UC Riverside
UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title
Art in Perception: Making Perception Aesthetic Again

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0qt7g5t7

Author
Matherne, Samantha Marie

Publication Date
2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Art in Perception: Making Perception Aesthetic Again

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Philosophy

by

Samantha Marie Matherne

June 2013

Dissertation Committee:
- Dr. Pierre Keller, Chairperson
- Dr. Andrews Reath
- Dr. Martin Schwab
- Dr. Charles Siewert
- Dr. Mark Wrathall

Copyright by
Samantha Marie Matherne
2013

The Dissertation of Samantha Marie Matherne is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgments

It seems appropriate to begin with the beginning. For me, this means thanking the person who most shaped my first years as a graduate student, the ever presently missed Paul Hoffman. From Paul, I learned what it is to do the history of philosophy. His patient attention, kind encouragement, and sharp eye shepherded me from the start He was and still is the model I aspire to.

I am also deeply grateful to the members of my committee. First and foremost my thanks extend to Pierre Keller for his unfailing support and systematic mind. His hours of tutelage and conversation ranging over the 'philosophers H-K', amongst so many others taught me to respect and pursue the historical unfolding of ideas. This project is, in many ways, the embodiment of that lesson. While I am indebted to Pierre for our years-long dialogue about Kant, I am also grateful to Andy Reath for revealing to me the 'other' side of Kant. Just when I thought I knew Kant, Andy's courses and conversations brought to light the 'proper self' I had been neglecting. This is in addition to his subtle comments on this work, which undoubtedly improved it. Meanwhile, springing into the 20th century, the second half of my dissertation is indebted to my engagement with Mark Wrathall and Charles Siewert. I was very fortunate that Mark joined the department my second year. He offered me a new and challenging way to look at Heidegger, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty. Without the knowledge of Phenomenology I gained from his courses, translation groups, and constant feedback, this project would not have been possible. This project would also not have been possible had Charles not offered that fated course in the *Phenomenology of Perception* the fall of my second year. This course awoke me from my Kantian slumber and made me want to pursue Merleau-Ponty. Charles's continued commitment to my project

and comments from his unique perspective have taught me a great deal about how to do philosophy, not just its history. Finally, I would like to thank Martin Schwab for his inevitably insightful conversations on the wide-range of issues, from perception to aesthetics, from Kant to Phenomenology, that most excite me.

Thanks are also in order for those who are not on my committee, but who have nevertheless made this work so much better than it would have otherwise been. I am grateful to the UCR Center for Ideas and Society and to Georgia Warnke for providing me with a year of unencumbered support. Thank you to Michael Goerger, Joe Cressotti, John Ramsey, Ben Mitchell-Yellin, among others for your willingness to trudge through the earliest drafts and for your invaluable feedback. Special thanks are in order for Courtney Morris, who both as a Kantian and as a friend, has helped me through. I am also especially grateful to Justin Coates and Clinton Tolley for having read not only every page that follows, but also the hundreds they so kindly suggested be 'rethought'. Without this engagement, I would not have thrived.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have given me a 'respite' from all this, my dear friends Emmanuelle Humblet, Crista Farrell, Christine Catania, and Mark Leher; my sister Aimee Baker; and my parents.

The text of this dissertation is, in part, a reprint of material as it appears in the *Kantian Review* (Matherne (forthcoming)) (Chapter Three) and the *British Journal of Aesthetics* (Matherne (2013)) (Chapter Four).

For my parents,

without whose love, support, and fine champagne

this would not be

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Art in Perception: Making Perception Aesthetic Again

by

Samantha Marie Matherne

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Philosophy
University of California, Riverside, June 2013
Dr. Pierre Keller, Chairperson

Although separated by a century and a half, the relationship between Immanuel Kant and Maurice Merleau-Ponty has more recently come into sharper focus. It is now common to read Kant and Merleau-Ponty as offering two *competing* characterizations of perceptual experience. In the present work, however, I argue that pitting Kant against Merleau-Ponty in this way leads us to overlook the important and philosophically illuminating continuity between their views of perception. In particular, I show that Kant and Merleau-Ponty share a key commitment: both regard *aesthetic experience*, including both the production and appreciation of a work of art, as an invaluable resource for understanding the nature of perceptual experience more generally. It is, in particular, reflection on the role of what Kant calls the '*productive imagination*' and its *creative* and *projective* activities that both philosophers think sheds light on our more mundane perceptions. This work is, in part, an effort to clarify the development of this aesthetically inflected theory of perception from Kant's philosophy, through Neo-Kantians like Ernst Cassirer and Pierre Lachièze-Rey, and into

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. However, once we expose the development of this line of thought between Kant and Merleau-Ponty, we shall find we have reason to revise the standard interpretation of the relationship between these two figures. As I argue in the first part of this work, rather than thinking of Kant as an anti-phenomenological 'intellectualist', we find he is, as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty took him to be, a forefather of the phenomenological movement of the 20th century. So too, as I argue in the second part of this work, instead of reading Merleau-Ponty as anti-Kantian, we should recognize that he self-consciously appropriated aspects of Kant's philosophy of perception and is, to this extent, a Neo-Kantian. Ultimately, what this revised understanding of Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's theories of perception offers us is a unified, subtle, and promising theory of perceptual experience that places the productive imagination and aesthetic experience at its very heart.

Table of Contents

Introduction……………………………………………… ……………………...1

Chapter 1: The Basic Framework of Kant's Theory of Perceptual Experience

Part 1: Sensibility and Understanding……………………………………………………5

Chapter 2: The Basic Framework of Kant's Theory of Perceptual Experience

Part 2: Images and the Imagination……………………………………………...…20

Chapter 3: Kant and the 'Hidden Art' of Perception……………………………...35

Chapter 4: Kant and the Aesthetic Enrichment of Perception……………………………66

Chapter 5: From Kant to Merleau-Ponty…………………………………………………97

Chapter 6: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Productive Imagination…………..104

Chapter 7: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Schematism………………………137

Chapter 8: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Aesthetic Ideas…………………...162

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………...194

Bibliography…………………...……………………………………………………….202

Introduction

Although separated by a century and a half, the relationship between Immanuel Kant and Maurice Merleau-Ponty has more recently come into sharper focus. It is now common to read Kant and Merleau-Ponty as offering two alternative characterizations of perceptual experience. This trend is illustrated especially clearly in the recent debates between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell.[1] Both Dreyfus and McDowell treat Kant as an 'intellectualist', as someone who thinks that our conceptual capacities thoroughly shape our perceptual experience. As McDowell describes this position: "our perceptual relation to the world is conceptual all the way out to the world's impacts on our receptive capacities."[2] Meanwhile, both Dreyfus and McDowell regard Merleau-Ponty as a challenger who urges against Kant that our perception involves, as Dreyfus puts it, "nonconceptual embodied coping skills we share with infants and animals."[3] We thus appear to be left with a choice: we can either side with Kant and the claim that "mind is pervasive in our perceptual experience"[4] or with Merleau-Ponty and the claim that, prior to mind, perception depends on "embodied coping going on on the ground floor."[5]

In the present work, I argue that pitting Kant against Merleau-Ponty in this way leads us to overlook the important and philosophically illuminating continuity between their views of perception. More specifically, I show that Kant and Merleau-Ponty share a key commitment: both regard *aesthetic experience*, including both the production and appreciation of a work of art, as an invaluable resource for understanding the nature of perceptual experience more generally. It is, in particular, reflection on the role of what Kant calls the '*productive imagination*' and its *creative* and *projective* activities that they think promises to shed light on our more mundane perceptions. For this reason, Kant and Merleau-Ponty both appeal to aesthetic experience in their accounts of perception, in an effort to parlay our familiarity with imaginative activities in the aesthetic context into a recognition of their pervasiveness in our perceptual experience as such.

---

[1] See Dreyfus (2006), McDowell (2007a), McDowell (2007b)

[2] McDowell (2007a): 338

[3] Dreyfus (2006): 43

[4] McDowell (2007a): 339

[5] Dreyfus (2006): 43

Not only does the present work bring to light these often overlooked aesthetic and imaginative elements in Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's theories of perception, but also it reveals that the standard interpretation of the relationship between these two figures should be revised. Rather than thinking of Kant as an anti-phenomenological intellectualist, we find he is, as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty took him to be, a forefather of the phenomenological movement of the 20th century. So too instead of reading Merleau-Ponty as anti-Kantian, we should recognize that he self-consciously appropriated aspects of Kant's philosophy of perception and is, to this extent, a Neo-Kantian. Moreover, with this revised understanding of Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's theories of perception in place, we find that this tradition, in fact, offers us a more unified, subtle, and promising theory of perceptual experience that places the productive imagination and aesthetic experience at its very heart.

In the first part of this work, my aim is to elucidate the aesthetic underpinnings of Kant's theory of perception by highlighting the role the productive imagination plays in it. While most commentators acknowledge that the imagination has some function in Kant's theory of perception, specifying this function is typically left to one side in favor of an emphasis on Kant's discussion in the *Critique of Pure Reason* of the distinction between 'sensibility' and 'understanding'.[6] However, I argue that we can fully appreciate Kant's theory of perception only if we *also* take into account his analysis of the imagination's contribution. Indeed, I show that this is a topic that concerns Kant not only in the first *Critique*, but also one he takes up again in the *Critique of Judgment*. In which case, it is only by being attentive to the aesthetic contribution of the imagination in perception that we can understand Kant's mature account of perception, i.e., the one that develops over the critical period. In order to lay out my interpretation of Kant, I begin in Chapters One and Two by presenting the basic framework of Kant's theory of perception. In Chapter One, I consider the contribution he takes sensibility and understanding to make to perception. Meanwhile in Chapter Two, I examine his claim that perception also depends on the imagination's formation of images. In Chapters Three and Four, I argue that on Kant's view the imagination is able to form the sort of images required for perceptual experience only by engaging in aesthetic activities. In Chapter Three, I demonstrate his commitment to this claim in the so-called Schematism chapter of the first *Critique*, where he claims the imagination's 'hidden art in the depths of the human soul' makes images possible. In Chapter Four, I turn to the third *Critique* and show that Kant's analysis of *aesthetic ideas* and *genius* augments his earlier account of perception by pointing towards the ways in which the imagination enriches what we perceive.

In the second part, I explore how Merleau-Ponty's influential account of perception is best understood as an elaboration of Kant's thesis regarding the imagination's aesthetic role in perception. Although Merleau-Ponty is certainly critical of the 'intellectualist' aspects of Kant's philosophy, I demonstrate how his exposure to the interpretations of Kant offered by the Neo-Kantians Ernst Cassirer and Pierre Lachièze-Rey position him to appreciate and, in fact, appropriate what he sees as the proto-phenomenological aspects of Kant's philosophy. In Chapter Five, I discuss Merleau-Ponty's attitudes, both critical and laudatory, towards Kant's philosophy more generally. Then in Chapter Six, I argue that Merleau-Ponty's engagement with Cassirer led him to appropriate Kant's theory of the productive imagination both in his theory of pathology and human existence more generally. In Chapter Seven, I claim that a cornerstone of Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception, viz., the 'body schema', is best read as a development of Kant's theory of schematism, a development he was poised to make thanks to the influence of Lachièze-Rey. Finally, in Chapter Eight I suggest that the third *Critique* also influenced Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception insofar as he acknowledges that something like Kant's aesthetic ideas and genius must be at work in it. While Merleau-Ponty surely goes beyond Kant by casting his views explicitly in embodied terms, in the Conclusion I argue that this should be viewed as a development within Kantianism, rather than a refutation of it.

---

[6] See, e.g., McDowell (1994), (2009)

Chapter One: The Basic Framework of Kant's Theory of Perceptual Experience
Part 1: Sensibility and Understanding

§1. Introduction

Before we consider the aesthetic underpinnings of Kant's theory of perceptual experience, in the following two chapters I shall present what I take to be the basic framework of this theory.[7] First and foremost, however, a word is in order about how I am using the term 'perceptual experience' in this discussion of Kant, especially since Kant's own use of the term 'perception' is somewhat ambiguous. To orient us, I want to consider what Kant says about perception in the so-called *Stufenleiter*.[8] In this passage of the first *Critique*, Kant outlines the different species that fall under the genus of 'representation' [*Vorstellung*]. He claims that one of these species is a '*perceptio*', which he defines as a "representation with consciousness[*mit Bewußtsein*]."[9] He then delineates two sub-species of *perceptio*: subjective and objective perceptions. The former, or what he labels '*Perzeption*', are perceptual representations that refer to a modification of subject's own state, e.g., feeling cold.[10] The latter, or what he labels 'objective perception' [*objective Perzeption*] or 'cognition' [*Erkenntnis*], are perceptual representations that refer to an object, e.g., a champagne flute.[11] He continues by describing two types of cognition: intuitions and concepts (which we shall discuss more below). However, earlier in the *Critique*, he suggests that there is a third type of cognition, one that involves the combination of an intuition and a concept:

---

[7] As is standard practice, citations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the pagination of Kant's first ("A") and/or second ("B") editions. All other passages from Kant's works are cited by the volume and page number in the standard edition of Kant's works, *Kants gesammelte Schriften.* Unless otherwise noted, translations are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant.* The references are preceded by the following abbreviations: **Tr**: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics.* **KrV**: *Critique of Pure Reason.* **Gr**: *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals.* **KpV**: *Critique of Practical Reason.* **EE**: 'First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment' in *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* **KU**: *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* **Anthro**: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Pointy of View.* **MS**: *Metaphysics of Morals***.** **JL**: *Jäsche Logic* in *Lectures on Logic.* **LL**: *Lectures on Logic.* **LM**: *Lectures on Metaphysics.* **OP**: *Opus Postumum.* **R**: *Reflexionen.*

[8] A320/B376-7

[9] A320/B376

[10] A320/B376

> Intuition and concepts therefore constitute the elements of all our cognition, so that neither concepts without intuitions corresponding to them in some way nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition.[12]

Although a full defense of this claim will have to wait for subsequent chapters, I shall understand 'perceptual experience' to be the sort of experience that involves cognitions/objective perceptions of this third sort, i.e., perceptions of objects that involve both intuitions and concepts.[13] And in the following two chapters, I shall examine the basic Kantian framework for this sort of perceptual experience.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the two capacities that have received, perhaps, the most attention in Kant's analysis of perceptual experience: sensibility and understanding.[14] In §2, I discuss the distinction Kant draws between these two capacities. And, in §3, I consider one strategy (the 'intellectualist' one) for bringing these two capacities together in perceptual experience. I, however, argue that we cannot have a proper account of Kant's theory of perception if we look to understanding and sensibility alone; rather, we need to take into account the way the imagination mediates between these two capacities (a topic I shall develop more thoroughly in the following chapters).

---

[11] A320/B376-7

[12] A50/B74. These three sub-species of cognition do not, in fact, exhaust this category: in the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant suggests that cognition for human beings can come in seven degrees: to represent something (sich etwas *vorstellen*), to represent something with consciousness or to perceive (*wahrnehmen*, *percipere*), to be acquainted with (*kennen, noscere*), to 'cognize' (*erkennen*, *cogniscere*), to understand (*verstehen*, *intelligere*), to have insight into through reason (*einsehen, perspicere*), and to comprehend something through reason to a degree sufficient for our purposes (*begreifen*, *comprehendere*) (JL 9: 64-65).

[13] My full defense of why we should think of perceptual experience in this way will have to wait for my discussion of images in Chapter 2.

[14] See, e.g., McDowell (1994), (2009)

§2. Sensibility and understanding

Kant's discussion of sensibility and understanding pivots around two key claims, which though not easy to reconcile do illuminate the nature of these capacities and the role they play in perceptual experience. On the one hand, Kant argues that sensibility and understanding are *distinct*: they are separate capacities with different natures and different functions. As he says at the outset of the Transcendental Logic, "one must not mix up their roles, rather one has great cause to separate them carefully from each other and distinguish them."[15] On the other hand, Kant is committed to the view that in order for us to perceive anything at all, sensibility and understanding must work *together*: "Only from their unification can cognition arise."[16] Before we can consider how they come together, I want to offer a full picture of their distinctness.

Kant has, at least, three different ways of articulating the distinction between sensibility and understanding: first, in terms of receptivity and spontaneity, second, as relating immediately or mediately to objects, and, third, as involving singular or general representations, i.e., intuitions or concepts. To start, Kant claims that sensibility involves receptivity, whereas understanding involves spontaneity.[17] Here is a fairly representative passage,

---

[15] A52/B76

[16] A51/B76

> If we will call the **receptivity** of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way **sensibility**, then on the contrary the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the **spontaneity** of cognition, is the **understanding**.[18]

According to Kant, sensibility is our receptive capacity, through which we are affected or causally impinged upon by objects around us.[19] He claims that the function of this capacity is to 'give us objects': sensibility presents objects to us, which our cognitions are about.[20] By contrast, Kant argues that understanding is a 'spontaneous' capacity whose function is to 'think' objects.[21] His idea is that understanding is active: it takes the 'raw material' provided by sensibility, and interprets or 'determines' it through synthetic activities.[22] These synthetic activities are spontaneous insofar as they involve our 'self activity' and self-determination.[23]

In addition to distinguishing sensibility and understanding in terms of receptivity and spontaneity, Kant also claims that sensibility is the faculty of intuitions and understanding is the faculty of concepts.[24] For the purposes of this discussion, I shall treat sensibility and understanding as basic capacities, and intuitions and concepts as the representations involved in the enactment of these capacities.[25] Generally, when sensibility is enacted, i.e., when we are affected by objects, the result is a singular representation, which is immediately relates to an object.[26] Kant calls this representation an intuition. Similarly, when understanding is enacted, i.e., when we make a judgment about an object, the judgment involves general representations, which he labels as concepts.[27] These concepts, Kant argues, are mediately related to an object, because they must be routed through intuition. So, for Kant, sensibility is the faculty of intuitions, or singular representations, which are immediately related to an object, while understanding is the faculty of concepts, or general representations, which are mediately related to objects. From this arises two additional ways of distinguishing sensibility from understanding.

---

[17] A50-51/B74-75, A126

[18] A51/B75

[19] Kant describes sensibility in terms of passivity in Anthro §7.

[20] See also A15/B29, A19/B33, A50/B74, A286/B342

[21] A15/B29, A19/B33, A50/B74

[22] B1

[23] B130, B158

[24] Kant labels this the 'logical distinction' in the Jäsche Logic (JL 9: 36).

