

Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the 'Second Step' of the B-Deduction¹

Dennis Schulting

Introduction

At a crucial juncture in the B-Deduction, Kant makes an important distinction. He writes:

To *think* of an object and to *cognize* [*erkennen*] an object are [...] not the same. For two components belong to cognition [*Erkenntnisse*]: first, the concept, through which an object is thought at all (the category),² and second, the intuition, through which it is given; for if an intuition corresponding to the concept could not be given at all, then it would be a thought as far as its form is concerned, but without any object, and by its means no cognition of anything at all [*keine Erkenntnis von irgendeinem Dinge*] would be possible, since, as far as I would know, nothing would be given nor could be given to which my thought could be applied. (B146)³

¹ This article first appeared in a different form in Dutch in the Leuven journal *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 72 (2010): 679–715. I thank the editor for her kind permission to reuse material from that article in translation here. In the paper published here I have expanded on certain issues, whilst leaving out a discussion of P. F. Strawson. For my account of Strawson's reading of Kant, see Schulting (2008) and Schulting (2012). I thank Gary Banham, Christian Onof and Jacco Verburgt, as well as two anonymous referees for *Kant Studies Online*, for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

² In German it says: 'dadurch überhaupt ein Gegenstand gedacht wird (die Kategorie)', translated by Kemp Smith as 'through which an object in general is thought (the category)', which is apt as Kant means to refer to the notion of the unity of apperception as defining the concept of an object in general.

³ All translations from Kant's works are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992–),

Here, Kant indicates that there is still important work to be done after completing the so-called ‘first step’ of deducing the categories from the principle of apperception, since that deduction is incomplete if it cannot be shown how the categories apply to objects of *human* sensible intuition.⁴ As Kant writes, ‘the categories do not afford us cognition of things by means of intuition except through their possible application to *empirical intuition*, i.e., they serve only for the possibility of *empirical cognition*’ (B147). Only by showing the manner in which this application comes about will Kant have explained fully the possibility of empirical knowledge, which he defines as ‘experience’ (B147). There has been much discussion about the role and structure of the second part of the B-Deduction in the Kant literature. However, I am not going to engage with it here directly. My approach will be by means of a topical issue in current discussion around Kantian epistemology, namely the possibility of non-conceptual content. This will also be limited in scope. I am interested in the extent to which this discussion captures an important, structural aspect of Kant’s general argument in the Transcendental Deduction (hereafter TD). Most commentators believe that in the second part of TD Kant in fact wants to exclude the possibility that there would be intuitions or

unless otherwise indicated. In cases where no English translation is available, I provide my own. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are by means of the standard abbreviations A/B referring to the first and second edition respectively. All other references to Kant refer to the *Akademie Ausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900–) by means of the abbreviation AA, followed by volume and page numbers, and occasionally, line numbers. In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

<i>LBl KrV</i>	<i>Lose Blätter zu Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i> (AA 23)
<i>Met-V</i>	<i>Metaphysik Volckmann</i> (AA 28)
NF	<i>Notes and Fragments</i> , ed. and trans. P. Guyer et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
R	<i>Reflexionen</i> (AA 14–19)
Real Progress	<i>What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?</i> , trans. T. Humphrey (New York: Abaris, 1983)

⁴ For a detailed account of the ‘first step’ of the B-Deduction, see Schulting (2012).

perceptions to which the categories are not applied or applicable. This position is roughly called conceptualism. By contrast, Kantian non-conceptualists want to argue that Kant does leave open the possibility of intuitions or perceptions that are not subsumed or subsumable under the categories.⁵ I want to argue that Kantian non-conceptualists are right insofar as the possibility of intuitions that are not subsumed (or even subsumable) under the categories is concerned, but that they are wrong to claim (1) that such intuitions are or can be considered synthesized content, and (2) that they are objectively valid cognitions. Kantian non-conceptualists argue that non-conceptual content is still synthesized content in the sense that it is synthesized by means of figurative synthesis, which Kant distinguishes from intellectual synthesis, which non-conceptualists

⁵ I am not interested here in the various possible kinds of conceptualism and non-conceptualism. See for an overview Grüne (2011: 470–2). There are obviously ways to accommodate both conceptualism and non-conceptualism to Kant's thought, by specifying the type of conceptualism (are both empirical and pure concepts involved?) or the type of non-conceptualism (is it state or content non-conceptualism, absolute or relative non-conceptualism?) or by proposing some hybrid form that best fits Kant's arguments. However, notwithstanding Grüne's (2009) illuminating classification of four main types of approaches to Kant's view on the concept-intuition relation —'judgment-theoretical', 'non-conceptualist', 'conceptualist' and 'obscurist-conceptualist', the latter of which represents her own reading—such an exercise will not necessarily clarify matters with respect to the original interpretive question whether Kant is *either* a conceptualist, broadly taken, *or* a non-conceptualist regarding intuition, broadly taken.—The question whether empirical concepts are involved or only categories is, in itself, an interesting one, since a conceptualism regarding empirical concepts could be seen as stronger than a conceptualism solely regarding a priori concepts (categories) (Griffith 2012). However, I believe such fine-graining with respect to the kind of concepts involved is not pertinent to Kant's analysis in TD, since that analysis only concerns the use of *pure* concepts and not empirical concepts, and so the controversial claim regarding the absolute distinction of intuition and concept—the claim that is central to the debate on Kant and non-conceptual content—only concerns the whether or no requirement of pure concepts or the categories for the *possibility* of intuition. The question regarding the application or applicability of *empirical* concepts, the question that interests Griffith, is secondary, as their application requires at any rate the application of the categories. Furthermore, to differentiate between the actual application and the applicability of the categories to intuition, as Grüne (2011) suggests, seems equally irrelevant, as the relation between the categories and intuition is not an empirical but a transcendental question.

identify as characteristic of conceptual content. I argue that although formally distinguishable, figurative synthesis is not possible without intellectual synthesis. However, this position does not *eo ipso* imply (standard) conceptualism. In Section 1, I discuss, very briefly, the conceptualist position of John McDowell, against whom Lucy Allais argues and defends a non-conceptualist reading of Kant, discussed in Section 3. In Section 2, I discuss the non-conceptualist position of Robert Hanna. In Section 4, I address some interpretations of a crucial passage in the run-up to TD, at A89–90/B122–3, which is the best evidence for a non-conceptualist interpretation of Kant. I defend a qualified conceptualist reading of Kant, which leaves room for non-conceptual content.

1 McDowell on Concept and Intuition

John McDowell (1996; 2009) presents a view of the relation of concepts to sensory content,⁶ to which concepts must in some

⁶ I will here treat ‘intuition’ and ‘sensory content’ as similar expressions, although the latter is broader in meaning than the former. Intuition is Kant’s designation for a sensible *way* of cognizing (B33/A19), whereas sensory content, as the label says, points to the empirical *content* of such cognizing, what Kant calls ‘sensation’ or the ‘material’ in an ‘appearance’, which is the ‘unbestimmte Gegenstand’ of an ‘empirical intuition’. In the *Stufenleiter* (B376/A320), Kant says that ‘perception’ is ‘sensation’ when it concerns a ‘modification of one’s state’, but cognition when it is a perception of something objective. And this is again subdivided into ‘intuition’ and ‘concept’, so that it seems as if for Kant both ‘intuition’ and ‘concept’ are objective perceptions. But see Wolff (1995: 62–3), who asserts that ‘intuition’ is not genuine knowledge, which is confirmed by Kant’s position that only in their conjunction do intuitions and concepts yield knowledge (cf. *Real Progress*, AA 20: 325: ‘Knowledge by means of *concepts* is called *discursive*, by means of *intuition*, *intuitive*; in fact, knowledge requires the conjunction of the two, but each is named for the ground of determination to which I always primarily attend.’ See also *Met-V*, AA 28: 405: ‘All our cognition [*Erkenntniß*] consists of judgments and these must have an object, the mere intuition [*bloße Anschauung*] is not cognition [*Erkenntniß*].’). I should note that Kant’s ‘Erkenntnis’ is best translated as ‘cognition’ rather than as ‘knowledge’, which has a different connotation in contemporary epistemology. Nevertheless, since there is no standard among commentators as to which translation should be preferred, I shall be using ‘cognition’ and ‘knowledge’ interchangeably. Also notice that for Kant ‘cognition’ does not *eo ipso* imply ‘empirical cognition’. See further on this, Schulting (2012), Ch. 4.

epistemically relevant way be answerable, that is in an important sense close to Kant's view. Very globally put, the problem concerns the foundation of empirical knowledge, or indeed, in more Kantian terms, the possibility of such knowledge. In McDowell's view, Kant's *epea pteroënta* 'thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (B75) hint at the solution to the problem. As Kant asserts, only in the connection of thoughts and intuitions is knowledge possible. This in itself does not give us much in terms of a solution to the problem of the possibility of knowledge. In some sense, we must be able to indicate what makes the connection work and to what extent thoughts and intuitions are effectively connected such that knowledge ensues or is made possible. The unifying element which connects two distinguishable and irreducible items or 'two stems of human cognition, namely, sensibility and understanding' (B29) into a unity concerns what Kant calls synthesis, or as McDowell (2009: 30–3) puts it, 'togetherness'.⁷

At B151–2, Kant speaks of a connection or combination of representations that is non-intellectual—precisely what McDowell thinks is necessary for having empirically contentual thoughts, i.e., knowledge that amounts to more than empty thoughts that 'spin in a void'. Kant calls it figurative synthesis (*synthesis speciosa*) or also the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. This power of the imagination belongs to sensibility and combines the sensible representational material in an intuition into a unity. However, because according to Kant every synthesis is an act of spontaneity, an act of determination, and not, as with sensibility, *that which* is determinable or being determined, transcendental synthesis of the imagination is an a priori power that is the effect of the understanding itself on sensibility (cf. B129–30). After having differentiated figurative from intellectual synthesis in the preceding section, Kant writes:

Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an

⁷ I provide a detailed analysis of Kant's notion of 'synthesis' in Schulting (2012), Chs 6 and 7.

object that is *not itself present*. Now since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination, owing to the subjective condition under which alone it can give to the concepts of understanding a corresponding intuition, belongs to *sensibility*. But inasmuch as its synthesis is an expression of spontaneity, which is determinative and not, like sense, determinable merely [*bloß bestimmbar*], and which is therefore able to determine sense *a priori* in respect of its form in accordance with the unity of apperception, imagination is to that extent a faculty which determines the sensibility *a priori*; and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the *categories* [*den Kategorien gemäß*] must be the transcendental synthesis of *imagination*. This synthesis is an action [*Wirkung*] of the understanding on the sensibility; and is its first application [...] to the objects of our possible intuition. (B151–2; trans. Kemp Smith)

This passage is of central importance for answering the question regarding the relation between intuition and the understanding, between sensory content and concept. I believe that Hegel already saw clearly the relevance of Kant's discussion of productive imagination for addressing the issue concerning the relation between concept and sensory content. In his early, formative essay *Faith and Knowledge* (Hegel 1968), which contains one of his earliest and most sustained expositions of Kant's theoretical philosophy, Hegel points out that with the notion of the productive imagination Kant shows the way in transcending the epistemological dead ends of what Hegel calls reflective philosophy, which puts up barriers in terms of absolute distinctions between the elements of cognition (note that Hegel's appreciation of Kant in this regard is a qualified one, since he accuses Kant of not abiding by his own insight into the intimate relation between sensibility and conceptuality in that he uncritically keeps a *metaphysical* dualism intact). Hegel interprets Kant's notion of the productive imagination as the power of reason itself, of which the understanding and sensi-

bility are derivative forms. In Hegel's view, it is the productive imagination which forms the original-synthetic unity, from which the discursive understanding and sensibility first spring as differentiable elements. In this way, the productive imagination is to be seen as the ground of both sensibility and the understanding (Hegel 1968: 327). Productive imagination is the synthetic a priori, rational principle that is operative in 'extension' (1968: 329, 341) itself, as Hegel writes, in other words, it is operative in sensibility or intuition itself.⁸ One can detect a similar Hegelian inspired reading of productive imagination as the combinatory factor between concept and intuition, the 'togetherness' of conceptuality and sensible content, in McDowell.

Let me expand. Following Wilfrid Sellars, McDowell (2009: 5) believes that 'judging is not the only mode of actualization of conceptual capacities'. McDowell takes 'judging' to be an act by virtue of our freedom, something for whose content we take responsibility, and for which we are held responsible and must give reasons if asked. If we make a claim to knowledge, that is, if there is a 'knowing', then we place that which we claim to know in the 'logical space of reasons' in contrast to a merely sensible perception, or, being sensibly affected by an object, which as natural fact we place in the logical 'space of nature' (2009: 4).⁹ Judging as such a 'knowing' is a typical epistemic fact which must be placed in the space of reasons. McDowell (1996) outlined the explanatory problem which the two classical epistemological theories, foundationalism and coherentism, face when trying to explain the justificatory basis of knowledge claims. Both foundationalism and coherentism fail to provide a satisfying account of the grounds for our knowledge. What is interesting in this context is that in order to get out of this epistemological cul-de-sac McDowell appeals to, among other possible ways out, Kant's above-quoted adage that thoughts without intuition are empty and intuition without concepts blind. To guarantee a critical naturalism or empiricism

⁸ See further Schulting (forthcoming b).

⁹ See for the origin of these terms Sellars (1997: 76).

which is not a reductive physicalism, our conceptuality, and hence our claim to true knowledge, must somehow eventually be grounded in what Sellars (1997: 68–73) calls ‘observation reports’, and these, in turn, in sensible intuition or perception. Sensible perception must provide the justificatory ground of our knowledge claims, albeit that such ‘observation reports’ themselves in turn necessarily rest on a perspective on the world (McDowell 2009: 6–7). What McDowell picks up from Kant, partly following Sellars, is the belief that the manner in which our knowledge claims are grounded in sensibility, in such ‘observation reports’, is not one of being grounded in a *purely given* content,¹⁰ such as sense data or factual objects in the world. The crucial point is that whatever necessary sensible content must be presupposed for knowledge, it will not *as merely given* provide the justificatory ground of knowledge. In the above-quoted passage at B151, Kant makes it clear that the productive imagination, which bridges the gap between concept and intuition and so provides the justificatory ground of knowledge, is not sensibility itself, which must be determined, but the *determinative*, since it is an ‘exercise of spontaneity [*Ausübung der Spontaneität*]’.¹¹ Despite this, the productive imagination *belongs* to sensibility, which makes it properly answerable to the world of sensible objects.

Herein, McDowell sees the solution to the problem concerning the correspondence between concept and intuition, between judgment and perception. Perception itself, by virtue of this spontaneity in sensibility,¹² provides us with the justificatory basis of the knowledge that is first explicitly articulated concep-

¹⁰ Cf. Sellars (1997: 33) about the ‘Myth of the Given’.

¹¹ Kemp Smith has ‘expression’ for ‘Ausübung’, which unfortunately loses the active aspect meant here by Kant. This is relevant, since McDowell systematically wants to deflate any such activity on the level of sensibility. See further below.

¹² Interestingly, the post-Kantian philosopher Reinhold differentiates between various degrees of spontaneity (Reinhold 2012: 344, 454); spontaneity in the first degree concerns sensibility, whereas the understanding is spontaneity in the second degree. (Spontaneity in the third degree is reason [2012: 454, 457].) See further below on Hanna, who could be said to espouse such a Reinholdian view of different stages or degrees of spontaneity.

tually in judgments. The sensible episodes of a perceptual experience ‘contain’ already ‘a claim’, as McDowell (2009: 10-12)¹³ puts it following Sellars. A perceptual experience is not merely an observation report, but is itself already intentionally directed towards the world. Perceptual experiences are not merely episodes of sensible consciousness or awareness but already ‘actualizations of conceptual capacities’ (2009: 10), although not yet full-fledged judgments. In this way, however, the Kantian distinction between concept and intuition is not sublated, for, as McDowell (2009: 11) makes clear, it being the case that we judge that things are as they appear to us in the way that they are, the *fact* that they appear to us in a certain way is not the same as *judging* that they so appear. The epistemic fact of judging is not reducible to the natural fact of the sensory affection, nor is the latter reducible to the former. Formally, concept and intuition, or, judgments and percepts, are separable. But in an actual episode of perceptual experience they are always already intricately connected. In McDowell’s view, the intuition of an empirically given object is already a proto-judgment, which pre-forms as it were the objective predicative locution of a judgment proper.

Also apparently important here is heeding the distinction between a singular, self-standing representation or sensible affection and an intuition, whereby Kant’s singularity criterion for intuition is emphasized (see B41; B47; A19/B33; B377). An intuition is by definition always already a perceptual experience of an object, not just an aggregate of representations (although I believe that the distinction is not as clear-cut as some would make it out to be). As a demonstrative ‘this here’, such an experience is already conceptual. This narrow definition of intuition plays a significant role in the debate surrounding non-conceptual content (see below). According to both McDowell

¹³ McDowell writes: ‘Visual experiences “make” or “contain” claims in that they are conceptual episodes, actualizations of conceptual capacities, and as such are to be understood on the model of linguistic performances in which claims are literally made’ (2009: 10).

and Sellars, intuitions are already conceptual, although in contrast to McDowell Sellars wants to retain the idea of ‘sheer receptivity’, namely the purely being receptive to impressions of the external world which as such are not conceptual. McDowell (2009: 16) sees no epistemically clarificatory or transcendental role for ‘sheer receptivity’. At first blush, it is indeed difficult to see what transcendental function ‘sheer receptivity’ can fulfil for the explanation of epistemically relevant perception.¹⁴

For McDowell, the inseparability of concept and intuition is important for understanding the way in which we orient ourselves in the world, are directed towards the world, as well as the manner in which the world is as it were preformed for our judgments about the world. McDowell insists, time and again, on the fact that knowledge is grounded in the connection between concept and intuition and that without this connection no knowledge is possible. This reveals his thoroughly Kantian background. McDowell (2009) demonstrates how Kant’s *Leitfaden* in the Metaphysical Deduction (MD) provides the key to the solution to the question of the justificatory ground of our knowledge claims. Kant writes:

¹⁴ More recently, Cassam (2007) has pointed out something similar to what Sellars means. For Cassam, it equally holds that an intuition is already conceptual but at the same time space must be made for what Fred Dretske (1969) has labelled ‘simple seeings’, non-epistemic seeings or percepts which are not in themselves conceptual and are tantamount to the sheer reception of sensory material without involving concepts; importantly, a simple seeing is not a perception. Cassam paraphrases Dretske’s account of the difference between ‘epistemic’ and ‘non-epistemic’ or ‘simple seeing’ thus: ‘[S]imple seeing is concept-free, since it implies nothing about the conceptual resources of the perceiver, and belief neutral in the sense that simply seeing X is compatible with no beliefs about X. In both of these respects seeing X is like stepping on X; one can step on X without recognizing it as an X or having any beliefs about X. In contrast, *perception* is “(either by stipulation or common understanding) cognitively loaded” since “some degree of recognition or categorization is essential to our perception of things” [...]. If this is right, then “it is by no means obvious that one must perceive something in order to see it” [...]. Not knowing what a cup is prevents one from perceiving a cup but not from seeing a cup’ (2007: 133).

