

On interpreting Kant's doctrine of apperception as both analytic and synthetic

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstrac <p>This thesis deals with Kant's doctrine of apperception, as presented in the Transcendental Deduction, in the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. The research question examined in the thesis is to what extent and how the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as analytic, and to what extent and how it can be interpreted as synthetic. The aim of the thesis is to show that the doctrine can be interpreted as inherently ambiguous, between an analytic account which presents a conceptual analysis of a unified subject's activities of cognition, and a synthetic account which explains how the subject's unity of consciousness, or the identity of apperception, is possible in the first place. This is achieved through (1) an examination of Allison's interpretation of apperception, (2) close readings of the relevant passages in the Critique of Pure Reason, and (3) an interpretation of Hegel's reading of Kant in Faith & Knowledge.</p> <p>It is argued in the thesis that an accurate interpretation of the doctrine of apperception must include accounts of both its analytic and synthetic dimensions. The proposed view is that the synthetic account explains how the analytic account is itself possible. So, on the one hand, it follows analytically from the thought of a single subject's thinking an object, as containing diverse representations, that the subject synthesizes those diverse representations as an identical subject. On the other hand, Kant sometimes seems to think that the identity of apperception must itself be produced by synthesis and consciousness of it. This provides the basis for a synthetic account of apperception, expressed by Hegel's view that the doctrine of apperception implies an identity of subject and object. In the thesis, Hegel's view is interpreted to mean that insofar as the identity of apperception must be produced through synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, the distinction of subject and object cannot be justified, when it comes to that synthesis and consciousness of it.</p> <p>The view advanced in the thesis is that the process through which consciousness becomes unified, relative to synthesis, is a necessary condition of the analysis of the unified subject's activities of cognition. Moreover, it is held that the ambiguity which gives rise to this view is inherent to the doctrine of apperception. So, although Allison's analytic interpretation presents a generally plausible and internally consistent account of apperception, it is not fully supported by the text. Consequently, to avoid begging the question, a synthetic interpretation must also be given. In this thesis, such an interpretation is formulated on the basis of an interpretation of Hegel's reading of Kant.</p>			
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstrac <p>Tämä tutkielma käsittelee Kantin apperseptioteoriaa, joka esittää Puhtaan järjen kritiikin toisen laitoksen Transsendentaalisessa deduktiossa. Tutkimuskysymyksenä on, kuinka pitkälle ja miten apperseptioteoriaa voidaan tulkita analyyttisenä sekä kuinka pitkälle ja miten sitä voidaan tulkita synteettisenä. Tutkielman päämääränä on osoittaa, että apperseptioteoriaa voidaan tulkita itsessään epämääräisenä. Toisaalta se sisältää analyyttisen esityksen, joka mallintaa yhtenäisen subjektin tiedollisia toimintoja, ja toisaalta synteettisen esityksen, joka selittää, miten subjektin yhtenäinen tietoisuus, niin sanottu apperception identtisyys, on ylipäänsä mahdollinen. Tutkielman päämääränä pyritään (1) käsittelemällä Allisonin tulkintaa apperseptiosta, (2) esittämällä tulkintoja Puhtaan järjen kritiikin olennaisista kappaleista ja (3) tulkitsemalla Hegelin Kant-luentaa.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa väitetään, että apperseptioteorian tarkka tulkinta edellyttää sekä sen analyyttisen että synteettisen ulottuvuuden huomioimista. Tutkielmassa ehdotetun näkemyksen mukaan synteettinen esitys selittää, miten analyyttinen esitys itse on mahdollinen. Toisaalta siitä ajatuksesta, että yhtenäinen subjekti ajattelee objektia, joka sisältää moninaisia representaatioita, seuraa analyyttisesti, että tämä subjekti yhdistää tai syntetisoi nuo moninaiset representaatiot identtisenä subjektina. Toisaalta Kant vaikuttaa ajoittain olevan sitä mieltä, että apperception identtisyys sellaisenaan on muodostettava representaatioiden synteessin kautta. Tämä tarjoaa lähtökohdan apperception synteettiselle tulkinnalle, joka tulee ilmaistuksi Hegelin näkemyksessä siitä, että apperseptioteoria implikoi subjektin ja objektin identtisyttä. Tutkielmassa tämän identtisyden tulkintaan tarkoitettavan, että siinä määrin kuin apperception identtisyys on muodostettava synteessin ja tietoisuuden synteessistä kautta, erottelu subjektin ja objektin välillä ei ole oikeutettu, mitä tulee tähän synteessiin ja tietoisuuteen siitä.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa esitetyn näkemyksen mukaan prosessi, jonka myötä tietoisuudesta tulee yhtenäinen suhteessa synteessiin, on välttämätön ehto yhtenäisen subjektin tiedollisten toimintojen analyysille. Lisäksi tutkielmassa esitetään, että kyseinen näkemys juontuu epämääräisyydestä, joka sisältyy apperseptioteoriaan itseensä. Siispä, vaikka Allisonin analyyttinen tulkinta esittää yleisesti uskottavan ja sisäisesti johdonmukaisen käsityksen apperseptiosta, se ei ole täysin yhteensopiva Kantin tekstin kanssa. Tästä seuraa, että kehäpäätelmän välttämiseksi on tarjottava myös synteettinen tulkinta. Sopiva tulkinta muotoillaan tutkielmassa Hegelin Kant-tulkinnan pohjalta.</p>			
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1. Introduction

In the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (B19)¹ formulates the central concern of his theoretical philosophy, or as he puts it, the “real problem of pure reason”, as the question: “**How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?**” The meaning of this question is the following. Knowing subjects seem to make judgments which apply to objects necessarily and universally, as well as independently of experience.²

Moreover, as in the case of mathematics and natural science, these judgments appear to extend the scope of the knowing subject’s knowledge (B14-8). The problem is that an explanation of *how* or *on what basis* they are formed seems totally lacking. As Kant puts it, there is no readily available account of the “X”, which the understanding depends on to discover a connection between the logical subject and predicate³ of a synthetic *a priori* judgment (A9/B13). To provide such an account becomes, then, the central concern of a critique of pure reason. But this task involves serious conceptual difficulties. Namely, when Kant asks what the basis could be for judgments that seem to apply necessarily to objects, but which cannot have been formed by the subject based on experience, the source of his puzzlement appears to be this: while synthetic *a priori* judgments supposedly provide knowledge about objects, their applicability to those objects simply seems given along with their logical formulation. How can this be the case? And pressing the issue still further, it may be asked: *who* or *what* is it that establishes the applicability of synthetic *a priori* judgments to objects? Can the intuitive distinction between the knowing subject, i.e. that who predicates a concept, and the object, i.e. that of which the concept is predicated, be maintained, when it comes to Kant’s mysterious “X”?

In contrast to the explicitly stated problem of pure reason, Kant’s philosophy is often approached as putting forward the metaphysical or epistemological doctrine of *transcendental idealism*.⁴ This doctrine is characterised by a distinction between appearances and things in themselves, such that the subject can come to know only

¹ References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are indicated by specifying the edition (A/B) and the original page number. I have used the following English translation: Kant, Immanuel (1998): *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited and translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge University Press (reprinted 2017).

² Kant’s initial example is: “Everything that happens has its cause.” (A9/B13)

³ In the judgment “all S’s are P”, S is the logical subject, while P is the logical predicate.

⁴ This has been noted by De Boer (2011: 50), who holds that the approach is mistaken. In her view, the interpreter of the *Critique* should focus instead on examining the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

appearances.⁵ For Kant, transcendental idealism follows from the fact that objects can be represented only insofar as the subject represents them according to the subjective forms of sensibility, i.e. space and time (A490-1/B518-9).⁶ But this constitutes only a part of Kant's complex conception of the relation of subject and object. Kant writes that in cognition, either (1) "the object alone makes the representation possible", or (2) "the representation alone makes the object possible" (A92/B124-5). Now, insofar (1) is true, it follows that the subject cannot know the thing in itself, since the representation which arises for the subject might fail to represent the thing as it is in itself. But insofar as (2) is true, it follows that the subject, through its manner of representing, whether it be the manner in which it receives representations or that in which it thinks them, makes an essential contribution to the form of the object of knowledge. In transcendental idealism, then, a fundamental epistemic *non-identity* of the knowing subject and the thing in itself is supplemented by an equally fundamental correspondence between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. The subject's faculty of cognition sets conditions on what objects of cognition can be like. Nevertheless, this correspondence is possible only on account of the non-identity, since the transcendental idealist assumes that the subject's manner of representing can make the object possible only insofar as something is given to the subject's faculty of cognition from outside that faculty itself. Matters get still more complicated, however, when one considers the precise way in which Kant conceives of the subject's contribution to knowledge. In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant presents the doctrine of apperception, where he argues that the possibility of the subject's thinking multiple representations, as contained in a single representation, necessarily requires that those multiple representations undergo combination or *synthesis* in a single, unified consciousness (B131-4). Arguably, for

⁵ As Allais (2011: 91) has noted, there is no interpretative consensus regarding the doctrine of transcendental idealism. See Schulting (2010) for a discussion of the debate regarding how the distinction between appearances and things in themselves should be interpreted. To give an example of a major point of debate, one issue is whether things in themselves should be thought of as metaphysical entities, which exist outside the realm of appearances, or whether they should be thought of in purely epistemological terms, that is, as simply referring to whatever does not fit the subject's conditions of knowledge, and cannot therefore count as an object of knowledge. This last is roughly Allison's (2004) position.

⁶ In Kant's words: "We have sufficiently proved in the Transcendental Aesthetic that everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself. This doctrine I call **transcendental idealism.**" (A490-1/B518-9) Taking, then, the example of space: "Space is nothing other than merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e., the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us." (A26/B42)

instance, to think the three lines of a triangle, as contained in the single representation of a triangle, requires that the representations of those three lines be combined in a single consciousness. In the Deduction, Kant makes use of this idea to argue that certain *a priori* concepts or *categories* establish or guarantee the *unity* of the synthesis of the representations contained in the object (B143). But the problem is that Kant's account involves intuitive difficulties caused by his conception of a *consciousness of synthesis*. That is, Kant seems to require that, in order for the subject to be able to think an object, the subject must be capable of *being conscious* of the synthesis or combination of the representations contained in that object (B133). This requirement has been met with varying reactions. These are related to the question of whether the doctrine of apperception is *analytic* or *synthetic*, that is, whether it is to be interpreted as a piece of conceptual analysis, or whether it should be read as purporting, as such, to establish something about what actually goes on in the activity of cognition. Both approaches are problematic in their own ways. If the doctrine is interpreted as an analytic model of cognition, as Allison (2004, 2015) does, then it must be explained how the notion of a consciousness of synthesis can be compatible with a mere conceptual analysis. If it is interpreted as synthetic, then it must be explained what exactly a consciousness of synthesis is supposed to be like; and precisely this is difficult to understand (Strawson, 1966; Guyer, 1987). Accordingly, others, even when they have thought the doctrine of apperception to ultimately be synthetic, have held views close to Allison (de Vleeschauwer, 1937; Dyck, 2017).

Hegel cuts a lonely figure among the interpreters of the Transcendental Deduction. In his view, Kant's conception of apperception implies an identity of subject and object (Hegel, 1977). This view is clearly at odds with transcendental idealism. How can there be an identity of subject and object, if the very possibility of knowing an object requires that something be given from outside the subject's faculty of cognition? The claim seems inadmissible. Nevertheless, Hegel's thesis resonates in at least one sense with Kant's problem of pure reason. If synthetic *a priori* judgments apply necessarily and universally to objects, even though the model provided by experience cannot be used in conceiving of how this applicability is established, then it might be asked whether the distinction of subject and object can be maintained within whatever "X" that objective applicability is based on. In a word, the so-called identity of subject and object would seem to correspond to the *indistinguishability* of subject and object, insofar as the "X"

serves as the basis for formulating synthetic *a priori* judgments. To clarify, the suggestion is not that the subject and the object are identical insofar as they are both ultimately part of the same reality of being a thing in itself. The suggestion is, rather, that their identity, whatever its precise nature, is incorporated as an essential feature into the very process of *a priori* cognition.

Now, the identity of subject and object might also bear on Kant's conception of a consciousness of synthesis. By way of hypothesis, this consciousness need not be conceived of as the *subject's* consciousness of a synthesis, but as a consciousness which takes place in a state where there is no justification for distinguishing the subject from the object. Similar considerations have been implied in the literature on Kant's doctrine of apperception. Düsing (1983: 414) has claimed that there is no discussion in the Transcendental Deduction for why the activity of synthesis should belong to the unified subject that gets represented as its result. This raises the question of why synthesis should be thought of as part of a *subject's* cognitive activities. In a similar vein, Henrich (2003: 42) has noted that, for Kant, "no self is possible unless it exists in such a way that there is an original relationship between it and something that is not itself but can be given to it". Again, the question can be raised of why such an "original relationship" itself should be thought to involve the distinction of subject and object. Granted, Kant (Axvii) himself emphasises that he is chiefly concerned with the question: "What and how much can understanding and reason cognize free of all experience?" rather than with the question: "How is the **faculty of thinking** itself possible?" It might be objected at the very start, therefore, that questions regarding the origin of the subject – object distinction are simply not relevant to Kant's project. Nevertheless, it is possible that Kant's theory in the *Critique* is more ambiguous than he himself would have liked it to be. This is the possibility explored in the present thesis, with respect to his doctrine of apperception.

1.1. The methods and aims of this thesis

The research question examined in this thesis is to what extent and how Kant's doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as analytic, and to what extent and how it can be interpreted as synthetic. This thesis deals, then, with an apparent ambiguity, which concerns the possibility of interpreting the doctrine of apperception either as an analytic model of cognition, or as a synthetic account of the relation of the unity of

consciousness to objects. More specifically, the proposed ambiguity concerns, on the one hand, the doctrine of apperception understood as an analysis of a thinking subject's activity of thought, and, on the other hand, that same doctrine understood as an explanation of how there can be a unified thinking subject or an identity of apperception, presupposed by the analytic account, in the first place. The aim of this thesis is to show that the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as inherently ambiguous, which is to say that an accurate interpretation of it requires acknowledging both an analytic as well as a synthetic account of apperception. This also involves presenting specific interpretations of both inclinations.

Three major steps are required in order to reach the proposed aim. First, I examine Allison's analytic interpretation of the doctrine of apperception. I argue that what I call Allison's 'model view of apperception' is both a plausible interpretation of the doctrine of apperception, as well as consistent with Kant's general argument. I maintain, however, that the model view cannot be fully supported by the text. Second, I offer an interpretation of the doctrine of apperception from a point of view which focuses on its ambiguous aspects. I argue that there is a general ambiguity in the content of the doctrine between an analytic and a synthetic account of apperception. Accordingly, my proposal is that a synthetic account is required to explain how the identity of apperception, presupposed by the analytic account, is itself possible. Third, I examine Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception in *Faith & Knowledge*. I make use of Hegel's interpretation in providing an analysis of the synthetic account of apperception implied by Kant. This analysis shows that Hegel's conception of an original identity of subject and object can plausibly be applied to the doctrine of apperception. In short, I argue that the identity of subject and object refers to the indistinguishability of subject and object, or better, to the lack of justification in maintaining their distinction, when it comes to the conditions of the identity of apperception.

It is important to note the following caveats. Firstly, I deal only with the second edition version of the Transcendental Deduction. There are two reasons for this. First, the B-Deduction is the revised version of the proof, which suggests that it provides the better portrayal of Kant's position.⁷ Second, Allison has dealt primarily with the B-Deduction,

⁷ Of course, not everyone agrees with this. For instance, Heidegger (1965) considers the first edition of the *Critique* to offer the better portrayal of Kant's theory.

while Hegel seems to do so exclusively in *Faith & Knowledge*. This already limits the scope of the discussion to the second edition version. Secondly, I am above all concerned with §16 of the B-Deduction, since that is where Kant presents the doctrine of apperception. Though I discuss the relation of Kant's argument in §16 to the overall argument of the Deduction, especially when evaluating Allison's interpretation, the focus of this thesis remains always on demonstrating the implications of Kant's claims in §16, rather than on determining what one 'should' take their implications to be considering the overall argument of the Deduction. Accordingly, I follow the principle that if there appear to be good reasons for taking the view that not all of Kant's claims in §16 can be squared with his overall project, then one should take that view. This results, again, in a limitation of scope, both in terms of the material treated as well as the applicability of the results. Rather than presenting an interpretation that can be generalised to apply to Kant's overall project, then, this thesis focuses on a problem largely specific to the doctrine of apperception.