To start, we can distinguish sensibility and understanding in terms of their relation to an object: whereas sensibility immediately relates to objects, understanding mediately relates to them.[28] At the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant describes intuition as follows,

---

[25] I take Kant's claim that "Concepts are therefore grounded on the spontaneity of thinking, as sensible intuitions are grounded on the receptivity of impressions" to indicate that this sort of relationship holds between sensibility and intuitions, and understanding and concepts (A68/B93). That being said, there is ambiguity in Kant's description of 'intuition': he uses it to refer to a particular representation, the act of intuiting, the object we intuit, and a capacity (see Paton (1936, VI): 94ff, Falkenstein (1995), Allison (2004): 82). For the sake of this chapter, I will use 'intuition' to refer to particular representations, e.g. the representation of a particular champagne flute in front of me right here, right now.

[26] There is a debate over whether the 'immediacy' criterion or 'singularity' criterion is primary. For the argument that singularity is primary, see Hintikka (1969a), (1969b). For criticism of this view, see Parsons (1969), Wilson (1975), Falkenstein (1995), and Allison (2004).

[27] A68-69/B93-94

[28] A19/B33, A68-69/B93-94, A320/B377

> In whatever way and through whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, that through which it relates immediately to them, and at which all thought as a means is directed as an end, is intuition.[29]

The definition of intuition Kant offers us here is of a representation, which relates 'immediately' to objects: as soon as we are affected by an object, we are related to it. Nothing further needs to be done. But the situation is different with understanding:

> Since no representation pertains to the object immediately except intuition alone, a concept is thus never immediately related to an object, but is always related to some other representation of it (where that be an intuition or itself already a concept). Judgment is therefore the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it.[30]

While there is much that can be said about this passage, I want to focus on Kant's claims that judgment is 'mediate cognition' or a 'representation of a representation', and that concepts do not immediately relate to objects. According to Kant, a judgment is not something that is immediately related to an object; rather, in order for it to relate to an object, it must first relate to an intuition, and through the medium of intuition, it becomes related to an object. And, since Kant thinks that concepts are 'predicates' of possible judgments, he is committed to the view that concepts are also only mediately related to objects.[31] Another way to describe this mediacy is in terms of discursivity: our understanding is discursive, because judgments and concepts are only mediately related to objects through intuition.[32] So, for Kant, another important way to distinguish sensibility and understanding is to see that sensibility, through intuitions, is immediately related to objects, while understanding, through concepts, is mediately related to them.

---

[29] A19/B33. See also, A109, A320/B377

[30] A68/B93

[31] A69/B94

[32] A230/B282: human beings have a "discursive form of thinking, or that of cognition through concepts". See also Kant's claim in the Aesthetic that space and time are not 'general or discursive' concepts (A25/B39, A30/B47). Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (KPM) and a *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's*

And, finally, Kant also draws a distinction between sensibility and understanding in terms of the singularity or generality of their representations: where sensibility involves intuitions that are singular representations, understanding involves concepts that are general representations. Kant makes this claim in the *Stufenleiter*: "[intuition] is immediately related to the object and is singular; [a concept] is mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things."[33] To say that an intuition is a singular representation means that it represents a particular individual.[34] As Sellars puts it, intuitions involve a representation of a singular, particular 'this such'.[35] For example, my intuition of a champagne flute, involves the representation of this particular flute, on the table in front of me right now. Concepts, on the other hand, are general representations. They represent a 'mark', a characteristic or

---

Critique of Pure Reason (PIK) and Allison (2004) offer two different glosses on discursivity. Allison emphasizes that our cognition is discursive, whereas Heidegger emphasizes that the understanding is discursive. Allison's 'discursivity thesis' states that "human cognition (as discursive) requires both concepts and (sensible) intuitions" (xiv, see also 12-16). What Allison emphasizes is that, as a whole, human cognition, in contrast to God's cognition, requires both concepts and sensible intuitions (27-28). Meanwhile, Heidegger tends to emphasize the discursivity of understanding. He highlights the fact that understanding must process or 'run-through' the information given to it by sensibility (PIK 118). He describes the discursive nature of intuition, using the example of a judgment about a piece of chalk, as follows in his Kant lectures: "Instead of an immediate representation, intuition of a *definite* solid matter, for example this piece of chalk, a higher representation will be used when I judge: "This piece of chalk is a solid matter."… In order to think this definite chalk-thing as solid matter, we move beyond what is immediately intuited to the representation "solid matter," in order to come back from this representation to the chalk-thing—in such a way as to grasp this chalk-thing in terms of the representation "solid matter." In thinking we necessarily move away from the immediate representation, this intuition, right through the determining representation back to the thing. Thus true to its inner core, thinking proceeds in a *roundabout way*; thinking moves through the determining representation; thinking is a *running through*—is *discursive*" (117-118).

[33] A320/B377

[34] See Kant's claim in the Aesthetic to the effect that space and time are intuitions and not general concepts because they are "essentially single [*einig*]", and that all parts of space or time are only "parts of one and the same unique" space or time (A25/B39).

[35] Sellars (1967): 5

property, which many things share in common. Thus, the concept of a champagne flute is general, because it is something that many particulars share.

Taking these three ways of characterizing the distinction between sensibility and understanding together, the picture that emerges is this: sensibility and understanding represent two capacities we have as human beings that contribute to perception in different ways. Through sensibility, our receptive capacity, we are affected by objects. This affection involves intuitions, or singular representations, which are immediately related to objects. For example, sensibility would be responsible for a champagne flute impinging upon me, and for producing an intuition through which I am immediately related to that flute. Meanwhile, our understanding is responsible for thinking about and judging the thing in front of us to instance the concept 'champagne flute'. Thus, it relates, by means of the concept 'champagne flute' to what we intuit.

§3. How to relate sensibility and understanding

Even though Kant thinks sensibility and understanding are distinct, nevertheless, in order for cognition to occur, they must relate to one another:

> Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind [sensibility and understanding]… Intuition and concepts therefore constitute the elements of all our cognition, so that neither concepts without intuition corresponding to them in some way nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition.[36]

And, as he goes on to famously argue, if intuition is not involved in cognition, then our thoughts are 'empty' and 'without content'.[37] Recall that the function of sensibility is to give us objects, and it is these objects that lend content to thought. So, unless intuition presents us with objects, our thoughts are without content in this sense.[38] But Kant claims that intuitions alone cannot give rise to cognition, because if they do not involve concepts, then they are 'blind'.[39] For Kant, understanding takes the raw material from sensibility and interprets it according to concepts, and on the basis of this, we are able to recognize the objects in front of us *as* something particular. If we cannot recognize an object as exemplifying a certain concept, then we remain in the dark.

---

[36] A51/B74

[37] A51/B75

That sensibility and understanding relate to one another in cognition is not controversial; however, *how* they relate to one another is. As we have seen, Kant is committed to two, not easily reconcilable claims: sensibility and understanding are distinct, and, yet, we can explain a certain kind of cognition only if we take into account how both capacities work together. These claims leave interpreters with a certain challenge: how do we render the distinction between sensibility and understanding in such a way that does not end up precluding the possibility of their relationship? If we articulate the distinction in too stark of terms, it would seem impossible for sensibility and understanding to ever come together because there would be no basis for their relationship. If, however, we do not draw a sharp distinction, we may begin to doubt whether they are distinct after all.

a. The intellectualist approach

One possible route to reconciliation is through, what we could call, an 'intellectualist interpretation' of sensibility and understanding. On this view, which dominated the Neo-

---

[38] Kant elaborates on this point in his critique of Leibniz in the Amphiboly (A260-289/B316-346).

[39] A51/B75

Kantian tradition and has taken new form in the work of McDowell, sensibility and understanding are not wholly distinct from one another; rather, sensibility is essentially dependent on understanding.[40] And, this dependence, in turn, becomes the key to understanding how these capacities relate to one another.

Although we might have thought, given the distinctions Kant draws, that sensibility and understanding are independent from one another, an advocate of the intellectualist interpretation maintains that this distinction is not as clear cut as we might have thought. As Sellars aptly puts it,

> there is little which is 'clear cut' about the way in which the distinction is drawn. … [Sensibility and intuition] is introduced under the heading 'receptivity', [understanding and concept] under that of 'spontaneity'. Alas! this neatness soon falls victim to the exigencies of the argument. 'Intuition' turns out to be Janus-faced, and the understanding to haves it own mode of receptivity.[41]

Sellars is driving at the fact that the farther you get into the *Critique*, the more it becomes apparent that sensibility cannot be entirely receptive, nor can understanding be entirely spontaneous. In order for intuition to be spatially and temporally ordered, and in order for there to be a manifold of intuition, sensibility must involve a degree of spontaneity.[42] Similarly, if the understanding is ever to generate thoughts or judgments *about* objects, it must be somehow ‘receptive’ to the object which intuition gives to it.[43] If, however, the distinction between sensibility and understanding begins to break down in these ways, we may well be led to doubt that the ‘isolation’ of the two capacities in the Aesthetic and Analytic reflects Kant’s considered view. In the end, it has been suggested that the ‘isolation’ of these two capacities is only an artifice of the text, and that Kant conceives of these two capacities as interdependent.

---

[40] The term 'intellectualist' can be used either in a laudatory or condemnatory way. Whereas McDowell appears to embrace this label, Kant, Merleau-Ponty, and Dreyfus all use it in a negative way. See Dreyfus (2006); McDowell (2007a); McDowell (2007b), and Merleau-Ponty PhP.

[41] Sellars (1967): 2. Cassirer makes similar claims in *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, "The critique of knowledge shows that mere sensations, i.e., a sensory quality without form or *order*, is not a fact of immediate experience but a product of abstraction" (PSF v1: 198), "If perception is to signify any thing at all—if it is to be perception for an ego and perception of something—it must possess certain theoretical criteria of validity [*Geltungscharakteren Teil*]. And from now on it appears to be one of the specific tasks of the critique of knowledge to lay bare those criteria which constitute the form of perceptive consciousness as such" (PSF v3: 9). Or, as Goethe puts this point, as quoted by Cassirer, "all "sensuous" seeing is already a "seeing with the eyes of the spirit." (PSF v3: 134).

[42] On the synthesis of apprehension, see A97.

These considerations have given rise to the intellectualist interpretation according to which sensibility is, in fact, dependent upon and shaped by the understanding. The intellectualists offer a number of arguments in support of their view. First, Kant’s discussion of synthesis in the Transcendental Deduction appears to commit him to their view. In the A Deduction, he argues that intuition involves the ‘synthesis of apprehension’,[44] but if we take this claim together with his claim that synthesis requires understanding,[45] then it would appear that intuition depends on understanding for its synthesis.[46] Now, we might be tempted to respond that while the synthesis of apprehension must be involved in all empirical intuition, this is not enough to show that sensibility depends on understanding, because space and time, the *a priori* forms of intuition, are independent from understanding. But the Neo-Kantians argue, leaning heavily on the footnote to §26 in the B-Deduction, that space and time are dependent on understanding as well.[47] In that footnote, Kant appears to suggest that the view of sensibility he offered in the Aesthetic was incomplete, and that we need to supplement the earlier account with the idea that the formal intuition of space and time presupposes a synthesis and that this formal intuition stands under the categories.[48]

---

[43] See the discussion in §3 about Sellars’s view of ‘relative spontaneity’

[44] A97

[45] B130

[46] See also A77/B102

In another vein, McDowell has offered a transcendental argument for sensibility's dependence on understanding. He argues that we cannot make sense of intuition at all unless we take our conceptual capacities into account.[49] He argues that we must take conceptual capacities into account when explaining intuition because all intuitions must have content or a subject matter of the form 'this such', e.g. 'this champagne flute'.[50] Indeed, having content is constitutive for any intuition as such. However, he argues, we cannot account for this content without acknowledging that intuition is shaped by our conceptual capacities because concepts account for how we fill out the 'such' element in every intuition, e.g. the concept of a champagne flute must be involved in the content 'this champagne flute'. All told, Kant's discussions of synthesis and formal intuition in the B-Deduction, as well as McDowell's transcendental argument have led many to be swayed by the intellectualist interpretation.

---

[47] "the form of intuition merely gives the manifold, but the formal intuition gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, thought to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible (B160-161)". Natorp, for one, argues that this footnote ought to be read as "a correction to the presentation of the transcendental aesthetic" (*Die logischen Grundlagen der exaten Wissenschaften*: 276. Cited in Heidegger PIK: 91).

[48] B1661

[49] McDowell argues that understanding and intuition both involve the exercise of conceptual capacities; the only difference is that in understanding, we exercise those capacities voluntarily, while in intuition, we exercise them involuntarily, as the result of the world impinging upon us (2009):12-13. See also (2009): 35, 36.

[50] Here, McDowell is following Sellars (see McDowell (2009): 24, 32).

In spite of these arguments in favor of the intellectualist interpretation, it does not do justice to several of Kant's views.[51] To start, Kant makes it clear that sensibility and understanding are "two fundamental sources in the mind" and claims that neither one should "be preferred to the other."[52] And, in order to give each capacity its due, Kant considers them in isolation from one another in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Logic. Indeed, he considers sensibility and understanding to be two 'elements' of cognition and describes the Aesthetic and Analytic as a science of each element:

> I call a science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility the **transcendental aesthetic**. There must therefore be such a science, which constitutes the first part of the transcendental doctrine of elements, in contrast to that which contains the principles of pure thinking, and is named transcendental logic.[53]

Furthermore, it is difficult to square the intellectualist interpretation with Kant's avowed rejection of Leibniz's "intellectualism".[54] In the Amphiboly, Kant argues at length that Leibniz's philosophy is deeply flawed because it fails to acknowledge the original contribution sensibility makes to experience.[55] This ought to give us pause over the intellectualist interpretation.

---

[51] See Heidegger PIK: 57

[52] A50/B74-A51/B75

[53] A21/B35-36

[54] A267/B323

[55] A271/B327

b. The mediation of imagination

However, there are further reasons to be wary of the intellectualist interpretation. Insofar as the intellectualist interpretation is meant to bridge the gap between sensibility and understanding, we could fault it for complicating matters more than need be.[56] It seems that Kant himself offers us a solution to how this gap is bridged that does not violate the autonomy of sensibility: his theory of the imagination.[57]

According to Kant, our imaginative capacities occupy a middle ground between sensibility and understanding. On the one hand, the imagination is connected to sensibility because it involves intuitions: whereas sensibility involves intuitions of objects that are directly present to us, Kant says "***Imagination*** is the faculty for representing an object even **without its presence** in intuition."[58] On the other hand, the imagination is not wholly receptive, as sensibility is; according to Kant, the imagination engages in "spontaneous" activity,[59] e.g., figurative synthesis (in the B Deduction), and the synthesis of apprehension and reproduction (in the A Deduction).[60] Given this dual nature of the imagination, it is poised to play the needed mediating role between sensibility and understanding, concepts and intuition. As Kant puts it,

---

[56] I say insofar as it is meant to bridge this gap, for there may well be other motivations of the intellectualist interpretation, e.g., the Neo-Kantian motive of explaining how scientific knowledge is possible, that would make us sympathetic towards it.

[57] The view of imaginative mediation I offer below differs from the one offered by Heidegger. For Heidegger, the transcendental productive imagination, which he connects to temporality, unites sensibility and understanding because it is the 'common root' of these two capacities (KPM: 25-6, 95-8; PIK: 64). However, I am sympathetic with Henrich's (1994) argument to the effect that, for Kant, the common root is unknowable, whereas the workings of the imagination (although sometimes hidden) are knowable. For another objection, see Cassirer's (1967) argument by focusing only on temporality, Heidegger has effaced Kant's phenomenal-noumenal distinction, and, therefore, is not presenting an interpretation that does justice to Kant's view (147). Rather than privileging temporality and transcendental imagination, Cassirer argues that we must first grasp how Kant's system hinges on the phenomenal-noumenal distinction, which includes appreciating the atemporal aspects of Kant's view, and only then can we see how schematism, temporality, and imagination fit within that framework as *one* element of the phenomenal world (149).

[58] B151. See Anthro §15 (7:153) and §28 (7:167)

[59] B151

> Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination, since otherwise the former would to be sure yield appearances but no objects of empirical cognition, hence there would no experience.[61]

As this suggests and I hope to demonstrate in the following chapters, in order to understand Kant's theory of perceptual experience it is not enough to go along with the intellectualist interpretation and focus on his theory of sensibility and understanding alone. Instead, we need to examine how the imagination brings together our sensible and intellectual capacities in such a way that we are able to perceive a meaningful world around us.

---

[60] We will return to the nature of this synthesis in much more detail in Chapter Two.

[61] A124

Chapter Two: The Basic Framework of Kant's Theory of Perceptual Experience
Part 2: Images and the Imagination

§1. Introduction

As we saw in the preceding chapter, for Kant, our perceptual experience of the world involves the collaboration of three capacities: our receptive capacity, 'sensibility', and two active capacities, 'imagination' and 'understanding'. Although some commentators attempt to explain how perception is possible by looking solely at the contribution of sensibility and understanding, I suggested that we would fail to do justice to Kant's view if we do not also consider the mediating role played by the imagination. Indeed, for him, unless the imagination brings our intuitions and concepts together, we will not be able to perceive objects around us as having conceptual meaning. In other words, our thoughts would remain empty and our intuitions blind. Hence Kant's striking claim in the A Deduction, "the imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself."[62]

In this chapter, we shall discuss the role the imagination plays in Kant's basic framework of perceptual experience. In particular, we shall explore Kant's claim that perceptual experience involves the formation of images by the imagination. Below, I suggest that images are the type of representations produced when the imagination brings intuitions and concepts together. Hence, they are the type of representations necessary for perceptual experience. In order to elucidate Kant's views about images, I begin in §2 by analyzing the nature of images as holistic intuitive representations that have conceptual meaning. And, in §3, I look at the imaginative activity of synthesis through which images are formed. I conclude in §4 by looking at the implications this view of images has for Kant's theory of perceptual experience, arguing that it reveals his commitment to it being conceptual in nature.

---

[62] A120fn

§2. The Nature of Images

At the most general level, an image, for Kant, is a representation produced by the productive imagination.[63] This species of representation can, in turn, be broken down into two different sub-species: what we could call 'invented' representations and representations corresponding to external objects.[64] By an 'invented' representation, I have in mind something like a fantasy or a 'figment of the imagination', i.e., a representation that the imagination produces from within itself, which does not immediately correspond to what is perceptually present to the subject at that moment.[65] Examples of these kind of images will include any mental representations we just 'make-up', whether this is a wholly fictional entity, like a unicorn, or an entity possible but not present to us, like a bottle of Dom Perignon in front of me right now, or some mix thereof.