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*, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects *a priori* [...]. (A79/B104–5)

The *Leitfaden* indicates—and let me put this in the slightly misleading terms McDowell (2009: 35) uses — that the ‘togetherness’ of items in judgments, that is, a conceptual or logical ‘togetherness’, is also actualized on the level of sensibility. McDowell’s (2009: 33, 29ff.) understanding of the *Leitfaden* is somewhat simplified,¹⁵ but in any case he has understood well that the same conceptual operationalization—Kant speaks of ‘the same function’—is active on two formally distinguishable levels. The role that perceptual experience plays is not a question of the givenness of sense data or some blind intuition on which judgment only *post hoc* imposes its conceptual structure. On the other hand, according to McDowell perceptual experience is also not an act of free agency, as is the case in judgment proper. It is formally distinguishable from a judgment and at the same time it contributes to knowledge *inseparably* from judgment.

This last point appears to contradict Kant’s own idea of productive imagination as an act of spontaneity, because, for Kant, *any* conceptual operationalization can only be a spontaneous act of the understanding, and, given that Kant identifies the act of the understanding with an act of judgment

¹⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the *Leitfaden*, see Schulting (2012), Ch. 5.

(A68=B93), the conceptual operationalization must be a judging. McDowell exploits Kant's distinction between receptivity and spontaneity without granting an epistemic role to Sellars's 'sheer receptivity'. According to McDowell, a perceptual experience, which is a conceptual episode and not merely a sense impression or a mental state that is prompted by a sense impression, already 'contains a claim', whose content is precisely correspondent to the content of a judgment. The difference, however, between perceptual experience and an actual judgment lies in the fact that the 'actualization of conceptual capacities' in a perceptual experience is 'involuntary' (2009: 12). This is the reason why McDowell wishes to talk about 'actualization' and not about 'exercise' of 'conceptual capacities' in sensibility.¹⁶ Free exercise, as spontaneity, is in McDowell's view restricted to an actual judging, which is *eo ipso* predicative in nature, and not a perceptual experience.

This is an ingenious way of reading Kant's account of the concept-intuition relation. However, it is problematic both systematically and interpretively. As a typical naturalist, McDowell regards the act of judgment very much as a form of effective 'control' that one has 'over one's cognitive life' (2009: 11), in contrast to perception, in which, logically, there is an at least partly involuntary reaction to an external object which affects me and over which I have no control. McDowell (2009: 12) refers to an enunciation of Sellars's, who expresses the conceptual in a perceptual experience in terms of a 'claim [which] is, so to speak, evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived' (Sellars 1997: 40). In contrast to 'knowings', 'seeings'—i.e., 'epistemic seeings' in Dretke's sense¹⁷—contain claims and thus are conceptual episodes in such a way that these claims are '*necessitated*' (McDowell 2009: 12) by the object of perception, in that they are 'wrung from the perceiver by the object'. Sellars appears to exploit the English term

¹⁶ Cf. Kant's use of the term 'Ausbung' (B151), translated by Kemp Smith as 'expression' and by Guyer/Wood, appropriately, as 'exercise'.

¹⁷ See again above note 14.

‘impression’ by pointing out that that which a perceptual experience contains in terms of a claim is ‘impressed’, as it were, on the subject of perception. In the context of McDowell’s as well as Sellars’s qualified empiricism, it is understandable that a strict distinction is maintained by them between passive sensibility and the judging subject, who actively ‘directs himself’ intentionally to the object of perception. At the same time, McDowell wants to stress the fact that there is already, inchoately, a sense of intentionality present in perceptual experience itself. A perceptual experience, as sensible awareness, is itself already intentionally directed at the world. The key question is how the actualization of conceptual capacities in perceptual experience is effectively achieved, if it does not occur by means of an exercise of spontaneity, that is, an act of the understanding. There is nothing conceptual about sensible states as such—something that is underscored by Sellars’s distinction between, on the one hand, ‘sheer receptivity’, the de facto receiving of sensations, and perceptual experience, on the other. For McDowell, however, it cannot be the case that a perceptual episode is not in principle an item for judgment (2009: 19; 21n.32). This makes McDowell’s position conceptualist. That is, for McDowell, perceptual episodes are conceptually laden or permeated and have always already intentionality, even independently of an effective act of the understanding (i.e., a judgment). They always already have the world in view, even though it is true that sensations qua sensations have that intentionality only ‘vestigially’ (2009: 121). In McDowell’s view, the unity that is realized by the productive imagination is not ‘an amalgam [...] of components that belong severally to sensibility and understanding’ (2009: 124); to the contrary, as Hegel emphasized (Hegel 1968: 329), it is a unity which already lies in perceptual experience, it is as it were ‘immersed’ in sensibility itself.

But where does that leave the activity of the apperceiving subject who is conscious of her manifold sensations as her own and is a fortiori conscious of the unity which she herself puts

into the manifold in intuition? What is the role of self-consciousness in the actualization of conceptual capacities in intuition? McDowell considers his reading of the relation between conceptuality and intuitions as authentically Kantian. It is unclear, however, how McDowell visualizes the effective ‘actualization of conceptual capacities’ in sensibility; furthermore, such a view of productive imagination contradicts Kant’s view that productive imagination is an ‘exercise of spontaneity’ by the understanding, a legislative power or activity, and precisely *not* an ‘involuntary’ necessitation by the external object that affects me. It is thus not surprising that McDowell talks about ‘togetherness’ instead of ‘synthesis’, a term he anxiously avoids. ‘Togetherness’ conveniently lacks the connotation of activity. McDowell (2009: 35) even asserts that ‘mere synthesis just happens, it is not our doing unlike making judgments, deciding what to think about something’.

Synthesis is however not something that just happens. According to Kant, at least in the B-Deduction, the productive imagination or figurative synthesis is ‘an action [*Wirkung*] of the *understanding* on the sensibility’ (B152; emphasis added).¹⁸ The unity that lies in perceptual experience is the unity that is put into the sensory content by an active subject, which is conscious of her act of judgment. The knowledge that the perceptual experience yields is not knowledge that merely results from the ‘togetherness’ of sensibility and understanding that is subsequently expressed propositionally in a judgment. Such ‘togetherness’ would always be a merely contingent connection

¹⁸ The Guyer/Wood translation has ‘an effect of the understanding on sensibility’; this reflects Kant’s standard meaning for the word ‘*Wirkung*’ as one half of the cause-effect (*Ursache-Wirkung*) relation; the causal effect, of some sort, of the understanding on sensibility is thus meant here, that is, the effect of the causality of the spontaneity of the understanding, being a special kind of causality (see Schulting 2012, Ch. 7). The synthesis of the imagination is not an ontologically separate synthesis, that is, separate from the synthesis of the understanding, but is the effect of the synthesis of the understanding in sensibility itself; it is in sensibility that the understanding’s synthesis manifests itself as the synthesis of the productive imagination (cf. again B151–2).

and not a necessary connection as is required for knowledge.¹⁹ An act must lie at the foundation of a necessary connection (cf. B130); however, such an act is not, as McDowell believes, *mere* ‘control over one’s cognitive life’ (2009: 11). What Kant means by a synthesis which is active on the level of sensibility itself is the subject’s own act of consciously taking responsibility for her conscious life, for all of her sensations and perceptual experiences.²⁰ Of course, McDowell (2009: 72n.8) is right that it cannot be the case that the subject is continuously self-reflective or inspecting herself. However, by construing ‘activity’ too reflectively (2009: 71) or even psychologically, as if some ‘muttering to oneself’ were concerned, McDowell underestimates the fact that, for Kant, the justificatory ground of our knowledge claims lies, not in sensibility itself, no matter how conceptually loaded, but in the apperceiving act of the understanding, in the act of judgment, *alone*.

I believe that McDowell is thus wrong in claiming that ‘[n]ot all instances of that kind of unity [he means the ‘togetherness’ which lies in perceptual experience, D.S.] need to be seen as resulting from free cognitive activity’ (2009: 72), by the latter meaning the activity of judgment proper. It may be obvious that certain kinds of connection—e.g., the contingent manner in which an arbitrary series of representations in the mind pre-

¹⁹ The ‘togetherness’ that McDowell has in mind has in fact more in common with what Kant terms ‘a rhapsody of perceptions’ as opposed to ‘a synthesis according to concepts of the object in appearance in general’. The latter is cognition which ‘rests on the synthetic unity of appearances’, the former not, since ‘a rhapsody of perceptions [...] would not fit together in any context in accordance with rules of a thoroughly connected (possible) consciousness, thus not into the transcendental and necessary unity of apperception’ (B195–6/A156). A putative synthesis that does not rest on, in McDowell’s terms, ‘our doing’, which for Kant means a ‘(possible) consciousness’ or an act of transcendental apperception, is not a synthesis in Kant’s sense, namely a priori synthesis, but merely a rhapsodic a posteriori arrangement of perceptions.

²⁰ Cf. the debate between Robert Pippin and McDowell on the issue of ‘subjectivism’ in Pippin (2005a) and (2005b). See McDowell (2009: 185–203) for McDowell’s response to Pippin (2005b). I am in general agreement with Pippin’s criticisms against McDowell on the issue of the role of subjectivity in knowledge, which I cannot discuss here. I intend to get back to this on another occasion.

cisely correspond to physiological sensations in the brain, which in their turn are physiologically linked up with the body—are not strictly speaking the product of spontaneous cognitive activity in the sense of Kantian apperception or a priori synthesis. A Kantian argument can be formulated to the effect that such contingent connections are not due to the spontaneous activity of the understanding (See Schulting 2012, Ch. 7). However, Kant is clear as to the fact that the combination at issue, that is, combination in the strict sense of *a priori* synthesis, ‘can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition’ (B129). This is so, ‘[f]or it is an act of spontaneity of the faculty of representation’ and ‘all combination [...] is an act of the understanding’, to which ‘the general title “synthesis” may be assigned’ (B129–30; Kemp Smith). Kant means a specific, a priori, necessary and hence a priori intelligible, necessary connection and not just any causal connection which results from being contingently, *a posteriori* affected by or being impressed with sensory content.