The third and final caveat concerns the definitions of the terms 'subject' and 'object'. The most important thing to note is that these terms do not directly refer to the self and the objects of experience as they are commonly thought to exist in the empirical world. The terms should be understood, rather, in the precise sense in which they apply to §16 of the Deduction (B131-6). There, the subject, represented by the "I think", plays the part of the *unity of self-consciousness* in relation to an object of thought; and the object is present as the *unity of the manifold* that is combined in the consciousness of a single representation. Rather than speaking of spatiotemporal objects and the self that knows them, then, one should here speak of the *minimal conditions for there being a distinguishable subject and an object relative to an act of cognition*. On the other hand, these conceptions of subject and object do present *a priori* conditions for any relation of subject and object relevant to knowledge. Suppose for the moment that Hegel is right in claiming that the doctrine of apperception implies an identity of subject and object. It follows that this identity will be a condition of any act of cognition which involves a subject and an object. Nevertheless, it must be made clear that such an identity would not entail anything about the ontological unity or distinctness of the self and the world. It would apply only to subject and object in their relation to acts of cognition.

1.2. The structure of this thesis

The present chapter introduces this thesis. The second chapter introduces certain central features of Kant's philosophy, which are crucial to understanding the remaining chapters. These features include Kant's theory of judgment, his conception of the roles of the Transcendental Deduction and the doctrine of apperception, as well as his doctrine of synthesis. The chapter also introduces a tension between Kant's conception of the unity of consciousness, fundamental to the thinking subject, and some aspects of the doctrine of synthesis. The third chapter deals with Allison's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception. It is important to present an analytic interpretation such as the one proposed by Allison, since this makes it possible to determine which of Kant's claims are compatible with an analytic interpretation, and which of them seem to require a synthetic reading. The result is the view that an analytic account is ultimately not enough to account for all of Kant's claims. The fourth chapter contains my close reading of some of Kant's central claims in §16, as well as an examination of some reactions offered to these claims in the literature. My aim in the chapter is to show that the text appears to require both an analytic interpretation as well as a synthetic one. The fifth chapter deals with Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception. There, I read the text of §16 and Hegel's claims about apperception in *Faith & Knowledge* reciprocally. My aim is to provide a synthetic interpretation of the doctrine of apperception by applying Hegel's claims to the text of §16. This results in the view that it is plausible to consider the conditions of the identity of apperception to imply an identity of subject and object, in the precise sense that their distinction cannot be justified, when it comes to those conditions. The thesis ends with a concluding chapter.

2. Central features of Kant's theoretical philosophy

For Allison, the key to understanding Kant's transcendental idealism is the concept of an "epistemic condition", that is, "a necessary condition for the representation of objects" (Allison, 2004: 11). On his view, then, the transcendental idealist is someone who affirms that there are such epistemic conditions. Consequently, Allison's position provides a perspective on transcendental idealism where the main focus is on the epistemological question of how the subject can know objects, rather than on the distinction between appearances and things in themselves. This perspective seems

justified, considering the importance Kant gives to the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, which, otherwise put, asks how subjects can formulate judgments that apply necessarily and universally to objects. Accordingly, in what follows, I approach Kant's account of knowledge from the viewpoint of his theory of judgment. The structure of the present chapter is the following. First, I introduce Kant's theory of judgment along with what Allison calls Kant's discursivity thesis. Next, I deal with the analytic – synthetic distinction, and I show how this distinction leads to the problem of pure reason. I then suggest that this problem points to the further question of how one should conceive of the relation of subject and object, when it comes to explaining the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Though I will present a potential solution to this second problem, namely, that the identity of the subject's self-consciousness exists in a continuity with the unity of the categories (i.e. the *a priori* concepts which guide the synthesis of intuitions), I will also problematise it through an interpretation of Kant's general doctrine of synthesis.

2.1. Kant's theory of judgment

Following Allison, Kant's thesis that human cognition requires both intuitions and concepts will be called the *discursivity thesis*.⁸ Kant conceives of an intuition as an immediate representation of an object, whereas he considers concepts to represent objects mediately, that is, only insofar as they are applied to intuitions (A19/B33; Allison, 2004: 85). So, to specify what it means to conceive of cognition as discursive, Allison (2004: 77) enumerates "three bedrock epistemological assumptions": (1) cognition requires that an object be given; (2) a human mind requires that objects be given through sensibility, i.e. they are received rather than created by the mind; and (3) such "sensible intuition" is not sufficient for cognition of objects; cognition requires in addition "the cooperation of the spontaneity of the understanding", that is, the application of concepts. The picture of cognition initially implied by these assumptions is one where, first, the subject receives the representation of an object, i.e. an intuition, and second, achieves cognition of that object by applying a concept to it in thought. Moreover, the two relevant kinds of representations correspond to distinct faculties of cognition, sensibility and the understanding (A15/B29). Now, as Allison (2004: 82-3)

⁸ Kant (A51/B75-6): "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. [...] The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. Only from their unification can cognition arise."

points out, discursive cognition is “judgmental”. This means that the acts through which concepts are applied to intuitions are acts of *judgment*, where the concepts are predicated of the relevant intuitions. Accordingly, Kant (A68/B93) defines judgment as “the mediate cognition of an object” or “the representation of a representation of it”, that is, the representation of what is already a representation, i.e. of an intuition.

As Allison (2004: 84-7) demonstrates, an essential feature of Kant’s account of judgment is that a judgment of the paradigmatic subject – predicate form always involves *two distinct acts of predication*. Take one of Kant’s examples, the categorical judgment “Every metal is a body” (A69/B94), where ‘metal’ is the subject concept and ‘body’ the predicate concept. Here, the *logical* predication consists of predicating the concept ‘body’ of the concept ‘metal’. Yet this merely logical predication does not constitute the applicability of the judgment to an object. Such applicability requires, in addition, the application of a concept to an intuition. For this relation to hold, a *real* predication is required. In such a predication, the *subject concept* (here ‘metal’) is applied to an intuition or a set of intuitions. The idea is that by establishing the relation of the judgment to a set of objects through the subject concept, it becomes possible to cognize the relevant set through the predicate concept (here ‘body’), too. Furthermore, in this light, it is understandable why Kant also defines judgment as “the representation of the unity of the consciousness of various representations” (1992: 597). For instance, the judgment “Every metal is a body” is the unified representation of the concepts ‘metal’ and ‘body’, as well as of the intuitions of objects that count as metals; and as such, the judgment represents in a unified form the knowing subject’s consciousness of those various representations.

2.2. The analytic – synthetic distinction

For Kant, judgments are either analytic or synthetic. This distinction concerns the difference between two distinct bases for combining concepts in the form of a judgment. Regarding analytic judgments, Kant writes:

[I]f I say: “All bodies are extended,” then this is an analytic judgment. For I do not need to go beyond the concept that I combine with the body in order to find that extension is connected with it, but rather I need only to analyse that concept [...]. (A7/B11)

The basis for combining two concepts in an analytic judgment is that the predicate concept is already contained in the subject concept. Such a judgment can be termed analytic, since it only requires an *analysis* of the subject concept to discover the predicate concept connected to it. In the case of the judgment “‘All bodies are extended’”, then, one merely needs to analyse the concept ‘body’ to discover its connection with the concept ‘extension’. In contrast, the basis for combining two concepts in a synthetic judgment must be external to either concept as such. Kant writes:

[I]f I say: “All bodies are heavy,” then the predicate is something entirely different from that which I think in the mere concept of a body in general. The addition of such a predicate thus yields a synthetic judgment. (A7/B11)

Taking Kant’s example of a synthetic judgment, “‘All bodies are heavy’”, the knowing subject does not combine the concept ‘body’ with the concept ‘weight’ based on an analysis of the former, but based rather on the subject’s experience of bodies. In a word, since the knowing subject has had the experience of bodies being heavy, the subject is thereby capable of making the relevant judgment. Such judgments are termed synthetic, then, not because two concepts are combined in them, but because they presuppose a separate act of synthesis, such as the combining of the *intuitions* of a body and weight in experience. Or as Kant (B12) puts it, a synthetic combination of the concepts of “weight” and “body” rests on experience, “which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions”.

The distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments is important because it leads to what Kant considers the central problem of metaphysics. This development can be understood when a further distinction is made between empirical and *a priori* judgments (B11-2). Empirical judgments (or “**Judgments of experience**”) are the sort of synthetic judgments where the required synthesis of intuitions is based on experience. In contrast, analytic judgments are always *a priori*, since they are formulated independently of experience, based purely on conceptual analysis. Now, for a judgment to be *a priori* is for that judgment to be in some sense necessary and universal. In Kant’s (B4) words, “Necessity and strict universality are [...] secure indications of an *a priori* cognition, and also belong together inseparably.” In the case of analytic judgments, this necessity and universality follows from the fact that thinking the subject concept entails thinking (even if only covertly) the predicate (B11-2). But since analytic judgments are made on

the basis of the analysis of concepts, they do not amplify the scope of the knowing subject's knowledge. They merely clarify what was already cognized in the subject concept. Only synthetic judgments result in extensions of knowledge, since they bring previously separate representations together. That is why they can be called "**judgments of amplification**" (B11). Given this distinction, a serious problem follows: if all ampliative judgments are empirical, and if the only judgments that qualify as *a priori* are analytic, subjects would seem to be barred from any extensions of knowledge that have a claim to necessity and universality. Since the *a priori* of analytic judgments consists merely in the necessity of thinking the predicate together with the subject concept, such judgments establish nothing new about objects. And finally, since *metaphysics* is the branch of philosophy which aspires to amplifying the scope of knowledge through necessary and universal judgments (B18), it would seem to follow that metaphysics is impossible as a science.

2.3. Synthetic *a priori* judgments

It is evident by now why Kant considers it essential to show how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible. Simply put, synthetic *a priori* judgments are the only possible candidates for judgments that offer knowledge that is both necessary and universal as well as potentially new. Yet, if subjects are to form judgments that have the potential for extending their knowledge, but which apply necessarily and universally to objects, it must be explained on what basis they formulate the sorts of combinations of concepts that constitute those judgments. Taking Kant's example of a synthetic *a priori* judgment, "Everything that happens has its cause" (A9/B13), this judgment, in order to be truly synthetic *a priori*, should correctly state that for every object that counts as an event, there must in every case be a cause, with absolutely no exception. This requirement is problematic, since, according to Kant, the concept of cause is not analytically contained in the concept of an event, and yet, or so he claims, it appears that the judgment is necessary (A9/B12-3). It is problematic, furthermore, because experience seems incapable of ever offering proof of a judgment's supposed necessity and universality (B3-4).

Allison instructively links the notion of a synthetic *a priori* judgment to his general analysis of Kant's theory of judgment. Accordingly, the question of synthetic *a priori* judgments can be reformulated as the question of how *a priori* concepts can apply to

intuitions *a priori* (Allison, 2004: 96).⁹ This follows from the discursivity thesis, according to which cognition requires both concepts and intuitions. But Allison's analysis can be applied further than he himself does. Recalling that judgments require two acts of predication, the relevant question can also be understood as that of how the act of *real* predication, which provides the basis for the logical judgment's applicability to objects, is to be conceived of with respect to synthetic *a priori* judgments. Taking again the example "Everything that happens has its cause", the problem then comes to be seen as how to account for the *basis* of the merely logical predication, in such a way that the applicability of that logical predication to the relevant set of objects is established. Here, the first approach might be to examine the question from the perspective of transcendental idealism. If there are judgments that apply necessarily and universally to objects, and if those judgments cannot be based on experience, then it is still possible that they express *a priori* conditions of the representation of objects. Supposing that they do express such conditions, it follows that "to say how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible is to account for the structure of experience" (Gardner, 1999: 62). On this view, a real predication, i.e. the application of an *a priori* concept to an *a priori* intuition, would be equivalent to a condition of the representation of objects, and the role of the logical judgment would be to conceptually express that condition.

But the suggested approach does not erase a certain conceptual difficulty, which becomes clear by first examining the more easily available model of real predication. Consider what a real predication might look like in the case of an *empirical* judgment. Taking the judgment "All bodies are heavy", a real predication would be something like the following: the knowing subject experiences a set of objects, and predicates the concept 'body' of all of them. Furthermore, supposing that an intuition of weight is contained in all the intuitions of bodies that are given, the knowing subject will be able to formulate the logical judgment "All bodies are heavy". And though this judgment

⁹ One question which is not dealt with in this thesis is that of how there can be *a priori* intuitions. Kant gives an answer to this in the Transcendental Aesthetic, where he argues that the representations of space and time are such "pure *a priori* intuitions" (B73). Restricting the discussion to space for the sake of clarity, here are some examples of arguments advanced by Kant to support his thesis. First, the representation of space is *a priori* rather than empirical: the representations of outer objects cannot have been derived from experience, since the representation of space is presupposed by the representation of objects as outside the subject, as well as outside one another (A23/B38). Second, the representation of space is an intuition rather than a concept: the parts of the representation of space cannot precede the representation of space as a single whole, since the representation of its parts are always represented as parts of the single space. In contrast, concepts are formed by putting different representations together (A24-5/B39).

will never amount to absolute universality or necessity, at least the framework of the knowing subject's relation to the relevant objects is clear. *The subject* predicates a concept of a set of objects, and then *the subject* predicates a further concept of the real predicate/subject concept. But this process is just what seems inconceivable in the case of synthetic *a priori* judgments: applying to objects necessarily and universally, they would have to be the sort of judgments which the knowing subject can formulate simply on account of its being a knowing subject. That is because it is necessarily ruled out that the knowing subject could have gained the knowledge expressed by the judgment through experience or, for that matter, through any *a posteriori* activity. Rather, the knowing subject simply *can* formulate the relevant logical judgment. The *subject* is capable of making the *logical* predication, but who does the *real* predicating?¹⁰ In the following section, a promising but ultimately problematic answer to this question will be proposed in light of the doctrine of apperception.

2.4. The doctrine of apperception

Kant presents the doctrine of apperception in the Transcendental Deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding. In Allison's (1987: 2-3) words, the purpose of the Transcendental Deduction is "to establish and delimit the epistemic credentials for a set of pure concepts of the understanding or categories". This definition requires some fleshing out. First of all, Kant presents in the *Critique* what he takes to be a complete list of the logical functions of the understanding, that is, what he considers to be the *a priori* forms of judgment provided by logic (A70/B95).¹¹ He then stipulates that these forms function, not only with respect to the combination of concepts, as in logical judgments, but also with respect to the combination of intuitions (A79-80/B104-6). This stipulation allows Kant to present the hypothesis that there is a set of *categories*, or "pure" (i.e. non-empirical) concepts (A80/B106), which correspond to the logical forms of judgment, and which are applied to objects *a priori*. To establish the epistemic

¹⁰ Note that the present problem does not arise for analytic judgments, even though they are *a priori*. This is because the real predication involved in an analytic judgment is ultimately no different from that involved in an empirical judgment. For an analytic judgment to apply to an object, its subject concept must be connected to an intuition. What makes an analytic judgment *a priori*, as opposed to an empirical one, is simply the basis for the combination of the predicate concept to the subject concept: a judgment counts as analytic just in case thinking the subject concept necessarily involves thinking the predicate concept. But this does not make the *conditions of its applicability to objects* different from those of empirical judgments.

¹¹ For instance, the judgment "All bodies are extended" is formed according to those functions of the understanding that are used in making *universal, affirmative, categorical* and *apodictic* judgments.

credentials of the categories, then, requires answering the question “How can a priori concepts be applied to objects that are given?” (Longuenesse, 1998: 17) This suggests a close connection between the Deduction and the question of how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible. Since a judgment consists of the application of a concept, it follows that a solution to the central problem of the *Critique of Pure Reason* requires the proof of the Deduction. In order to explain how, for instance, the judgment “Everything that happens has its cause” can apply to objects *a priori*, Kant needs to explain how the *a priori* concept of cause can be applied to objects that are given. And this applicability will turn on whether it can be shown that a category corresponding to the concept of cause makes possible the experience of any object that counts as an event; that is, by guiding *a priori* the combination of intuitions contained in such an object.