---

[63] See A120, A141/B181

[64] Kant makes this distinction most clearly in "Dreams of a Spirit Seer" essay (1766). Makkreel (1990): 13-15, drawing in R 330 (15: 130), has argued that the imagination is not involved in the formation of an image an object that is present to us [*Bildung*], it is only involved in instances where the object is not present to us. But I take Kant in the Critical Period to be committed to the view that the imagination is involved in image-formation even when the object is present to us. Because even when the object is present to us, it is not wholly present to us; rather, as beings who are restricted by our embodied perspective, we can only access certain aspects of an object at once, and in order to perceive an object as a whole in front of us we must reproduce aspects of the object that are no longer 'present' to us. See my discussion of the holism of images below.

[65] As Kant puts this in the "Dreams" essay, "in the usual order of things, the lines indicating the direction of the motions which accompany the image of the imagination in the brain as their material auxiliary, must intersect inside the brain, and that consequently the place, at which the image, consciously entertained by the ordinary waking person, is apprehended, is thought of as lying inside himself" (Tr 2:346). The 'mental auxiliary', or as he puts it later the '*focus imaginarius*', of 'invented' images is located inside the thinking subject.

While 'invented' representations are the ones that we normally associate with imaginative activity, Kant also uses the term 'image' to refer to a set of representations we do not normally associate with the imagination, viz., representations that reflect what we are perceiving. These images, rather than being made-up by the imagination, are the representative counterparts of the object we perceive.[66] It is this second sort of image that Kant focuses on primarily in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and, given that my over-arching concern is with Kant's theory of perception, it is this latter sort of images that will concern us here.

I would like to focus on two key features of these images. First, images are holistic representations, which reflect how a particular perceptual object appears to us over time and as extended in space. Second, I argue that these images are the representations the imagination forms when we are engaged in 'perceiving as'. That is to say, when we either implicitly or explicitly perceive something as having conceptual meaning, e.g., I see those things *as* flowers, I hear that noise *as* a middle C, the representation involved is an 'image'.

We get a sense of the holistic nature of images in Kant's Lectures on Metaphysics:

> My mind is always busy with forming [*formieren*] the image [*Bild*] of the manifold while it goes through [*durchgeht*] [it]. E.g., when I see a city, the mind then forms [*formirt*] an image of the object which it has before it while it runs through [*durchläuft*] the manifold… The mind must undertake many observations in order to form an image [*abzubilden*] of an object so that it forms an image [*abbildet*] of the object differently from each side. E.g., a city appears differently from the east than from the west. There are thus many appearances of a matter according to the various sides and points of view. The mind must make a formed image [*Abbildung*] from all these appearances by taking them all together [*zusammen nimmt*] (LM 28:235-6, translation altered).[67]

---

[66] In this case, the '*focus imaginarius*' is located "outside the thinking subject" (Tr 2:346).

[67] See Makkreel (1990): 15-19 for a discussion of the imagination in these lectures.

An image, as Kant presents it here, is something that we form by bringing together various perspectival presentations (what Husserl would call 'adumbrations') of an object into a single representation of that object. As our perception of an object unfolds over time, our manifold of intuition corresponding to that object will be replete with various appearances of the object from 'various sides and points of view', and, we form an image of that object by bringing those presentations together into a single representation.

Developing Kant's example, suppose I am visiting Paris. Over the course of my trip, I will perceive Paris in a multitude of ways, from the top of Montmartre, walking down the Champs-Élysées, sitting at cafés, etc. I form an image of Paris in my mind by bringing together these various appearances into a single representation of Paris. This cohesive representation reflects Paris as a whole, complete with the various perspectives I have enjoyed of the city. Although forming this image of Paris takes a good bit of time, it need not be the case that the objects we form images of occupy us for a great temporal extent. Any time our encounter with an object is temporally extended, then we are in a position to bring together the manifold of appearances into a single representation of the object. If, for example, I look at a tree outside my window, the perception of this tree will be temporally extended. In which case, the manifold of intuition corresponding to that tree will involve multiple appearances of that tree. If I am able to form a single, holistic representation of the tree, it is because I am able to bring together the appearances of the tree unfolding across those seconds. Although this happens frequently in perception, Kant notes that this is not always possible. If, for example, we are in a highly ornate room "piled high with pictures and decorations," Kant suggests we may be unable to run through the manifold of appearances in such a way that we form a cohesive image.[68] The room, in this case, would be simply too baroque for us to be able to bring together what we see in a single, cohesive representation.

What we learn from this lecture course is that an image is a holistic representation we form of a particular object by bringing together the various appearances of that object into a cohesive whole. But what emerges in the first *Critique* is the fact that images are also representations that have conceptual meaning. This is intimated in the Schematism chapter, where Kant claims an 'image' becomes possible by being connected to a concept through a schema (a notion we shall examine in Chapter Three):

> the schema…[is that] through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but they must [*müssen*] be connected with the concept only ever by means of the schema, which they indicate [*bezeichnen*], and they in themselves are never fully congruent to the concept.[69]

All I want to point out, for now, is that Kant says an image 'must' be connected to a concept through a schema. And, I take the force of this 'must' to amount to the fact that an image has conceptual meaning.[70] As we might put this point, an image is the representation we form of an object when we are engaged in what is frequently referred to as 'perceiving as'.[71]

---

[68] LM 28:236

[69] A141-2/B181, translation altered

[70] For a more detailed argument as to why an image has to be connected to a concept, because an image is made possible through a schema and a schema is necessarily connected to a concept, see Chapter Three.

[71] On this point, I am in broad agreement with commentators like Strawson (1974) and Sellars (1978) who argue that, for Kant, our perceptual experience involves 'perceiving as'. However, Strawson does not understand images the way I do. For Strawson, an image is a mental representation of, what he calls, 'non-actual perceptions', i.e., 'past and merely possible perceptions' (53). So where I conceive of an image as representation of the object from our present perspective as well as other perspectives, he treats an image as a representation only of past or possible perspectives. My view of an image is, then, more akin to Sellar's analysis of 'image-models' (25).

By ‘perceiving as’, I have in mind the sort of perception where we perceive something in our perceptual field as having a determinate meaning, e.g., I see those things *as* tulips. On my understanding of ‘perceiving as’, however, we do not need to have make an explicit statement, e.g., “Hey, that flower is a tulip!” in order to ‘perceive as’. For the most part, we perceive things as meaningful without articulating this explicitly to ourselves. However, the fact that we treat objects as meaningful through our embodied actions even when we do not have an explicit thought about those objects *as* a thus and such, e.g., I bend down to take in the fragrance of the tulips, and the fact that we are ready to articulate what we perceive, e.g. later in the day I remark to someone about ‘those beautiful tulips in the park’, shows that we do perceive things ‘as’ having meaning, even without explicitly articulating it. An image, I wish to suggest, is the sort of representation we form of objects when we implicitly or explicitly ‘perceive as’.

So far, I have been suggesting that an image is a holistic intuitive representation that has a conceptual meaning, i.e., a representation that straddles both intuitions and concepts. This is, after all, what we would expect given the nature of the imagination as involving features of both sensibility and understanding. What I would like to now consider is the activity through which images are formed, which will confirm their nature as conceptually laden intuitions.

§3. The activity of image-formation

One of Kant’s fullest accounts of the activity of image-formation comes in the A Deduction. According to Kant, it is the synthetic activity of the productive imagination that is responsible for the formation of images.[72] He describes two forms of empirical imaginative synthesis, the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction,[73] and they each enable us to synthesize the manifold of intuition over time in such a way that results in an image.

To begin, the synthesis of apprehension is responsible for taking up *new* appearances in the manifold of intuition and treating them as a further development of our perception of one object. If, for example, I am looking at Paris from Montmartre, and I scan the horizon from left to right, the synthesis of apprehension combines my present right-orientated perception with the previous left-oriented perceptions, treating the right-oriented perceptions as a development of a continuous perception of Paris. In which case the present appearances of Paris in my manifold are taken together with the preceding appearances of Paris in the manifold, and this combination enables me to form a representation of Paris as a whole. Thus, it is only by apprehending the present appearances of an object in the manifold together with the preceding appearances of that object that we are able to form an image of the object. Or, as Kant puts this point, the job of the synthesis of apprehension is to "run through [*Durchlaufen*] and then take together [*Zusammennehmung*] this manifoldness,"[74] and to "take up [*aufnehmen*] the impressions into its activity."[75] Each new appearance of the object is something the imagination apprehends or 'takes together' with the preceding appearances of the object contained in the manifold. And, it is on this basis, that the imagination can form an image of the object, which reflects the series of appearances of that object reflected in the manifold.

---

[72] A120, A141/B181

[73] A102

[74] A99

[75] A120

But Kant goes on to argue that the synthesis of apprehension alone is not enough to produce such an image; we also need, what Kant calls, the 'synthesis of reproduction':

> It is, however, clear that even this apprehension of the manifold alone would bring forth no image… were there not a subjective ground for calling back a perception, from which the mind had passed on to another, to the succeeding ones, and thus for exhibiting entire series of perceptions, i.e., a reproductive faculty of the imagination.[76]

As Kant puts it here, without the synthesis of reproduction, that is, the ability to 'call back' past perceptions, we would not be able to form an image. This must be the case if the synthesis of apprehension is to be able to take the new appearances of the object together with the past appearances of the object. If the past appearances were gone completely, then there would be nothing for the present appearances to be a continuation and development of.

Kant explains both the distinctiveness and inseparability of the two modes of synthesis in the following example,

> Now it is obvious that if I draw a line in thought… I must necessarily first grasp one of these manifold representations after another in my thoughts. But if I were always to lose the preceding representations (the first part of the line…) from my thought and not reproduce them when I proceed to the following ones, then no whole representation [*eine ganze Vorstellung*]… could ever arise.[77]

According to Kant, when we generate a line in thought, we begin by drawing one part of the line, then another part, and so on until we arrive at an image or, what Kant here calls, a 'whole representation' of a line. In order to generate such a whole representation, Kant suggests that both the synthesis of apprehension and reproduction must be involved. To begin, Kant claims that the synthesis of apprehension must connect together each represented part of the line, as they unfold over time. As we might put the point, the synthesis of apprehension is oriented towards the *generation* of the manifold: it is oriented towards synthesizing the new parts of the line together with the preceding parts of the line. But as we already saw, in order for the imagination to synthesize the newly generated parts of the line together with the already generated parts of the line, those past parts must be made present once against by the synthesis of reproduction. We are, ultimately, able to experience a 'whole representation' of the line, i.e., a representation that presents the various parts of the line in a cohesive fashion, only if both kinds of synthesis are at work. We need the synthesis of apprehension to gather together each new representation as the manifold is generated, but we also need the synthesis of reproduction to retain the past representations. Indeed, the *whole* line can be present to us only if all the parts of the line, past and present, are connected together.

---

[76] A121

[77] A102

While this example deals with the generation of an image in our heads, something similar goes on when we generate an image that reflects a perceptual object outside of us. Returning to the example above where I am scanning Paris from Montmartre, if I am to form an image or 'whole representation' of Paris, it is necessary that I am combining these various representations together as my perception of the city unfolds. I must treat each new appearance of Paris in my manifold as a further development of my overall perception of the city. It is, as it were, one step in the unfolding process of my perception. And, it is the synthesis of apprehension that is responsible for treating each new appearance as a further step in this process. But in order for the new appearances of Paris to be connected together with the earlier appearances of Paris in my manifold, I must be able to call forth those past appearances, even when they are no longer present. It is only if these past appearances of Paris are retained that I will experience a 'whole representation' of Paris. Setting the examples aside, for Kant, it is this combination of the synthesis of apprehension and reproduction, which accounts for our ability to form images.

Yet a closer look at the A Deduction reveals that an image is not only the result of the synthesis of the apprehension and reproduction; rather, these syntheses need to be influenced by the conceptual synthesis of recognition. And, it is when we consider this aspect of Kant's view that we see, once again, that an image is an intuition that has conceptual meaning. In analyzing the synthesis of reproduction, Kant emphasizes that the imagination does not just allow an image to 'fall together' like an 'unruly heap'; instead, he argues that the imagination produces an image through a certain form of rule-guided synthesis:

> reproduction must thus have a rule in accordance with which a representation enters into combination [*Verbindung*] in the imagination with one representation rather than with any others.[78]

In order for the imagination to produce an image, it must be guided by a 'rule', which governs the combination of the various representations involved in the manifold. When those representations are combined in a rule-guided fashion, Kant claims the result is an image that has a certain 'determinate connection [*Zusammenhang*],' indeed, the sort of connection needed for the image to be holistic, as discussed above.[79]

---

[78] A121

[79] A121

This raises the question: what rule guides the imagination's synthesis in this case and that accounts for the determinate connection of the image? This, to be sure, is a vexed issue, as it presses on how Kant conceives of rules;[80] however, if we focus on the fact that Kant identifies the rule in the above passage as a rule that guides the reproduction of an image, we will find that this rule is a concept.[81] For earlier in the A Deduction, Kant argues that a concept just is a rule of reproduction: "[a concept] can be a rule of intuition only if it represents the necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions."[82] This suggests that the rule that guides the imagination in production of an image is nothing other than a concept, and that it is the concept that gives the image its 'determinate connection'. If, however, it is the concept that contributes to an image having a determinate connection, lending the manifold a specific, definite connection, then it seems fair to say that the image has conceptual meaning. For example, if it is the concept of 'Paris' that guides the synthesis of my manifold as I gaze at the city from Montmartre, and if it is the concept that gives the various appearances 'determinate connection' in the image I form of the city, then it seems that the image itself will reflect the concept 'Paris'.

To put this point in a more Kantian fashion, in order for the imagination to produce an image, it cannot rely on the synthesis of apprehension and reproduction alone; it must also be influenced by the synthesis of recognition, i.e., the synthesis involving concepts.[83] This is not to say that the understanding, which is responsible for the synthesis of recognition in concepts, is what produces an image. Instead, it means that the imagination must be influenced by this synthesis in forming an image with holistic and conceptual characteristics.

---

[80] For a discussion of the tensions in Kant's view, see Ginsborg 1997(a): 51-59. For a discussion of the relationship of concepts and rules, see Paton (1936I): 272-3, Aquila (1983): 134-5, Longuenesse (1998): 45, Allison (2004): 210.

[81] I do not mean to suggest that all rules are concepts according to Kant. Although he says things that point in this direction, we will see later that he also describes a schema as a rule. And, since I want to distinguish concepts from schemata, I think we should allow for rules that are not concepts.

[82] A106

§4. Making perception too intellectual?

At this point, however, a worry may arise. To borrow a phrase from Henry Allison, it may seem as if I am 'over-intellecutalizing' Kant's theory of perception.[84] By arguing that the imagination forms images that have conceptual meaning, it may appear as if I am attributing to the imagination a function belonging only to the understanding, i.e., the synthesis of recognition and of concepts.[85]

I take much of the support for wanting to preserve a space for pre- or non-conceptual intuitions to stem from recent arguments to the effect that some intuitions have 'non-conceptual' content.[86] However, we must be careful and draw a distinction between Kant's theory of intuiting and Kant's theory of perceptual experience. I do not intend my present analysis of Kant's theory of perceptual experience to decide the issue on whether intuitions can have non-conceptual content. Rather, taking our clue from Kant's claim that the imagination is a 'necessary ingredient' in perception, a comment he appends to his discussion of images in the A Deduction, I take it to be the case that perception is not just a matter of intuition, but of images. More precisely put, I take images to be a sub-set of intuitions, intuitions that 'must' be connected to a concept, a view suggested by Kant in both the A Deduction and the Schematism.[87] In which case, even if some intuitions have non-conceptual content and do not involve conceptual synthesis, this does not mean that the imagistic intuitions involved in perception have non-conceptual content.

---

[83] This contrasts with Guyer's (1979) view that in the free play of our faculties, the first two syntheses are there without the third (76 in the 2nd edition).

[84] Allison (2004): 187-8

[85] Allison (2004) criticizes both Strawson and Sellars for attributing the capacity of 'recognition' to the imagination, a capacity that he claims is possible only through the understanding's synthesis of concepts (187-8). Echoing this worry, Young (1988) has urged that we ought to conceive of the imaginations activities as pre-conceptual.

[86] See, e.g., Hanna (2005), (2008) and Allais (2009), who are arguing against the sort of views offered by Sellars (1967) and McDowell (2009).

Furthermore, even if the understanding contributes to perception in some sense, it would be a mistake to think that this means that our understanding could itself form images or somehow usurp the role of the imagination. Instead, I take the imagination to make a distinctive contribution to perception that the understanding could not, in fact, make, a contribution essential to the formation of images. This argument turns, in large part, on Kant's comments about the understanding at the outset of the Analytic of Principles. Kant has already established that the understanding is the 'faculty of rules' and in the Introduction he argues that if all we possessed were rules, we would never be able to subsume an intuition under a concept because we would run into a rules regress problem.[88] In any perception, we must apply a concept to what we perceive, or, as Kant puts it, we must subsume an intuition under a rule. However, before we can subsume an intuition under a rule, we must first recognize that the rule applies to that intuition. But he argues that recognizing that a rule applies to an intuition cannot be a matter of applying another rule, because in order to apply the second rule, we would need a further rule for applying the second rule to the first rule, then a third for applying the second, and so on. For these reasons, Kant claims that applying a concept to an intuition cannot be a purely rule-driven or mechanical process. Instead, Kant says that,

---

[87] In the following chapter, I will give a further argument as to why an image must be conceptual: insofar as an image is made possible through a schema and a schema is necessarily connected to a concept, the image itself is made possible through the concept.

[88] A126. See also Kant's claim, "Now if [logic] wanted to show generally how one ought to subsume under these rules, i.e., distinguish whether something stands under them or not, this could not happen except once again through a rule. But just because this is a rule, it would demand another instruction for the power of judgment" (A133/B172). See also KU 5:169

> although the understanding is certainly capable of being instructed and equipped through rules, the power of judgment [the ability to subsume an intuition under a concept] is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced. Thus this is also what is specific to so-called mother-wit, the lack of which cannot be made good by any school.[89]

Although in this passage, Kant is discussing the 'power of judgment', there is a lesson to be garnered with regard to his theory of images. As we have already seen, an image is formed when the imagination brings together an intuition and concept; and, as these remarks about the insufficiency of the understanding and its rules reveals, this imaginative process cannot involve mechanical rule-following.