In contrast to McDowell, Kant stresses that it is the subject who a priori puts the combination into the object, and so into the manifold of intuition. The deflationary reading of the role of subjectivity concerning the actualization of the connection in the representational material, and the failure to heed the a priori sense of synthesis, is also characteristic of an interpretation that is at least in one important sense diametrically opposed to McDowell’s conceptualist construal of the relation between concepts and intuition. In the next paragraph I expand on this reading.

2 Hanna’s Non-Conceptualism

Against the traditionally conceptualist reading of Kant’s argument concerning the relation between concept and intuition, Robert Hanna (2005; 2008)²¹ defends the existence of

²¹ Here, I rely on the more succinct 2008 paper. See also Hanna (2011).

non-conceptual content. According to Hanna (2008: 42), the thesis of the non-conceptuality of mental content (hereafter Non-Conceptualism for short) rests on the idea ‘that representational content is neither solely nor wholly determined by our conceptual capacities, and that at least some contents are both solely and wholly determined by non-conceptual capacities and can be shared by human and non-human animals alike’. Hanna places this claim against the thesis of Conceptualism, which says that mental content is wholly determined by conceptual capacities and that the psychological states of non-human beings (animals) lack mental (representational) content.²² Hanna (2008: 44) asserts that perceptual states exist whose representational content is not, even in principle, conceptual. This does not imply that such states lack representational content. Hanna provides philosophical evidence independently of the Kantian context, but he also contends that the existence of such states can be proven by virtue of the very passage from the *Critique* quoted by McDowell in support of his Conceptualism, viz., that ‘thoughts without content are empty [and] intuitions without concepts are blind’ (B75). On the basis of this and other passages (e.g., B122–3; see further below), Hanna regards Kant not only, like most interpreters of Kant, as the founder of Conceptualism, but also and foremost as the founder of Non-Conceptualism. According to Non-Conceptualism, intuitions can indeed be given without requiring concepts, just as concepts are thinkable without (sensible) intuition.

Hanna (2008: 45–6) aims at a ‘bottom-up’ theory of human rationality. That is to say, he has in mind an analysis of the ‘two-way ladder by which the world is consciously delivered

²² In the literature various types of non-conceptualism are distinguished, i.e. state and content non-conceptualism and weak and strong variants of non-conceptualism. Here, I must abstract from such analytical filigree. Roughly speaking, a *Kantian* conceptualist regards the relation between intuition and concept such that no intuition exists without involving, at least in principle, conceptuality (broadly conceived). A *Kantian* non-conceptualist, by contrast, is someone who regards that relation in such a way that there is no necessary entailment between any arbitrary existing intuition and conceptuality (broadly conceived).

up from embodied animal experience to self-conscious thought and action-oriented deliberation, and then is downwardly transformed by our thinking and action under universal a priori norms' (2008: 62–3). To this end, he distinguishes between first-person information processing and subpersonal information processing. Although it is non-conceptual and non-self-conscious, subpersonal information processing takes place from the first-person perspective and involves consciousness (2008: 59). Hanna further argues for the distinction between self-consciousness and 'sensorimotor subjectivity' (2008: 59), which is the primitive capacity of conscious, neurobiological beings and which is based on primitive bodily consciousness, such as proprioception, kinaesthesia, orientation, feeling of pain etc. The central, and I believe valid, philosophical point that Hanna (2008: 59) makes concerns the fact that 'self-consciousness or self-reflection requires sensorimotor subjectivity, but sensorimotor subjectivity does not require self-consciousness or self-reflection'.

A scientific proof for this viewpoint is provided by the famous case of blind-sight patients who are able to perform acts which they are at the same time not self-aware of performing. It would be very implausible to assume that such patients 'are *mere robots* in the blind areas of their self-conscious visual fields' (2008: 60–1). Hanna associates this with Kant's notion of blind intuition (B75–6). An intuition is blind if a self-conscious, conceptual processing of information does not take place, whilst nonetheless being representational content involving sensorimotor subjectivity in what Kant calls inner sense. According to Hanna, an intuition is *conscious* mental content and also directly refers to an object. Blind intuition is 'essentially non-conceptual content' (2008: 62).²³ Non-conceptual content is further characterized by its own 'lower-level

²³ See also Grüne (2009) on blind intuition. Grüne's richly documented book also deals with the discussion of non-conceptual content, but it is not *prima facie* clear whether her own reading is classifiable as non-conceptualist. See further on Grüne, Schulting (forthcoming a).

spontaneity’ (2008: 62),²⁴ which Hanna associates with Kant’s *synthesis speciosa* or figurative synthesis. Hanna emphasizes that the ‘lower-level spontaneity’ is irreducible to ‘higher-level spontaneity’, the synthesis performed by the understanding or the *synthesis intellectualis*. Also, Hanna (2008: 62) argues that ‘lower-level spontaneity’, which knows its own normativity, is the ‘necessary ground’ for the rational spontaneity of the higher level, and that both non-conceptual and conceptual content ‘are complementary to one another in the constitution of atomic or basic perceptual judgments, or what Kant calls “judgments of experience”’.²⁵

Hanna’s arguments for the existence of non-conceptual content—one of them is a very illuminating account of Kant’s early argument about incongruent counterparts (2008: 53ff.)—are sound and in my view convincing. However, his more specific views on Kant in respect of the issues at stake, especially the alleged distinction between ‘lower-level’ and ‘higher-level’ spontaneity, is seriously problematic, both philosophically and as an interpretation of Kant. Hanna postulates the idea that the Sellarsian space of reasons is nothing but ‘a discursive—that is, a conceptual, judgment-driven, and linguistic—and a priori normative *superstructure built on* the platform of essentially non-conceptual embodied animal experience’ (2008: 63; emphasis added). If this were indeed the case—and the language used is significant—then, as Hanna effectively claims, ‘essentially non-conceptual embodied animal experience’ would be the epistemically relevant, foundational ground of all rational experience and knowledge; put differently, essentially non-conceptual content would be the exogenous normative constraint of conceptuality. This is in stark contrast to the view

²⁴ Notice the Reinholdian pedigree of this idea. See note 12 above. Kant himself does not speak in these terms. Spontaneity is the prerogative of the understanding (in the broad and narrow senses).

²⁵ Hanna appears to conflate judgments of perception and judgments of experience. However, this distinction is made by Kant in the *Prolegomena* and not in the *Critique* and it is considered highly controversial by some commentators.

of McDowell, who as we have seen maintains that the role of intuition or receptivity cannot be regarded as exercising a normative constraint on our rational claims from the outside. Intuition does not play a constraining role on our conceptuality exogenously, supposedly in a non-conceptual way. The philosophically more pertinent question is how something non-conceptual can in fact be the clarificatory, let alone the justificatory, ground of the conceptual without falling back into an unwelcome foundationalism, which invites all sorts of vicious infinite regress?

McDowell's conceptualist reading does not suffer from this problem, even if it is true that he misapprehends Kant's emphasis on the activity of our rational capacities which connect concepts with intuition. Hanna cannot explain what it is that connects two irreducible and essentially different things, viz., the essentially non-conceptual—i.e., 'embodied animal experience'—with what is essentially conceptual—i.e., rational thought and 'action-oriented deliberation'—in such a way that together they yield objective knowledge. Notwithstanding the merits of a gradation of species of Non-Conceptualism (Grüne 2009), the main philosophical problem comes down to being able to explain how the two irreducibly separable constituents of knowledge, the non-conceptual and the conceptual, do link up so that knowledge can arise from it. This is especially pertinent when the Kantian terminology of figurative synthesis and intellectual synthesis is employed, for regardless of their exact nature Kant at any rate means these kinds of synthesis clearly as operating *only* in their conjunction. If, as Hanna suggests, figurative synthesis as the lower-level spontaneity corresponds to the non-conceptual and intellectual synthesis as the higher-level spontaneity corresponds to the conceptual, and are separable, then what connects figurative synthesis with the intellectual synthesis such that a proper judgment ensues? Which *further* synthesis is responsible for *their* synthesis? And how does the threat of an infinite regress here relate to Kant's view that the synthesis at issue in TD is an *a priori* and

transcendental synthesis, that is, an *original* synthesis which grounds any other *empirical* synthesis and which itself does not depend on an *even more original* synthesis but should rather be considered a regress-stopper?²⁶

If Hanna were right that figurative synthesis is the necessary ground of intellectual synthesis (2008: 62), then it would seem that the lower-level spontaneity grounds the higher-level spontaneity, which given the specifics of spontaneity—a self-activity (B130) or causality that is itself uncaused (cf. B430; A533/B561; A445ff./B473ff.)—seems odd to say the least. How does this work? This would surely be to reverse the order of what is ground and what is grounded. How can something that is not caused by anything except itself be grounded in something other that is in any case not *more* fundamental or original (and in fact, is rather *less* fundamental)?²⁷ At any rate, it conflicts with Kant's view that a priori synthesis is the spontaneous act or 'self-activity' of the understanding (B130; B132; B150); there is nothing, certainly not a putative 'lower-level' spontaneity, which can ground it, for if there were it would cancel out its very originality. If Hanna intends this grounding to mean that intellectual synthesis, or the higher-level spontaneity, simply latches onto the lower-level, more primitive spontaneity, which supposedly grounds the former, then one can hardly speak of spontaneity in the proper sense of the term anymore. Hanna reveals himself to be a standard naturalist on this point.

