a priori* structuring framework determines what counts as an object for us, our *a priori* conceptual structure adds further determination to this.

4

Finally, in this last section, I want to argue that seeing that the role of intuitions is to perceptually present us with particulars enables us to make sense of argument 1 in the Metaphysical Exposition, quoted at the beginning of this paper, for the *a priori* of space. I have argued that intuition is what presents us with particulars, and therefore that the *a priori* forms of intuition are conditions of our being perceptually presented with particulars. However, Daniel Warren has given a detailed and convincing argument against readings of the Aesthetic, particularly argument 1 of the Metaphysical Exposition, that see Kant as trying to show that space is a necessary condition of individuating or distinguishing objects, and it might be thought that it will be an objection to my view if it is no part of Kant's purpose in the Aesthetic to argue that the representation of space is a condition of individuating or distinguishing objects.

A number of commentators have seen in this paragraph an argument for the claim that the representation of space is necessary for us to be presented with objects. Warren's objection to this is largely focused on Henry Allison's version, which sees the representation of space as a necessary condition of representing things as numerically distinct from myself and each other.⁷² Allison reads the passage as arguing that, in order to be aware of things as numerically distinct from one another, it is necessary to be aware not only of their qualitative differences, but also of the fact that they are located in different places. Warren questions both the textual basis for this interpretation, and the plausibility of the argument it represents. He points out that the *Critique* has an account of how we make judgments distinguishing qualitatively identical objects, in the Amphiboly, that this argument is concerned with the use of concepts, and that it assumes, rather than argues for, the results of the Aesthetic.⁷³ Further, he says that the argument would not work, because space is sufficient but not necessary for *judging* that objects are distinct: the capacity to distinguish objects "is after all a capacity for making certain kinds of judgments."⁷⁴ He argues that we need spatial features to ground such judgments only when we have run out of other qualitative features. His alternative account of Kant's aim in this section is that it is to establish that our representation of space is *a priori*, and he argues that Kant's strategy for showing this is based on the claim that in order to represent things as *spatially related* (rather than as distinct)

⁷¹In fact, unlike the forms of our intuition, Kant thinks that the categories are concepts that would be used by all rational beings, which makes it less clear that it can be through the constitutive role of the categories that idealism is being introduced.

⁷²Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*.

⁷³D. Warren, "Kant and the A Priority of Space," *Philosophical Review* 107 (1998): 179–224, 93.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 192.

we must have the representation of space. Thus, the argument is directed against the Leibnizian view that our representation of space could be derived from our experience of spatial relations.

In many respects my reading requires no disagreement with Warren. First, I agree that Kant's argument in the Aesthetic is not that the representation of spatial location is necessary for the *judgment* that particulars are distinct (but it does not follow from this that it is not necessary for *perceiving* things as distinct). Second, I agree with Warren that the point of the argument is to establish the *a priori* of our representation of space. And, third, I agree that in argument 1 of the Metaphysical Exposition, Kant does not argue for the claim that the representation of space is necessary to represent distinct individuals. However, it does not follow that this claim plays no role in the argument. On the contrary, to make sense of his presentation of the argument, we need to see that that Kant argues *from*, not *to*, the claim that space is a condition of the possibility of being presented with particulars (distinct spatially related and located individuals outside of myself). In other words, the idea that space is a necessary condition of individuating or distinguishing objects does play a central role in the argument, but as a premise, and not a conclusion.

In the passage, Kant claims that the representation of space is necessary:

- to represent things as distinct from and outside me (*etwas außer mir*);
- to represent things as in different places/as spatially located (*als in verschiedenen Orten*);
- to represent things as spatially related (*außer und neben einander*); and
- to represent things as distinct/different from each other (*verschieden*).

Note that Kant says that space is necessary to represent things “not *merely* as different” (*nicht bloß verschieden*), which presumably means that, *a fortiori*, it is necessary to represent things as distinct or different. Warren pays attention to only one of these claims—that the representation of space is necessary to present things as spatially related. But Kant claims more than this. Having, through sensory affection, a presentation of a particular involves representing a thing that is outside of me, is distinct from other things, is located, and is spatially related to other things. He then says that *because* the representation of space necessarily grounds these features of representations of things, the primary representation of space must be *a priori*.