Instead, as I argue in the following to chapters, it involves the non-mechanical, *artistic* capacities of the imagination. This will begin to emerge in the following chapter when I discuss Kant's theory of schematism. Schematism is a topic that is directly relevant, indeed a complement to our present discussion of images, for, on Kant's view, images are, in fact, made possible by a different representation produced by the imagination, viz., a schema. In the course of our analysis of schemata, we will find once again, evidence that the images involved in our perceptual experience stand in the nexus of intuitions and concepts. And, we shall also find Kant's initial depiction of the aesthetic activity of the imagination needed for perceptual experience. Ultimately, instead of characterizing Kant's theory of perception in an overly-intellectualist fashion, my interpretation is meant to reveal the deep aesthetic tendencies in his theory and his commitment to art in perception.

---

[89] A133/B172

Chapter Three: Kant and the 'Hidden Art' of Perception

§1. Introduction: Schematism as a 'hidden art'

In the two preceding chapters, we have seen that on Kant's view perceptual experience involves the contribution of three capacities: sensibility, imagination, and understanding. While the contribution of each capacity is no doubt important, as I urged in the last chapter, we must focus, in particular, on the mediating role of the imagination in image formation if we are to see how understanding and sensibility can come together in perceptual experience. But I suggested, for Kant, this process is one that cannot occur through the mechanical execution of rules; rather, he indicates that something non-mechanical is needed for this process to be possible. Indeed, as I show in this chapter, in the first *Critique*, Kant claims that it is the *artistic* contribution of the imagination in its schematizing activities that explains how this is possible.

Although Kant's most extended analysis of the artistic activity of the imagination is found in the third *Critique*, we find hints of it also in the first *Critique*, in a chapter titled 'On the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding'.[90] Here, Kant notoriously claims,

> the schematism of our understanding is a hidden art [*Kunst*] in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty.[91]

---

[90] The majority of what follows is a reprint of material that will be found in Matherne, "Kant and the Art of Schematism," *Kantian Review* (forthcoming). Copyright © 2014 Kantian Review. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

[91] A141/B180-1

According to most commentators, this description of schematism is simply Kant's metaphorical way of saying that schematism is something too obscure to explain. As P.F. Strawson puts it,

> How the mechanism [of the imagination] is supposed exactly to work is not very clear… But the obscurity of this point is something which [Kant emphasizes himself] … Thus Kant says of schematism that it is 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul …'. [Imagination] is a concealed art of the soul, a magical faculty, something we shall never fully understand.[92]

Strawson is not alone in this reading; indeed, many commentators, such as Bennett, Pippin, and Guyer, offer what we could call the 'obscurity interpretation' of Kant's description of schematism.[93]

In this chapter, however, I argue that far from Kant being obscure in this passage, he is instead offering us insight into the nature of the imagination's activities in perceptual experience. As is clear elsewhere, especially in the third *Critique*, Kant has theoretically precise ways of using the term 'art' and by calling schematism an art, I believe he intends for us, at least to an extent, to think of it in these precise ways. In order to develop this interpretation of schematism, I shall begin by examining Kant's most sustained discussion of art in his mature work: §§43 and 49 of the third *Critique* (§2). And once we have a basic sketch of Kant's general theory of schematism on offer (§3), we shall consider to what extent schematism relates to the senses of art laid out in the third *Critique* (§§4-6). Along the way, these considerations will not just illuminate what Kant means when he says schematism is art, but also why he calls schematism a *hidden* art in first place. Ultimately, by following up Kant's clue to think of schematism as art, we shall gain insight into how the artistic activity of the imagination makes perceptual experience possible.

---

[92] Strawson (1974): 47

[93] Bennett (1966): 'there is something which we do but which we cannot catch ourselves at because it lies too deep' (142). Pippin (1976): the claim gives us 'a good deal of speculative freedom in trying to come to terms with what it [schematism] might do' (170). Guyer (1987): the claim involves a 'sense of obscurity' and 'pessimism' (158), and in (2006): it involves 'melodramatic language' (96).

§2. Art in §§43 and 49 of the *Critique of Judgment*

Let's begin by getting a clearer picture of Kant's theoretically exact ways of using the term 'art'. His most precise presentation of the notion of art can be found in §43 ('*Von der Kunst Überhaupt*') of the *Critique of Judgment*. In this section, Kant offers his definition of art understood not as a product, e.g., the *Mona Lisa*, but as an *activity* an agent engages in, e.g., the art of painting. As Henry Allison has noted, in §43 Kant proceeds "in scholastic fashion by attempting a definition by genus and species."[94] Hence Kant begins by describing two jointly sufficient and necessary conditions an activity must meet in order to fall under the *genus* art and then delineates two *species* of this genus.

Kant lays out the two conditions required for the genus art in his discussion of the difference between artistic activity and the activities involved in nature [*Natur*] and science [*Wissenschaft*]. First, with regard to the distinction between art and nature, Kant argues that while nature may be able to bring about products, e.g., a beehive, this mode of production does not count as art because it is not the result of a choice the agent has made. Thus, Kant says, 'only production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason, should be called art'.[95] The production through freedom he has in mind here involves an agent 'conceiving of an end' and *art* is the activity through which she brings this end about.[96] Kant suggest that although we may be able to think of a beehive *as if* it were the effect of such a conception, we should not, strictly speaking, think of the bees themselves as the agents responsible for conceiving of this end. From this emerges the first condition an activity must meet in order to fall under the genus art: it must be an activity the agent engages in as the result of an end she has adopted.[97] Call this the 'end-adoption condition'.

---

[94] Allison (2001): 273

The second condition emerges in Kant's discussion of the difference between the activities involved in art and those involved in science:

> Art as a skill [*Geschicklichkeit*] of human beings is also distinguished from science [*Wissenschaft*] (**to be able** from **to know** [*Können vom Wissen*]), as a practical faculty from a theoretical one, as technique [*Technik*] from theory.[98]

Unlike science, which requires theoretical knowledge [*Wissen*], Kant argues that art requires practical abilities, or what we might call 'know-how'. Illustrating his point with examples, Kant claims that just as mastering a geometrical proof does not guarantee one's ability to survey land, knowing about shoes does not make one able to cobble one. As Kant describes this latter example, Pieter Camper, the author of *Treatise on the Best Form of Shoes*, could 'describe quite precisely how the best shoe must be made, but he certainly was not able to

---

[95] KU 5: 303. Though Kant says that art in this sense involves only 'production through freedom,' I do not take this to mean that art must involve only autonomous action in the moral sense. Rather, as long as the agent is engaging in the activity in light of some reason or other, i.e., as the result of 'rational consideration', then she is producing through freedom, which stands in sharp contrast to the purely instinctive production that the bees engage in.

[96] KU 5:303

[97] To be sure, in the Third Moment of Taste, Kant suggests that a beautiful object, hence a beautiful work of art, involves 'purposiveness without a purpose'; however, in those earlier sections, Kant is describing how we *experience* an already produced work of art, not the end-guided *activity* through which a work of art is produced.

[98] KU 5:303. See also R1650 (16: 65), R1892 (16: 150), R2704 (16: 477), R2707 (16: 478), R2709 (16: 478)

make one'.[99] As these examples suggest, in order to put our theoretical knowledge to use in a practical situation, we need the art associated with know-how. In which case, in addition to meeting the end-adoption condition, in order for an activity to fall under the genus *art* it must also meet what we could call the 'know-how' condition: it must involve skills or know-how.[100]

Having laid out the conditions of the genus art*,* Kant goes on to consider two species of art: the art of genius and of handicraft.[101] Kant's way of introducing the distinction between genius and handicraft is somewhat misleading for his claim that 'art is also distinguished from handicraft' may give one the impressions that handicraft does not count as art.[102] However, insofar as both handicraft and genius meet the end-adoption and know-how condition they fall under the genus art, hence his description of the former as 'renumerative' or 'mechanical' and the latter as 'liberal' or 'free' art.[103] Where they differ is with respect to what species of *art* they belong to and Kant wants to emphasize that handicraft does not fall under the particular species of free art, i.e., of genius, that is of special interest in the third *Critique*. In handicraft, Kant claims the artist regards her activity as 'labour' and is motivated only by the renumeration she will receive, whereas the 'free' artist regards her activity as 'play' and is motivated by the activity itself::

---

[99] KU 5:304

[100] That *art* requires both conditions is also evident in the 'First Introduction' to the third *Critique*, where Kant argues that imperatives of art are relevant, on the one hand, to ends-adoption and 'the art of bringing about that which one wishes should exist' and, on the other hand, to know-how insofar as these imperatives are imperatives of skill ('technical imperatives') (EE 20: 200, see also Gr 4: 415-7).

[101] R1866 (16: 142-3):
'art: Lehr*art* mechanisch (Handwerk)
Kommt darauf an, wie und wodurch man etwas kan [sic].
des genie [sic]'

See also, R2026 (16: 201): 'Alle Unterweisung ist entweder in der art oder der Wissenschaft. Die erste ist entweder Brod*art* oder freye art. Jene ist Handwerk. Die freye art ist die, welche durch Lohn bewogen niemand selbst hervorbringen kan, wobey also der Geist ganz frey ist, d.i. art des genies; dergleichen sind eigentlich nur die Künste des Geistes und nicht des korperlichen [sic] Gebrauchs,' and R941 (15: 417).

[102] KU 5: 304

[103] KU 5: 304. That genius meets the two conditions of the genus art is evident in §49 where Kant says genius involves the adoption of a 'determinate concept of the product, as an end' (KU 5: 317) (hence, meets the end-adoption condition) and is a talent for *art*, not for science (hence, meets the know-how condition). To be sure, he does claim that genius is 'not a predisposition of skill for that which can be learned in accordance with some

> [Free art] is regarded as if it could turn out purposively (be successful) only as play, i.e., an occupation that is agreeable in itself; [handicraft] is regarded as labour [*Arbeit*], i.e., an occupation that is disagreeable (burdensome) in itself and is attractive only because of its effect [*Wirkung*] (e.g., the remuneration [*Lohn*]).[104]

This, however, is only the first pass at how the activity involved in handicraft differs from what is involved in the art of genius.[105] Indeed, as Kant develops his analysis of genius in the ensuing sections (§§46-49), further discrepancies become apparent. Taking Kant's summary of genius at the end of §49 as our guide, we find that genius has four features that distinguish it from handicraft.[106] First, on Kant's view, genius is an *original talent*. Unlike the activities involved in both science and handicraft where the agent is guided by antecedently given rules and procedures,[107] artistic production is guided by the inborn talent of the artist: 'genius … is a **talent** for producing that for which no determinate rule can be given, not a

---

rule'; however, this does not mean genius is skill-free, but rather does not involve a skill for following pre-given rules (KU 5: 307). That handicraft also meets the two conditions of generic art follows from the fact that it, one, adopts an end, viz., remuneration; and, two, involves the know-how and skill for following pre-given rules (KU 5: 310).

[104] KU 5: 304. See also R812 (15: 361), R963 (15: 424), R1866 (16: 142), R2026 (16: 201), R2705 (16: 477) for the distinction between fine art and handicraft.

[105] Though we often use genius substantively as a synonym for an artist, Kant more often uses genius to describe the mental disposition of an artist (KU 5: 307). Hence his analysis of genius in terms of the 'faculties of the mind that constitute genius' (title of §49). This, I take it, is why he aligns genius with the *activity* of free art.

[106] See Tonelli (1966) for a discussion of the development of Kant's notion of genius from the pre-critical period to the third *Critique*.

[107] For handicraft in this regard, see KU 5: 310 and R941 (15:417).

predisposition of skill for that which can be learned in accordance with some rule'.[108] And, since the artist's own talent must give the rule to art, Kant maintains, '**originality** must be [genius's] primary characteristic'.[109]

Second, Kant claims genius must involve 'a relation of the imagination to the understanding'.[110] More specifically, he claims in the production process, an artist must decide on what she wants to present through her work of art, or, in Kant's terms, she, through her understanding, must select a 'determinate concept of the product, as an end' to pursue.[111] And she must, in turn, rely on her imagination to develop a sensible way of presenting that concept, i.e., 'a representation (even if indeterminate) of the material, i.e., of the intuition, for the presentation of this concept'.[112] If the artist's activity does not involve this cooperation between the imagination and understanding, Kant claims she will produce 'nonsense', rather than a work of art that is 'exemplary', i.e., can serve as a model for other artists.[113]

To be sure, handicraft too will involve a relationship between the imagination and understanding; however, as Kant makes clear with the third feature of genius, these cognitive capacities are apportioned to one another in a *free* way in the production of fine art,[114] a freedom not shared by handicraft.[115] This emerges in Kant's discussion of 'aesthetic ideas'.[116] According to Kant, an aesthetic idea is the imaginative presentation of the concept the artist wants to present through her work. However, unlike in ordinary cognition, where the imagination is constrained to present the logical content of the concept at stake,[117] in genius the imagination is free from this constraint and is able to add various 'aesthetic attributes', i.e., attributes the artist subjectively connects to the concept.[118] These aesthetic attributes coalesce together into an aesthetic idea and it is through this freely created idea that the relevant concept is presented.

---

[108] KU 5:307. For the contrast between genius and science, see KU §§46-7, R621 (15:268), R812 (15:361), R829 (15: 370)

[109] KU 5:308. See below for a more thorough discussion of originality. See also R812 (15:361), R933 (15:414), and R949 (15:420-1).

[110] KU 5:317

[111] KU 5:317

[112] KU 5:317. For example, Ernest Hemingway, in a letter to Gertrude Stein, suggests that his aim in his short story 'Big Two-Hearted River' is to 'do the country like Cézanne' (Hemingway (1981): 122). This, then, would be the concept he pursues and presents through the imaginative representation of the character Nick Adams, the experience of fishing, etc.

[113] KU 5:308. See Gammon (1997) for a discussion of Kant's theory of exemplary originality.

But as Kant asserts with the fourth feature of genius, this special proportion holding between the imagination and understanding in genius is the result of a 'natural endowment' or a 'natural gift,' something Kant says is 'unsought' and 'unintentional'.[119] The artist cannot follow a step-by-step guide in her productive activities; rather, she must rely, in part, on some unsought natural endowment. To be sure, the artist can control some aspects of the production process, e.g., she can pick what colours to restrict herself to or whether to use sonnet form; however, Kant thinks there is some further contribution from genius that the artist cannot seek or control. For these reasons, Kant claims genial talent is something the artist is not fully able to explain to herself,

---

[114] I take the point he is making here to be similar to his earlier claim in §21 about the judgment of taste: although all cognition involves a basic relationship between the understanding and the imagination, in a judgment of taste these capacities are apportioned to each other in a unique way, i.e., in a way that is 'optimal for the animation of both powers' (KU 5: 238-9).

[115] To be sure, both genius and handicraft are free in the sense that they involve choices grounded in reason, i.e., the sort of freedom Kant discusses in relation to ends-adoption in §43. However, there is another kind of freedom that they do not share, the freedom Kant associates with 'play' and 'spirit', i.e., the freedom of genius.

[116] I shall offer a more thorough discussion of aesthetic ideas in Chapter 4.

[117] KU 5:317

[118] KU 5:315

[119] KU 5:307, 317-8

> the author of a product that he owes to his genius does not know himself how the ideas for it come to him, and also does not have it in his power to think up such things at will or according to plan, and to communicate to others precepts that would put them in a position to produce similar products.[120]

In light of this passage, we could say that the inner workings of this natural endowment, of genius, are *hidden* from the artist.

By way of summary, genius is a species of *art* that differs from handicraft insofar as it is, one, an original talent. Two, it must involve the artist's understanding setting an end and her imagination presenting that end. Three, it involves the expression of an aesthetic idea, hence, a free cooperation between the imagination and the understanding. And four, this proportion is achieved thanks to a natural endowment of the artist, which is, in some sense, hidden from her.[121]

§3. Schematism: Basic Features

Kant introduces the notion of schematism in a very brief chapter titled 'On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding'. This is the first chapter of the 'Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment', and Kant's main concern is explaining how it is possible for us to make judgments in which we apply concepts to intuitions. On his view, in order for us to make such a judgment, the concept involved must be 'homogeneous' with the intuition it is to be applied to.[122] This, he thinks, poses a particular problem in the case of judgments where we apply the categories to empirical intuition for it seems that the categories, qua *pure* concepts, are so heterogeneous with respect to intuitions, qua *empirical* representations, that the former could not be applied to the latter.[123] Kant, in turn, offers his theory of schematism as a way to explain how these judgments are possible.

---

[120] KU 5:308. See also KU 5:309

[121] Kant summarizes these features as follows, 'According to these presuppositions, genius is the exemplary originality of the natural endowment of a subject for the **free** use of his cognitive faculties' (KU 5:318).

However, although transcendental schematism is his main focus, Kant alludes to two other forms of schematism: the schematism of pure sensible concepts, e.g., mathematical concepts, and that of ordinary empirical concepts, e.g., the concept of a dog.[124] By my lights, Kant addresses these other forms of schematism because even if the problem of heterogeneity is most extreme in the transcendental case, nevertheless, he regards *all* concepts as heterogeneous with *all* intuitions. As he says in the third *Critique*, understanding, with its concepts, and sensibility, with its intuitions, are 'two heterogeneous elements'.[125] Indeed, Kant describes the sorts of representations involved in concepts and intuitions in heterogeneous terms: whereas concepts are mediate, universal representations, intuitions are immediate, singular representations.[126] In which case, the problem of heterogeneity will arise in any judgment, including pure sensible and empirical ones, in which we apply a concept to an intuition.[127]

---

[122] A137/B176

[123] A137-8/B176-7

[124] A140-1/B179-180

[125] KU 5:401

[126] A320/B376-7

Kant's solution to the problem of heterogeneity takes shape in his theory of schematism. He argues that in order for us to be able to apply a concept to an intuition, there must be a 'third thing' [*ein Drittes*] homogeneous with both the concept and the intuition, and this 'third thing' is what Kant labels a schema. As he says in his discussion of transcendental schemata,

> there must be some third thing [*ein Drittes*], which must stand in homogeneity [*Gleichartigkeit*] with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter. This mediating representation must be … **intellectual** on the one hand and **sensible** on the other. Such a representation is the **transcendental schema.**[128]

Although this passage references transcendental schemata, I take it to point towards the dual nature of all schemata: they are mediating representations, possessing both *sensible* and *intellectual* aspects.[129] We can, in turn, reconstruct what these sensible and intellectual features of schemata are on the basis of two sets of claims Kant makes about them.