A distinction between a priori synthesis and actual causal connections, a posteriori syntheses, must be heeded. The fact that essentially non-conceptual mental content exists does not

²⁶ Cf. the discussion between Cassam (2008) and Longuenesse (2008) on this issue.

²⁷ Kant's spontaneous 'I' of transcendental apperception is of course, in a certain cognitively indeterminable sense, grounded in an ontologically more fundamental noumenal substance, which however does not detract from the originality and spontaneity of transcendental apperception *relative* to empirical experience. Transcendental apperception, or what Hanna calls 'higher level spontaneity', is at any rate not grounded in *sensory* content, however much synthesized.

eo ipso imply that this content is synthesized content in Kant's sense (i.e., synthesized *a priori*, that is, *necessarily*). A proof of the existence of non-conceptual mental content follows analytically from Kant's argument for the unity of self-consciousness.²⁸ But the same argument will also show that logically such mental content *cannot* be *synthesized* content (in Kant's sense), given the rigorous coextensivity of the analytic and synthetic unities of apperception (cf. B133). Hanna's assertion that essentially non-conceptual mental content is characterized at least by figurative synthesis is not based on Kant's own argumentation; although, given the two-step structure of the argument of TD, intellectual synthesis and figurative synthesis are *formally* distinguishable, figurative synthesis is not de re possible without intellectual synthesis having been satisfied, for figurative synthesis *is* the *same* understanding which operates both on the 'intellectual' or conceptual level of a judgment and the level of 'intuition' in a judgment (see again A79/B104–5). A more in-depth defence of my claims is required than I can provide in this limited space,²⁹ but at any rate the passage we have been discussing, at B151–2, makes sufficiently clear that figurative synthesis does not come apart from intellectual synthesis, since figurative synthesis *is* the effect of the understanding's *own* act of synthesis (intellectual synthesis). If you remove intellectual synthesis, you remove figurative synthesis. One could argue that, in a formal analysis, it would be possible to have an intellectual synthesis that does not imply the instantiation of a figurative synthesis, if, for example, one abstracts from the application of the categories to a spatiotemporal sensible manifold and considers discursive modes of cognition that make use of a different way of schematizing. But the reverse does not hold: one cannot have a figurative synthesis, even analyze it, without presupposing the actual instantiation of an intellectual synthesis, since the latter is a necessary condition of the former.

²⁸ See Schulting (2012), Chs 6 and 8.

²⁹ I advance detailed arguments for these claims in Schulting (2012).

It should also be pointed out that, at any rate in Kant's internalist perspective, such mental contents that are non-conceptual are epistemically irrelevant, as indeed McDowell maintains, because they are 'nothing for' the self-conscious subject, the conscious 'I' (B131–2). McDowell rightly observes that '[w]ithout the higher faculty, sensibility can yield at most the representations, merely associatively ordered and so not amounting to cognitions, that Kant allows to non-rational animals' (2009: 119), although I should like to qualify this to the extent that such merely associatively ordered representations occur, *de facto*, also in rational animals, human beings. In other words, non-conceptual content has no epistemically or transcendently relevant role to play whatsoever—although of course sensory content has a role, insofar as it must be assumed to be given on pain of there not being knowledge at all; but this requirement is of course not denied even by (strong) conceptualists.

3 Allais's Non-Conceptualism

In her article on non-conceptual content in relation to the representation of space, Allais (2009) reacts against the standard reading of Kant's theory of the *a priori* forms of intuition as the condition of the representation of particular objects. This reading amounts to believing that '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 [...]' (2009: 386). Like Hanna, Allais criticizes the common view that no mental representational content exists independently of concepts (Conceptualism). Allais contends that, for Kant, it is not necessary to apply concepts to have perceptual presentations of external particular objects. She emphasizes that the role of intuition consists in presenting us with particular objects and that intuition plays this role independently of conceptuality. In this way, Allais (2009: 384–5) goes against McDowell's (1996: 9)

assertion that intuition does not make an ‘even notionally separable contribution to the co-operation’ between receptivity and spontaneity.

Like Hanna, Allais argues for the existence of (relatively)³⁰ non-conceptual content. Allais’s thesis is that although it cannot be denied that actual intuitions must be conceptualized in order to yield knowledge, it must be denied that intuitions must be conceptualized in order to present us with objects. To claim the latter, namely that intuitions must be conceptualized even to present us with objects, would be to argue for ‘strong’ Conceptualism (2009: 386).³¹ In opposition to McDowell, Allais argues that intuition does make a separable contribution to cognition, which consists in the fact that intuition perceptually provides us with individuals, particular objects. Allais emphasizes Kant’s definition of intuition as that which, in contrast to a concept, refers immediately to a particular, singular object (cf. A320/B377; A68/B93). The thesis of the blindness of intuition (B75) does not mean, according to Allais (2009: 393), that an intuition has no representational value or function. To the con-

³⁰ As said, in the literature a distinction is made between ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ non-conceptual content. Absolute non-conceptual content means that perception and belief are essentially or intrinsically different, whilst relative non-conceptual content indicates that a subject has mental content without possessing the relevant concepts to describe that content (see Allais 2009: 386).

³¹ Griffith (2012) argues for a less strong conceptualism, whereby it still holds that categories are required for intuition, even if it is not the case that one need employ *empirical* concepts to have intuitions. Strong conceptualism in his view would mean that empirical concepts are needed for intuition. It seems though that strong conceptualism for Allais just means the thesis that *categories* as general rules are required for the existence of an intuition (she also seems to conflate the two questions that Griffith wants separated; see further below). Griffith’s weak conceptualism thus is still stronger than Allais’s relative non-conceptualism (i.e., the view that intuition can but need not stand under the categories), so counts as absolute or strong conceptualism in Allais’ perspective. Furthermore, I believe Griffith’s fine-graining is not pertinent to Kant’s analysis in TD, since that analysis only concerns the use of *pure* concepts and not empirical concepts, and so the controversial claim regarding the absolute distinction of intuition and concept—the claim that is central to the debate on Kant and non-conceptual content—only concerns the whether or no requirement of pure concepts or the categories for the possibility of intuition. The question regarding the application of empirical concepts is secondary, as their application requires *at any rate* the application of the categories.

trary, it belongs to the definition of an intuition that it gives us the object.³² Allais points out that for an intuition and hence for the perception of a particular object the use of concepts as general rules, as constituents of judgments and thus of the understanding, is not required.³³ Intuition provides or gives us the object about which we think and it is only in the second instance that the concept enables us to *think* about the object, or to make judgments about it (2009: 390). In contrast to McDowell and Sellars, Allais believes it is important to acknowledge that Kant understands the epistemic role of intuition as such, of receptivity tout court (cf. Sellars' 'sheer receptivity'), not as merely causal or that intuition would only have an information-processing role. Intuition, by 'giving us objects', enables objectively valid knowledge (2009: 391).³⁴

³² Cf. *Real Progress*, AA 20: 325: 'By the intuition that accords with a concept the object is *given*; without that it is merely *thought*. By this mere intuition without concept the object is given, indeed, but not thought; by the concept without corresponding intuition it is thought but not given; thus in both cases it is not known' (trans. Cambridge edition).

³³ See by contrast McDowell (2009: 32, 100–1). McDowell reads Kant's assertion at B159, that categories apply to 'whatever objects may *present themselves to our senses*', such that even the presenting, in and through intuition, of objects does not happen 'independently of its cooperation with the understanding'. Earlier (Schulting 2010: 704n.76), I misquoted McDowell here; I quoted McDowell as referring to the passage following, at B160, where Kant writes that 'everything which ever may come before the senses must stand under the laws that arise a priori from the understanding alone', but, as I pointed out there, this must clearly be read in the light of the sentence effectively quoted by McDowell; the 'everything' means merely 'objects' presenting themselves, not literally every and all representations. See by contrast Griffith's (2012) stronger conceptualist reading of this passage; Griffith contends that 'even sense perception without judgment stands under the categories' (2012: 207). This is a common reading but it makes no sense. How can sense perception which is not a judgment, or an actual, inseparable component of a judgment, still stand under functions of judgment that give it, the judgment, objective validity, i.e., by means of the categories? A perception is either an inseparable component of a de facto judgment, thus implying the categories, or it is not, in which case it is merely an intuition of an object. There is nothing essential about perception *as such*, 'without judgment', that makes it amenable to standing under the categories, which are after all nothing but the logical functions of judgment (B143).

³⁴ In his pre-Critical philosophy, around 1769, Kant still held the view that intuition provides 'immediate cognition of individual things', but he also then believed in 'intuitive concepts' (R3957, AA 17: 364 [NF: 104]). After the Inaugural Dissertation, it seems plausible that, since he gave up on the idea of

Regarding this latter point, however, although Kant sees intuition as an indispensable source for knowledge, I believe Allais, like Hanna, goes beyond Kant by suggesting that it is intuition that enables the objective validity of knowledge, since objective validity, for Kant, is always only a function of judgment, hence of our conceptuality, not of intuition. In her defence, it should be pointed out though that Allais (2009: 405) makes an important distinction between being presented with objects and the presentation of an object ‘*as object*’, which ‘the non-concept-having creature is arguably not in a position’ to do (cf. Allais 2009: 407, 413).

That intuition fulfils an epistemic role independently of conceptuality implies, according to Allais (2009: 394), that intuition itself must be attributed a non-conceptual mental processing function. Allais connects this processing function with Kant’s synthesis (2009: 395). Like Hanna, she associates intuition with figurative synthesis. She considers the possible objection that if intuition requires synthesis and synthesis is always governed by concepts, then intuition must itself also already be conceptual content. Allais’s reply is that synthesizing is not yet or not the same as conceptualizing and that ‘[a]lthough concepts always involve synthesis, it does not follow that synthesis always involves concepts’ (2009: 396n.35). According to Allais, then, intuition indeed requires synthesis, but synthesis itself is not already conceptual.³⁵ Allais

‘intuitive concepts’ and sought to explain how the intellect and sensible intuition work together to yield knowledge, he also relinquished the idea that intuition provides immediate *cognition* of individual things, separably from the intellect. See again note 6.