The task of the Deduction being sufficiently clear, it remains to be explained what role the doctrine of apperception plays in the proof. According to Dyck (2017: 32), the near consensus regarding the Deduction is that Kant’s demonstration of the applicability of the categories to objects is based on a “claim concerning the subject of experience”, which “concerns the identity or unity of the subject across various representations that belong to it”. More precisely, the role of the doctrine of apperception is to provide Kant with the premise that the subject, or the subject’s self-consciousness, is identical or unified with respect to the diverse representations contained in the representation of an object (B131-2). This premise will allow Kant to argue, in turn, that the categories constitute the subject’s unity of consciousness in relation to (the synthesis of) any manifold of representations given to it. Moreover, recalling that Kant conceives of a judgment as the unity of the consciousness of various representations, and recalling that a judgment consists of the application of a concept, a continuity becomes apparent between Kant’s theory of judgment and his doctrine of the categories. Kant defines the categories as “concepts of an object in general, by means of which its intuition is regarded as **determined** with regard to one of the **logical functions** for judgments” (B128). Supposing, then, that judgments bring unity to the knowing subject’s consciousness of various representations, it follows that the categories must be understood as functions of bringing unity to the diverse representations contained in the representation of an object. And the basis for proving that the categories do play this role is provided in the doctrine of apperception, where Kant puts forward the idea that

there is an *a priori* unity of consciousness in relation to the synthesis of the manifold of given representations.

On a sketch of Kant's complex view, then, the categories make possible *a priori* the unified nature of the synthesis of the diverse representations that are contained in the representation of an object; and this unity gets expressed in the representation of the identity of the subject in relation to the manifold of representations. Now, this suggests an obvious answer to the question of *who* does the real predicating in synthetic *a priori* judgments. Namely, even though the subject might not be conscious of the application of pure concepts to the manifold of intuition, those concepts are nevertheless the source of the unity of the subject's self-consciousness, and may therefore be conceived of as determinations of that very same, numerically identical subject. In other words, the idea is that there is a continuity in the *unity* involved in cognition; starting from the function of the categories as unifying the synthesis of intuitions, and ending with the subject's being conscious of itself as one and the same subject in relation to all the representations that belong to it. This can be called the 'continuity of unity' view. Finally, given this continuity, it would seem that the subject must be the agent of the application of *a priori* concepts to intuitions. In the next section, however, it will be seen that Kant's conception of the activities of cognition is not straightforwardly compatible with the proposed solution.

2.5. Kant's doctrine of synthesis "in the most general sense"

Supposing that there is a unified thinking subject at the basis of Kant's theory of cognition, it remains unclear how one should conceive of the relation of that subject to the activities of cognition it is supposedly engaged in. Are they mental activities? Is the subject fully in control of them? Pippin (1987: 451) has argued that, for Kant, "while we may not know what a thinking subject is noumenally [i.e. *qua* thing in itself], we *do* know that whatever it is, 'it' must be capable of spontaneous activity". The idea is that even though it might be unknowable what the subject is *qua* thing in itself, the fact that cognition involves, not just *receiving* representations, but also *combining* them, entails that whatever the subject is, it must itself be the productive agent of some representations, i.e. those which are combinations. It would seem intuitively correct, then, to follow Longuenesse (1998: 5) in conceiving of the understanding's activities as mental activities, in the sense that the subject's mind engages in spontaneous activities

that are enacted on given representations and produce further ones. Nevertheless, the problem with this ‘mental activity’ view is that it is difficult to square with Kant’s discussion of synthesis in its general sense. This will become apparent on a reading of various passages.

First of all, Kant writes that by “**synthesis** in the most general sense”, he understands “the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition” (A77/B103). For Kant, there are two components in an act of synthesis. One is the actual combining of diverse representations, the other an act of comprehending, which itself involves two elements: the comprehensions, respectively, of a diversity and of the unity of that diversity. An example of synthesis would seem to be, then, the following twofold act leading to the representation of a triangle: (1) combining three lines in a triangular form, and (2) comprehending that the representation contains three lines, as well as comprehending that those lines belong to one and the same representation of a triangle. Finally, if synthesis “in the most general sense” is interpreted as a genus concept of different sorts of syntheses, then there can be no synthesis which does not involve both combination and comprehension. Secondly, Kant writes:

Synthesis in general is [...] the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious. Yet to bring this synthesis **to concepts** is a function that pertains to the understanding, and by means of which it first provides cognition in the proper sense. (A78/B103)

This second passage introduces an additional faculty involved in cognition, *the imagination*, the task of which is to bring about the synthesis of representations. Allison (2015: 175) tries to square what Kant says here with the first passage by connecting the two functions of synthesis introduced in the first to the two seemingly distinct faculties enumerated in the second. On such a reading, the imagination would be responsible for the activity of combination, while the understanding would be responsible for the subsequent act of comprehension. But the problem is that Kant appears in the second passage to attribute synthesis *in general* to the imagination. Supposing that this is indeed what Kant does, it follows that the two components of the activity of synthesis must both be assigned to the imagination. On this reading, then, it would be most natural to interpret the act of bringing “synthesis **to concepts**” as retroactively

modelling the preceding synthesis, instead of as a component of the activity of synthesis. Note that Kant states that only bringing synthesis to concepts can bring about “cognition in the proper sense”. For instance, presumably the subject truly *knows* that *x* is a triangle only when the subject can think of the three lines combined in a triangular shape as belonging to the unified representation of a triangle. Yet, on the present reading, what Kant really seems to be claiming is that such conceptual knowledge is, at bottom, based on a blind synthesis, involving an act of combination as well as a blind comprehension.

Now, if synthesis is the effect of “a blind though indispensable function of the soul”, then it follows that synthesis cannot justifiably be ascribed to the knowing subject. The claim that the subject brings synthesis to concepts in no way entails that the synthesis itself must be a determination of the knowing subject. This is further implied by Kant’s surprising use of the term “soul”. It seems that the only way in which this term can be understood in the present context is to read it as a proclamation of a certain openness regarding the agency engaged in synthesis. That is, since synthesis cannot be ascribed to the subject, it is ascribed to the “soul”, i.e. to a speculative agency that cannot straightforwardly be identified with the subject. Still, whether this actually is Kant’s view is highly questionable. Indeed, almost as if in response to the present suggestion, Kant subsequently writes: “[P]ure synthesis, generally represented, yields the pure concept of the understanding. *By this synthesis, however, I understand that which rests on a ground of synthetic unity a priori* [my italics]” (A78/B104). First, Kant applies his doctrine of synthesis to the specific realm of *a priori* cognition. There is something called pure synthesis, which yields to the subject the pure concepts of the understanding. Yet, instead of describing the underlying synthesis as a “blind effect”, he now claims that the synthesis “rests on a ground of synthetic unity *a priori*”, i.e. on some necessary foundation which supposedly guides its unity. Clearly, Kant here anticipates the view that *a priori* synthesis is governed by the categories. But on that view, synthesis can no longer be conceived of as a blind activity which only later gains a conceptual representation. Rather, synthesis is itself already governed by concepts.

Nevertheless, despite the apparent primacy of *a priori* concepts with respect to synthesis, the upshot of the present discussion is that it is difficult to pin down what role the Kantian subject plays in cognition. First, even if the understanding governs synthesis by way of the categories, the activity of synthesis itself can be predicated of

the subject only tenuously, as is made evident by Kant's own formulations. Second, Kant's theory seems to be that while the pure concepts are provided to the subject by bringing synthesis to concepts, those concepts already govern that synthesis itself. It is difficult to determine, therefore, to what extent even those pure concepts, in their function of guiding the synthesis, can be assigned to the subject.¹² Finally, these considerations suggest that conceiving of the activities involved in synthesis as the subject's mental activities is problematic. As a result, much will turn on the doctrine of apperception. It was suggested above that the subject is supposedly characterised by the continuity of unity among the categories and the subject's self-consciousness. The present discussion suggests, however, that this continuity is not straightforward to maintain. The question is, then, whether the doctrine of apperception contains the right sort of conception of the unity of the subject for the 'continuity of unity' view to hold. In this matter, the discussion of Allison's analytic interpretation will provide a good starting point.

3. Allison's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception

Allison's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception is premised on the view that the second edition version of the Transcendental Deduction is made up of two parts that constitute two steps in a single proof of the validity of the categories (2015: 327).¹³ On Allison's interpretation of the two-part structure, Kant abstracts in the first part from the human forms of sensibility, i.e. space and time, which means that Allison sees the first part as consisting purely of an analysis of the operations of the understanding (2015: 328-9).¹⁴ Furthermore, since the doctrine of apperception is located in this first part of the single proof, it follows that it must likewise be regarded as describing a contribution to cognition made solely by the understanding. I will call Allison's interpretation of the

¹² Granted, there are other ways of conceiving of the "ground of synthetic unity *a priori*". On Longuenesse's (1998) interpretation, the relevant "ground" is provided by the logical forms of judgment. On her view, then, it is possible to both (1) conceive of synthesis as being governed by the unity of consciousness (in the form of the logical forms of judgment), as well as (2) deny that concepts are both the basis and the end result of the activity of synthesis. Nevertheless, following Allison's (2012) criticism of Longuenesse, this would be a contentious move, and might entail an excessive reduction of the role of the categories, in light of Kant's argument in the Deduction.

¹³ Allison credits the discovery of the "two steps in one proof" view to Henrich (1969), who argues that the Deduction consists of two parts which are both necessary for reaching its intended conclusion.

¹⁴ Similarly, Grier (2001: 77) holds that "in the first part (B130-144) Kant wants to establish a necessary connection *first* between categories and *objects in general*, and in the *second* part (B150-165), between the categories and *appearances*".

doctrine of apperception the ‘*model view of apperception*’, since he ultimately takes it to follow from the structure of the Deduction that the doctrine of apperception must be interpreted as an analytic model of cognition (Allison, 2004: 172).

Now, Allison’s interpretation centres on discovering the correct formulation for what he calls “*the principle of the synthetic unity of apperception*”, and showing that this principle is analytic (Allison, 2015: 343-8). The task of finding a ‘principle of apperception’ is not a straightforward one. For one thing, as Dyck (2017: 32) points out, Kant never uses a single, consistent phrase to refer to one. Though it does not follow that there is no principle of apperception, this does suggest that there is no single obvious candidate for such a principle. According to Dyck (2017: 32-3), for instance, there are multiple principles of apperception at work in §16, all of which contribute to Kant’s argument. Nevertheless, Kant speaks in B135 of a single “principle of the necessary unity of apperception”, which he does term an “analytical proposition”. This indicates that there at least exists for Kant an analytic principle that can be formulated on the basis of the material provided in §16. Though Allison (2015: 343) admits that it is not immediately clear what the “analytical proposition” might be, at least the requirement of analyticity functions as a criterion for formulating such a principle. So, following Kant’s own criterion of analyticity, the principle must at least be such that its predicate term is contained in its subject term.

To gain a rough idea of the relevant procedure of analysis, consider a paraphrase of Allison’s final formulation of the principle (2015: 345): a single thinking subject, who can think a single intuition as containing many representations, accompanies each of those representations, in thinking them together, as an identical thinking subject. Let the logical subject of this principle be: a single thinking subject thinks a single intuition as containing many representations. And let the logical predicate be: the thinking subject accompanies each representation contained in an intuition as an identical thinking subject. Now, if the suggested principle is analytic, then it must be the case that to think its logical subject is also to think its logical predicate. Otherwise put, the concept of a thinking subject, i.e. one that thinks an intuition as containing a manifold of representations, must contain the concept of the thinking subject’s being an identical subject with respect to the manifold. It is worth pressing this point about applying Kant’s conception of analyticity, since it makes apparent what sort of conception of apperception is entailed by the model view. Namely, on such a view, the doctrine of

apperception must be understood not as describing what discursive cognition is actually like, but what a *discursive* knowing subject must *think* it is like, supposing that the premise provided by the logical subject is correct. With this clarification in mind, Allison's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception can be analysed in detail. Clearly, the model view sets strict limits on what the propositions of §16 can be taken to mean. And, as will become evident, it fails to handle some of them within these limits.

3.1. Apperception and synthesis according to Allison

Kant begins §16 with a claim about the relation of representations to thinking:

The **I think** must **be able** to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me. That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the **I think** in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered. (B131-2)

According to Allison (2015: 335), Kant's claim here is that accompanying any given representation with the "I think" is a necessary possibility for any thinking subject. Otherwise put, while the subject need not attach the "I think" to *all* its representations, it must be capable of doing so. Dyck (2017: 36) proposes that this requirement should be understood as the first principle of apperception; that is, as an analytic principle where the "I think"-requirement is derived from the concept of a representation. In Allison's (2015: 336) view, however, the initial "I think"-claim still lacks an important feature introduced in the second sentence, namely, that the "I think" is *numerically identical*. In other words, supposing that X and Y are representations possessed by the subject, it is not enough to say that the subject can accompany both representations with an "I think". Kant's more important claim is that both representations can necessarily be accompanied by an "I think" which is *one and the same*, or indeed numerically identical, with respect to both X and Y.¹⁵

¹⁵ As Ameriks (2003: 62) has emphasised, Kant's discussion centres on the manifold of representations found in *one* intuition. This provides a good opportunity to further clarify the model view. A proponent of this view can interpret 'one intuition' as either the representation of a single object of intuition, which contains a manifold, or as the single totality of all possible objects of intuition, which are given to a single subject's faculty of intuition. The same formal argument will apply to both. Put schematically, as long as

But how is the numerical identity of the “I think” constituted? Following Longuenesse (2017), it is crucial to note that the “I think” says nothing about what sort of entity might be represented by the “I”. She writes: “[U]sing ‘I’ in the ‘I think’ expresses the consciousness, by the subject of the activity of thinking, of the unity of the contents of her thoughts, and *thereby* of herself as the agent of that unity, whatever the metaphysical nature of that agent might be” (Longuenesse, 2017: 81). The numerical identity expressed by the “I think” is based, then, on the unity of the diverse representations that are accompanied by the “I think”. For Dyck (2017: 37), this idea constitutes the second principle of apperception: “[F]or any manifold of representations that belongs to me, it must be possible to think the identity (or unity) of the subject with respect to it”. This principle is, again, analytic, since the thought of a manifold of representations that belongs to a single thinking subject entails the thought of the identity of that subject. But what is crucial to note is that the identity of the subject is entailed only insofar as it is thought *in relation* to a manifold of representations. It follows that the identity of the subject, as Kant conceives of it, is such that it can only be thought in connection with a synthesis (i.e. the combination of the manifold). And any comprehensive principle of apperception would need to take this into account. Accordingly, after introducing the “I think” and its relation to the manifold of intuition, Kant goes on to discuss the consequences of his initial thesis. Allison (2015: 339) enumerates three such consequences, all of which are explicitly drawn by Kant in B133-4: (1) “the thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of the manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis”; (2) “it [the identity of apperception] is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis”; and (3) “the analytical unity of apperception presupposes a synthetic one”. The next task is to see how well the model view can handle these claims.

The first point is promising for the model view, since it involves the idea that the identity of apperception *contains* a synthesis. This implies that the thought of a synthesis can be analytically derived from the representation of the identity of apperception. Indeed, Allison (2015: 339) takes Kant’s argument to be that the thinking subject’s capacity to represent itself as an identical subject, with respect to diverse representations, requires that the subject be able to combine, or to synthesize, those

whatever is thought of as a single intuition can be formalised as the conjunction of, say, representations X, Y and Z, the analytic argument can be made just the same. In this sense, the model view can be thought of as a *formal* view.

representations in a single consciousness. In other words, on the right analysis, for a subject to represent itself as an identical subject *is* for that subject to engage in a synthesis of representations. This follows from the fact that the way in which the identity of the subject is conceived of by Kant is precisely as an identity *relative* to a manifold of representations. Kant himself emphasises this point, when he states that “the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject” (B133). Kant’s claim is that the subject’s identity is never contained in any single given representation, and can only be conceived of as an identity relative to many representations, or better, relative to their synthesis.

The second consequence of the “I think”-claim is that the identity of apperception requires a consciousness of synthesis. Kant writes that the relation between representations and the identity of the subject “does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my **adding** one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis” (B133). This requirement presents difficulties for the model view. While a synthesis might be analytically contained in the representation of the subject’s identity, as Kant conceives of it, it is difficult to see what role a special consciousness of synthesis could play in an analytic model of cognition. Longuenesse (2017: 87), too, notes that Kant sometimes seems to “accept a consciousness *of myself as thinking*”, which she identifies as a consciousness of the thinking subject’s existence, without cognition of what that subject is *like*. This is problematic for the model view, since surely such consciousness of synthesis would not be consistent with an analytic model (i.e. could not be derived from a mere concept). Indeed, it might be more appropriate to turn to Merritt’s (2011: 59) definition of the principle of apperception; that “a cognitive subject’s representations belong to it *in virtue of* an a priori synthesis [my italics]”. Crucially, for Merritt (2011: 63), the “I think”, or what she calls “the cogito statement”, “makes no claim about synthesis”. This would suggest that Kant’s doctrine of apperception is synthetic, since the requirement of a consciousness of synthesis would have to be attached to the “I think”-claim non-analytically.