On the one hand, Kant claims that a schema is a sensible 'presentation' [*Darstellung*] of a concept, or, as he puts it, a representation of a concept 'made sensible' [*Versinnlichung*].[130] More specifically, he describes a schematic representation as a 'monogram of pure *a priori*

---

[127] I, therefore, do not take the problem of homogeneity to be one that applies only in the case of transcendental schematism (in disagreement with Walsh (1957/8), Chipman (1972) and Pippin (1976)).

[128] A138/B177

[129] Although I cannot discuss the following issue at length, insofar as I take empirical schemata to mediate between a concept and an intuition, my interpretation contrasts with a popular interpretation of empirical schemata as identical to empirical concepts, put forward most notably by Chipman (1972): 42, and can be found in Bennett (1966): 151 and Guyer (2006): 97. I do not think that Kant makes this identification. For one, the way Kant sets up schemata as mediating between concepts and intuitions, something he does even in his discussion of empirical schemata, seems to preclude this. Moreover, given that a schema is not just an intellectual representation, but is a sensible representation as well, this too should set it apart from a concept. For an argument why Kant should make this distinction, see Pippin (1976): 166-7. For an alternative argument that schemata cannot be identical to concepts on the grounds that they are pre-discursive representations that play a role in concept-formation, see Longuenesse (1998): 116-7, Allison (2001): 25-6, Allison (2004): 209-210.

[130] KU 5: 351. This supports Heidegger's claim in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* that "The formation of the schema is the making-sensible of concepts" (68).

imagination'.[131] And elsewhere he defines a monogram as an 'outline' [*Umriß*], 'sketch' [*Zeichnung*], or 'silhouette' [*Shattenbild*] of an object.[132] Given that outlines, sketches, and silhouettes represent objects *as a whole*, I take a monogram to be a holistic representation of a concept made sensible, i.e., a representation of how the various marks of that concept manifest in a unified sensible way. In which case, we could think of the sensible aspect of a schema as involving a *gestalt*, i.e., a sensible, holistic presentation of a concept.

Consider, for example, the schema for a dog. While the concept 'dog' indicates that dogs have various properties, e.g., being furry, four-legged, an animal, etc., the schema represents how those various properties appear together as a whole in perception. Similarly, the schema for a pure sensible concept like 'triangle' will be a gestalt that reflects how the various properties of a triangle, e.g., having three sides, three angles, etc, manifest in a single figure. Finally, with respect to transcendental schemata, Kant describes them as 'time-determinations' and, on my interpretation, this means they represent what we could call temporal gestalts, i.e., temporal patterns that reflect the category at stake.[133] For example, the schema for the category of cause would be the temporal pattern: if A at time$_1$, then B at time$_2$.[134] As we see in each case, then, a schema is a sensible gestalt that represents how the concept with its various marks will manifest in a spatial or temporal whole.

---

[131] A142/B181

[132] A833/B862 and A570/B598. Kant, in fact, connects monograms to art, when he suggests that these are the sketches or silhouettes *painters* have in their heads (A57/B598).

[133] A142/B181. I shall leave it open as to whether transcendental schemata are exclusively temporal, as Allison (2004): 217-8 suggests, or whether they can involve spatial determinations as well, see Guyer (1987): 174 and (2006): 98-9.

[134] A144/B183

On the other hand, Kant does not think a schema is entirely sensible; rather, he maintains a schema must have *intellectual* features as well if it is to be able to mediate between *concepts* and intuitions in judgment. This brings us to the second set of claims Kant makes about the nature of a schema and returns us to the topic of image-formation we began in Chapter Two. According to Kant, a schema is a 'rule' or 'general procedure' for determining 'our intuition in accordance with a general concept' (A140-1/B180). A schema, then, is something like a pattern that we can follow for synthesizing an intuition in such a way that it represents a particular concept. And when the schema involved is a pure sensible or empirical concept, the result of this process will be the formation of an image. Hence, Kant's claim:

> the schema…[is that] through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but they must [*müssen*] be connected with the concept only ever by means of the schema, which they indicate [*bezeichnen*], and they in themselves are never fully congruent to the concept.[135]

My schema for the concept 'dog', for example, guides me in synthesizing intuitions of poodles, German Shepherds, and Chihuahuas in accordance with the concept 'dog', the result of which is the formation of a dog-image. Likewise, my schema for triangles guides me in synthesizing intuitions of isosceles, equilateral, and right triangles in accordance with the concept 'triangle', which, in turn, results in the formation of images of triangles. Matters, however, are a bit more complicated in the case of transcendental schemata because Kant claims that the categories "can never be brought to an image at all."[136] Instead, Kant claims that transcendental schemata enable us to synthesize the *a priori* manifold of the pure intuition of time in accordance with the categories.[137] When this happens, Kant argues that we arrive at a determination of the series, content, order, and sum total of time.[138]

---

[135] A141-2/B181, translation altered

[136] A142/B181

In order for a schema to be able to serve as a rule or indicate a general procedure for us to follow in synthesizing intuition (so as to result in either an image or determination of time), the gestalt represented by the schema must be suitably generic, i.e., it must reflect a sensible pattern that is flexible or, perhaps, vague enough to apply to different intuitions. For example, the schema of a dog cannot just represent my pet poodle for, to use Kant's word, the 'image' of my pet poodle is not generic enough to apply to visually dissimilar dogs, like Chihuahuas. However, in order to be able to form images of dogs in different circumstances, we need a schema general enough to guide us in those different circumstances. As Kant makes this point in his discussion of triangles:

> No image of a triangle would ever be adequate to the concept of it. For it would not attain the generality of the concept, which makes this valid for all triangles, right or acute, etc., but would always be limited to one part of this sphere.[139]

The schema of a triangle, by contrast, would have the right generality to apply to different types of triangles, so we can form triangle-images in different circumstances. So too do transcendental schemata need to be generic: they, as Kant suggests must be able to apply to *any* representation: '[they] concern the determination of the inner sense in general, in accordance with conditions of its form (time) in regard to *all* representations'[140]. Ultimately, then, a schema, on Kant's account, is a generic gestalt, i.e., a sensible, holistic presentation of a concept, which serves as a rule for us to follow when synthesizing intuition in accordance with that concept, so as to result in an image or determination of time.

---

[137] A138/B177

[138] A145/B185

[139] A141/B180

[140] A142/B181, my emphasis

However, in addition to discussing the *nature* of schemata, Kant also discusses the *activity* through which schemata are produced, an activity I shall refer to as 'schematism'. Unfortunately, Kant does not say much about this activity. He does attribute this activity to the productive imagination.[141] And he asserts the claim we have been puzzling over, viz., that it is a form of hidden art. This brings us back to our main question: by calling schematism hidden art does Kant simply mean to say it is something too obscure to explain? Or, does he intend for us to take him at his word, and treat schematism literally as art?

§4. Schematism and Agency

An initial worry may arise at this point: in his discussion of art in the third *Critique*, Kant is clearly thinking of it as an activity performed by a particular *agent*, e.g., a cobbler or painter; however, who, if anyone, could be the agent of schematism? Is there any sense in which *I* schematize? Or is it rather something that just happens within me?

Though my full response to these questions will only take shape in the ensuing discussion, I take it to be the case that, for Kant, we are, indeed, the agents of schematism; however, we are agents in a somewhat attenuated sense. On the one hand, the activity of schematism is not like other activities we are aware of or that we control. The cobbler, for example, is the agent of his cobbling in a robust sense: he is aware of working with the leather, he can directly manipulate it, etc. Schematism, by contrast, is something hidden, presumably falling under the category of imaginative activities that are 'indispensable', but 'of which we are seldom ever conscious'.[142] So we do not appear to be the agent of schematism in any robust sense.

---

[141] A142/B181. This is somewhat obscured by the fact that Kant also says that 'the procedure of the understanding with these schemata [is what we will call] the **schematism** of the pure understanding' (A140/B179). But, in the following sentence, Kant clarifies his view by saying that 'The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination' (A140/B179).

On the other hand, Kant does not reserve agential language for the activities we are aware of or directly control; he also uses it when describing the faculties of imagination and understanding. To pick a prominent example, synthesis, which both the understanding and imagination engage in, is defined by Kant as 'the *action* of putting different representations together with each other'.[143] Moreover, he describes the understanding and imagination as having aims: the understanding 'is always busy poring through appearances with the aim [*in der Absicht*] of finding some sort of rule in them,' and that the imagination has 'as its aim [*Absicht*] … the necessary unity in [the synthesis of the manifold of appearances]'.[144] But who is the agent responsible for acting and aiming in these ways?

While Kant's language sometimes invites us to regard the faculties themselves, The Understanding or The Imagination, as the agents in question, this leads to a rather unsatisfactory homuncular view of the mind. A more promising alternative is to regard the various faculties as *capacities* [*Vermögen*] that belong *to us* and to regard their activities as exercises of *our* capacities. In which case, we are the agent of the activities of the imagination and understanding; their ends are our ends. This, in fact, appears to be the view that Kant endorses at the end of the B Deduction: in order to perceive a house, he claims, '*I* make the empirical intuition of a house into a perception through apprehension of its manifold … and *I* as it were draw its shape,' so too when I perceive water freezing, '*I* apprehend two states … *I* ground the appearance as **inner intuition**, *I* represent necessary synthetic unity of the manifold.[145] Here we find Kant ascribing various actions, which he had previously attributed to either the imagination or the understanding, to *us* as their agent. To be sure, we are not necessarily aware of or in control of these activities, in which case our agency in these cases is more attenuated; however, acknowledging that Kant makes room for this weaker sense of agency both does justice to Kant's agential language, while avoiding the homuncular view of the mind.

---

[142] A78/B103

[143] A77/B103, my emphasis

[144] A123. I return to the 'aim' of the imagination in more detail in §5b.

Applying this weaker sense of agency to schematism, we find that although Kant will describe the imagination as the faculty that does the schematizing, his considered view should be that I, in virtue of my imaginative capacities, engage in schematism. With this preliminary hurdle removed, we should now pursue the parallels between schematism and *art* more directly.

§5. Schematism as a Species of Art in General

Let us consider first whether schematism falls under the genus of art. If so, it must meet the two conditions: it must involve practical abilities and know-how (the know-how condition) and it must be an activity that results from the agent adopting an end (the end-adoption condition).[146]

---

[145] B162-3, my italics

[146] This possibility seems threatened by Kant's discussion of determining and reflecting judgment in Section V of the *First Introduction* of the third *Critique*, where he aligns the schematic use of judgment with determining or

a. The Know-How Condition

As I noted above, in the third *Critique*, Kant suggests that a schema is a representation of a concept 'made sensible'.[147] However, in order to sensibly present a concept, it is clear the imagination cannot rely on theoretical knowledge alone. Indeed, Kant introduces his doctrine of schematism precisely because he thinks our theoretical grasp of something through the understanding does not guarantee any practical competence with it, i.e., it does not give us a sense of how that thing ought to manifest itself in experience. To this end, Kant offers the example of a physician who has theoretical knowledge about a disease, but cannot tell whether a particular patient actually has the disease.[148] Indeed, there seems to be a transcendental analogue in the B Deduction, where Kant argues that possessing the categories, qua 'purely intellectual' 'forms of thought' does not yet guarantee their applicability to intuition.[149]

In order to make a concept sensible, then, the imagination must rely on resources outside of theoretical knowledge. But what is the alternative? Taking our cue from §43 of the third *Critique*, we are led to suspect that the imagination's ability to make a concept

---

mechanical judgment, and the technical or *künstlich* use of judgment with reflecting judgment (EE 20: 212-4). But it is crucial to note that in this passage, Kant is contrasting determining and reflecting forms of *judgment*; he is *not* addressing the *imagination's* schematizing activities. To put the point another way, what Kant is concerned with in this passage is the way in which judgment can either *proceed schematically* or *technically*; he is not taking up how the imagination *schematizes*. Moreover, the imagination's schematizing activities are, in fact, pre-conditions of proceeding schematically in judgment. For, in a determining judgment, we mechanically apply a concept to an intuition; however, in order for us to be able to apply that concept to intuitions at all, we *first* need a schema, which mediates between concepts and intuitions.

[147] KU 5:351

[148] A134/B173. As Kant puts it, although the physician 'understands the universal *in abstracto* [he] cannot distinguish whether a case *in concreto* belongs under it.'

[149] B150

sensible is just that, an ability (*Können*): it involves skills that outstrip our theoretical knowledge (*Wissen*). And, indeed, when we consider what the imagination must do in order to make a concept sensible, we find that it relies on several skills. It must be able to *project* and *anticipate* how the various marks of the concept in sensible, holistic terms and, at least in the empirical case, to *adjust* and *readjust* our schematic representation of a concept on the basis of further sensible experience or increased knowledge. These projections, anticipations, and adjustments are the skills that contribute to the know-how of the imagination in its schematizing activities. In which case, schematism does meet the know-how condition of art.

b. The End-Adoption Condition

Turning to the end-adoption condition, *prima facie*, schematism seems to be very different from the sort of 'artistic' activities that result from more explicit, self-conscious end-adoption, e.g., baking a cake. As noted above, schematism does not appear to be something we are aware of at all, let alone something we engage in because of an end we have consciously adopted.[150]

Despite these appearances, a closer look at schematism reveals that it can meet the end-adoption condition after all. To begin, it seems plausible that we develop at least some empirical schemata as a result of ends, either theoretical or practical, we have chosen. We often set ends for ourselves and engage in various activities in our pursuit of those ends. If, for example, I decide I want to learn to distinguish different herbs, I will engage in various activities, like tasting herbs, cooking with herbs, etc., which help me bring that end about. However, at least on a Kantian picture, I will also engage in various mental activities that aid me in pursuit of this end, one of which will presumably be schematism. My imagination will develop schemata for basil, chervil, rosemary, etc. and these schemata will put me in the position to recognize and differentiate these herbs.

---

[150] For other instances of art that involves the end-adoption condition in the first *Critique*, see Kant's discussion of the argument from design (A626-7/B254-5), architectonic as the art of systems (A832/B860-A835/B863), and dialectical art (A61-3/B86-8, B141fn, A502/B530, A606/B634).

To be sure, this does not mean that I choose to schematize in any robust sense, as I might choose to read the *Joy of Cooking*. But the ends-adoption condition does not require us to choose the activity in this robust sense; as long as the activity is entailed by the end we have chosen, then it will meet this condition. Indeed, even in paradigmatically practical examples, e.g., trying to hit a baseball, we do not robustly choose every activity that aids us in pursuit of our ends. The batter often does not deliberately choose to raise his elbow, turn his hips, or follow through; indeed, if he did deliberately choose these activities at each moment, he would most likely never hit the ball. Nevertheless, these are activities that result from ends-adoption, just as, I am suggesting, schematism does.

Yet, this response only goes so far: although it shows that *some* of our schematizing activity can meet the end-adoption condition, this by no means shows that *all* empirical, let alone transcendental, schematizing activity meets this condition. After all, transcendental schematism happens *a priori*. And much, if not the majority, of our empirical schematizing results from simply 'bumping up' against things in the world, and this, it would seem, is not entirely up to us. So what sense could be made of talk of adoption of ends in these cases?

In order to answer this question, we need first to recognize that, for Kant, not all of the ends we adopt are up to us. Most prominently happiness, Kant argues, is not an end that is up to us; instead, as he puts it in the *Groundwork*, it is an end 'that can be presupposed surely and a priori in the case of every human being, because it belongs to his essence'.[151] Nevertheless, in the First Introduction to the third *Critique* he argues that there are technical imperatives of art, albeit of a special kind, which arise from this necessary end.[152] This means that, for Kant, there are at least two kinds of imperatives of art: imperatives relating to ends that are up to us and imperatives relating to necessary ends. This, in turn, opens up the possibility that not all art is the result of an arbitrarily chosen end; some art can be the result of ends we must adopt, ends necessitated by the kinds of beings we are.

This raises the question: is schematism guided by any necessary end? I think the answer is yes. For, as I will now show, all of our schematizing activities do involve the adoption of what I shall call the 'constitutive end' of the productive imagination.[153] By a constitutive end, I have in mind an end we must adopt in order to be able to engage in the activity at all. For example, engaging in the activity of playing Scrabble to win involves the constitutive end of scoring more points than your opponents. I take Kant to commit himself to the productive imagination having a constitutive end insofar as he offers a *functional* account of this capacity, i.e., insofar as he maintains that the productive imagination has a function that is teleologically aimed at a particular end. This end is what I take to be a constitutive end we must adopt in order to exercise the productive imagination at all. In which case, all exercises of the productive imagination, including schematism, must adopt its constitutive end.

---

[151] Gr 4: 415-6

[152] See EE 20: 200 footnote. In claiming that there are technical imperatives that are associated with happiness, Kant, in the *First Introduction*, takes himself to be correcting his earlier position in the *Groundwork*, where he did not treat imperatives of happiness as imperatives of art. That being said, Kant acknowledges that there is a difference between the imperatives associated with happiness and those associated with contingent ends.

[153] This notion of constitutive ends is shaped by the account of 'internal standards' in Korsgaard ((1999): Section IV); formal features of judgment and the 'strong notion' of form as an internal standard in Engstrom ((2009): 98-118, 131-3); and formal principles and formal ends in Reath ((2010): Section III and (2013): Section I, B and III).

Evidence for this functional account of the productive imagination can be found in Kant's discussion of the 'transcendental function' of the productive imagination in the A Deduction. Here, Kant argues that the transcendental function of the imagination is associated with the aim of bringing about 'necessary unity in the synthesis of appearances':

> insofar as [the productive imagination's] *aim* [*Absicht*] in regard to the manifold of appearances is nothing further than the necessary unity in their synthesis, this can be called the transcendental function of the imagination.[154]

The 'necessary unity' Kant has in mind is the unity that is involved in experience, so he thinks that the transcendental function of the imagination plays a crucial role in making experience possible:

> it is only by means of [*vermittelst dieser*] this transcendental function of the imagination that even the affinity of appearances, and with it the association and through the latter finally reproduction in accordance with laws, and consequently experience itself, become possible; for without them no concepts of objects at all would converge [*zusammenfließen*] into an experience [*eine Erfahrung*].[155]

What I want to emphasize is Kant's rather striking claim that the imagination enables experience by getting our concepts to 'converge into an experience'. This, I believe, gives us an important insight into the function of the productive imagination: it has the aim of bringing about experience by getting our concepts to 'converge into an experience'. To put the point in a different way, the productive imagination is functionally aimed at bringing our concepts to bear on what we intuit.