³⁵ Cf. by contrast McDowell (2009: 100), who writes: ‘Kant urges that objects do not count as present to *intuition* unless what is given to the senses has categorial unity, [...] categories secure for intuitions a genuinely objective purport [...].’ That according to Allais synthesis supposedly is not already conceptual would appear to be in conflict with Kant’s assertion in one of his notes from the 1780s, where transcendental synthesis of the imagination is said at least to involve ‘a concept of the object in general’: ‘The transcendental synthesis of the imagination pertains solely to the unity of apperception in the synthesis of the manifold in general through the imagination. Through that a concept of the object in general is conceived in accordance with the different kinds of transcendental synthesis’ (*LBl KrV*, B12, AA 23: 18 [NF: 258]).

writes: ‘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 the concepts [...]’ (2009: 396). Allais is right that the fact that concepts always require synthesis does not imply that synthesis always requires concepts, but she is *only* right if she means that synthesis *per se* is not governed by *empirical* concepts. I take it however that Allais really means that ‘synthesis *per se*’ is not ‘governed’ by the categories, not just empirical concepts.³⁶ The question regarding the use of empirical concepts is not germane to the central question whether figurative synthesis is or is not amenable to categorial determination.³⁷ However, the view that ‘synthesis *per se*’ is not ‘governed’ by the categories, as Allais would appear to think, must be considered mistaken. To believe that synthesis and categories can come separate shows a misunderstanding regarding the intimate relation between synthesis and the categories, as if synthesis and categorial determination were, or rested on, two wholly separable functions.³⁸ To the contrary, as the *Leitfaden* makes clear, synthesis, both intellectual and figurative, is precisely the way in which categorial determination takes place.³⁹ Apart from interpretive

³⁶ Allais appears to be ambiguous here about ‘concept’. If she means ‘empirical concept’ or ‘analytic unity of marks’, then of course synthesis is not conceptual, for a synthetic unity is by definition not an analytic unity. However, in the context of TD Kant means ‘concept’ as ‘pure concept’ or as ‘consciousness of the unity of synthesis’ (A103), i.e., category/categories.

³⁷ See above note 31.

³⁸ Cf. *LBI KrV*, AA 23: 19 (NF: 259): ‘Now the categories are nothing other than the representations of something (appearance) in general so far as it is represented through transcendental synthesis of imagination [...]. The manifold, however, cannot thoroughly belong to one apperception except by means of a thoroughgoing synthesis of imagination and its functions in one consciousness. This transcendental unity in the synthesis of imagination is thus an *a priori* unity under which all appearances must stand. *Those [sic] however are the categories*, thus the categories express the necessary unity of apperception under which all appearances belong insofar as they belong to one cognition *a priori* and necessarily’ (emphasis added).

³⁹ *A priori* synthesis precisely is the ‘application’ of the categories to/in intuition, so that *a priori* synthesis and categorial determination are coextensive in all cases.

questions, if figurative synthesis were to be something wholly different from categorial determination, intellectual synthesis say, then the question would arise—the same question that arose with Hanna’s construal—as to how figurative synthesis is in turn synthesized with categorial determination or intellectual synthesis, thereby landing us in a vicious infinite regress, the regress that *a priori*, original synthesis was precisely designed to block.

Although Kant makes it clear, as Allais acknowledges, at B129–30, that ‘all combination [...] is an act of the *understanding*’ (emphasis added), Allais relies on Kant’s account of synthesis in the A-Deduction, where Kant more explicitly differentiates the various forms of synthesis, ostensibly only one of which involves concepts, namely the synthesis of recognition, which she takes to confirm her understanding of intuitional or figurative synthesis as non-conceptual. She also emphasizes Kant’s remark in the run-up to TD, after Kant has defined ‘synthesis’, that synthesis is the effect of the imagination, ‘a blind but indispensable function of the soul’ (B103/A78). One should notice, however, that in the margin of his own copy of the A-edition of the *Critique* Kant substituted ‘understanding’ for ‘soul’, which is significant to say the least and points to his refashioning of the argument in the B-edition (although, I should note, he did not replace ‘soul’ in the passage at A78 in the B-edition).⁴⁰ More forcefully, in the B-Deduction

The standard reading is that synthesis is an activity that is separate and separable from the set of categories itself, but that makes it unintelligible *how* supposedly *by virtue of* synthesis the categories get applied—although used by Kant himself (e.g. B149) the term ‘application’ is misleading. Which function other than synthesis (and we are talking *a priori* synthesis here, naturally) would perform the unification of the synthesis and the categories, if synthesis and the categories were separate? It is clear that such a view would lead inevitably to an infinite regress. The categories *being* so many modes of synthesizing pre-given manifolds in intuition and the act of synthesis being the unitary set of these modes of synthesizing, by implication synthesis cannot be separate from the categories. Any other connection that intuitions might have independently of the understanding, and thus of the categories, is not synthesis in Kant’s sense (i.e. a priori necessary connection).

⁴⁰ It might appear odd for Kant to make the distinction in B103 between synthesis in general and ‘to bring synthesis *to concepts*’, if both were indeed to be seen as

Kant speaks explicitly of the productive imagination or figurative synthesis as an ‘effect of the *understanding*’ (B152; emphasis added) (see again my earlier discussion of this passage above).⁴¹ But even in the A-Deduction, it is questionable to regard the threefold synthesis as separable sources of knowledge. Kant clearly aims at providing a regressive analysis of knowledge by explaining the ‘threefold synthesis, which is necessarily found in all cognition’ (A97), where knowledge is the *explanandum* and synthesis the *explanans* in the analysis. Also, Kant argues that the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction of the imagination are ‘inseparably bound’ (A102; trans. Kemp Smith) and that without recognition in the concept ‘all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain’ (A103). This suggests that neither syntheses can operate singly, in isolation from the others. However, A124 appears to lend support to Allais’s reading. There, Kant argues that it is first by means of the unity of apperception that ‘concepts that belong to the understanding can come about, but only by means of the imagination in relation to the sensible intuition’, and ‘*must be added to the pure imagination in order to make its function intellectual. For in itself the synthesis of the imagination, although exercised a priori, is nevertheless always sensible, for it combines the manifold only as it appears in intuition [...]*’ (emphasis added).

Understandably, Allais wants to keep both syntheses, intellectual and figurative, separate, since like Hanna she insists on two modes of synthesizing that are not necessarily coextensive, and only one of which is due to the conceptual capacities of the understanding, analogous to the strict distinction between

functions of the same *understanding*. Nevertheless, in conformity with the *Leitfaden*, I believe it is precisely Kant’s claim that *one* function of the understanding brings about *two* syntheses simultaneously, on both the conceptual level and in intuition.

⁴¹ Cf. also a *Reflexion* from the *Duisburg Nachlaß* (R4681, AA 17: 667 [NF: 174]): ‘The *synthesis* contains the relation of appearances not in the perception but in the concept. That all relation in perception nevertheless presupposes a relation in the concept indicates that the mind contains in itself the universal and sufficient source of *synthesis* and all appearances are explicable in it.’

essentially non-conceptual content and concepts. In her and Hanna's non-conceptual construal of intuition, intuition must by definition contain a synthetic connection between the representations which constitute its content independently of the categories and hence independently of intellectual synthesis. This function of an independent synthetic connection in intuition is, in the view of Hanna and Allais, carried out by figurative synthesis. Figurative synthesis performs this function separably from the understanding and its synthetic activity. In sharp contrast to this reading, McDowell, and *mutatis mutandis* Sellars, holds that although figurative and intellectual synthesis are formally distinguishable and each fulfil a distinctive epistemic function, a synthesis or, in his words, 'togetherness' on the level of intuition is always coupled with a synthesis on the level of judgment. Figurative and intellectual synthesis are thus always coextensive. In fact, it concerns the same logical 'togetherness' that characterizes both an 'ostensible seeing' and a conceptual episode (2009: 32–3, 94–5). McDowell writes: 'What the productive imagination generates is a unity involving both sensibility and understanding—*not an amalgam, however intimately bound together, of components that belong severally to sensibility and understanding*' (2009: 124; emphasis added).⁴² Therefore, it cannot be the case, in McDowell's view, that there is a synthesized intuition which is not itself already conceptual, that is, shows the very same 'togetherness' that is shown on the conceptual level of judgment. McDowell observes: '[T]he unity of the intuitions is *not prior to and independent of* the unifying capacities of the understanding' (2009: 101; emphasis added).

⁴² The difference between sensibility (intuition) and understanding lies merely in the manner in which the relevant conceptual capacities are actualized in the 'ostensible seeing' and in judgment respectively (2009: 31). But it concerns nonetheless the same 'togetherness' and the same 'conceptual capacities' in both cases (2009: 30–1, 34). McDowell writes: '[T]he actualization of the relevant conceptual capacity in the intuition *is* an actualization of it in a conceptual occurrence whose content is, so to speak, judgment-shaped, namely a seeing (a seeing that...)' (2009: 34).