How might a proponent of the model view try to handle the troublesome requirement of a consciousness of synthesis? First of all, as Strawson (1966: 64) points out, Kant himself does not seem to conceive of synthesis in a consistent manner. While in B133

Kant seems to claim that a consciousness of the *activity* of synthesis is required in order to relate different representations to the identity of the subject, in B134 he appears to have shifted his position. Consider the relevant passage:

The thought that these representations given in intuition all together belong **to me** means, accordingly, the same as that I unite them in a self-consciousness, or at least can unite them therein, and although that is itself not yet the consciousness of the **synthesis** of the representations, it still presupposes the possibility of the latter [...]. (B134)

While in B133 Kant seems to claim that there must be a direct consciousness of synthesis, in B134 this requirement appears to have changed into a more indirect one. Now Allison (2015: 339), similarly to Strawson, begins by remarking that consciousness of synthesis can indeed be understood either as a consciousness of the *product* of synthesis or as a consciousness of synthesis as an *activity*. If it is taken as the former, no problems arise: if the identity of the “I think” is conceived of in relation to a manifold of representations, it follows that the representation of the subject’s identity must involve a product of synthesis, that is, an intuition that contains a manifold. This is nothing new. If, however, consciousness of synthesis is taken instead to refer to a consciousness of an activity, problems do arise (Allison, 2015: 339-40). Should Kant then be interpreted as claiming that the subject must be capable of some special kind of introspective consciousness? Would he be guilty of requiring from the subject the awareness of an activity, the synthesis of representations, which is seemingly non-conscious by nature (Allison, 2015: 340-1; Strawson, 1966: 32)?

Allison’s solution to the problem of consciousness of synthesis, interpreted specifically as the consciousness of an activity, is not satisfactory. According to him, it is enough to account for such consciousness to affirm that the subject must be capable of being conscious of the fact that its act of thinking X and Y together is one and the same act (Allison, 2015: 340).¹⁶ Evidently, this solution is consistent with the model view of apperception. Supposing that the doctrine of apperception presents an analytic model of cognition, it follows that whatever requirement might be included in that doctrine, it must be explainable in analytic terms. Accordingly, consciousness of synthesis must be

¹⁶ Allison (2015: 340): “Expressed schematically, the consciousness of the identity of the I that thinks *a* with the I that thinks *b* could only consist in the consciousness of the identity of its action in thinking together *a* and *b* as its representations.”

such a consciousness, the concept of which is necessarily contained in a thinking subject's thought of a manifold of intuition. Precisely speaking, on this view, a thinking subject's thought of a manifold of intuition must contain the *thought* that the activity of synthesis, in which it engages, is an identical activity of synthesis. Yet it would require significant stretching of the terms 'consciousness of' and 'activity' to conceive of such consciousness as the consciousness of synthesis *qua* activity. Moreover, it would seem to require assuming the model view to be correct to engage in such stretching; and this would beg the question.

How, then, does the model view fare with the third consequence? This final consequence of Kant's initial claims is the idea that the analytical unity of apperception presupposes a synthetic one. In Kant's words:

[I]t is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations **in one consciousness** that it is possible for me to represent the **identity of the consciousness in these representations** itself, i.e., the **analytical** unity of apperception is only possible under the presupposition of some **synthetic** one.
(B133-4)

This passage suggests that Kant conceives of the analytical unity of apperception as the possibility, for the thinking subject, to represent the numerical identity of its consciousness in relation to the representations contained in a manifold of intuition. Otherwise put, the analytical unity of apperception appears to be an alternative term for the necessary possibility of accompanying representations with an identical "I think". As de Vleeschauwer (1937: 111) puts it, the analytical unity "is the fact of being able to call diverse representations mine [my translation]". But why exactly does the analytical unity of apperception presuppose a synthetic one? Looking at B133-4, the synthetic unity would seem to be the term for the subject's capacity to combine a manifold of representations in one consciousness. Accordingly, the argument seems to be that in order for the subject to be capable of representing itself, as the identical subject with respect to many representations, those representations must be combined in a single consciousness. As Allison puts it: "it is only insofar as the I unifies its representations that it can become conscious of its own identity" (Allison, 2015: 341).

All in all, the claim that the analytical unity of apperception requires a synthetic unity appears to be a reformulation of the preceding argument of §16, i.e. that the identity of the "I think" in relation to the manifold of intuition contains a synthesis and is possible

only through a consciousness of synthesis, with added focus on the unity of the synthesis. Again, the model view runs into difficulties. Consider Kant's claim in B134: "Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as given *a priori*, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes *a priori* all **my** determinate thinking." Kant is claiming that the fact, that all representations given to the identical subject must be combined in one consciousness, is the reason for the fact that the thinking subject *is* always one and the same in relation to all representations. Crucially, he no longer writes that the synthetic unity is a condition of the *representation*, or of the *consciousness* of the identity of apperception. Rather, he speaks of the identity of apperception *itself*, which he claims *precedes* all "**my**" determinate thinking. In contrast, Allison is forced to interpret Kant as claiming that it is only insofar as the thinking subject combines its representations that it can *represent* its own identity. This is because the model view, due to its analyticity, can account only for the conditions of the *representation* of the identity of apperception, since this latter constitutes the content of the logical subject term of the analytic interpretation. But this approach does not seem sufficient to account for the claim in question.

3.2. The principle of apperception and the model view

Allison (2015: 345) formulates the principle of apperception in the following way: "[I]t must be the *same* (numerically identical) subject whose thought must accompany each of these representations, if the subject is to think of them as collectively constituting the representation of the manifold of an intuition." This principle is the same as the one paraphrased at the beginning of this chapter. Its logical subject term is the thought of a subject that thinks many representations as constituting a single representation, while its predicate term is the thought that there is an identical subject whose thought accompanies each of the representations.¹⁷ Evidently, the relevant notion of 'accompaniment' is equivalent to that of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. Moreover, the principle is analytic, since the predicate term is analytically contained in the subject term. Its conditional form is not surprising, though it makes it more difficult to isolate its logical subject and predicate. This conditionality follows from its analyticity: the fact expressed by the predicate follows purely from a conceptual

¹⁷ Allison writes that the concept from which the analysis of cognition contained in the doctrine of apperception is derived is the concept of "discursive thinking" (2015: 345-6). But this concept just expresses the sort of thinking enacted by a subject that thinks a representation as containing a manifold.

analysis of the logical subject, and for this reason the actuality of the judgment depends on the actuality of the logical subject term, which, of course, is not entailed by the judgment itself. Finally, this principle constitutes the centrepiece of the model view.

There are significant advantages to holding the model view. Firstly, it allows for a neat connection between apperception and the categories. If (1) the thought of a manifold, as contained in a single representation, requires *a priori* a synthesis of those representations in one consciousness, and (2) the categories are *a priori* unities of the synthesis of diverse representations, then it may be argued that (3) the categories are necessary conditions of cognition, to the effect that they give unity to the synthesis of representations; which results, finally, in the representation of the identity of apperception in relation to the manifold. Supposing that this argument is analytic, it is possible to think of a category merely as a name for that necessary unity of the synthesis of representations, which is analytically contained in the concept of a subject that thinks a manifold as contained in a single intuition. Secondly, the model view allows the interpreter to avoid the troublesome task of explaining what an *a priori* synthesis, or consciousness of it, might look like. This is because the proponent of the model view can argue that, whatever synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are, they must be analytically contained in the concept of a subject that thinks a manifold as contained in a single representation. Thirdly, it follows from the first two points that the model view keeps intact the continuity between the unity of the categories and the unity of the thinking subject. In fact, there is no distinction between these unities on the model view, and this makes it possible to conceive of the *subject* as the agent of *a priori* synthesis.

The proponent of the model view can also reply successfully to certain criticisms that have been made against the analyticity of the doctrine of apperception. Firstly, some commentators (de Vleeschauwer, 1937: 112-3; Dyck, 2017: 40) have argued that the principle of apperception cannot be fully analytic, since to affirm it requires rejecting alternative sources of the identity of apperception, either in the form of an intuitive intellect¹⁸ or of sensible intuition. If correct, so goes the argument, this would entail that the identity of apperception cannot simply be derived from the concept of a subject that thinks a manifold as contained in a single representation. As Allison (2015: 345-6)

¹⁸ Kant: “That understanding through whose self-consciousness the manifold of intuition would at the same time be given, an understanding through whose representation the object of this representation would at the same time exist [...]” (B138-9)

points out, however, the model view is derived specifically from the concept of *discursive* thinking, that is, a type of cognition which by definition requires thinking a manifold as contained in a single representation. And an analysis of *this* concept need not involve rejecting an intuitive intellect or sensible intuition as sources of the identity of apperception. Secondly, Kant has been criticised on the grounds that if the principle of apperception is analytic, then it entails a merely conditional conclusion about the identity of apperception (Guyer, 1987: 137; Castañeda, 1990: 150). That is, if the thought that the manifold of representations is accompanied by an identical subject is analytically derived from the conception of a subject that thinks a manifold in a single representation, then the identity of apperception (and thereby the applicability of the categories) is proved only conditionally, that is, only on the assumption that the right kind of subject exists.¹⁹ Yet this does not present a serious problem for the model view. As Allison (1993: 241) has noted, the proof-structure of the Deduction makes the conditionality of the analytic conclusion acceptable, since the burden of proving the actuality of the doctrine of apperception falls on the *second* part of the Deduction, where Kant connects it to the forms of sensibility.

Still, there is one serious problem with the model view. As has been demonstrated in connection to the text of §16, the model view cannot plausibly accommodate all of Kant's claims about the conditions of the identity of apperception. To be sure, this does not mean that the model view cannot offer an internally consistent way of interpreting the doctrine of apperception, or that it is not compatible with the overall argument of the Deduction. On the contrary, the model view provides a generally plausible account of the relation of the identity of the thinking subject to the manifold of intuition. But the problem is that the text of §16 cannot be interpreted as a fully analytic account without begging the question. Following the above discussion of Allison's interpretation, there are two reasons for this. Firstly, the requirement of a consciousness of synthesis *qua* activity cannot plausibly be explained in analytic terms. Secondly, it appears that apperception, or the identity of apperception, cannot be reduced to any representation that can be dealt with analytically. So, in the next chapter, Kant's doctrine of

¹⁹ See also Guyer (1980: 208): "It would only be analytic to claim that consciousness of numerical identity is possible only under the conditions which make that consciousness possible – but it does not follow that those conditions include the necessity that I can ascribe *any* representation to myself."

apperception is approached from the viewpoint offered by the hypothesis that it is inherently ambiguous between an analytic and a synthetic account of apperception.

4. The ambiguity of the doctrine of apperception

In this chapter, I approach the doctrine of apperception from a point of view which focuses on its ambiguous features. Previously, Düsing (1983: 411) has suggested taking the perspective that there are “dispositions, problems, and gaps” involved in an exposition of the structure of subjectivity such as the one presented by Kant. Based on the discussion of the model view in the previous chapter, there is reason to take such a point of view seriously. Admittedly, it might still seem intuitively incorrect. As a case in point, Klass (2003: 81-2) has claimed that interpreters of the doctrine of apperception should avoid drawing the conclusion that Kant’s conception of apperception is inconsistent, since an interpretation should make sense of Kant’s claims in the context of his whole text. Klass (2003: 82) writes: “While Kant may employ various strategies for dealing with apperception, we should try to understand these as various supports for a single project, variations on a unified theme.” Now this does not seem completely correct. It is clearly reasonable to hold that one should not deny the role of the doctrine of apperception in a more general, unified project simply due to a degree of variation in Kant’s arguments. But it obviously does not follow that there is no inconsistency in the doctrine of apperception. Instead, if it could be demonstrated that Kant is inconsistent somewhere in the course of §16, then it would be absurd to reply that Kant cannot be inconsistent because he has a single project.

The hypothesis that there are inconsistencies in Kant’s account appears justified on the basis of the discussion of Allison’s interpretation in the previous chapter. My proposal is, however, that instead of inconsistencies it would be better in the context of the doctrine apperception to speak of *ambiguities*. The term ‘ambiguity’ is intended to capture the following idea suggested by the previous discussion of the model view: although the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as internally consistent, as well as consistent with Kant’s theory of cognition in general, still there are various elements within that doctrine which (1) can plausibly be interpreted to imply some alternative view, and (2) may not be consistent with the rest of the Deduction or with Kant’s overall project. Such ambiguities, as I understand them, will count as actual

inconsistencies only if their component views are regarded as parts of one and the same line of argumentation. But this is not necessary. It could well be that one can extract a consistent argument from the text, while simultaneously accepting that not all the elements present, even if significant, must be incorporated into that argument. On the present proposal, in such a case there will be an ambiguity in the text. In what follows, then, I present an analysis of the potential ambiguities of §16. I argue based on this analysis that: (1) the doctrine of apperception can be read as a consistently analytic account; (2) an implicit argument can be detected within the doctrine of apperception, such that it expresses the need to account for the origin of the identity of the thinking subject; and (3) an acknowledgement of both (1) and (2) is required for an accurate interpretation of the text of §16.

4.1. The “I think” and original apperception

To begin, the “I think”-claim will be re-examined, this time following closely how Kant’s presentation of it develops from the initial statement of the claim:

The **I think** must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me. That representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the **I think** in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered. But this representation is an act of **spontaneity**, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it the **pure apperception**, in order to distinguish it from the **empirical** one, or also the **original apperception**, since it is that self-consciousness which, because it produces the representation **I think**, which must be able to accompany all others and which in all consciousness is one and the same, cannot be accompanied by any further representation. (B131-2)

At first sight, the role of the “I think” appears relatively clear. It does the work of showing that all the representations contained in an intuition must be combined in one consciousness. Since it is necessarily possible for the “I think” to accompany all the representations contained in an intuition, by which is meant a given complex representation, it follows that the representations contained therein must be thought of as being combined in a single consciousness. Yet, though its role in the overall argument is relatively clear, the precise status of the “I think” is much more obscure.

First of all, Kant describes the “I think” both as an “act of **spontaneity**” as well as a representation. This description is still easy to explain. Kant is claiming that the representation “I think” is never *given* to the subject, but is instantiated in an act, where the thinking subject represents itself in relation to a complex representation. In this sense, the representation and the act are inseparable. Secondly, and much more problematically, Kant identifies the representation/act “I think” with what he calls “**original apperception**”. The problem is that while Kant initially identifies the former with the latter, he subsequently proceeds to distinguish the two. On the one hand, Kant writes that he calls the representation/act by the name of original apperception, for the reason that it is “that self-consciousness which [...] cannot be accompanied by any further representation”. On the other hand, Kant explains in the very same sentence that the reason why the “I think” cannot be accompanied by further representations is that the “I think”, or original apperception, *qua self-consciousness*, “*produces the representation I think* [my emphasis]”. Simply put, Kant seems to backtrack on his initial identification by differentiating original apperception from the “I think”, now designating the former as that which produces the latter, and thereby distinguishing the two. How to understand this ambiguity?

In light of the double nature of the act/representation “I think”, on the one hand, and the ambiguous distinction between the “I think” and original apperception, on the other, it might appear natural to connect these two features of Kant’s account. Kant could just mean that the *act* “I think” produces the *representation* “I think”. But it is difficult to see how this could be the case, since Kant clearly identifies the representation with the act: the instantiation of the representation “I think” just is an act where a complex representation is thought by an identical, self-conscious subject. This identity of act and representation suggests that when Kant describes original apperception as a self-consciousness which produces the “I think”, he is describing something which produces the *representation/act*, both taken as identical. Consequently, the ambiguity remains. On the one hand, it appears that original apperception should be distinguished from the representation/act “I think”, the former being that which produces the latter. On the other hand, Kant states that he calls the “I think” by the name of original apperception, thereby implying the identity of the two.

In the literature on Kant’s doctrine of apperception, the presently discussed ambiguity tends to be either disregarded or treated as purely terminological. Representative of the

first tendency, Paton (1961: 510-2), after pointing out Kant's identification of original apperception both with the "I think" as well as with the self-consciousness that produces the "I think", proceeds to simply regard the two as distinct. According to him, the productive self-consciousness should be seen as "a power rather than an act...", that is, a power which produces the representation/act "I think". Moreover, Paton (1961: 510-2) equates this "power" with the understanding. According to his proposed view, then, far from there being a genuine ambiguity, Kant is simply to be interpreted as making the point that the understanding, appearing initially in the guise of the faculty of apperception, produces the representation/act "I think". Indeed, Kant appears at first sight to confirm this in a footnote to §16, where he writes: "the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point to which one must affix all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic and, after it, transcendental philosophy; indeed this faculty is the understanding itself" (B134n).