Warren explains the *a priori* of our representation of space by contrast with the idea of “brightness space.” On the basis of our representations of brightness relations between things, we could *construct* a representation of “brightness space,” in which things could be situated and related to each other. In this case, the brightness space would be derived from our experience of brightness relations; in contrast, Kant thinks that “when we represent objects as being in spatial relations to one another . . . we presuppose a representation of the space that they are *in*.”⁷⁵ Unlike with “brightness space,” Kant thinks that we could not represent things as spatially related unless we already had the representation of space, but he seems to state rather than argue for this claim. First, Kant states that the representation

⁷⁵Ibid., 202.

of space is a condition of representing objects as distinct from myself and each other, and as spatially related and located. He then states that it follows from this that the representation of space is *a priori*, without explaining why it follows.⁷⁶ But why should we think that we could not represent things as spatially related without already having the representation of space. Why should space be different from “brightness space” in this regard? It cannot just be the fact that space has structural features that do not depend on the particular location and orders of objects in space—this is true of “brightness space,” but it does not follow from this that we could not acquire the representation of brightness space from our representation of the brightness relations between objects.

Seeing that Kant claims that the representation of space is a condition of the possibility of being presented with distinct particulars explains why Kant does not seem to feel it necessary to give more argument for the *a priori* claim. It is not just that we have a representation of structure that does not depend on the particular locations and arrangements of individuals in the structure, but also that (Kant thinks) we could not be presented with distinct (outside me, outside each other, located, and spatially related) individuals *at all* without the representation of space (this structure)—because he thinks that the representation of space cannot be abstracted from our experience of spatial relations between particulars. Since we are already presented with particulars in brightness relations, we can construct brightness relations on the basis of our experience of these particulars; we cannot do this for whatever framework is a condition of the possibility of being presented with particulars.⁷⁷ Thus, Kant argues from, and not to, the claim that space is a necessary condition of representing distinct particulars.

As well as his fundamental claim that cognition has two essential and distinct ingredients, Kant argues that both ingredients have *a priori* conditions. This means that some *a priori* representation is necessary for intuition to play its role as one of the ingredients of cognition; an *a priori* representation is necessary to enable empirical intuition to perceptually present us with particulars. Of course, the claim that there are *a priori* conditions of intuition is supposed to lead to transcendental idealism as well as to explain the possibility of geometrical knowledge.⁷⁸ However, the idea that the representation of space is the *a priori* form of outer intuition has

⁷⁶Warren suggests developing the argument by exploring the idea that “the ascription of spatial relations to objects presupposes many *a priori* modal claims about what combinations of spatial relations are or are not possible,” and that “these restrictions are not simply features of spatial relations that first can be seen to obtain and then can be built into our representation of space” (“Kant and the *A Priority* of Space,” 207–08).

⁷⁷Compare this with another of Kant’s extremely brief arguments for the claim that intuition has an *a priori* form: he says that “that within which the sensations can alone be ordered and placed in a certain form cannot itself be in turn sensation, the matter of all appearance is only given to us *a posteriori*, but its form must all lie ready for it in the mind *a priori* and can therefore be considered separately from all sensation” (A20/B34). As Falkenstein points out, this looks like a bad argument; it simply does not follow from the mere distinction between the order of elements given in experience and the elements in that order that both could not be given through receptivity. But if the form is what enables sensation to present distinct particulars, it is less bad. It is not just that there is a distinction between elements and their order, but that there is something that makes it possible for the matter to present objects. As Kant says elsewhere: “the mere form of sensibility” “precedes the actual appearance of objects since it is what first makes this appearance possible” (P 284).

⁷⁸See Brittan, *Kant’s Theory of Science*; M. Friedman, “Kant’s Theory of Geometry,” *Philosophical Review* 94 (1985): 455–506.

broader significance in Kant's position than its role in explaining geometry: our outer intuition *in general* has this *a priori* condition, and we need to understand this idea in order to understand the Transcendental Aesthetic as playing a role not just in explaining knowledge within the exact sciences, but in explaining empirical knowledge in general. Explaining why Kant thinks that pure intuition is necessary for mathematical proof does not tell us why empirical intuition could not play its role of presenting us with the objects about which we think without this *a priori* form,⁷⁹ which is indisputably part of Kant's overall picture:

[A]n object can appear to us only by means of such pure forms of sensibility, i.e., be an object of empirical intuition. Space and time are thus pure intuitions that contain *a priori* the conditions of the possibility of objects as appearances. (A89/B121–22; see also A24/B39)

Empirical intuition presents us with objects; *a priori* intuition is a condition of its doing this, so it is a condition of the intentionality of perception, and not just of geometrical knowledge.