4 Kant's Qualified Conceptualism

I concur with the central contention of Hanna's and Allais's argumentations that Kant is essentially a non-conceptualist and not a conceptualist concerning the *intuition* of particular objects. Intuition is not itself already conceptual content. However, I object to the interpretation of intuition as itself having objective validity, as Hanna (2005: 257) and presumably Allais believe, or to the similar claim that an intuition itself objectively refers. For Kant, objectivity or objective validity is solely a function of judgment (B142). I also differ from Hanna and Allais in that I do not believe that figurative synthesis and intellectual synthesis can be shared out between intuition and concept in such a way that intuition is by definition characterized by figurative synthesis. Not all intuition is synthesized and only those intuitions are synthesized which are part of a judgment, given that synthesis is an act of the understanding (B151–2) and that the faculty of the understanding is the capacity to judge (A69/B94). Also figurative and intellectual synthesis are not two *de re* separable instances of syntheses or ways of synthesizing, but just one instance of synthesizing that ensues from an operation of the understanding, which manifests itself on both the sensible and intellectual level of a judgment. There *is* just one transcendental synthesis, which binds intuition and concept together. For McDowell, this is not a problem as he believes that in principle each intuition already shows the *same* 'togetherness' that is manifest in a conceptual episode, whose 'togetherness' is shown in the propositional structure of judgment. Insofar as it concerns a case of objective knowledge, my reading is close to McDowell's. However, I believe Allais is right to insist that the necessary 'mutual dependence' (2009: 399) of concept and intuition does not hold for the perception but only for the cognition of objects. The necessary conditions for the perceptual presentation, or the intuition, of particular objects are time and space, not the categories (2009: 399–401). Both Allais and Hanna rightly cite the passage at B122–3 in support of their

non-conceptualist reading of intuition. I believe this is indeed one of the most convincing passages in Kant's work against strong Conceptualism. Kant writes:

The categories of understanding [...] do not represent the conditions under which objects are given in intuition. Objects may, therefore, appear to us without their being under the necessity of being related to the functions of understanding; and understanding need not, therefore, contain their *a priori* conditions. Thus a difficulty such as we did not meet with in the field of sensibility is here presented, namely, how *subjective conditions of thought* can have *objective validity*, that is, can furnish conditions of the possibility of all knowledge of objects. *For appearances can certainly be given in intuition independently of functions of the understanding.* [...] That objects of sensible intuition must conform to the formal conditions of sensibility which lie *a priori* in the mind is evident, because otherwise they would not be objects for us. But that they must likewise conform to the conditions which the understanding requires for the synthetic unity of thought, is a conclusion the grounds of which are by no means so obvious. *Appearances might very well be so constituted that the understanding should not find them to be in accordance with the conditions of its unity. Everything might be in such confusion that, for instance, in the series of appearances nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis and so answer to the concept of cause and effect. This concept would then be altogether empty, null, and meaningless. But since intuition stands in no need whatsoever of the functions of thought, appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition.* (A89–91/B122–3; trans. Kemp Smith, emphasis added)⁴³

⁴³ Other passages in TD that support non-conceptualism regarding intuition are B145 ('The manifold for intuition must already be *given* prior to the synthesis of understanding and *independently from it*'; emphasis added) and B132 ('That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called *intuition*').

Often the emphasis in this passage, especially the last part (italicized here), from §13 in the run-up to TD is put on the ostensible merely hypothetical nature of the thought that Kant puts forward here, namely that ‘appearances might [...] be so constituted that the understanding should not find them to be in accordance with the conditions of its unity’ and that ‘in the series of appearances nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis and so answer to the concept of cause and effect’. Here, Kant would appear to argue that since in that case there could be no knowledge of an object it must be excluded that appearances would lie in disarray and would not already show, at least in principle, the conceptual unity that is required for knowledge. Hannah Ginsborg (2008: 70–1) is typical in this respect. She writes in regard to B122–3: ‘If we abstract from the role of this synthesis in perception then it does at least *seem* possible that appearances can be presented to us independently of the conditions of understanding, but once we have recognized the role of synthesis in perception, we are in a position to see that this apparent possibility is illusory.’⁴⁴ Ginsborg believes that the possibility that Kant considers is merely hypothetical,⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Also Allison (2001: 38) thinks along those lines. Allison speaks of the ‘exorcizing of the specter’ of ‘transcendental chaos’, which at B122–3 Kant supposedly holds before us as a threatening possibility; this exorcism is considered the central goal of TD. Allison’s reading of this passage manifests strong Conceptualism: ‘[T]he goal of the Transcendental Deduction in both editions is to prove that everything given to the mind in accordance with its forms of sensibility, that is, all appearances, which includes everything that could possibly become an object of empirical consciousness, must be subject to the conditions of this unity, and therefore to the categories (which are just the rules governing this unity).’ See also Allison (1996: 49–50), where Allison refers to ‘the Kantian analogue of the Cartesian “evil genius”, a spectre that must be exorcized if the project of the Deduction is to succeed’.

⁴⁵ Grüne (2011: 474) thinks the hypothesis in B122–3 has ‘only a didactic function’. Grüne writes: ‘[O]nce one has read the deductions and bears in mind that concepts are representations of the understanding, it turns out that contrary to what he writes in A 89ff./B 122ff., Kant believes that objects cannot “appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding”, appearances cannot “be given in intuition without functions of the understanding” and intuition requires “the functions of thought”. The reason why at the beginning of the Transcendental Deduction he states the opposite is just that he wants to motivate why there has to be a deduction of the categories.’

and that he never considers this a *real* possibility, viz., the possibility that appearances would be presented to us independently of the understanding and are not structured by the understanding so as to yield knowledge.⁴⁶ However, it should be pointed out against a reading such as Ginsborg's that the transcendental truth that the unity of understanding is necessary for a synthesis of causally linked appearances and hence for the possibility of knowledge does not imply the truth of the existential claim that all appearances necessarily conform to the unity of understanding and synthetically hang together (in an a priori way).

But Kant does not in fact make the latter existential claim to the effect that the real possibility of appearances not conforming to the unity of the understanding would be excluded. (At least he does not here at B122–3; sometimes he does appear to make that claim, especially in the A-version of TD, e.g. at A111, A119, A123). With regard to the quoted passage at B122–3, two points are important:

- (1) Kant clearly asserts that even if appearances were to lie in a chaos it would still be the case that '[o]bjects may [...] appear to us without their being under the necessity of being related to the functions of understanding' and 'since intuition stands in no need whatsoever of the functions of thought, *appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition*' (emphasis added).⁴⁷ This

⁴⁶ Perhaps Ginsborg means that appearances that have objective validity cannot be independent of the understanding, as it is the understanding which confers objective validity on them. But the way in which she puts it makes it appear that she believes that *all* appearances whatever cannot be independent of the understanding, regardless of their validity. And that is clearly tantamount to an existential claim not licensed by Kant's argument at B122–3. At A111–12, however, Kant indeed appears to argue that 'all possible appearances', even 'the entire sensibility', are all 'necessarily in agreement with the conditions of the thoroughgoing unity of self-consciousness, i.e., must stand under universal functions of synthesis [...]', which would endorse Ginsborg's reading. But cf. A110: '[...] all appearances, *insofar as objects are to be given to us through them*, must stand under a *a priori* rules of their synthetic unity [...]' (emphasis added), which points to a limiting condition.

⁴⁷ Carl (1992: 124n.20) suggests that Kant's talk of 'objects' here must be seen in the broad sense, 'in dem "objective Perceptionen" Vorstellungen von Gegen-

strongly suggests the real possibility of non-conceptual content or blind intuition.⁴⁸ The goal of TD concerns establishing the rules under which our perceptions, which are not already by themselves categorially determined, are regulated by the categories in such a way as to yield objective knowledge. As Allais (2009: 399) rightly insists, establishing the rules of *intuition as such* is not at issue in TD, since these had already been established in the Aesthetic.

- (2) A clear distinction must be heeded between the project of the Transcendental Aesthetic and that of TD, even if it is

ständen sind'. As Carl argues, 'objects' here means 'appearances', which 'to the extent that as objects they are thought in accordance with the unity of the categories are called *phaenomena*' (A248). All phenomena are appearances, but not all appearances are phenomena. Appearances which are not phenomena are those objects of which Kant speaks here at B122–3, and are in no need of the functions of the understanding. This, I contend, excludes the possibility that there would be objects *that are phenomena* which would be in no need of the functions of the understanding, as this amounts to a contradiction (given Kant's definition at A248).

⁴⁸ At A111, Kant hypothesizes about the possibility that 'a swarm of appearances [...] fill[s] up our soul without experience ever being able to arise from it', whereby 'all relation of cognition to objects would also disappear, since the appearances would lack connection in accordance with universal and necessary laws' (cf. A122). In that case, 'intuition without thought [*gedankenlose Anschauung*]' would be possible, but it would 'never [be] cognition, and would therefore be as good as nothing for us' (cf. the early *Reflexion* contemporaneous with Kant's letter to Herz (1772) R4636, AA 17: 619–20 [NF: 151]: 'One can intuit something without thinking something thereby or thereunder. / All cognitions come to us through thinking, i.e., through concepts; they are not intuitions.'). From the immediately preceding passage (A110), where he argues that '[t]here is only *one* experience, in which *all* perceptions are represented as in thoroughgoing and lawlike connection' (emphasis added), it appears that Kant excludes the possibility that one could have an *epistemically relevant* perception or intuition that does not belong to unitary experience grounded in 'a transcendental ground of unity' (A111), but this does not imply that he excludes the *real* possibility of 'intuition without thought [*gedankenlose Anschauung*]'. In the hypothetical 'swarm' case of a total lack of universal and necessary law-governedness, 'intuition without thought [*gedankenlose Anschauung*]' would still be *really* possible, but it would have no real relevance for us as cognizers; such perceptions that lack the necessary unity as is required for knowledge 'would be nothing but a blind play of representations, i.e., less than a dream' (A112). See also R5221, AA 18: 122.25–123.02.

true that in the second half of TD, in the famous and much discussed footnote to B160–1, Kant seems to alter his view on the way in which time and space must be regarded.⁴⁹ However, the argument there is that the objective unity, about which in the Aesthetic Kant still maintained that it belonged to sensibility, is first constituted by virtue of the synthetic act of the understanding. Space and time as such, as ‘forms of intuition’, themselves do not yet contain the synthetic unity which they only have as ‘formal intuitions’ as a result of that synthetic act.⁵⁰ This does not mean at all that the a priori form of space and time, which are the necessary forms of each and any intuition, are themselves by definition subject to the rules of the understanding or indeed show by default that synthetic unity which is required for objective knowledge of spatiotemporal objects.