On a closer look, there are evident difficulties with the proposed interpretation. Firstly, Kant explicitly states that original apperception is a kind of self-consciousness; and it is difficult to see how the faculty of understanding could be reduced to a self-consciousness or vice versa. This would appear to be the case even if all the *activities* of the understanding were to be self-conscious. Secondly, Kant appears to identify the understanding not with apperception as such but, more precisely, with its *synthetic unity*. Thirdly, and most importantly for current concerns, Kant not just distinguishes original apperception from the "I think" but also identifies them. While interpreters can reasonably be expected to take this into account, Paton fails to do so. Nevertheless, aware of at least the second of these problems, he offers an alternative interpretation, according to which Kant identifies not apperception as such but its *unity* with the understanding (Paton, 1961: 515n). This interpretation can handle the first two problems. Firstly, since it identifies not apperception as such but only its unity with the understanding, it leaves room for a self-consciousness distinct from the understanding. Secondly, the interpretation is more compatible with what Kant says in the text about the relation of apperception and the understanding. The third problem remains, however: Paton still does not offer any substantial clues for interpreting the ambiguous relation of the "I think" and original apperception.

An examination of Allison's view on the present issue goes some way towards justifying the seeming disregard for the ambiguity of the text. Allison (2015: 337), like

Paton, makes a simple distinction between original apperception as a power or a faculty and the representation/act “I think”. Furthermore, Allison claims that it is just trivially true that apperception, *qua* underlying power or faculty, is identical in all cognition, since the “I think”, the representation produced by the former, is itself identical. Based on this, Allison appears to treat Kant’s claim about original apperception being a productive self-consciousness distinct from the “I think” as an insignificant remark that plays no role in the actual proof of the Deduction. Now, there is reason not simply to dismiss Allison’s solution as an evasion of the problem. Let it be assumed that what is required for the argument of the Deduction to take off is just an identical *representation*, from which the necessity of an *a priori* synthesis can be inferred. It would then appear reasonable to hold that it simply does not matter whether there is an underlying faculty that corresponds to the representation. Clearly, this approach follows from accepting the model view of apperception. But the obvious problem is, then, that one might not accept a straightforwardly analytic interpretation. And indeed, the discussion of Allison’s views in the previous chapter suggests that such an interpretation alone is not sufficient.

Other interpretations deal with Kant’s ambiguous distinction by treating his terminology as context-dependent. For instance, de Vleeschauwer (1937: 102-3), after remarking on the initial characterisation of the “I think” as original apperception, states that “looking at the text more closely, one would have to admit that the “I think” is not apperception but its product [my translation]”. Now, de Vleeschauwer deals with this problem by claiming that the “I think”/apperception has two “aspects”: the act and its effect. More specifically, he suggests a distinction between *two senses* of the term ‘original apperception’. On this view, ‘original apperception’ is the term both for the “I think” as an effect, as well as for the self-consciousness *qua* act which produces the “I think”, while its meaning depends on the context of its use. Similarly, Longuenesse holds that the ambiguity resides in Kant’s terminology. For her, the crucial term in §16 is “the unity of apperception”, which she takes to refer at times to the “I think” and at other times to a more basic consciousness *expressed by* the “I think” (Longuenesse, 2017: 104). Evidently, then, the term “unity of apperception”, as used by Longuenesse, can be substituted for the term ‘original apperception’ as it has been discussed so far. Now, first of all, Longuenesse (2017: 103) writes that “[t]he transcendental unity of apperception is the consciousness of” the “overall unity of our mental activity”. She then goes on to discuss the specifics of the beginning of §16, remarking that while, at

first, Kant just seems to consider the transcendental unity of apperception to be equivalent to the “I think”, “Kant [then] says that the former ‘brings forth’ the latter” (Longuenesse, 2017: 104); i.e. that original apperception produces the representation “I think”. And from this Longuenesse (2017: 106) concludes that “‘the **I think**’ [...] is sometimes identified with the unity of apperception, sometimes described as the *expression of* the unity of apperception”.

de Vleeschauwer’s and Longuenesse’s readings demonstrate that it is far from absurd to interpret the text of §16 as ambiguous. Yet what they have in common with Paton’s and Allison’s interpretations is that they do not locate any ambiguity regarding the distinction between the “I think” and original apperception on the level of the *content* of Kant’s theory. Both alternatives are problematic. While Paton and Allison avoid the task of explaining the ambiguity by denying (whether implicitly or explicitly) the need to explain it, they pay the price of accepting an ultimately incomplete portrayal of the text. And while de Vleeschauwer and Longuenesse acknowledge the ambiguity, they do not *explain* its presence in the text. Arguably, since they interpret the ambiguity as merely terminological, they both assume there to be no more fundamental explanation of it available. The reason, then, why both kinds of interpretations can be identified, and why they are both problematic, is that they end up assuming there to be no actual explanation of the ambiguity that could be derived from the rest of §16. And this appears to result in the ambiguity’s not being located on the level of the actual content of the theory. To be sure, one might reasonably claim that it is more natural to interpret the text by assuming there to be no actual ambiguity in its content; and this would be consistent with Klass’ interpretative guideline discussed at the beginning of this chapter. And granted, one would be justified in objecting that not enough has been shown to plausibly suggest the contrary. In response to such potential objections, however, I go on below to analyse a further ambiguous feature of §16. My aim is to demonstrate that this second ambiguity explains the first, and that taken together the two imply a general ambiguity inherent in the very content of the doctrine of apperception.

4.2. Synthesis, consciousness of synthesis and the identity of apperception

In the course of §16, Kant appears to oscillate between the view that synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are conditions of the *representation* of the identity of apperception, on the one hand, and the view that they are conditions of the identity of

apperception *itself*, on the other. Consider the following claims, the first of which supports the former interpretation, while the second suggests the latter. First, Kant writes: “[I]t is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations **in one consciousness** that it is possible for me to represent the **identity of the consciousness in these representations** itself [...]” (B133). Here, Kant appears to state quite explicitly that the combination of representations in one consciousness is required for the *representation* of the identity of apperception. Yet the next claim suggests a very different interpretation: “Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as given *a priori*, is [...] the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes *a priori* all **my** determinate thinking” (B134). This time, Kant seems to be claiming something more than in the previous passage, namely, that the combination of representations in one consciousness is required not just for the consciousness or representation of the identity of apperception, but for that identity *itself* to exist. Moreover, Kant states that this identity *precedes* all thinking which can be ascribed to the thinking subject. In other words, Kant now seems to claim that the identity of apperception must be generated by the combination of representations in one consciousness *prior* to the possibility of thought, insofar as this thought can be considered to belong to a subject; i.e. prior to there actually being a necessary possibility of accompanying representations with an “I think”.

Finally, besides the two previous claims, which seem to entail different views, consider a third, where it is difficult to choose between the two options: “Now this principle of the necessary unity of apperception is, to be sure, itself identical, thus an analytical proposition, yet it declares as necessary a synthesis of the manifold given in an intuition, without which that thoroughgoing identity of self-consciousness could not be thought” (B135). Here, the ambiguity is encapsulated by Kant’s use of “yet”. Let it be assumed, first of all, that by the principle of the necessary unity of apperception Kant means the analytic claim that a manifold must be combined in one consciousness in order for the subject to be able to represent itself as the identical subject of that manifold. On the one hand, then, Kant can just be interpreted as noting that it is *surprising* that an analytic claim can say something about a synthesis; though in that case the surprise would simply be due to the terminology of the analytic – synthetic distinction. But on the other hand, Kant can also be interpreted as claiming that *even though* one possesses the analytic principle in question, *still* one needs to presuppose the

existence of a synthesis that makes possible the identity itself, which can *then* be represented in the form of an analytic principle. On the first reading, synthesis would be a condition of the representation of the “thoroughgoing identity of self-consciousness”, i.e. of the representation of the identity of apperception. In contrast, on the second reading, synthesis would be the necessary condition of the identity of apperception itself, an identity merely *expressed* by the relevant analytic principle; and the representation of the identity would presuppose the formation of the identity itself.

The presently discussed ambiguity is significant, because the choice between the two alternatives determines how the unity of consciousness is to be conceived of in relation to synthesis, and consequently, how the thinking subject must be conceived of in relation to the manifold of representations. Assuming, first, that synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are conditions merely of the representation of the identity of apperception, the ‘continuity of unity’ view seems to follow. On this view, the synthesis which makes possible the representation of the identity of apperception must itself be an *a priori* unified synthesis, since otherwise it could not make possible the unified representation of the identity of apperception. The same subject, which is *represented* as identical through the “I think”, *functions* as identical with respect to the synthesis of representations. As Düsing (1984: 412) has put it, “the synthesis itself is possible [for Kant] only by the unity of consciousness, which guarantees the performance and the unity of the synthesis of representations”. Similarly, Klass (2003: 89-90) takes Kant’s argument to be that if the representation of the unity of consciousness relative to a manifold requires a synthesis, then that unity of consciousness must itself be somehow present in the synthesis, in order to ensure that it is established in relation to all the representations involved. Evidently, Klass is thinking of the unity of consciousness represented by the “I think” as essentially the same as the unity that functions in the synthesis of representations. On this view, then, the conclusion is that the unity of the thinking subject is both a condition of synthesis as well as that unity which gets represented as a result of synthesis.

In contrast to the first view, if synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are taken as conditions of the identity of apperception *itself*, then the status of the thinking subject with respect to the activity of synthesis becomes much more difficult to account for. The problem can be understood by examining Kitcher’s recent reading of Kant’s doctrine of apperception, which is based on an interpretation of Kant’s claim, in B134,

that the synthetic unity of intuitions is the “ground” of the identity of apperception. First of all, Kitcher (2017: 605) interprets Kant as claiming that without the synthetic unity the identity of apperception would not exist. Now, on the one hand, she emphasises that Kant appears to identify the synthetic unity of apperception with the understanding (Kitcher, 2017: 603). On the other hand, she draws from B134 the conclusion that the faculty of apperception is such that it *must produce its own unity* (Kitcher, 2017: 605-6).²⁰ In other words, it appears based on B134 that the identity of apperception must be produced by a synthetic unity which is itself a function of apperception. These conclusions drawn by Kitcher make for the premises of a further argument, namely, the following: if the synthetic unity of apperception (1) is the understanding, and (2) must produce the unity of understanding, then (3) the understanding cannot always be unified. Now, since the categories are supposed to function as *a priori* unities of the synthesis of intuitions, it seems blatantly contradictory to claim that the understanding, the faculty of the categories, should not be unified. And to be sure, the contradiction could be avoided by assuming that the synthetic unity is a condition merely of the *representation* of the identity of apperception. But this is not what Kant says in B134. Instead, following the text, it would seem that the unity of consciousness, supposedly based on the unity of the categories/the understanding, cannot be a condition of synthesis, since that unity itself is produced only *through* the synthetic unity imparted to the manifold by synthesis.

The conclusion suggested by the above is expressed by Düsing (1983: 414), when he points out that there is no real discussion in the doctrine of apperception of how the unity of consciousness, represented by the “I think”, can be identified with that unity which is involved in the synthesis that produces the “I think”. Moreover, if there is no such explanation, there seems to be no justification for assuming that the synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, which are conditions of the “I think”, must themselves belong among the determinations of the thinking subject represented by the “I think”. Otherwise put, the problem is that if the unity of the subject’s consciousness comes to be represented only through accompanying a manifold of intuition by the “I think”, then there is no justification for assuming that the unity of the subject plays any part in

²⁰ Kitcher (2017: 605-6): “We are now in a position to see that there is a metaphysical thesis that is implied by Kant’s theory of the faculty of apperception: for this faculty to make its necessary contribution to cognition, it must produce and recognize as such a set of mental states standing in relations of necessary connection, relations that make them states of a single self-identical I-think. More briefly, the faculty of apperception must produce the unity of apperception and so an ‘I-think’.”

whatever the conditions are for its representation. But now, if one keeps in mind the above argument, i.e. the one based on Kitcher's interpretation, then it may be argued that such concerns are *internal to Kant's own thought*. That is, if Kant can be understood as implying, at least at times, that the identity of apperception *itself*, as opposed to its mere *representation*, must be produced by synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, then it follows that Kant's own doctrine implies a synthetic conception, which points beyond the unity of the thinking subject analysed by the model view. Supposing that this is correct, it follows that the simple continuity between the unity of the categories and the unity of the thinking subject is broken. For what then needs to be explained is precisely how there can be an identity of apperception, i.e. the basis for the unity of the subject, in the first place, and this cannot be done by assuming that there is an *a priori* unity of consciousness in the form of the understanding or of the categories, since that would involve assuming that there is an identity of apperception; and that would be circular.

The significance of the present issue can be highlighted further by looking at what Kant says about the thinking subject in the Paralogisms of Pure Reason (B):

That the I of apperception, consequently in every thought, is **a single thing** that cannot be resolved into a plurality of subjects, and hence a logically simple subject, lies already in the concept of thinking, and is consequently an analytic proposition; but that does not signify that the thinking I is a simple **substance**, which would be a synthetic proposition. (B407-8)

Here, Kant claims that the unity of the thinking subject in relation to the manifold of intuition is analytically contained in the concept of thought. Whenever the subject has a thought, therefore, the subject is necessarily identical in relation to the diverse representations combined in that thought. Kant argues that this does not entail that there exists a simple, self-subsistent thing that corresponds to the identity of the subject. Still, as has been shown, Kant seems to argue that the identity of apperception must itself be produced by synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. Assuming that this is correct, it follows that even though the principle, that the manifold contained in a single thought must belong to one and the same thinking subject, is analytic, still there is a synthesis, which is the condition of there being an identical thinking subject to which the analytic principle can apply. And there is no justification for assuming that the synthesis should

belong as an internal function to the identical thinking subject, since there is no way to represent the latter's identity independently of that synthesis.

To be sure, in the literature there is a tendency to assume that the process which produces the representation of the identity of apperception must itself be a determination of the identical subject represented by that representation. Nevertheless, the analysis offered above can be used to show that the crucial problem remains implicitly operative in the literature too. Consider Bird's (1962) interpretation, which combines two claims, the conjunction of which highlights the relevant tension. Bird claims both (1) that the unity of apperception constitutes an identical "personality" (1962: 136), and (2) that "categorical synthesis", i.e. synthesis governed by the categories, results in a distinction of "myself and other things" (1962: 138-9). Now, since Bird (1962: 137-8) thinks that the unity of apperception ultimately derives from the unity of the categories, his claims entail the view that while synthesis, as governed by the categories, makes possible the distinction of subject and object, nevertheless the identity of the subject is already presupposed in that synthesis. But how can this view be justified? What proves that the identity of the subject already functions in synthesis, if only that synthesis brings about the distinction of subject and object in the first place?

More recently, Longuenesse (2017: 86-93) has offered a sophisticated account of the different modes of consciousness at work in the Deduction, where she distinguishes between different kinds of consciousness of thinking. One is the "I think", which, Kant states, "expresses the act of determining my existence" (B157n).²¹ So, the "I think" determines for the thinking subject that the thinking subject exists. Another consciousness of thinking is a consciousness of the activity of thinking. Longuenesse (2017: 86-7) characterises this second consciousness as (1) "the mere consciousness of the act of thinking"; and (2) "a consciousness *of myself as thinking*". The first thing to note is that this consciousness can be identified with the consciousness of synthesis presented in §16. Secondly, one should recall that consciousness of synthesis is a condition of the representation of the identity of apperception in relation to a manifold. Thanks to the detailed nature of Longuenesse's analysis, then, it can be very clearly

²¹ As Longuenesse notes, the proposition "I think" is grounded on an empirical representation. For Longuenesse (2017: 89-90), there are two ways to interpret this: either (1) the "I think" essentially involves an awareness of what it is like for a thinking subject to think, or (2) the "I think" can arise only in relation to an empirical representation provided by sensation. She holds that the first option is more plausible. In contrast, Banham (2011: 111) takes Kant's point to be that some empirical representation must supply the content in relation to which the "I think" is generated.

seen where the problem resides. First, the “I think” is what determines that the subject exists. Second, the “I think” requires a consciousness of synthesis. Third, consciousness of synthesis is not just “the mere consciousness of the act of thinking, but also “a consciousness *of myself as thinking*”. But if the “I think” is what determines that the subject exists, how can the consciousness of synthesis, a necessary condition of the determination of the existence of the subject, already itself be justifiably thought to include that determination? Finally, having become aware of this problem, one should turn to look at the ambiguity inherent in the doctrine of apperception.