---

[154] A123, my emphasis

[155] A123

Although this is the 'transcendental function' of the imagination, there is reason to think the same aim underwrites both transcendental and empirical schematism. For, in the case of transcendental schematism, the imagination aims at making experience *in general* possible, i.e., making it possible for concepts in general to converge on intuition in general. And it guarantees this possibility by bringing the categories to bear on the temporal manifold of inner sense, a pre-condition of experience at all. Meanwhile, in pure sensible and empirical schematism, the imagination aims at making *particular* experiences possible, e.g., enabling the concepts 'triangle' or 'dog' to converge on a particular intuition. Schematism, in whatever form, then aims at getting concepts to converge into experience, hence, involves adopting the constitutive end of the productive imagination.

In the end, then, all schematism involves some form of end-adoption: insofar as we are engaged in some activity, say becoming a better home-cook or exercising our productive imagination, we are thereby committed to the adoption of certain ends. Furthermore, if we couple this analysis of end-adoption with my earlier argument about why schematism meets the know-how condition, then we have reason to think schematism is an activity that falls under the genus art. This is, indeed, a happy result, as it gives us at least one helpful way of cashing out what the concealed art of schematism involves.

§6. Schematism and the Art of Genius

We now need to consider whether schematism also falls under one of the species of art Kant discusses in the third *Critique*: does it at all resemble handicraft or genius? As I argue below, although there are some disanalogies between schematism and genius, by paying attention to often overlooked features of Kant's account of genius, we will find that schematism is, in fact, more continuous with genius than with handicraft.

a. Schematism and genius: apparent contrasts

The activities involved in genius and schematism come apart most sharply with regard to the third feature of genius, viz., that it involves the expression of aesthetic ideas and a free proportion between the imagination and understanding. This emerges in §49, where Kant claims,

> in the use of the imagination for cognition, the imagination is under the constraint [*Zwange*] of the understanding and is subject to the limitation of being adequate to its concepts; in an aesthetic respect, however, the imagination is free to provide, beyond that concord with the concept, unsought extensive undeveloped material for the understanding, of which the latter took no regard in its concept.[156]

Here, Kant contrasts two ways in which the imagination can present a concept. In the first case, the imagination is constrained by the understanding, insofar as it has to offer a 'logical presentation' of the concept that reflects its 'logical attributes'.[157] This type of 'direct' presentation of a concept is what Kant in §59 identifies with a schema.[158] By contrast, in the second aesthetic case, the imagination is free from this constraint and creatively adds an aesthetic idea and aesthetic attributes to that concept. This results in an 'indirect' or 'symbolic' presentation of a concept.[159] In which case, the relationship holding between the imagination and understanding in schematism seems to be precisely what Kant wants to contrast with the free relation between these two capacities in genius's expression of aesthetic ideas.[160]

---

[156] KU 5: 316-7

[157] KU 5:315

[158] KU 5:352

[159] KU 5:352

b. Schematism and genius: deeper parallels

However, even if we were to concede that schematism and genius come apart with regard to the third feature of genius, this does not yet drive a wedge between schematism and the other three features of genius. In the first place, it is clear that insofar as both schematism and genius involve the imagination presenting a concept offered to it by the understanding, it will involve the second feature of genius. This, however, does not seem to be distinctive since it seems to be a feature shared by handicraft as well.

What aligns schematism with genius more decidedly is the way in which it involves the first and fourth features of genius: originality and being the result of a natural endowment. To appreciate this, however, we must pay careful attention to how exactly Kant is conceiving of originality and natural endowments. Turning, first, to his discussion of genius as an original talent, while it may be tempting to think of artistic production as original insofar as it is free from all constraint by rules and concepts, something like creation *ex nihilo*, this does not reflect Kant's view of originality. For Kant, the originality of genius necessarily involves constraint. This, in part, follows from the fact that genius counts as art, something Kant thinks must involve normative constraint: 'For *every* art presupposes rules which first lay the foundation by means of which a product that is to be called artistic is first represented as possible'.[161].

---

[160] This is not to say that the free exercise of our capacities in an aesthetic context cannot relate to cognition at all; indeed, Kant continues in this passage by claiming that aesthetic ideas can be applied 'subjectively, for the animation of the cognitive powers, and thus also indirectly to cognitions' (KU 5: 317). This, I take it, leaves room on Kant's view for aesthetic ideas to perform an, at least, indirect cognitive function, a topic I cannot pursue further here.

Furthermore, Kant thinks that being constrained by formal, mechanical rules is also an 'essential condition' of genius.[162] Kant claims that while an artist is free to come up with the aesthetic idea she wants to execute, the way in which she executes this must be constrained by mechanical, formal rules. In Kant's words,

> there is no beautiful art in which something mechanical, which can be grasped and followed according to rules, and thus something **academically correct,** does not constitute the essential condition of the art …Genius can only provide rich **material** [*Stoff*] for products of art; its elaboration [*Verarbeitung*] and **form** require a talent that has been academically trained.[163]

If, for example, a poet wants to write a sonnet, she is constrained by the formal rules for sonnets, rules that do not originate in her, but rules she must nevertheless follow in order to produce a sonnet. To be sure, this feature of genius does not account for its originality (the other 'essential condition'); nevertheless, it does reveal that, for Kant, an activity can still be original even if it is constrained by mechanical rules.

But even if we turn our attention to the original features of genius, displayed most vividly in the expression of an aesthetic idea through a work of art, we find that here too genius is constrained. In fact, what we find is that an artist's activities are original *because* they are governed by norms of a particular sort, viz., *self-given* norms. This contrasts genius with handicraft: whereas in the art of handicraft, one is guided by rules extrinsic to her, in the art of genius, 'nature in the subject [i.e., in the artist] must give the rule to art'.[164]

---

[161] KU 5:307, my emphasis

[162] KU 5:310

[163] KU 5:310

We can distinguish two sorts of self-given norms that guide artistic production on Kant's view. In the first place, Kant suggests there are self-given norms that govern the artist's production of an aesthetic idea. Insofar as the aesthetic idea must be a presentation of the concept at stake, it must, in some sense, 'belong to' that concept, i.e., it cannot be so divorced from the concept that it would no longer count as its presentation.[165] However, the artist's imaginative process for developing such an aesthetic idea cannot be guided by an external standard: insofar as the process is original, neither the logical content of the concept nor some other artist's rendering of it can guide her. Instead, Kant suggests, the artist is guided by an internal standard, her *own* sense for what aesthetic idea will do justice to the concept: as Kant puts it, the artist has 'no other standard than the **feeling** of unity in the presentation'.[166] In the second place, when we consider the artist's execution of an aesthetic idea in a particular medium, say, on a canvas or on the page, her creation and revision process must be guided by internal standards, i.e., her *own* sense of what counts as a 'good' or 'bad' way of presenting that idea concretely.[167] If she, instead, emulates external standards, she is once again failing to be original. In the end, then, the artist's activities are original insofar as she is guided not by norms imposed on her 'from without', but by norms she develops internally and imposes upon herself.

---

[164] KU 5:307

[165] KU 5:315

[166] KU 5:319

[167] We find a nice example of this type of self-given norm in Ernest Hemingway's early career. As was noted above, in his short story 'Big Two-Hearted River', Hemingway claims he wants to 'do the country like Cézanne' and his own understanding of what this amounts to constrains him in the creation and revision process. As we see in a letter to Bob McAlmon regarding the revision process, Hemingway, who had originally included a long monologue by Nick Adams, eliminates this because it does not accord with this guiding concept: 'decided that all that mental conversation in the long fishing story is the shit and have cut it all out. I got a hell of a shock

If we now consider whether schematism is original in this sense, as involving self-given norms, several important similarities come to the fore. In both genius and schematism, the way in which, one, the imagination presents a concept (through an aesthetic idea or a schema) and, two, the way in which the 'material' (the artist's medium or the manifold of intuition) is manipulated must be guided by self-given norms.[168] On the first count, as we have already seen, in order for the imagination to develop a schema in the first place it must rely on know-how. These skills, however, appear to be norm-guided: there are right and wrong ways to anticipate, project, and adjust expectations for how a concept manifests in sensible terms. My schema of chervil, for example, should not accommodate every green herb I come across. But these norms are not external rules that we somehow internalize; they are norms that are self-given. To be sure, in the empirical case, the imagination develops schemata as a result of 'bumping against' the world; however, the world does not offer us step-by-step recipes for how to imaginatively develop a schema. This is a skill our imaginations must develop internally. Even more so in the transcendental case, since transcendental schematism is a condition of having any experience at all, the norms that guide it cannot be given from the outside, but must rather have an internal source. In both cases, then, the production of a schema is guided, at least in part, by norms

---

when I realized how bad it was and that shocked me back into the river again and I've finished it off the way it ought to have been all along' (Hemingway (1981): 133).

[168] To make the analogy complete, this process in genius leads ultimately to the production of a work of art, whereas this process in schematism leads ultimately to the production of either an image (in the empirical case) or a determining of time (in the transcendental case).

I, through my imagination, develop for right and wrong ways to imaginatively project, anticipate, and adjust. Secondly, when we synthesize an intuition in accordance with a schema, this activity too involves self-given norms: given that a schema is a representation our imaginations develop internally that can serve as a rule or procedure for us to follow in synthesizing intuition, when we actually perform this synthesis, our activity will be guided by a self-given norm. Ultimately, insofar as self-given norms guide our schematizing activities in these ways, it mirrors the originality involved in genius.

We are now in the position to consider the final way in which schematism parallels genius: it shares in the fourth feature of genius, viz., it is a natural endowment. This parallel is particularly important because it promises to shed light on what has seemed like obscurity to so many, viz., Kant's claim that schematism is a *hidden* art. Recall that, according to Kant, the free use of the imagination and understanding in genius is something that is brought about through a natural endowment of the artist.[169] And, since this natural gift is just that, a gift, something given to her and not intentionally brought about, the artist cannot fully describe, explain, or even 'know' how exactly the production process takes place.[170] It is in this sense that the inner workings of the artistic process are hidden from the artist.

What I would like to suggest is that by calling schematism a hidden *art* Kant is alerting us to the fact that it, like genius, is a natural endowment we cannot fully understand. Schematism, in whatever form, involves a process that we are not fully conscious of, let alone have much insight into. Although I might, for example, be able to explain to someone how to play a C Major scale on the piano, I cannot explain to someone how to make her imagination schematize a concept. Unlike many skills that we can articulate to ourselves, our ability to schematize is, then, more like a 'natural endowment' or a 'gift'. And, it is in this sense, that schematism is a hidden art.

---

[169] KU 5:318

[170] KU 5:308

In general, then, although there are some dissimilarities between schematism and genius, we have more reason to align it with this aesthetic form of art than with the art of handicraft. Indeed, when we take a closer look at Kant's conception of constrained originality and his discussion of natural endowments, we gain insight not only into the artistic aspects of schematism, but into its more mysterious aspects as well.

§7. Conclusion

When Kant calls schematism a hidden art, he is not just being obscure. To the contrary, a literal reading of this claim reveals that not only does schematism fall under the genus art, but also it in many, though not in all, regards falls under the species of art associated with genius. Indeed, we realize that schematism not only involves know-how and ends-adoption, but also that it, like genius, involves constrained originality and a hidden natural endowment. By following out the clue from Kant's choice of terms, then, we can acquire considerable insight into the schematism process.

This, in turn, points towards what I referred to earlier as the aesthetic underpinnings of Kant's theory of perceptual experience. For, as we saw in the previous chapter, Kant thinks the formation of images is a central component of our perceptual experience and what we find in this chapter is that image-formation is made possible by the art of the imagination. This, however, is not all Kant has to say about how the aesthetic exercise of the imagination shapes perception. Indeed, as we shall see in the following chapter, the Schematism is only the beginning of Kant's reflections on these matters.

Chapter Four: Kant and the Aesthetic Enrichment of Perception

§1. Introduction

Whereas in the pervious three chapters our focus has been on Kant's analysis of perceptual experience in the first *Critique*, in this chapter we shall turn our attention towards the third *Critique*. Although the productive imagination is a major topic in the third *Critique*, it may be tempting to think that Kant's treatment of it in this latter text is relevant only to aesthetic experience *per se*. In this chapter, however, I argue that it, in fact, represents Kant's most mature analysis of its role in ordinary perceptual experience. On my interpretation, in the first *Critique*, Kant's theory of the aesthetic dimension of perceptual experience was still in its nascent form. By the third *Critique*, however, he realizes that perceptual experience is not simply a matter of recognizing when a particular object counts as an instance of a kind, but also involves us imaginatively enriching what we perceive with other experiences, thoughts, and memories. Although these connections are subjective, i.e., something in us and not literally in the object, nevertheless they contribute to the overall meaning of what we perceive. It is Kant's acknowledgment of how the imagination aesthetically *expands* perception that I take to constitute the culmination of his theory of perceptual experience in the third *Critique*.

In what follows, I aim to bring to light these perceptual themes in the third *Critique* by examining Kant's theory of 'aesthetic ideas'.[171] Kant introduces the notion of an aesthetic idea in his discussion of 'genius' and argues that an aesthetic idea is what an artist expresses through a work of art.[172] While Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas often receives rather restrictive interpretations, according to which aesthetic ideas can either present only moral concepts, or moral concepts and purely rational concepts, in this chapter I offer an 'inclusive interpretation' of aesthetic ideas, according to which aesthetic ideas can not only present moral and purely rational concepts, but also concepts and emotions related to our ordinary perceptions of the world. Although this latter class of experience-oriented aesthetic ideas has been neglected, I argue that recognizing the role it plays is crucial for fully appreciating the role he takes the imagination to play in perceptual experience.

---

[171] The majority of what follows is a reprint of material as it appears in Matherne, "The Inclusive Interpretation of Kant's Aesthetic Ideas," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53(1) (Jan. 2013): 21-39, by permission of Oxford University Press.

In order to develop the inclusive interpretation of aesthetic ideas, I begin with a discussion of the general notion of an aesthetic idea (§2). Next, I examine two standard interpretations of what aesthetic ideas can present (the 'moral interpretation' and 'rational interpretation'), which I intend the inclusive interpretation to contrast with (§3). I go on to argue that the standard interpretations overlook an important sub-set of aesthetic ideas that present empirical concepts and everyday emotions (§4). I then show that, for Kant, these aesthetic ideas not only play a role in our experience of art, but also in our perception of the world around us (§5). I conclude by examining the implications the inclusive interpretation has for how we understand Kant's theory of perceptual experience more broadly (§6).[173]

---

[172] Kant himself likens artistic production to expression in §51, when he claims that, "Thus, if we wish to divide the beautiful arts, we can, at least as an experiment, choose no easier principle than the analogy of art with the kind of expression that people use in speaking in order to communicate to each other, i.e., not merely their concepts, but also their sensations" (KU 5:320). We get a nice description of this in his analysis of the pictorial arts, when he says, "how pictorial art can be counted (by analogy) as gesture in a language is justified by the fact that the spirit of the artist gives a corporeal expression through these shapes to what and how he has thought, and makes the thing itself speak as it were in mime [*die Sache selbst gleichsam mimisch sprechen macht*]" (KU §51, 5:324). For discussions of Kant's theory of expression, see Gotshalk(1967); Guyer (1977), (1997): Chapters 6 and 12; Rogerson (1986), (2008); and Allison (2001): 288-290.

§2. The Basic Features of Aesthetic Ideas

In §49 of the third *Critique*, Kant defines an aesthetic idea as follows,

> In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept, which is combined with such a manifold of partial representations in the free use of the imagination that no expression designating a determinate concept can be found for it.[174]

This passage is surprising for several reasons. First, it is surprising because it links ideas with the *imagination*. More specifically, he connects them to the productive imagination and its capacity for "creating, as it were, another nature, out of the material the real one gives it."[175] This is in contrast to the more familiar characterizations of ideas in the previous *Critiques*, where they are almost uniformly characterized as concepts that spring from *reason*, either those theoretical ideas of God, the soul, and the world-whole from the first *Critique*,[176] or those of the moral law, virtue, and freedom from the second *Critique*. Second, and relatedly, this passage is surprising because insofar as an aesthetic idea is a representation produced by the imagination, it will be a sensible representation, i.e., an *intuition* (though, one that does not require the presence of an object).[177] This, again, contrasts with the ideas mentioned

---

[173] Although in §52, Kant claims that "Beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the **expression** of aesthetic ideas," in this paper I shall restrict my focus to how aesthetic ideas are expressed in art, leaving considerations of how they are expressed in nature for another time (KU 5:320).

[174] KU 5:316

[175] KU 5:314

[176] In 'The Ideal of Pure Reason', Kant does talk about 'ideals of sensibility' that lack 'objective reality' but can act as regulative principles, which may well be an underdeveloped precursor of aesthetic ideas (A569-70/B597-8).

[177] Kant calls aesthetic ideas 'intuitions' at KU 5:314 and 5:342. For Kant's account of the imagination as a 'faculty of intuition', see Anthro 7:167.

above, which are all explicitly characterized as *concepts* of objects that cannot be given in experience.[178]

Kant is not insensitive to the fact that calling an aesthetic idea an 'idea' may seem to conflict with his earlier discussion of ideas and offers a clarification of his position in Remark I after the Antinomy of Taste.[179] He claims that an idea 'in the most general meaning' [*in der allgemeinsten Bedeutung*] is a representation of an object that we can never cognize (KU §57, 5:342). In this context, Kant is thinking of cognition as requiring both a concept and an intuition, and his suggestion is that an idea is a representation of an object that outstrips one or other of these cognitive poles.[180] In particular, an idea of reason is a representation that outstrips the *intuitive* aspect of cognition: "An **idea of reason** can never become a cognition, because it contains a **concept** (of the supersensible) for which no suitable intuition can ever be given."[181] Unlike concepts of the understanding whose object can be given in intuition, or in Kantian terms can be 'demonstrated', the objects of concepts of reason cannot be given in intuition, hence Kant labels them 'indemonstrable" (KU §57, 5:342-3). Meanwhile, aesthetic ideas outstrip cognition because they step beyond the bounds of our *concepts*: they involve an intuition that is so rich and complex that no concept could ever adequately capture it: "An **aesthetic idea** cannot become a cognition, because it is an **intuition** (of the imagination) for which a concept can never be found adequate."[182] Kant tends to emphasize this point with regard to the limits of language and conceptual description:

---

[178] See A320/B377 and KpV 5:136

[179] KU 5:341-4

[180] For this description of cognition, see A50-1/B74-5.