Whatever the case may be regarding space and time, the passage at B122–3 shows well that Kant’s manner of reasoning concerning the relation between intuition and concept, more particularly the relation between intuition and the categories as fundamental rules of synthesis for objective knowledge, is of a modal nature. This argument can be construed in two different ways, only one of which is correct (let *CN* stand for a claim to conditional necessity in regard to the intuition-concept relation

⁴⁹ That the projects of the Transcendental Aesthetic and TD are not completely separable is also suggested by Kant’s words, in a passage prior to the above-quoted, that hint at the necessity of a transcendental deduction not just of the concepts of the understanding but also of *space* as a result of the ambiguity in the *concept* of the latter (see B120/A88). See further Onof & Schulting (forthcoming).

⁵⁰ This, I believe, goes against Griffith’s (2012: 194) recent criticism against non-conceptualists that the representation of ‘pure content’, space and time, cannot be non-conceptual. Griffith’s position appears to be close to Longuenesse’s (1998), who argues that Kant’s distinction between ‘forms of intuition’ and ‘formal intuitions’ is not as crucial as is standardly thought. On their reading, already space and time as mere ‘forms of intuition’ (and not first as ‘formal intuitions’) require categorial synthesis *even to be* those forms. On Longuenesse’s interpretation of space as form of intuition/formal intuition, see further Onof & Schulting (forthcoming).

and *AN* stand for a claim to absolute necessity in regard to that relation):

CN: $(\forall x)(\exists s)(x \text{ is an intuition}) \wedge (s \text{ is the set of a priori rules of synthesis}) \rightarrow \text{necessarily } \{[(\exists y)(y \text{ is conceptual cognition governed by } s) \wedge (x \text{ is necessary for } y) \wedge (x \text{ corresponds with } y)] \rightarrow (x \text{ is subject to } s)\}$

AN: $(\forall x)(\exists s)(x \text{ is an intuition}) \wedge (s \text{ is the set of a priori rules of synthesis}) \rightarrow \text{necessarily } [(\exists y)(y \text{ is conceptual cognition governed by } s) \wedge (x \text{ corresponds with } y) \wedge (x \text{ is subject to } s)]$

The standard reading in the literature is *AN*. This reading comes down to (strong) Conceptualism, the interpretation that Hanna and Allais argue against. The quoted passage at B122–3 shows that *AN* cannot be correct. It is not true that for all intuitions it holds necessarily that they are combined with concepts and yield cognition and hence are subject to the a priori rules of synthesis governing such cognition. Also Kant's famous adage at B75, which seems to assert the absolute inseparability of concept and intuition, shows on further analysis that *AN* cannot be right. For Kant writes towards the end of that passage that '[o]nly through their union [i.e., of intuition and concept, D.S.] can knowledge arise'. This suggests a hidden antecedent in the argument: it does not concern an absolutely necessary unity between intuition and concept, which in fact would contradict Kant's insistence on their irreducible difference (cf. B29), but a conditionally necessary unity.⁵¹ That is shown by *CN*. Kant

⁵¹ *AN* would imply that we would know that necessarily all our sensations would be conformable to the universal relations among them that enable their connectedness by means of which we know objects. Cf. R5262 (1776–78), AA 18: 135 (NF: 223): 'If we had complete insight into all of our sensitivity and form then we would be able to determine antecedently everything that can be an object for us at all.' But clearly we do not have 'complete insight into all of our sensitivity'. This implies that we cannot know whether 'all of our sensitivity' is indeed conformable to the universal relations by means of which we know objects. Hence *AN* is invalid as a reading of Kant's aims in TD.

reasons that if we take there to be knowledge, and given that knowledge consists of both concepts and intuitions as well as their synthetic unity, then we must assume that our conceptuality corresponds to our sensibility in accordance with a priori rules, for knowledge is only explainable from that correspondence.⁵²

The conditional structure of the argument in regard to the intuition-concept relation (*CN*) is linked to the globally regressive character of TD.⁵³ Whilst Allais (2009: 402) claims to base her reading on Ameriks' regressive interpretation, her non-conceptualist reading of intuition as intrinsically characterized by figurative synthesis in contrast to conceptuality as intrinsically characterized by intellectual synthesis reveals a much too rigid view of Kant's formal distinctions. The distinction between the different syntheses is not an 'ontological' distinction between faculties or powers or ways of representing that either are or are not coextensive, whereby figurative synthesis is simply the synthesis of intuition in contrast to, and numerically distinct from, the intellectual synthesis of concepts through the understanding. The differentiable syntheses are the necessary transcendental-logical conditions of knowledge which operate their functions integrally and cannot be shared out between intuition and the understanding. If we base our reading on the A-version of the threefold synthesis, no synthesis performs its function separably from the other two syntheses for, as Kant indicates in the *Leitfaden*, that function is reducible to one and the same act of the understanding in judgment. This is the forte of Kant's argument for an original unity of the two stems of knowledge and at the same time shows its limit, for it precludes Kant from claiming that perception and intuition themselves are already conceptual or even proto-conceptual, or indeed amenable to being conceptualized, as Longuenesse (1998: 196, 208) appears to argue,

⁵² Cf. R5221, AA 18: 123.

⁵³ There is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding the question whether the argument of TD must be construed regressively or progressively. I discuss this in Schulting (2012), esp. Chs 4 and 10.

when she says that a certain ‘conatus’, i.e., the capacity to judge, ‘pervades the totality of our sensible perceptions’. There is nothing about perception or intuition which shows that they have a ‘conatus’ towards the capacity to judge.

The central question in TD is and remains: What needs to be presupposed, in terms of a priori capacities, in order for knowledge to be possible? Kant argues, on the basis of regressive analysis, that a synthesis of apprehension must at least be presupposed, but since such a synthesis is inadequate for the constitution of knowledge, also a synthesis of reproduction is required, and since neither a synthesis of reproduction is adequate, a further synthesis of recognition is required. Kant does not mean that each of these syntheses operates in separation from the others, or in abstraction from them, as if it concerned the consecutive phases of an underlying psychological process. This would immediately produce an infinite regress problem. That is to say, if synthesis of apprehension were to be operated separately, what would see to it that it becomes a synthesis of reproduction? Which more originary synthesis would be responsible for the synthesis of apprehension becoming a synthesis of reproduction? This surely cannot non-question-beggingly be the synthesis of reproduction? But perhaps it is the synthesis of recognition that is the more originary synthesis that connects the two other syntheses together. But what then is responsible for the synthesis of recognition effectively becoming a well-formed proposition that expresses a judgment performed by the understanding that is not just a reproduction of more or less ordered series of sensations? Or is the synthesis of recognition the actual judgment? But then what would be the synthetic relation between the synthesized syntheses of apprehension and reproduction and the actual judgment?

It may be said that the threat of a vicious regress still haunts the account in the A-Deduction. Therefore, I believe that in the B-Deduction Kant relinquishes the explicit threefold character of synthesis, to remove any semblance of psychologism. In full comportment with the *Leitfaden* (A79/B104–5), in the B-

version account the act of synthesis is attributed entirely to the understanding, which by means of one function establishes both a connection, or an intellectual synthesis, on the level of concepts (as formal unities) ‘by virtue of the analytical unity’ and a connection, or a figurative synthesis, on the level of the content of concepts (which is empirical in an actual empirical judgment) ‘by virtue of synthetic unity’. McDowell (2009: 124) comes closest to Kant’s meaning, when he asserts that the unity of the imagination is not ‘an amalgam, however intimately bound together, of components that belong severally to sensibility and understanding’. Other than McDowell, Hanna and Allais are however right in maintaining that intuition as such is not yet categorially determined, neither *de facto* nor in principle. In line with Hanna’s and Allais’s versions of Non-Conceptualism, it is my view that intuition and concept are not, or at least need not be, *de re* coextensive; they are only necessarily coextensive in their connection in an actual judgment. It is the *relation* between intuition and concept which is conceptual, not intuition itself. That relation is established by a conceptual action that Kant calls the bringing to concepts of synthesis (A78/B103–4). McDowell’s illegitimate quasi-Hegelian move is that he reads the capacity responsible for the possibility of judgment into sensibility tout court, which quite understandably rings Conceptualist alarm bells among the Non-Conceptualists.

However, contrary to what Hanna and Allais believe something that is essentially non-conceptual can hardly be seen as the a priori and necessary ground or basis of something that is essentially conceptual. Their version of Non-Conceptualism cannot explain what is the a priori synthetic-unitary ground for two essentially different elements, intuition and concept, for those instances in which intuition and concepts *are* necessarily coextensive, namely when there is an actual claim to knowledge, a judgment. But what is undoubtedly true about their version of Non-Conceptualism is that intuition is itself not conceptual, or in McDowell’s words an ‘actualization of con-

ceptual capacities'. Only *in relation to* the concept, as part of an actual judgment, must intuition be brought to concepts through an act of pure synthesis, an act of a judging subject.

In conclusion, Kant may be called a conceptualist with respect to the possibility of knowledge with the proviso that intuition itself is not conceptual (which on Kant's terms is actually trivially true). Bridging that gap, the gap between the essentially non-conceptual and the conceptual constitutes of course the heart of Kant's project in TD.

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