4.3. The general ambiguity of §16

The first thing to note is that the distinction between the “I think” and original apperception correlates with the distinction between the conditions of the representation of the identity of apperception, on the one hand, and the conditions of the identity of apperception itself, on the other. It is easy to see why this correspondence remains unnoticed in the interpretations analysed in section 4.1. The reason is the following: if the distinction between the “I think” and original apperception is assumed to be unexplainable, then there is no apparent reason to consider the possibility that Kant distinguishes between the conditions of the mere representation of the identity of apperception and the conditions of the identity of apperception itself. Consider, for instance, de Vleeschauwer’s interpretation of Kant’s claim that the analytical unity of consciousness requires a synthetic unity of consciousness. de Vleeschauwer (1937: 109) writes that, for Kant, for there to be an identical consciousness contained in all representations (i.e. for the analytical unity of consciousness to exist), a consciousness of the *identity* of the act of synthesis, which unifies those representations, is required. Now, similarly to the model view, this interpretation does not imply any need for distinguishing between the representation of the identity of apperception and the identity of apperception itself. And this is hardly surprising, considering how the views which affirm the context-dependence of Kant’s terminology end up treating the distinction between the “I think” and original apperception as unexplainable.

As has been demonstrated, however, there is reason to think that Kant implies, at least at times, that synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are conditions of the identity of apperception itself. Moreover, assuming that this is correct, it would make sense for Kant to draw a corresponding, *non-trivial* distinction between the representation “I

think” and original apperception. Now, if synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are understood as conditions specifically of the identity of apperception itself, it follows that these conditions cannot be analytically derived from the mere representation of the identity of apperception. Consequently, there arises a need to account for the identity of apperception as separate from its representation, and therefore, a distinction between the “I think” and original apperception would seem to be required. On this view, then, the distinction between synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, as conditions (1) of the representation of the identity of apperception, and (2) of the identity of apperception itself, explains the initial distinction between the “I think” and original apperception. But it still needs to be explained what the *ambiguity* of these distinctions means. Why does Kant formulate his claims in such an apparently inconsistent, or at the very least perplexing way? The present discussion suggests the following explanation. In §16, Kant intends to present an analytic model of cognition by laying out his doctrine of apperception. Yet, he betrays a simultaneous acknowledgement of the fact that there is no real justification, outside that analytic model, for taking the conditions of the representation of the identity of apperception to constitute determinations of an identical subject. But precisely the analytic model cannot explain the existence of the identity of apperception itself, that is, the identity which it is supposed to model. For this reason, on the present proposal, §16 contains indications of a synthetic account, to the effect that the identity of apperception *itself* must be produced through synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. Finally, on this proposal, the representation of the identity of apperception (i.e. the “I think”) is produced through the production of the identity of apperception itself (i.e. original apperception).

The fundamental ambiguity is essentially one which concerns the question of whether the doctrine of apperception is analytic or synthetic. While the relevant analytic argument can be made on the basis of the representation of the identity of apperception, there must, it seems, be an additional account that explains how there can be an identity of apperception in the first place; and such an account would have to be synthetic. On this view, then, the ambiguity of the distinction between the “I think” and original apperception would point to the coexistence of distinct analytic and synthetic dimensions of the doctrine of apperception. Moreover, the respective accounts can be formulated on the basis of the ambiguity regarding the status of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis as conditions of the identity of apperception. And finally, if

this interpretation is correct, the results are: (1) it is possible to read §16 as a consistently analytic account, both internally and in relation to Kant's overall project; (2) there is nevertheless an underlying synthetic argument in §16; and (3) both accounts must be acknowledged in order to give a complete interpretation of the text. In the following chapter, Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception is discussed. It is argued there that Hegel's interpretation hooks onto the ambiguities examined in this chapter, and serves to elucidate what has been tentatively called the synthetic account of apperception.

5. Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception

In this chapter, my aim is to provide an account of the synthetic dimension of the doctrine of apperception, on the basis of Hegel's reading of Kant in *Faith & Knowledge*. The structure of the chapter is the following. First, I examine Hegel's interpretation of synthetic *a priori* judgments. This is an important step, since Hegel emphasises the importance of the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments for Kant, and considers the latter's conception of the synthetic unity of apperception to solve this problem. Second, I examine Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of apperception itself. I argue that Hegel's thesis of the identity of subject and object is to be interpreted as designating the impossibility of distinguishing between subject and object, when it comes to the synthesis and consciousness of synthesis that are required for the identity of apperception. Finally, I discuss the implications of Hegel's interpretation to transcendental idealism, as well as the limits of his interpretation.

5.1. Hegel on synthetic *a priori* judgments

According to Hegel (1977: 71-2), Kant's conception of the synthetic unity of apperception provides the solution to the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments. In order to properly understand Hegel's approach to Kant's doctrine of apperception, then, it is necessary to begin by examining his interpretation of synthetic *a priori* judgments. There, Hegel introduces his conception of the *absolute identity* of the logical subject and predicate of a synthetic *a priori* judgment:

How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? This problem expresses nothing else but the Idea that subject and predicate of the synthetic judgment are identical

in the *a priori* way. That is to say, these heterogeneous elements, the subject which is the particular and in the form of being, and the predicate which is the universal and in the form of thought, are at the same time absolutely identical. (Hegel, 1977: 69)

First of all, recall that Kant takes synthetic *a priori* judgments to be necessary and universal judgments, which also contribute to the amplification of knowledge. These judgments involve *a priori* concepts, that is, concepts which have universal and necessary applicability to objects, and which cannot for that reason be derived from experience. But Hegel obviously wants to claim more. Suppose that by the predicates of synthetic *a priori* judgments Hegel means *a priori* concepts, and that by their logical subjects he means whatever concepts of objects those predicates are applied to. This suggests that in some sense Hegel thinks there to be no distinction between those *a priori* concepts and the objects to which they are applied by way of synthetic *a priori* judgments. The difficulty resides, of course, in determining what exactly this means, and that is no straightforward task. For instance, as Sedgwick (2012: 111) points out, the notion of absolute identity cannot be taken to imply that intuitions can be reduced to concepts, or that receptivity is a mode of spontaneity, since Hegel agrees with Kant that intuitions and concepts are both necessary for knowledge. How, then, should the term ‘absolute identity’ be understood? Here, it is instructive to begin by determining what Hegel is *not* saying, and this can be done by defending him against unwarranted criticism.

According to Guyer (1993), there are two basic problems with Hegel’s account of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Firstly, Guyer argues that the subject and predicate of synthetic judgments cannot be thought of as identical, since “synthetic judgments are precisely those in which the predicate *adds* information to that conveyed by the concept of the subject, and therefore cannot be known to be true by means of merely logical principles about identity” (1993: 180). As Guyer notes, only *analytic* judgments are based on the logical identity of the subject and the predicate. Secondly, Guyer (1993: 180-1) criticises Hegel’s identification of the logical subject of synthetic *a priori* judgments with “being”, and that of the predicate with “thought”. After all, the logical subject is a universal concept just like the predicate. Consequently, to get the subject concept to even refer to a particular object, one must apply the indexical “this” in the right spatiotemporal context, where an object correlative to the subject concept can be

found. Finally, even if it were assumed that intuitions could somehow enter judgments, an intuition could refer to *being* no more than concepts do. In Kant's epistemology, intuitions are themselves *representations* of objects, and must therefore be seen as belonging on the side of thought rather than of being.

Guyer's critique of Hegel's conception of synthetic *a priori* judgments does not stand up to scrutiny. Firstly, there is no reason to think that the identity claimed by Hegel to exist between the subject and predicate of a synthetic *a priori* judgment should consist of the logical identity of the subject and the predicate. This has been noted by Pippin (1989: 81), who remarks that "the context of Hegel's discussion makes it clear that he does not think synthetic *a priori* judgments are *analytic* identities". Indeed, it would require an absurdly uncharitable interpretation to conclude from what Hegel says that he makes an elementary mistake in confusing the relation of the subject and predicate of synthetic *a priori* judgments with the sort of logical identity expressed by analytic judgments. On the contrary, Hegel's very use of the term *absolute* to characterise the identity would indicate that he wants to refer to something different from the logical identity of concepts. Secondly, it can be demonstrated that Hegel's distinction concerning the 'forms' of the logical subject and predicate is compatible with Kant's theory of judgment. Recall Allison's analysis that judgments involve two acts of predication: (1) a real predication where a concept is applied to an intuition, and (2) a logical predication, where a further determining concept is predicated of the concept originally applied in the act of real predication. Now, Hegel's characterisations of the logical subject as being "in the form of being", and of the logical predicate as being "in the form of thought", appear perfectly symmetrical with the relevant acts of predication. The logical subject is "in the form of being", since it is predicated of an intuition, i.e. an immediate representation of an object, and the logical predicate is "in the form of thought" because it is predicated of a concept. Simply put, the "form" of a concept can be neatly taken to refer in each case to one of the two possible ways in which a concept can function as a predicate. In this way, Hegel can be interpreted as adhering to Kant's theory of judgment despite the initial obscurity of his chosen terminology.

Still, there remains the question of what exactly Hegel means by the absolute identity of subject and predicate in synthetic *a priori* judgments. It is useful first to consider cases of predication where the subject and the predicate are *non-identical* in an intuitive, non-logical sense. Firstly, they are non-identical at least in all cases of logical predication.

When a judgment is formulated in its final, logical form, the logical subject is clearly distinguishable from the predicate. This applies to both empirical and synthetic *a priori* judgments. Secondly, the subject and the predicate are intuitively non-identical in those cases of real predication that correspond to empirical judgments. In such predications, the intuition, which plays a role formally identical to a logical subject, being that of which something is predicated, is clearly distinct from the concept that is predicated of it. There is one kind of predication, however, where the distinction of subject and predicate seems difficult to maintain. This is the real predication that corresponds to a synthetic *a priori* judgment. Since the predication is *a priori*, the model of experience is not available for distinguishing between the intuition supposed to play the role of a logical subject, on the one hand, and the concept predicated of that intuition by the knowing subject, on the other. This suggests that the impossibility of distinguishing between the two is due to the impossibility of distinguishing *that who predicates* from *that of which something is predicated*. In a logical predication, *ex hypothesi*, the logical subject can be distinguished from the predicate on the basis of the fact that the predicate represents the knowing subject's act of predication targeted at an object, whereas the logical subject represents the object or the set of objects which is the target of that act. Analogously, in an empirical real predication, the intuition can be distinguished from the concept on the basis of the fact that the concept represents the knowing subject's act of predication targeted at an object, whereas the intuition represents the object which is the target of that act.

When it comes to synthetic *a priori* real predication, however, there seems to be no available model for conceiving of the epistemic structure of subject and object, as the structure of *that who predicates* and *that of which something is predicated*. And this suggests the following interpretation of Hegel's conception of absolute identity: the logical subject and predicate of a synthetic *a priori* judgment are "absolutely identical", because their existence as the distinct concepts of that synthetic *a priori* judgment presupposes an act of predication in which there is no way to distinguish that who predicates from that of which something is predicated. But now, it should be kept in mind that the relevant act of real predication is also an act of *a priori* synthesis. Supposing that the present reading is correct, then, it follows that there are two important features of absolute identity. The first is the negative feature discussed above, i.e. that the absolute identity of the logical subject and predicate requires that the

knowing subject and the object cannot be distinguished, when it comes to accounting for the connection of said logical subject and predicate.²² The second feature is positive, and corresponds to the activity of *a priori* synthesis, which makes up the real predication *a priori*. That is, *a priori* synthesis is the positive nature of that state, where it is the case that the knowing subject and the object cannot be distinguished from each other. Finally, the combination of these two features points to the idea expressed by Hegel, that the doctrine of apperception might solve the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments. In a word, the doctrine of apperception might be discovered to offer an account of the *a priori* synthesis where subject and object cannot be distinguished from each other, and to thereby show how there can be judgments, the logical subject and predicate of which are absolutely identical.

5.2. Preliminaries for interpreting Hegel on apperception

Before actually interpreting Hegel's interpretation, some preliminary discussion of his approach to the doctrine of apperception is in order. It was noted previously that, according to Hegel, the synthetic unity of apperception provides a solution to the problem of pure reason (1977: 71-2). Now, Hegel holds this view because he takes the synthetic unity of apperception to involve an "original, absolute identity of the heterogeneous" (1977: 72). What does this mean? Again, Hegel's position is best approached by defending him against criticism that does not stand up to scrutiny. In Guyer's (1993: 182) view, Hegel considers the doctrine of apperception to imply a *metaphysical* position called *neutral monism*. Guyer (1993: 182) characterises the so-called neutral monist position in the following way: "Self or thought and object or being are not ultimately different but represented as different by abstractions that it is the end of philosophy to overcome, thereby restoring the original recognition of unity implicit in apperception itself." Guyer takes Hegel to have identified apperception with an ontologically meaningful "recognition of unity", from which the notions of subject and object are somehow derived. He then dismisses this as an implausible interpretation of the doctrine of apperception, since there is no hint of such "recognition" in Kant. On the

²² Following the nomenclature of Kant's theory of judgment, the thesis that subject and object are identical would be best understood, not as the *affirmative* judgment that 'subject and object are identical', but as the *infinite* judgment that 'subject and object are non-distinct'. That is, the thesis expresses the proposition that *whatever subject and object are, they are at least not distinguishable*, when it comes to the activity of *a priori* synthesis. For Kant's distinction between affirmative and infinite judgments, see: "On the logical function of the understanding in judgments" (A71-2/B97).

contrary, it appears that the synthetic unity of apperception is restricted to the realm of the subject's thought. So, if Guyer is right about Hegel's interpretation, then he is surely justified in rejecting it as an interpretation of Kant's doctrine. No monist conception of ontology is present in the Deduction, and if Hegel were to claim the opposite, he would be guilty of advancing an absurd interpretation.

As demonstrated above in 5.1, however, it is much more plausible to think that Hegel does not use the terms "being" and "thought" in any ontologically weighty sense. Instead, he seems to intend these terms to express an important aspect of Kant's theory of judgment in its application to synthetic *a priori* judgments. Instead of referring to different kinds of ontological entities, "being" and "thought" designate the two different acts of predication involved in making judgments that apply to objects. Moreover, it has been argued above that the *absolute* identity of the logical subject and predicate does not refer to their logical identity, but to the indistinguishability in real predication of that who predicates from that of which something is predicated. It appears most natural, then, to interpret Hegel's view, that the synthetic unity of apperception implies some kind of original identity, as a development of the relevant interpretation of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Given this interpretation, it would seem that Hegel takes Kant's account of the synthetic unity of apperception to offer a positive conception of the synthesis presupposed by the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments, that is, the synthesis where subject and object cannot be distinguished from each other; and this would not require ontological assumptions about the relation of the self and the world.

Next, one should look at Hegel's fundamental premise for interpreting the Transcendental Deduction:

The whole transcendental deduction [...] in general cannot be understood without distinguishing what Kant calls the faculty of the original synthetic unity of apperception from the Ego which does the representing and is the subject – the Ego which, as Kant says, merely accompanies all representations. (Hegel, 1977: 72-3)

Hegel has been contested on this point by Schulting (2017), who holds that the distinction claimed by the former to be fundamental to understanding the Deduction has no textual basis. Schulting, interpreting Hegel's distinction between the "Ego" and the synthetic unity as a distinction between the "I think" and a more basic original synthetic unity, criticises him for assuming there to be such a distinction. In Schulting's words,

“the accompanying ‘I’ of the ‘I think’ of self-consciousness *is* the non-derivative original ‘I’ of the identity of self-consciousness, which is grounded in an original act of a priori synthesis” (2017: 359). For Schulting (2017: 360), then, the “I think” and the synthetic unity of apperception just are coextensive, in the sense that when there is an “I think” that accompanies a manifold of intuition, there is an *a priori* synthesis, and vice versa. In defence of Hegel, however, Kant *does* appear to make the right sort of distinction when he distinguishes between the “I think” and original apperception. To be sure, the distinction is ambiguous. But this is just what Hegel seems to be pointing out. After all, Schulting (2017: 358) himself notes that in Hegel’s view, “while Kant introduces the speculative idea [i.e. the notion of original identity], in the form of the original-synthetic unity of apperception, he does not adhere to it, for he reallocates this speculative principle to the *mere* understanding”. Should not, then, Hegel’s distinction of the Ego and the synthetic unity be taken in connection with his acknowledgment of Kant’s inconsistency or ambiguity? The suggestion is that Hegel’s distinction of the Ego and the synthetic unity should not be understood as a simple distinction between the two, but as expressing the fact that there are differing theoretical strands at play in Kant’s doctrine of apperception. Namely, the Ego might do the required work on an account where the “speculative principle” has been reallocated to the “*mere* understanding”. But, on Hegel’s view, one should not accept that the unity of the understanding is all that the synthetic unity of apperception is about.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above. The first is that there is no need to interpret Hegel’s conception of an original identity in metaphysical or ontological terms. This follows from the relation he stipulates between the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments and the doctrine of apperception. The second conclusion is that the fundamental premise of Hegel’s interpretation has a textual basis. With these points in mind, it is possible to move to a preliminary discussion of Hegel’s conception of the identity of subject and object. First, consider the following passage:

The true synthetic unity or rational identity is just that identity which is the connecting of the manifold with the empty identity, the Ego. It is from this connection, as original synthesis that the Ego as thinking subject, and the manifold as body and world first detach themselves. (Hegel, 1977: 71)

This passage seems to confirm that the “true synthetic unity” or “rational identity” referred to by Hegel is an identity of subject and object. But given (1) Hegel’s

interpretation of synthetic *a priori* judgments, and (2) the relation he stipulates between those judgments and apperception, it would be misguided to interpret Hegel as claiming that the synthetic unity of apperception entails some sort of ontological monism.