Partly looking to Kant, a number of philosophers have thought about ways in which the representation of space is a condition of the possibility of *thinking* of an objective world.⁸⁰ This might be part of Kant's view, but his fundamental claim is that there are *two essential and distinct* ingredients in cognition, and that *each* has *a priori* conditions, which means that space as the *a priori* condition of *intuition* must be something different from necessary conditions of *thinking*. This means that instead of trying to understand the primary role of the *a priori* representation of space by thinking about how the representation of space might be necessary for *thought* of an objective world, *thoughts* about re-identification, or *thoughts* about the distinction between states of the self and objects that are independent of the self, what we need to understand is why Kant thinks that an *a priori* and non-conceptual structuring representation is needed to enable empirical intuition to present us with particulars, with objects outside of and distinct from ourselves and each other.

5

I have argued that there are clear reasons to reject the orthodox reading that sees Kant as thinking that we could not be presented with perceptual particulars in the absence of having and applying concepts. On the contrary, seeing intuition in this way provides the clearest and most straightforward reading of Kant's definition of intuitions as singular and immediate representations, and the role for which he introduces them: that of giving us the objects about which we can then think. I have discussed a number of reasons why commentators have not taken

⁷⁹Neither is this idea explained by giving an account of what it means to say intuition has a form and a matter (see Falkenstein, *Kant's Intuitionism*, for a detailed account of this). We want to know not just how to understand the idea that we can distinguish between the elements in a set and the order they are in, but what role the idea of an *a priori* order to these elements plays in enabling the elements to make their distinctive contribution to cognition.

⁸⁰Strawson and Evans, for example, argue that space is necessary for reidentification of particulars and/or for thinking of existence unperceived. See Strawson, *Individuals*; G. Evans, "Things without the Mind—a Commentary upon Chapter Two of Strawson's *Individuals*," in *Philosophical Subjects*, ed. Z. Van Straaten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

this view. One reason is failing to distinguish the roles of intuition and sensation, and the corresponding different notions of “givenness” at issue. Kant does not say that intuitions are necessary because we need a sensory input (although he clearly does think that we need a sensory input), but because concepts cannot present us with objects. Another explanation of the dominant view may be not taking sufficiently seriously Kant’s anti-Cartesian account of mental representation, according to which even our ability to know the temporal order of our inner mental states depends on our being directly presented with objects outside us. Kant does not just think that we need to be sensorily affected by objects, but that the presence of objects to consciousness plays a crucial role in cognition. Since Kant does not think that concepts ever directly present us with objects, this role must be played by intuitions; intuitions are representations that involve the presence to consciousness of objects. Another reason for the orthodox view may be not distinguishing between the conditions of demonstrative *thought* and conditions of being in a position to attend to a perceptual particular. If we run these two together and then read this back into Kant, his view that the categories are necessary to apply concepts to objects (and therefore to think of objects as having properties, and therefore to think of objects as objects, and, in this sense, are necessary for anything to be an object for me) will be thought to imply that we cannot perceive particulars without the categories. But this will mean that we cannot fully do justice to his calling intuitions singular representations, or to his saying that they give us objects. Further, if we assimilate intuitions to sensations, and see their role as the provision of raw data and the role of concepts as being to draw boundaries round the manifold input to produce representations of particulars, we will not understand a central part of Kant’s argument for the need for pure intuition, and the role it plays in our empirical cognition. On my reading, Kant’s position is more complex than one that sees the difference between mere sensation and properly intentional perception as being that the latter involves concepts. Rather, it is the spatiotemporality of perception that enables it to present us with particulars, and conceptualization takes us from mere perceptual presentation of particulars to experience of a world that can be thought of as fully objective and (empirically) mind-independent, and of which we can have scientific knowledge. This still leaves us needing to understand why spatiality should be a condition of the intentionality of perception,⁸¹ and whether it follows from this that our (primary) representation of space is *a priori*,⁸² but it leaves unargued what Kant does not argue for, and makes sense of what he does argue for.⁸³

⁸¹For arguments that spatiality is necessary for the (world-directed) intentionality of perception, and that spatiality is in fact what distinguishes intentional perceptual representations from sensations, see Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, 133–35; and Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness*, 18–48.

⁸²And of course I have said nothing to explain why experiencing an objective world should require the structure introduced by concepts, and the necessity and universality introduced by *a priori* concepts.

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