[181] KU 5:342

[182] KU 5:342. See also KU 5:314

> [an aesthetic idea is] a representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept** to be adequate to it, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.[183]

On Kant's view, when we conceptually articulate an intuition, we 'expound' the intuition, e.g., when I, looking at a champagne flute, say, "That's a champagne flute," the concept 'champagne flute' serves to 'expound' my intuition. Since, however, our concepts cannot fully capture the intuition involved in aesthetic ideas, Kant calls them 'inexponible'.[184]

Yet although an aesthetic idea resists exhaustive conceptualization, as we see in the definition above it is nevertheless 'associated with' at least one concept, viz., the concept the artist uses the aesthetic idea to present. Indeed, for Kant, an aesthetic idea just is an imaginary 'presentation' [*Darstellung*] of a concept.[185] However, to be clear, by requiring that an aesthetic idea present a concept, Kant does not intend to limit an artist to expressing a concept in the narrow sense, i.e., either a concept of the understanding or a concept of reason, nor does he think an artist must have a thoroughgoing grasp of the concept at stake. Instead, with the conceptual requirement Kant intends only to convey the idea that the artist must be guided by some *end* or *intention*:[186] hence, his claim that artistic production presupposes a "determinate concept of the product, *as an end*."[187] So, regardless of whether the artist has in mind a concept in the narrow sense, e.g., the concept of 'modern love',[188] or whether she wants to present a feeling, e.g., joy,[189] Kant claims that her production process will be guided by a concept in the broad sense, i.e., an intention, and she will produce an aesthetic idea in an effort to imaginatively present that concept.

---

[183] KU 5:314

[184] KU 5:343. It is unclear, if pushed hard enough, whether Kant would have to say that all intuitions, considered in a certain fashion, would qualify as inexponible. On the one hand, it seems that no concept would be able to exhaust all of the spatio-temporal relations contained in any particular intuition (for these relations, see B66-7). On the other hand, in the third *Critique* Kant certainly suggests that some intuitions are much more amenable to conceptual articulation than others (KU §§49 and 57). At the very least, we could take Kant to be making a pragmatic point that with some intuitions, a *single* conceptual description will suffice, e.g., "That's a champagne flute"; however, with other intuitions *we feel* as if no single conceptual description would be sufficient. This, perhaps, manifests itself most clearly when we take a work of art to be open to a myriad of possible interpretations, something we do not typically do with objects of ordinary perception.

[185] As we saw in the previous chapter, Kant thinks,"[genius] presupposes a determinate concept of the product, as an end… but also a representation… of the intuition, for the presentation [*zur Darstellung*] of this concept… [genius] displays itself… in the exposition or the expression of **aesthetic ideas**… hence the imagination, in its freedom from all guidance by rules, is nevertheless represented as purposive for the presentation of the given concept" (KU 5:317).

Even so, an aesthetic idea is an imaginative representation too rich to ever be exhaustively described. To see why Kant makes this claim, we need to consider the creative process through which an aesthetic idea is produced. On Kant's view, the artist creates an aesthetic idea by connecting a host of representations, e.g., images, memories, plots, colors, etc., with the concept at stake.[190] He labels these representations 'aesthetic attributes', where

---

[186] To be sure, the artist's intention and aesthetic idea for a piece may transform as he engages with a material. Consider J.L. Carr's Foreward to *A Month in the Country*: "During any prolonged activity one tends to forget original intentions. But I believe that, when making a start on *A Month in the Country*, my idea was to write an easy-going story, a rural idyll along the lines of Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*… Then, again, during the months whilst one is writing about the past, a story is colored by what presently is happening to its writer. So, imperceptibly, the tone of voice changes, original intentions slip away. And I found myself looking through another window at a darker landscape inhabited by neither present nor past" (xxi-xxii). Though Carr claims that his original intentions 'slipped away', I see no reason Kant's account cannot accommodate this. Carr was never intention-free; rather, his original intention was transformed and matured in the production process, so too did his imaginative grasp on how he wanted the novel to go.

[187] KU 5:317, my emphasis. I take this point to be an extension of Kant's earlier claim in §43 that in order for an activity to count as 'art' and not just as production through instinct, e.g., bees making a beehive, the agent must have made a choice in which she 'conceives of an end' (KU 5: 303).

[188] See Lawrence Durrell's claim in the Author's Note at the outset of *Balthazar* (1958): "The central topic of this book is an investigation of modern love."

[189] This may be at least one thing intended by Beethoven in the *9th Symphony*.

[190] See KU 5:314-5

'aesthetic' is meant to signify the subjective status of these representations:[191] unlike logical attributes that lie analytically in a concept, aesthetic attributes are ones the artist, when guided by feeling, freely adds to it.[192] Now, he claims that in adding these aesthetic attributes to the concept at stake, the artist's imagination "emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum": just as we form ideas of reason in our efforts to reach a maximal explanation or description of something, so too does the artist form an aesthetic idea in an effort to offer a maximal characterization of a concept through aesthetic attributes.[193] Kant argues the resulting aesthetic idea is a representation that is so rich and thought provoking that our concepts can never fully do it justice:

> if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept… it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it.[194]

To illustrate Kant's view of aesthetic ideas, let's consider the poem 'Wind' (1957) by Ted Hughes.[195] Hughes begins by using various metaphors to describe listening to the wind howling,

> This house has been far out at sea all night,
> The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills,

---

[191] See Kant's alignment of 'aesthetic' with 'subjective' and 'feeling' in §1 of the First Moment of Taste.

[192] It should be noted that although Kant thinks an artist is free to creatively add these representations, this does not mean the artist can add anything whatsoever: the attributes she adds to the concept must still 'belong to the concept' (KU5:315) and remain 'within the limits of a given concept' (KU 5:326). In other words, the artist's creative activities must still be constrained by the concept/end she has set for herself.

[193] KU 5:314

[194] KU 5:315

[195] In Hughes's *The Hawk in the Rain*

Winds stampeding the fields under the window
Floundering black astride and blinding wet

But in the last two stanzas, he writes,

…Now deep
In chairs, in front of the great fire, we grip
Our hearts and cannot entertain book, thought,

Or each other. We watch the fire blazing,
And feel the roots of the house move, but sit on,
Seeing the window tremble to come in,
Hearing the stones cry out under the horizons.

With these lines, we discover what 'concept' Hughes intends this poem to convey, viz., a failing love affair. And we see that he has chosen to present this concept through an aesthetic idea replete with aesthetic attributes involving metaphorical descriptions of listening to the wind, e.g., feeling like the house is 'out at sea' or that the wind is 'stampeding' under the window. And, although this aesthetic idea and its attributes certainly present the concept of a failing relationship, saying this by no means exhausts the wealth of meaning in the poem. As we pore over the poem, we uncover new aspects of Hughes's aesthetic idea and gain new insight into how the aesthetic idea informs our overall understanding of the piece. In which case, no single, exhaustive description of the poem can be given that does it full justice; rather, its richness opens it to further consideration, exploration, and interpretation by us.

In the end, then, an aesthetic idea is a representation an artist produces through her imagination that, on the one hand, reflects her intention (her 'concept'), and, on the other hand, is so rich our thought cannot exhaust it, hence outstrips the conceptual pole of cognition.

§3. Competing Interpretations of the Presentational Content of Aesthetic Ideas

With this general characterization of aesthetic ideas in place, I want to focus in more detail on a pivotal issue: what exactly do aesthetic ideas present? Call this the issue of their 'presentational content'.[196] Among Kant's recent interpreters, the two most common answers to this question have been more restrictive. On the one hand, there is, what I shall call, the 'moral interpretation', suggest by the early work of Paul Guyer, according to which aesthetic ideas *only* present moral concepts.[197] On the other hand, there is the more dominant view, what I shall call, the 'rational interpretation', put forth by Henry Allison, Andrew Chignell, and Kenneth Rogerson, according to which aesthetic ideas can also present concepts of reason that are not *per se* moral concepts.[198] Though I take these accounts to be right in highlighting that *some* aesthetic ideas present moral concepts and *some* aesthetic ideas present rational concepts, I aim to show that they go too far in claiming that these are the *only* aesthetic ideas Kant addresses.

---

[196] I have labeled this the issue of 'presentational content' because Kant claims that an aesthetic idea is an imaginative presentation [*Darstellung*] of a concept, (KU 5:317) and this issue concerns what sort of concepts, in the broad sense, aesthetic ideas can present. This fits into Kant's overall view of the relationship between aesthetic ideas, concepts, and works of art according to which: a work of art *expresses* an aesthetic idea, while an aesthetic idea *presents* a concept.

[197] Although Guyer (1977) at first appears to make a weaker claim that, "the concepts involved in aesthetic ideas are primarily moral concepts…," in his explanatory footnote he offers the stronger 'moral interpretation': [footnote 21]: "Kant does not offer any reason why artistic expression should be confined to the expression of moral concepts, but both his exposition and examples in the sections devoted to the theory of fine art indicate that he does believe it to be so confined. The sensibility of an eighteenth-century moral philosopher might explain this belief (without justifying it)" (63). See also his (1993) claim: "Aesthetic ideas render moral conceptions accessible to sensibility" (39). However, he appears to move away from this position in the second edition to *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (1997), where he endorses the less restrictive 'rational interpretation', discussed below (see 358).

[198] See Allison (2001), Chignell (2007), and Rogerson (2008).

Support for the moral interpretation comes from three sources. First, if Kant's examples are any indication of his view, then the two examples he gives of aesthetic ideas in §49 point toward the highly restrictive view. For, in both examples the 'artist' combines an aesthetic idea with a moral concept: in the first example, Frederick the Great's poem expresses an aesthetic idea combined with the moral concept of a 'cosmopolitan disposition,' and in the second example, the poem expresses an aesthetic idea combined with the moral concept of 'tranquility streaming from virtue'.[199] Further support for the moral interpretation comes from Kant's claim in §52 that "If the beautiful arts are not combined, whether closely or at a distance, with moral ideas, which alone carry with them a self-sufficient satisfaction," then their 'ultimate fate' is to "make the spirit dull, the object by and by loathsome, and the mind… dissatisfied with itself and moody."[200] And, finally, in §59 Kant claims that beauty is the 'symbol of morality', and given that he also thinks that beauty is the "**expression** of aesthetic ideas",[201] it seems that we can infer that aesthetic ideas are a symbol of morality. For these reasons, the moral interpretation holds that the presentational content of all aesthetic ideas is moral.

However, in spite of this *prima facie* evidence, the moral interpretation is not decisive. To begin, Kant's claims in §52 certainly point toward his view that art that expresses moral ideas will satisfy and nourish us more in the long run; however, this leaves open the possibility that there is another kind of art, the temporarily satisfying kind, which does not express moral ideas. Furthermore, with regard to §59, it does not follow from the fact that beauty is the symbol of morality that the aesthetic ideas expressed in beautiful art necessarily present moral concepts. Allison, for one, has argued that in §59, by calling beauty the symbol of morality, Kant intends to claim, not that the *content* of a work of art is necessarily a symbol of morality, but rather than the *way we reflect* on beautiful art is analogous to the *way we reflect* in morality.[202] This leaves room for a work of art to have content that is not *per se* moral and to, nevertheless, still count as a symbol of morality on account of the pattern of reflection it brings about in us.[203]

---

[199] KU 5:316

[200] KU 5:326

[201] KU 5:320

We find an alternative to the moral interpretation in, what I have called, the 'rational interpretation'. On this interpretation, although aesthetic ideas *can* present moral concepts, Kant's view requires only that aesthetic ideas present some concept (idea) of reason or other.[204] Recall that Kant defines an idea of reason as a representation that 'contains a **concept**… for which no suitable intuition can be given'.[205] This definition in no way restricts ideas of reason to having moral content, and the rational interpretation can allow for the further possibility that some aesthetic ideas will present non-moral concepts of reason.[206]

---

[202] Allison (2001) argues that in our reflection on beauty, we move from reflecting on something sensible to reflecting on something supersensible, which is the same pattern involved in moral reflection (264).

[203] This is part of Allison's (2001) argument that beautiful art need only be a propadeutic to morality (254-267). Another possibility that I shall not pursue further is that the existence of beauty *as such* is a symbol of morality *as such* because it points towards a super-sensible world; however, this does not necessarily commit Kant to the claim that any *particular* work of art must express a moral concept.

[204] See Allison's (2001) claim that, "[aesthetic] ideas constitute a significant subset of possible symbols of rational ideas, namely, those that express or exhibit the corresponding idea independently of a determinate concept. Consequently, this explains how the beautiful (by means of aesthetic ideas) may be said to symbolize ideas of reason" (258, see also 282-3). See also Rogerson's (2008) claim that aesthetic ideas "express ideas of objects or states of affairs beyond our sensible experience by suggesting such things symbolically by way of an analogy" (28). For other discussions of aesthetic ideas and symbolism, see Zuidervaart (2003), Brown (2004).

[205] KU 5:342. See Allison (2001): 256, Rogerson (2008): 28, and Chignell (2007): 419 for their glosses on this definition.

To see this at work in §49, consider Kant's claim that some aesthetic ideas present the rational idea of 'invisible beings'.[207] Although some invisible beings will have a moral character, say angels or devils, it is possible for artists to present concepts of other non-moral invisible beings, say, ghosts of a certain ilk. So too it seems art that expresses aesthetic ideas associated with dreams might present non-moral rational concepts.[208] Think of Salvador Dalí's painting *Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate a Second Before Awakening* (1944), in which he attempts to capture a dream his wife has had. One could argue that in this painting Dalí is trying to capture a non-moral concept of reason, viz., the concept of his wife's dream. It is a concept of reason because it is a concept of an object that Dalí could never intuit, hence cognize; however, supposing it lacks moral content, then it would qualify as a non-moral concept of reason. To be sure, on the rational interpretation these non-moral concepts of reason are not the only ideas expressed through art; however, it makes room for this possibility, a possibility the moral interpretation could not allow for.[209]

Yet, though in this respect the rational interpretation is less restrictive than the moral interpretation, in the end, it too is too restrictive for, as I show in the following section, both interpretations neglect an important subset of aesthetic ideas, viz., aesthetic ideas that are oriented primarily towards experience.

---

[206] See Chignell's (2007) explicit rejection of the moral interpretation and claim that "there is no reason that the model [of aesthetic ideas] cannot be extended to almost all of the rational ideas: mathematical, religious, metaphysical, and moral" (420fn).

[207] KU §49, 5:314

[208] See Kant's discussion of dreams and ghosts in Anthro §37, 7:189-190

[209] Perhaps another example could be when an artist uses a work of art to express an aesthetic idea that presents the concept of a fantasy world, but who does so without having a moral agenda in mind, e.g., Lewis Carroll's *Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* (1865).

§4. Experience-Oriented Aesthetic Ideas

Kant's commitment to experience-oriented aesthetic ideas emerges implicitly in his fullest treatment of aesthetic ideas in §49. In this section, Kant delineates aesthetic ideas into two categories. First, in what I shall call the 'purely rational ideas category', Kant suggests that some aesthetic ideas 'make sensible' [*versinnlichen*] pure rational ideas, i.e., ideas that have no objective correlate in experience.[210] The examples Kant gives include the "ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc."[211] The aesthetic idea expressed through a piece like Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* (1508-12) would fall in this category.

Now, if the rational interpretation were the correct one, then this should be the *only* category Kant identifies; however, he goes on to introduce a second category of aesthetic ideas, namely, what I shall call the 'experience category'.[212] These ideas, according to Kant,

> make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness [*in einer Vollständigkeit*] that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature.[213]

Unlike aesthetic ideas falling in the purely rational ideas category, these aesthetic ideas are oriented *primarily* towards objects of ordinary experience, not toward objects that we could never, in principle, experience. However, they count as ideas because, Kant claims, they present the example drawn from experience 'with a completeness' that reaches past the limits of ordinary cognition: when the artist presents an example through a rich aesthetic idea and a host of aesthetic attributes, she extends the example beyond its conceptual limits, hence, past beyond the bounds of ordinary cognition. Consider, for example, Gustav Klimt's *Life and Death* (1911). On a Kantian analysis, Klimt begins with life and death, two things familiar to us from experience, but as he augments and enhances them with aesthetic ideas and aesthetic attributes, he presses them past the bounds of ordinary experience and what we can encounter 'in nature', thus creating 'another nature'.

---

[210] KU 5:314. I label this category 'purely rational ideas' because I want to make room for all aesthetic ideas to involve a rational element, e.g., their 'attaining to a maximum', but to then distinguish those ideas which *aim* at presenting a concept of reason from those ideas which may include rational elements but do not necessarily aim at presenting a concept of reason.

[211] KU 5:314

[212] For a discussion of these experience-oriented ideas, see Lüthe (1984): 72, and brief mention in Savile (1987): 169.

[213] KU 5:314

Kant's inclusion of the experience category of aesthetic ideas gives us clear evidence that he does not require that all aesthetic ideas present either specifically moral concepts of reason or any other concept of reason at all; rather, he acknowledges that many works of art express aesthetic ideas associated with our ordinary experience of the world. And, in my view, this acknowledgment lends credence to his account. After all, our own experience of art tells us that many artists do not aim at capturing something we cannot experience, but rather bringing to light the richness of experience we too often overlook in the exigencies of everyday life. Fortunately, Kant leaves room for this, and in the following sections, I aim to develop his analysis of this latter category of aesthetic ideas in more detail by looking at his discussion of aesthetic ideas that present empirical concepts and everyday emotions.

a. Aesthetic Ideas and the Presentation of Empirical Concepts

Some of the aesthetic ideas falling in the experience category present empirical concepts.[214] And, although we will return shortly to how these ideas figure into §49, Kant actually makes room for these aesthetic ideas already in §17, 'The Ideal of Beauty'. Though this section is often overlooked in discussions of aesthetic ideas, Kant's mention of 'aesthetic normal ideas' in it recommends it as a valuable resource in our understanding of aesthetic ideas more generally.[215] An aesthetic normal idea is a representation produced by the imagination, which captures a 'model image' [*Musterbild*] for an animal species.[216] More specifically, this model image reflects a perfect instance of the concept of the species at stake, e.g., the model image of a cow will perfectly instantiate the relevant features associated with the species-concept 'cow'. But an aesthetic normal idea is an idea because no living animal within a species can actually instantiate it; instead, it is the 'standard' against which every individual is measured.[217]

For our purposes, it is important to see that Kant does not think that aesthetic normal ideas only serve us in our ordinary judging of animals; he thinks they can be expressed through art. Indeed, in §17, he explicitly cites Myron's cow as a sculpture that expresses the aesthetic normal idea associated with the species-concept ‘cow’.[218] And, it is not hard to think of other works of art, like Dürer’s *Young Hare* (1502), which also express aesthetic normal ideas. Furthermore, if we wanted to situate these aesthetic ideas in one of the categories from §49, then they would seem to fit in the experience category much better than in the purely rational ideas category. After all, the aesthetic idea reflects the concept of an existing animal species, not a moral concept or a rational concept. Moreover, in Kant’s analysis of how we develop the aesthetic normal ideas, he suggests that we begin with examples from experience, say fifty cows, and our imagination settles on a model image that presents a perfect version of what is exemplified.[219]

---

[214] Although I distinguish between aesthetic ideas that present empirical concepts and emotions, I do not take Kant to be committed to the view that a work of art must express only one kind of aesthetic idea. Many works of art will express various aesthetic ideas falling in the moral, rational, and/or experience-oriented categories.