Moreover, this conclusion is supported by the fact that, as many commentators (Sedgwick, 2012: 98; Pippin, 1989: 77; Schulting, 2017: 358) have pointed out, Hegel considers Kant to have genuinely introduced some new ‘speculative’ idea; and surely Hegel does not consider *Kant* to even implicitly be an ontological monist. Accordingly, interpreting Hegel’s conception of the identity of subject and object would best be seen as the task of locating some claim or argument *internal to the Deduction itself*, which might explain why Hegel considers himself to have found such an identity in Kant’s thought. Furthermore, when understood in this way, the task of interpreting the identity of subject and object should at least initially preclude the ascription of any assumptions to Hegel such that would be unacceptable to Kant.

Admittedly, there is a genuine difficulty in the suggested approach. The problem is, as Sedgwick (2012: 108) has pointed out, that in a sense the very idea of a transcendental deduction follows from an affirmation of the *non-identity* of subject and object. To see this, it is enough to consider the task of giving a proof of the application of *a priori* concepts to objects that are *given* to the subject. To assert the necessity of such a proof, as Kant does, strongly implies a conception of the object as fundamentally external to the subject. Even Hegel thinks that “Kant raises ‘non-identity’ to an ‘absolute principle’” (Sedgwick, 2012: 108). But does this, then, not make Hegel’s own position incoherent? Is it really plausible to interpret Kant’s arguments to imply a view with which he himself is apparently in fundamental disagreement with? There are two visible solutions to the present problem. One would be to argue that although Hegel does not think that Kant’s doctrine as such implies the idea of an identity of subject and object, he considers Kant’s views to provide an impetus for developing such a position. Indeed, this view is held by Sedgwick (2012: 124-5), who claims that “[w]e misrepresent Hegel’s critique [...] if we suppose that it is directed at inconsistencies he discovers internal to Kant’s system”, and that a “genuine” idealism would require, for Hegel, a wholly “*new account of conceptual form*”. In a similar vein, Pippin (1989: 77) claims that “the only possible explanation” of why Hegel “feels entitled” to make the claim that Kant’s own doctrine implies a commitment to a speculative idealist position is that Hegel is already trying to answer “the post-Kantian problem of trying to account for

[...] the spontaneous self-relating involved in all experience”. On Pippin’s view, then, it is not the Transcendental Deduction as such which contains implications towards some new philosophical position, but the combination of the Deduction and the context in which Hegel approaches it which does.

The alternative solution would be to argue, based on the analysis of the ambiguity of §16 offered in chapter 4, that while Kant *does* imply the identity of subject and object, he does so in an ambiguous way. The adequacy of this solution turns on whether Hegel’s interpretation can be shown to capture the synthetic account of apperception implied by some of Kant’s claims in §16. Accordingly, Hegel’s interpretation would be correct to the extent that it can be thought to bring out this (more or less implicit) synthetic account. But first, two interpretations of Hegel compatible with the first solution (Pippin’s and Sedgwick’s) are examined. According to Sedgwick (2012: 111), the leading idea behind Hegel’s notion of absolute identity is that “in abstraction from each other, concepts and intuitions, spontaneity and receptivity, are (somehow) nothing at all”. On views which share this premise, the identity of subject and object will tend to be understood as a development of the discursivity thesis, which states, precisely, that cognition requires both concepts and intuitions. Such views are discussed next.

5.3. The identity of subject and object as a development of the discursivity thesis

Pippin (1989: 20-21) claims that the correct way to approach the Transcendental Deduction is to start from a “logical” approach, as advocated by Allison, and then to supplement this approach by an account of *how* the representing of objects must happen, in order for the necessary possibility of accompanying all representations with an “I think” to exist. Since for Allison the conditions of apperception must be inferred analytically, they cannot be understood as conditions of how the necessary possibility of accompanying representations with an “I think” can exist. Rather, they must be considered merely as clarifying, within the analytic model, how that possibility must be thought. But what exactly does Pippin mean by showing how the analytical unity of apperception can exist? Here, Pippin’s analysis makes use of the theory of judgment. If the subject judges that “S is P”, then the subject must be able to become aware of the fact that it thereby judges something to be such and such. In judging, then, not only does the subject judge something to be such and such, that is, not only does the subject form a logical judgment about an object, but that merely logical judgment is itself a reflection

of what the subject has *already* judged the object to be like. In Pippin's (1989: 21) words, the judgment is "implicitly reflexive". Accordingly, to accompany an intuition with the "I think" is not just to attach the latter to the former, but also to express the fact that the "I's" consciousness of the intuition already presupposes a process of conceptual determination.

What, then, does Pippin's account have to do with the identity of subject and object? Consider the way in which he attempts to define Hegel's position:

[I]n any particular case of 'my taking *this* to be *P*', or in a general claim about 'my taking this necessarily to be *P*', we must admit that there is no way in which the intuited particular, or formally characterised domain of particulars, can play a cognitively significant role except as already minimally conceptualized particulars. (Pippin, 1989: 85)

Arguably, Pippin offers here an argument for why the discursivity thesis entails an identity of subject and object of sorts. First, suppose that Kant is correct in claiming that "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75). It seems to follow that applying a concept to an object, or a set of objects, cannot just be a matter of applying a concept to an intuition or a set of intuitions, since those *intuitions themselves* must already be conceptually determined in order to even count as intuitions, such that concepts can then be applied to them in judgments (otherwise they would be blind).²³ Furthermore, it follows that there is an identity of subject and object, because what appears initially as the object, i.e. the intuition, is actually something that has already been determined by the subject, i.e. the concept.²⁴ The issue with this argument is, however, that it moves from the discursivity thesis to a conception of the identity of

²³ Westphal (1996) has presented a view opposite to that advocated by Pippin. For him, the identity of subject and object results, instead of the subjective or conceptual side, from what can be called the side of the object. On this view, the Hegelian argument is that since intuitions are thinkable under concepts, those intuitions must in themselves be organised in such a way that they are thus thinkable. Accordingly, Westphal (1996: 32-3) takes there to be a strong realist tendency in Hegel's thought.

²⁴ The view presently discussed appears close to the one implied by Kant in the course of his discussion of the distinction between *judgments of experience* and *judgments of perception* in the *Prolegomena*. Now, while judgments of experience are judgments that possess objective validity, judgments of perception are merely subjectively valid (Kant, 1997: 50). Kant (1997:52) suggests, however, that judgments of perception can be made into judgments of experience: "If I want it [a judgment of perception, here: 'the air is elastic'] to be called a judgment of experience, I then require that this connection [of the two concepts] be subject to a condition that makes it universally valid." Kant (1997: 53) argues, then, that this shift is possible because the perceptions involved in the judgment of perception are, in reality, already subsumed under a pure concept. A judgment of perception is therefore not made into a judgment of experience on the basis of a mere attribution of necessity to that judgment, but on the basis of uncovering the necessity that is already a condition of the *perception*.

subject and object without reference to the topic of apperception. Given the above discussion in 5.2, this move is difficult to accept in the context of interpreting Hegel's interpretation of Kant.

Sedgwick offers an interpretation which is more promising in this last respect. To be sure, she holds that Hegel's interpretation of Kant must be understood in terms of giving a new account of the "interdependence of concepts and intuitions" (Sedgwick, 2012: 119). Specifically, she holds that while Hegel accepts in its strictly Kantian form the condition that intuitions require concepts, i.e. they play a part in cognition only insofar as they are related to concepts, Hegel thinks that a new conception of the way in which concepts require intuitions is needed (Sedgwick, 2012: 120). But here the doctrine of apperception plays a crucial role. According to Sedgwick (2012: 121), Hegel emphasises that instead of merely *concepts* being empty without intuitions, as Kant claims, it is the "I" of the "I think" that is fundamentally empty. Or otherwise put, the "I" itself contains no cognitive content. For this reason, a separate faculty of the original synthetic unity of apperception is required in order to both bring actual intuitions about as well as to connect the empty "I" to objects. On this view, then, the synthetic unity of apperception constitutes an identity of subject and object insofar as its function is to first bring about the representations of the "I" and of the object.

What are the implications of Sedgwick's reading? As she points out, Hegel is fully aware of the fact that Kant ultimately identifies the synthetic unity of apperception with the understanding (Sedgwick, 2012: 122-3). From this, Sedgwick draws the conclusion that Hegel's interpretation does not involve the claim that Kant's doctrine is inconsistent. Instead, on her view, the claim that the doctrine of apperception implies an identity of subject and object is merely a sign of Hegel's own philosophical development. Furthermore, even though Sedgwick gives a significant role to the synthetic unity of apperception in her interpretation of Hegel's reading of Kant, she nevertheless conceives of that role merely as a development of the discursivity thesis. But the worry is that such a view could fail to appreciate any specific argument, internal to the doctrine of apperception, which might explain Hegel's thesis of the identity of subject and object. After all, the demand for such an argument would seem to be warranted given the connection Hegel affirms between the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments and apperception. In the next section, this worry is addressed by providing an alternative interpretation of the identity of subject and object.

5.4. The identity of subject and object in the doctrine of apperception

What the interpretations of Hegel that draw mainly from Kant's discursivity thesis miss is the specific conception of synthetic unity which Hegel uses in his interpretation of Kant. Consider the following passage:

[T]he expression "synthetic unity" might make the identity look as if it presupposes the antithesis and need the manifold of the antithesis as something independent and existing for itself [...] This original unity of apperception is called synthetic precisely because of its two-sidedness, the opposites being absolutely one in it. The absolute synthesis is absolute insofar as it is not an aggregate of manifolds which are first picked up, and then the synthesis supervenes upon them afterwards. (Hegel, 1977: 71)

First of all, reflecting on this passage, it seems clear that by the term "synthetic unity" Hegel does not intend to refer primarily to the unity of consciousness in relation to the manifold of intuition, or to the unity of the manifold insofar as it is combined in one consciousness. Rather, Hegel is claiming that the unity of apperception is called synthetic "because of its two-sidedness, the opposites being absolutely one in it". To understand what for Hegel constitutes "two-sidedness", or the unity of "opposites", it should be emphasised that he characterises the absolute and original identity as an "identity of subjective and objective" (1977: 71). Given this characterisation, it seems to follow that the components of the synthetic unity are not diverse intuitions combined in a single consciousness. Rather, the components are the pair of subject and object. And this makes it possible to conceive of the synthetic unity as a unity of "the opposites", as Hegel describes it.

Secondly, the relation of subject and object, which Hegel takes to constitute the synthetic unity, should be understood in the specific sense in which it is present in the doctrine of apperception. There, subject and object function as reciprocal conditions of each other's representations. On the one hand, the subject can be represented only through thinking an object, i.e. a manifold of intuition. On the other hand, the object can be represented only insofar as the manifold of intuition is unified by the subject in thought.²⁵ Despite this reciprocal relation, however, subject and object are always represented as distinct. But suppose for the moment that the subject represented by the

²⁵ Compare Kant's definition of an object in the first part of the Deduction, §17: "An **object** [...] is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is **united**." (B137)

“I think” and the object represented by the manifold are in reality identical, despite their being represented as distinct. It follows that one can conceive of their identity as a combination, *from the point of view from which they are conceived of as distinct*. This may appear paradoxical, since the so-called combination is stipulated to be the original state of the two distinct terms. Yet, from the viewpoint of the thinking subject, for whom the manifold of intuition is (already) distinct from itself, there is a sense in which the original identity can be conceived of as a combination with what is not its own self, i.e. the object. Or otherwise put, one can conceive of that original identity as a “synthetic unity”. The upshot of this analysis is expressed in the following suggestion. Namely, any answer to the question of whether or not Hegel’s interpretation of the doctrine of apperception applies to the text of §16 should be based on an answer to the more fundamental question: does *Kant’s* conception of a synthetic unity (a unity of consciousness in relation to the synthesis of a manifold of intuition) involve *Hegel’s* specific conception of a synthetic unity (the original unity of subject and object)? The task of answering these questions will be undertaken below, with the help of the analysis of the ambiguities of the doctrine of apperception offered in chapter 4.

First, take Hegel’s distinction between the empty Ego and the original-synthetic unity of apperception. As has been noted, this distinction seems to correspond with that made by Kant between the representation/act “I think”, on the one hand, and original apperception, which brings about the former, on the other. Again, Hegel thinks that Kant, after discovering the synthetic unity of apperception, “turned the true *a priori* back into a pure unity, i.e., one that is not originally synthetic” (1977: 73). Here, the relevant idea is that while Kant stipulates an original apperception that produces the “I think”, he nevertheless ultimately takes the unity of the categories, as expressed by the “I think”, to constitute the relevant premise for the argument of the Deduction. What Hegel terms a *turning back* from the “true *a priori*” can be understood, then, as Kant’s pragmatic acceptance of the model view of apperception. It follows that the unity of the *representation* of the identity of apperception cannot be identified with a synthetic unity in Hegel’s sense of the term. What *can* be identified with such a synthetic unity, however, is original apperception, i.e. that consciousness which produces the “I think”. Below, it will be demonstrated based on the second ambiguity of §16 how this can be done.

But first, it is necessary for the sake of clarity to deal with a potential objection. One might respond to the Hegelian view by pointing out that there is no reason why the unity of consciousness expressed by the “I think” could not be synthetic. In fact, for Kant, this is precisely the case, since the synthetic unity of apperception points to a unity of consciousness insofar as a manifold of intuition is combined in a single consciousness, expressed by the “I think” in its relation to the manifold of intuition. Moreover, according to Sedgwick (2012: 123), Hegel is perfectly aware of this fact. Yet this objection would ignore the distinction between the two meanings of the term “synthetic unity”, one of which is exclusively Hegel’s. While Hegel might be aware that there is nothing to prevent the understanding to be a faculty of synthetic unity in the *Kantian* sense, it certainly cannot be a synthetic unity in *Hegel’s* sense. This is because the unity of the categories is the same as the unity of the thinking subject, represented by the “I think” in its relation to the manifold of intuition, and therefore presupposes the distinction of subject and object. And this seems precisely to be the reason why Hegel thinks Kant ultimately abandoned his insight into a ‘real’ synthetic unity.

The second of the previously analysed ambiguities of §16 is that Kant appears to conceive of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis as conditions of both the *representation* of the identity of apperception as well as the identity of apperception *itself*. It was argued in chapter 4 that this ambiguity points to a serious difficulty of which Kant seems to be aware. Namely, if the conditions of the identity of apperception are taken merely as conditions of its *representation*, it seems to follow that there is no justification for holding the subject to be the agent of the activity of synthesis. Of course, one could evade this problem by assuming that the model view is correct. But the latter cannot be fully supported by the text. Consequently, it seems that an account of the origin of the identity of apperception itself is required, which would imply that the conditions of that identity must precede any possibility of the distinction of subject and object. Now, this line of criticism seems perfectly to fit Hegel’s conception of synthetic unity as the identity of subject and object. On the basis of the discussion in section 5.1, the identity of subject and object is best understood as their indistinguishability in *a priori* synthesis. Accordingly, if synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are conditions of the identity of apperception itself, then they take place within such a synthetic unity, that is, within a framework where subject and object cannot be distinguished from each other. To see how this sort of view might be implied

in §16, consider again the familiar argument by Kant regarding the conditions of the identity of apperception:

Namely, this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of the representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis. For the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The latter relation therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my **adding** one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis.
(B133)

How does one get from here to a synthetic unity in Hegel's sense? To achieve this, I propose the following thought experiment. Suppose, first, that there is consciousness C of representation R. For instance, there is consciousness of the representation of a triangle, R. Intuitively, such consciousness constitutes a *single* consciousness of R. Consider, however, an alternative case, where there is first consciousness C of representation R1, then consciousness by that same consciousness C of representation R2, and finally of R3. For instance, instead of there being consciousness simply of a triangle, there is consciousness of the three lines of a triangle, formed in the shape of a single triangle, but each being separate representations (R1, R2 and R3). Consciousness now appears as a single consciousness in a totally different sense: it is now an *identical* consciousness in relation to a manifold of representations. Now, Kant's move is to argue that only this latter version of the relation of consciousness to representations involves an actual unity of consciousness. Since empirical consciousness contains no representation of the unity of consciousness, such unity can be represented only when a manifold is combined in a single consciousness. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is wrong to claim that the simple consciousness C of representation R is a unified consciousness, or even a single consciousness in any meaningful sense. On the contrary, it is precisely an instance of a non-unified, scattered consciousness; a mere moment in the reception of given representations. Only when representations are combined can their common consciousness be a single consciousness in the true sense. Finally, then, C can be a single or unified consciousness of R, *if* R is really for C the combination of R1, R2 and R3.

But that is not all. The above still leaves open the possibility that what results from the combination of R1-3 for C is merely the *representation* of the unity of consciousness. On this view, which I call the ‘explicitly Kantian’ view, consciousness of synthesis is taken to produce the unified representation of the unity of consciousness, and the unity of this representation, in relation to a manifold, is then taken to prove that there *is* an a priori unity of consciousness, which is a condition of the unity of the synthesis that produces the representation. But the problem with this view is that the existence of the unity of consciousness C never gets *explained*. Rather, it is simply assumed on account of the unity of its representation. In contrast, the Hegelian (and ‘implicitly Kantian’) view is that for consciousness C to be an identical consciousness of R1, R2 and R3, the unity of C must *itself* be generated through consciousness of the activity of synthesis. That is, in order to actually explain the identity of C, it must be maintained that its identity exists *through* the combining of R1, R2 and R3.²⁶ And this is possible only if C starts off in the form of the consciousness of their synthesis, since for R to be the combination of R1, R2 and R3 for C, C must have been conscious of their combining. One might try to imagine this as a gradual process: C’s consciousness of R1 does not yet make C an identical consciousness; its consciousness of the combining of R1 and R2 starts to generate its identity; its consciousness of the combining of R1 and R2 with R3 strengthens this identity. Furthermore, assuming that there were to be more representations involved, this generation would go on.

The identity of C gets to be such an identity, then, only insofar as C is such a consciousness which gets to take itself as an identical consciousness, through being conscious of the combination of R1, R2 and R3. And the realisation of this fact provides an actual explanation for the identity of C. Moreover, this activity takes place within an identity of subject and object. That is, subject and object cannot be distinguished in the activity of synthesis and consciousness of it, since that activity is what brings about the

²⁶ This argument can be connected to a pre-Kantian historical debate about whether self-consciousness comes prior to object cognition, or vice versa. This debate has been presented in detail by Kitcher (2011: 58-9). First of all, Wolff argued that object-cognition must come prior to self-consciousness, since the unity of self-consciousness presupposes the differentiation of multiple objects. In contrast, Crusius held that self-consciousness must precede object-cognition, since it seems that only the former can be the cause of the differentiation of objects. Now, both alternatives appear to be incorporated into Kant’s (explicit) account. On the one hand, the identity of apperception can be represented only insofar as there is consciousness of the synthesis of a manifold of representations. On the other hand, the unity of consciousness is the condition for the unified synthesis of the manifold. In contrast, Hegel’s interpretation can be taken as a defence and development of Wolff’s position. So, though it may be that consciousness is required for the synthesis of the manifold of representations, there is no justification for taking that consciousness to possess the unity of the self-consciousness associated with a thinking subject.

very possibility of the distinction. It does this by generating the unity of consciousness, which can be represented in the form of the “I think”, relative to the single complex representation that gets formed through the same activity of synthesis. Here, this activity has been portrayed as C’s consciousness of the combination of R1, R2 and R3. And finally, since that activity generates the subject’s self-consciousness, which is represented in the form of the “I think”, it can be identified with *original apperception*, i.e. the self-consciousness which produces the “I think”. Admittedly, it would be more accurate to speak of a ‘becoming self-conscious’ which produces the “I think”. In any case, it is understandable in this precise sense how a mode of self-consciousness (or becoming self-conscious) can imply an identity of subject and object.

It remains now to connect the present interpretation of the synthetic unity of apperception to synthetic *a priori* judgments. What is crucial is that the same two features, the negative and the positive, that were previously seen to characterise the absolute identity of the logical subject and predicate in synthetic *a priori* judgments, can now be seen to characterise the original identity of subject and object. So, on the one hand, subject and object are identical in the sense that they are non-distinct in the activity of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. On the other hand, the activity of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis provides the positive characterisation of their identity. Finally, these considerations allow one to formulate the following argument. Since (1) the identity of subject and object follows from the impossibility of distinguishing between them in synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, as the two poles of the act of knowing; (2) the process which constitutes the identity of subject and object is, precisely, the *a priori* synthesis in consciousness of the manifold of intuition; and (3) supposing that *a priori* synthesis in consciousness of the manifold of intuition is what makes possible synthetic *a priori* judgments, it follows that (4) synthetic *a priori* judgments are made possible by an original identity of subject and object. Now, this argument explains why Hegel thinks that the synthetic unity of apperception, as an identity of subject and object, solves the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments. To be sure, the conjunction of premises (1) and (2) presupposes that Hegel’s specific conception of a synthetic unity is compatible with Kant’s conception of a synthetic unity. But this compatibility is just what has been demonstrated by way of the synthetic account of apperception offered in the present chapter. And crucially, this account does

the work of explaining how there can be an identity of apperception, about which analytic claims can be made, in the first place.

5.5. The implications and limits of the present interpretation of Hegel

The above analysis suggests that Hegel's notion of absolute identity should be thought of in terms of the concept of justification. More precisely, the suggestion is that for two terms to be identical in Hegel's sense means that they cannot justifiably be conceived of as distinct. Firstly, the logical subject and predicate of synthetic *a priori* judgments are absolutely identical, because the predicating subject and the object *qua* target of predication cannot justifiably be conceived of as distinct in the act of real predication presupposed by such judgments. Secondly, the subject and object of the doctrine of apperception are absolutely identical, since, again, they cannot justifiably be conceived of as distinct, when it comes to the activity of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis presupposed by their distinction. Now, Hegel's thesis of the identity of subject and object, as it has been interpreted here, implies an epistemology incompatible with the general framework of transcendental idealism. For the transcendental idealist, there is a non-identity of subject and object, because there are unknowable things in themselves, and because the subject can know objects only insofar as it deals with representations that are given to it from outside its faculty of cognition. In contrast, the proponent of the thesis of the identity of subject and object claims that the very distinction of subject and object, assumed by the transcendental idealist, is possible only on account of a process of *a priori* synthesis where subject and object cannot be distinguished from each other. Consequently, the proponent of this thesis holds that the transcendental idealist *cannot be justified* in holding the viewpoint that there is necessarily a realm of things in themselves beyond the scope of the subject's possible knowledge.

The present view is useful in replying to commentators who maintain that Hegel's interpretation begs the question (Ameriks, 2003: 8), or that it is possible only on account of his own philosophical convictions (Smith, 1973: 338-40). Arguably, such remarks stem from an unwillingness to apply Hegel's claims to the text of the Deduction. For instance, Ameriks (2003: 7) suggests that Hegel's interpretation rests on "the idea that *if* the categories of things in themselves were completely determinable from what is involved in a pure representation of the I, then this would demonstrate the basic subject-object identity to which Hegel is committed". It is obvious that no such

deduction of the categories is possible for Kant. The impasse may be avoided, however, by interpreting Hegel simply as arguing that there is *no justification* for maintaining the distinction of subject and object in *a priori* synthesis. On the proposed view, Hegel does not think that Kant's doctrine of apperception points to a positive determination of metaphysical categories from mere self-consciousness. Instead, Hegel's interpretation is taken to imply the fact that the epistemic framework, in which the very thought that things in themselves are unknowable can arise, is possible only on account of a process where subject and object are non-distinct, and that therefore the unknowability of things in themselves cannot justifiably be raised to an epistemological principle. Consequently, it seems that Ameriks is himself guilty of begging the question against Hegel, by assuming that the latter's claims about Kant can have no other foundation than some set of specifically 'Hegelian' assumptions.

But what does all this imply with respect to the doctrine of categories? Suppose that Hegel is right. The first thing to note, then, is that the doctrine must be dropped in its Kantian form. If the unity of consciousness must be generated through an activity of consciousness of synthesis, then the categories cannot be identified with the unity of consciousness in its function of governing the unity of synthesis. This means in turn that the categories lose the basis for their nature as purely subjective conditions of knowledge. After all, this subjective nature was dependent on their being identified with the unity of consciousness, *qua* condition of synthesis, and since one is no longer justified in conceiving of the conditions of synthesis as involving the unity of consciousness, one is no longer justified in conceiving of the categories as subjective conditions either. Perhaps it is possible to come up with an account of the categories as conditions for generating the unity of consciousness in relation to an object, without having to think of the categories themselves in terms of the unity of consciousness. It is difficult to say, of course, what such an account would look like, and certainly the task would be external to interpreting the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nevertheless, supposing that the argument of this thesis is correct, it follows that the problem which generates the suggestion of such an undertaking is internal to the *Critique*. And this should be acknowledged.

But though I advocate the view that Hegel can be read as giving a plausible interpretation of the doctrine of apperception, I do not hold the same to apply to his overall interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction. This is because, on the present

interpretation, Hegel cannot be understood as providing a coherent account of the Deduction as a whole. His fundamental mistake appears to be the identification of the synthetic unity of apperception with what Kant calls the productive imagination (Hegel, 1977: 73).²⁷ This identification seems to stem from an insensitivity to the overall structure of the Deduction. In the second part of the Deduction, Kant proceeds to connect the synthetic unity of apperception to the forms of sensibility, in order to allow for a connection between the categories and the objects of experience. There, the productive imagination plays the role of such a connecting element. Specifically, Kant's argument is that since space and time are *a priori* represented as unities that contain a manifold, there must be a special synthesis which allows the subject to represent them in that way, and this *transcendental synthesis of the imagination* is carried out by the productive imagination (B150-2). Moreover, this synthesis functions under the guidance of the synthetic unity of apperception or the categories (B152). From Hegel's point of view, the problem is that at this point Kant has already fixed his conception of the synthetic unity of the *first part* of the Deduction as a purely 'intellectual' synthesis, that is, as pertaining purely to the functioning of the understanding (B151). For this reason, the synthetic unity of apperception, in the sense in which it has been interpreted in this thesis, cannot simply be identified with the productive imagination.

On the other hand, the fact that Kant apparently decides to run with the analytic account cannot be used as justification for disregarding the ambiguity in the original presentation of the doctrine of apperception. On the contrary, Hegel's views regarding the synthetic dimension of that doctrine are justified. Hegel is mistaken, however, to the extent that he applies the argument regarding the identity of subject and object, in the precise sense implied by the synthetic unity of apperception, to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination in an apparently analogous manner. Hegel does not realise that the ambiguity necessary for such a move is no longer there in Kant's argument itself. In contrast, he seems to think that, since the transcendental synthesis makes possible the representation of a spatiotemporal world for the self-conscious subject, it is possible to conceive of that transcendental synthesis, again, as an identity of subject and

²⁷ Hegel (1977: 73): "[W]e must not take the faculty of [productive] imagination as the middle term that gets inserted between an existing absolute subject and an absolute existing world. The productive imagination must rather be recognized as what is primary and original, as that out of which the subjective Ego and the objective world first sunder themselves into the necessarily bipartite appearance and product [...]. This power of imagination is the original two-sided identity."

object. But that move is clearly ruled out by the disappearance of the crucial ambiguity from Kant's own argument. The problem with extending Hegel's interpretation to the rest of the Deduction is, then, that the latter's structure, as analysed by Allison, makes evident the fact that Kant chooses to disregard the original ambiguity in favour of an analytic account. As a result, the unity of the subject must always be presupposed as a condition of synthesis, when it comes to interpreting the overall argument of the Deduction.

6. Conclusion

The central problem regarding the conception of the unity of consciousness presented in the doctrine of apperception can be put in the following way. On the one hand, the subject's unity of consciousness is something that seemingly must be presupposed as a condition of synthesis. That is, in order for there to be consciousness by a single subject of a unified object, it seems that the consciousness, where the manifold contained in that unified object is combined, must be a unified consciousness. On the other hand, there is no representation of the subject's unity of consciousness without synthesis. That is, to represent consciousness as unified, its representation (the "I think") must be produced through a relation of consciousness to a manifold; or, in other words, through synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. But if this is correct, then it appears that there is no justification for assuming the subject's unity of consciousness to be a condition of synthesis. And this suggests that synthesis and consciousness of synthesis should be conceived of as conditions of that unity of consciousness itself.

Allison's model view of apperception entails that the subject's unity of consciousness is a condition of synthesis, just as synthesis and consciousness of synthesis are conditions of the representation of that unity of consciousness. This follows from the analyticity of Allison's interpretation. On the model view, synthesis and consciousness of synthesis must be thought of as conditions of the representation of the subject's unity of consciousness, since the thought of the identity of apperception analytically contains the thought of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis. On the model view, then, one is forced to conceive of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis in conjunction with the subject's unity of consciousness. In contrast, on Hegel's interpretation, there is no justification for conceiving of the consciousness involved in synthesis as a unified one.

In Hegel's terms, the synthetic unity of apperception implies the identity of subject and object. That is, since (1) the identity of apperception must be produced by synthesis and consciousness of synthesis, and (2) only the identity of apperception can provide the basis for the distinction of subject and object, it follows that (3) there is no justification for applying the distinction of subject and object to the activity of synthesis and consciousness of it.

In this thesis, I have argued that the two aforementioned dimensions of apperception, as portrayed by Allison and Hegel, respectively, are both inherent to the doctrine of apperception; or in other words, the doctrine of apperception is inherently ambiguous. This ambiguity is evidenced by, first, Kant's ambiguous distinction between the "I think" and original apperception, and second, his ambiguous conception of the conditions of the identity of apperception, as conditions of both the *representation* of that identity as well as of the identity *itself*. Given the analysis of these ambiguities, it is possible to formulate an answer to the research question I have examined, i.e. the question: to what extent and how can the doctrine of apperception be interpreted as analytic, and to what extent and how can it be interpreted as synthetic? First, the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as analytic to the extent that it contains sufficient material for an analytic model of cognition, and this model is consistent with the overall structure of the argument of the Deduction. On such an analytic account, the conditions of the identity of apperception are analytically derived from the thought of the unity of the subject's self-consciousness in relation to a manifold of intuition.

Second, the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as synthetic to the extent that the analytic model is insufficient in accounting for all of Kant's claims, some of which seem to involve the assertion of conditions of the identity of apperception *itself*, as opposed to its mere representation. In such cases, one should opt for a synthetic account, since otherwise one risks begging the question by assuming all of Kant's claims to fit the analytic model. In this thesis, I have provided an answer to the question of how the doctrine of apperception can be interpreted as synthetic on the basis of Hegel's interpretation. The answer is that one should consider the process of synthesis and consciousness of synthesis as *producing* the identity of apperception. Crucially, on Hegel's interpretation, consciousness of synthesis is not a consciousness from the subject's part. Rather, it is a condition of the very distinction of subject and object, which is made possible by the production of the identity of apperception in relation to a

manifold. I have suggested that this process is what Kant calls “**original apperception**”, that is, the ‘becoming-self-conscious’ or ‘becoming-identical’ of consciousness, which finally produces the “I think”.

If an interpretation of the doctrine of apperception is to be as accurate as possible, that interpretation must include accounts of both the analytic and the synthetic dimensions of the doctrine. Furthermore, the interpretation should include an attempt at an explanation for why both dimensions are present in §16. I have argued that the synthetic account explains how it can be the case that the analytic account is itself possible. That is, the process through which consciousness becomes unified, by acquiring its identity in relation to a manifold of representations, is a necessary condition of the state of affairs in which there is an identity of apperception in relation to the manifold, such that this identity can then be analysed.

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