[215] KU 5:233. An exception to this is Makkreel (1990): 114-119 and Kneller (2007): 104-5.

[216] KU 5:233. This discussion echoes his discussion of what we could call 'natural' ideas in the Dialectic of the first *Critique*: "A plant, an animal, the regular arrangement of the world's structure… these show clearly that they are possible only according to ideas; although no individual creature, under the individual conditions of its existence, is congruent with the idea of what is most perfect of its species" (A317-8/B374).

[217] KU 5:233

Although §17 reveals that some aesthetic ideas in the experience category present us with empirical species-concepts, if we turn our attention to §49, we will find that Kant makes room for and, in fact, gives examples of aesthetic ideas that present other empirical concepts as well. Recall that the experience-oriented aesthetic ideas are directed towards what there are *examples* of in experience. On Kant’s view, an example, strictly speaking, is an intuition that demonstrates the reality of an empirical concept.[220] In which case, in order to capture a particular example, the artist could produce an aesthetic idea that reflects the concept instantiated in that example. To be sure, many of the concepts exemplified in Kant’s list in §49 have moral overtones, e.g., fame; however, other concepts, such as life and death, do not necessarily have moral overtones. This is significant because it suggests that, for Kant, as long as it can be augmented through aesthetic attributes, (almost) *any* empirical concept can be presented through an aesthetic idea.[221]

---

[218] KU 5:235. Myron’s cow is a mid-fifth century B.C.E. Greek bronze sculpture of a cow. It now exists only in the form of Roman copies.

[219] See KU 5:234 for a description of this imaginative process.

[220] KU 5:351

Consider, for example, Hemingway's description of fishing in 'Big Two-Hearted River' (1925).[222] On a Kantian gloss, one of the empirical concepts Hemingway aims at in this piece is 'fishing', a concept that is not an empirical-species concept, moral concept, or a purely rational concept. Nevertheless, it is a concept that Hemingway presents and enhances through various aesthetic attributes, e.g., the character Nick Adams, the river, painstaking attention to detail, etc. Though this is but one example, we find that pieces from every art-form express ordinary empirical concepts, e.g., the concept of 'the Far East' in Duke Ellington's *Far East Suite* (1967), the concept of a 'kiss' in Constantin Brancusi's sculpture *The Kiss* (1916), the concept of 'the treachery of images' in René Magritte's painting of the same name (1928-9), the concept of 'dancing' in Frank Gehry's so called *Dancing House* (1996), etc.[223] Indeed, once we see that insofar as Kant acknowledges that aesthetic ideas can present empirical concepts in addition to presenting moral or rational concepts, his theory of aesthetic ideas points toward a rich and varied account of artistic expression that has purchase on much of the works of art we are familiar with.

---

[221] I qualify this statement with 'almost' because I here leave it open as to whether Kant would restrict the concepts that can be expressed in an aesthetic idea. At times, Kant aligns aesthetic ideas with the beautiful, claiming in §51 that beauty "can in general be called the **expression** of aesthetic ideas" (KU 5:32). This might suggest a certain restriction on the content of an aesthetic idea such that if a work of art presents a concept that arouses 'loathing' (KU 5:312), then it does not involve the expression of an aesthetic idea. That being said, we might think that a loathsome work of art involves the expression of an aesthetic idea by an artist whose genius has not yet had its 'wings clipped' by taste (KU 5:319). To decide this issue, an extended analysis of Kant's view of genius is needed, an analysis I cannot pursue further here.

[222] In Hemingway's *In Our Time*

[223] Of course, I do not hereby mean to suggest that these are the *only* concepts presented through these works, nor that these works *only* present concepts.

b. Aesthetic Ideas and the Presentation of Emotions

The experience category also includes aesthetic ideas that express two types of everyday emotions: 'affects' and emotions connected to thought and reflection. Beginning with the former type of emotion, Kant makes the claim that some aesthetic ideas present 'affects' in the context of his discussion of music.[224] An affect, on his account, is an emotion that arises immediately and suddenly as a response to a present situation; it involves "surprise through sensation."[225] Now, insofar as these emotions arise immediately and through sensation alone, Kant thinks they are 'unpremeditated', not grounded in thought and reflection.[226] If we were to all of a sudden feel anxious, joyful, or angry, then we would be experiencing an 'affect' in Kant's sense.[227]

According to Kant, it is music without words in particular that involves aesthetic ideas that present affects. As he puts it,

> those aesthetic ideas [involved in music] are not concepts nor determinate thoughts, the form of the composition of these sensations (harmony and melody) serves only… to express … the aesthetic ideas of a coherent whole [*eines zusammenhangenden Ganzen*] of an unutterable fullness of thought [*einer unnennbaren Gedankenfülle*], corresponding to a certain theme, which constitutes [*ausmacht*] the dominant affect of the piece.[228]

---

[224] See KU §29, 5:272, Anthro §§73-78, and MS 6:407-8

[225] Anthro 7: 252

[226] KU §29, 5:272fn

[227] See Anthro §§73-9 for these and other examples.

[228] KU 5:329

Rather than expressing concepts or thoughts, the aesthetic ideas involved in music express affects and, in Kant's words "speak through mere sensations without concepts."[229] He clarifies this claim further by comparing what a musician does to what we do in ordinary conversation. In ordinary conversation, we tend to focus primarily on the conceptual content communicated to us by a speaker. And, though, we are aware of affects and tones at work in the conversation, we treat those affects and tones as a means to understanding the speaker's thought. By contrast, Kant thinks a musician focuses primarily on the 'language of affects' and puts it 'into practice for itself alone, in all its force'.[230] Accordingly, the aesthetic idea a musician creates is one that does not present a concept or determinate thought, but rather a dominant affect.

Let's take as our example Chopin's *Étude in E Major* (Op. 10, No. 3). On a Kantian analysis, Chopin uses a plethora of musical devices to express a very rich emotion, evocative at times of sadness, homesickness, tenderness, and so forth. Indeed, the emotional wealth of this piece has earned it the nicknames '*Tristesse*' (sadness) and 'Farewell.' Now, if we were to rely on the standard interpretations of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas, we would be forced to analyze this piece in terms of moral concepts or rational ideas. But in so doing, it seems we would overlook what lay at the very heart of the piece, viz., its evocative emotional 'feel'. Fortunately, as this discussion of music has revealed, Kant does not require all aesthetic ideas to present concepts (in the narrow sense), acknowledging instead that some art will express affects.

---

[229] KU 5:328. The 'concepts' Kant has in mind here are not concepts qua the artist's intention, i.e. concepts in the 'broad sense', but rather concepts qua intellectual representations of the understanding or reason, i.e., concepts in the 'narrow sense'.

[230] KU 5:328

Although Kant raises the possibility of affect-presenting aesthetic ideas in the context of music, it seems to me that his view ought to allow for other art forms to do this as well. Take, for example, Mark Rothko's color field paintings and his claim that he is "interested only in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on."[231] At least in certain cases, the feelings of ecstasy and doom, at least, would fall into the category of affects. Indeed, Rothko's abstract titles for his pieces, e.g., 'No. 3/No. 13' (1949) or the lack of a title all together resists our efforts to find a convenient description for what we are seeing, and, often, throws us back on the feeling aroused in us by the colors we see. This would seem to suggest an interpretation of some of his paintings in line with Kant's account of music.

But setting affects aside, we find that Kant allows for aesthetic ideas to present another type of emotion, viz., emotion that involves thought and reflection.[232] This possibility is opened up, once again, by Kant's list of aesthetic ideas falling in the experience category in §49 and his inclusion of two emotions that can be connected to thought and reflection: envy and love.[233] To be sure, these particular emotions have moral overtones; however, as I argued previously, I take Kant's considered view to be that (almost) anything exemplified in experience can be presented through an aesthetic idea. Applying this now in the case of emotions connected with thought and reflection, his view should be that any emotion that can be exemplified in experience is a viable candidate for what an artist presents through an aesthetic idea. Take, for example, J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). One of the many things Salinger does in this novel is express several emotions related to coming of age, such as feeling cynical, alienated, and lonely. These are neither emotions that just arise suddenly, nor are they specifically moral; rather, they are the emotions connected to the adolescent period of his life.

---

[231] Rothko (2006): 119

[232] There are, at least two, species of this kind of reflective emotion: passions (see KU 5:272fn, Anthro §§74, 80-86, and MS 6:407-8) and moral feelings, like respect and (some forms of) love.

[233] In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant calls envy a 'passion', an emotion by his definition that is 'essentially different' from an affect because it involves a 'sensible *desire* that has become a lasting inclination (e.g., *hatred*, as opposed to anger)' (MS Part II, Section XV, 6:408). Likewise, though certain kinds of love can manifest as affects, e.g., falling in love (Anthro §74, 7:253;§80, 266), other forms of love, e.g., love without interest, will involve reflection (KU §29, 5:267).

§5. Aesthetic Ideas and Perceptual Experience

So far, we have seen that in addition to Kant allowing for some aesthetic ideas to present moral concepts and concepts of reason, he also allows for the content of some aesthetic ideas to touch on issues that are directly relevant to ordinary experience, viz., empirical concepts and everyday emotions, thus managing to do justice to our own sense of what is expressed through many works of art. But appreciating this aspect of his theory of aesthetic ideas will also help us make sense of another aspect of it, viz., the role he thinks aesthetic ideas play in enriching our perceptual experience of the world. This may come as something of a surprise. For one thing, it is not the perceptual function, but the moral function of aesthetic ideas that commentators have focused on precisely because this is something Kant himself tends to privilege.[234] What is more, it may seem as if Kant's analysis of aesthetic ideas *as aesthetic*, in fact, rules out the possibility of them having a perceptual function. After all, Kant's opening move in §1 is to contrast the 'aesthetic' with the 'cognitive', claiming that, "The judgment of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgment, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic."[235] Given that perceptual experience is a species of cognition, how could Kant think aesthetic ideas could play a role in it?

---

[234] See the discussion of KU §52 in §3 above and Allison (2001): 254-267, Zuidevaart (2003), and Rogerson (2008) 93-99. Exceptions to this trend include Lüthe (1984): 72-74 who argues that aesthetic ideas can help us expand the sensible associations we make with concepts related to objects of experience, and Savile (1987) who makes the suggestive, but not fully developed claim that many aesthetic ideas provide us "with a deeper and more extensive comprehension (intellectual and surely affective too) of the (rational) ideas which [the artist] takes as his theme" (171).

In what follows, I show that even if a judgment of taste is not cognitive, this in no way precludes aesthetic ideas from having *effects* in our perceptual lives. Indeed, we shall find that throughout his analysis of aesthetic ideas, Kant emphasizes the perceptual benefits they have for us. To be sure, this perceptual value is another value aesthetic ideas have alongside their moral one; however, if we are to do justice to Kant's doctrine of aesthetic ideas as a whole, we need to take into account the different functions he accords them. Indeed, his recognition of the different ways in which art can be valuable in our lives is one of the more attractive and plausible aspects of his view, one that the inclusive interpretation can restore to it.

That Kant is committed to aesthetic ideas having a perceptual function emerges clearly in §49. There, he claims that when the imagination adds aesthetic attributes to a concept, this brings two cognitive capacities, the imagination and understanding, to life:

> the aesthetic idea…which is combined with such a manifold of partial representations… therefore allows the addition to a concept of much that is unnamable, the feeling of which animates [*belebt*] the cognitive faculties and combines spirit with the mere letter of language.[236]

He argues that this, in turn, serves cognition:

> the imagination is free to provide, beyond that concord with the concept, unsought extensive undeveloped material for the understanding… which it applies, not so

---

[235] KU 5:203

[236] KU 5:316

> much objectively, for cognition, as subjectively, for the animation [*zur Belebung*] of the cognitive powers, and thus also *indirectly to cognitions*.[237]

In these passages, we find Kant highlighting two aspects of aesthetic ideas that allow them to contribute to cognition: they, one, animate our cognitive capacities, and, two, expand the concepts of our understanding. Even if this occurs in the context of our making a judgment of taste, as Kant emphasizes at the end of the second passage, it can nevertheless contribute *indirectly* to cognition, hence our perceptual experience. That is to say, the cognitive function of aesthetic ideas hinges on what we bring away from our encounter with a work of art.

To see exactly how aesthetic ideas can affect cognition, let's begin by considering the benefits of the animation of our cognitive powers by a work of art. Kant's analysis of this feature of aesthetic ideas comes to the fore most prominently in his discussion of the pictorial arts, which he takes to include sculpture, architecture, painting, and pleasure gardens. On his view, the pictorial arts involve spatial, corporeally extended objects that engage the very same cognitive capacities that are at work in outer sense perception.[238] And he claims that by animating those capacities, the pictorial arts can lead to the development of them, or, as he puts it, to "the enlargement [*Erweiterung*] of the faculties that must join together in the power of judgment for the sake of cognition."[239] In so doing, Kant claims that the pictorial arts 'conduct a business':

> while [the pictorial arts] set the imagination into a free play that is nevertheless also suitable for the understanding, *at the same time* they conduct a business [*Geschäft*] by bringing about a product that serves the concepts of the understanding as an

---

[237] KU 5:317, my emphasis

[238] KU 5:321

[239] KU 5:329

> enduring and self-recommending vehicle [*einem dauerhaften und für sich selbst sich empfehlenden Vehikel*] for its unification with sensibility.[240]

So, for Kant, a pictorial work of art does not just stimulate imaginative play, but also serves us by acting as an 'enduring and self-recommending vehicle' for the unification of our cognitive capacities. I take Kant's idea to be that pictorial works of art, unlike most objects we encounter in ordinary perception, intrigue us and we find ourselves lingering over them. This, in turn, affords our cognitive capacities an opportunity to explore and investigate the piece and to spur one another on in this activity. Consider, for example, Vermeer's *Milkmaid* (1658). Though we, perhaps, begin by relying on our sensible capacities to notice various details, e.g., the lighting, the pleats on her dress, the look on her face, etc., eventually a theme that engages our understanding begins to emerge: that of quiet or contentment in the everyday. With this theme, our gaze returns to the piece, as we find new details and patterns, something that, in turn, enriches our understanding of the piece.

But as we have already seen, although Kant thinks this animation of our cognitive capacities is helpful in our experience of art, he also thinks it 'conducts a business' by leading to an expansion of those capacities, which can, in turn, serve us in perceptual experience. It is perhaps easiest to see why aesthetic ideas lead to an expansion of the imagination. As we saw in the previous chapter, Kant emphasizes that though the imagination is 'constrained' by the understanding in theoretical cognition, in the aesthetic context, it is 'free'.[241] And Kant thinks that this free exercise results in an enlarged, more developed imagination, which can subsequently be useful in perception. To be sure, this does not mean that the aesthetic use of the imagination can ground any particular theoretical cognition; rather, it means that if we develop our imaginative capacities, i.e., our capacities for synthesis and schematism, in aesthetic experience, then they will become more effective in their cognitive use. Kant ascribes various typical roles to the imagination in cognition, e.g., apprehending the manifold of intuition, making associations, forming images, schematizing concepts, etc., and his suggestion, now, is that the performance of the imagination in these cognitive roles will improve if it is given the chance to develop in aesthetic experience.[242] Thanks to the expansion of my imagination, I am perhaps able to apprehend more or draw finer distinctions in a single manifold, make more associations, form new or more thorough images, or develop new schemata for new concepts: all of which enhances my theoretical cognition of the world. It is here that we find the cognitive benefit of an enlarged imagination.

---

[240] KU 5:329, my emphasis

[241] KU 5:317

However, according to Kant, it is not just the imagination that develops in our engagement with the pictorial arts, but our understanding is likewise enlarged. There are several angles from which we can appreciate this expansion of the understanding. To begin, as we just saw, Kant claims that a pictorial work of art 'serves the concepts of the understanding' by providing it with an occasion to unify with our sensible capacities. Now, on his view, it is not always easy for the concepts of the understanding to be unified with sensibility. Sensibility and understanding are, in a certain sense, at cross-purposes: while sensibility is oriented towards what is particular (intuitions), the understanding is oriented towards what is general (concepts).[243] As a result, Kant suggests that sensibility and understanding "to be sure cannot manage without each other but… nevertheless cannot readily be united with each other without constraint and mutual harm."[244] But, as we saw with the Vermeer, this tendency appears to be overcome in our experience of pictorial works of art, which, in fact, serve our understanding and its concepts by encouraging it to unify and work together with our sensible capacities. Given the fruitfulness of this unification, the understanding should be led to develop a new or, at least, heightened disposition to seek out this kind of interplay, and in this regard, the understanding is enlarged. Yet, a disposition towards collaborating with sensibility and imagination is something that will surely serve us in theoretical cognition as well: as we find more ways in which our intuitions and concepts fit together or come apart, we will gain a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the world around us.

---

[242] See the A Deduction for Kant's discussion of the imagination and the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction, as well as his discussion of image formation (especially, A98-102, A112-123). For his discussion of schematism and more on images, see Chapter 1 of the Analytic of Principles (A137-147/B176-187).

But there is second way in which the understanding can be enlarged and this brings us to Kant's view that aesthetic ideas can perform a cognitive function by 'expanding' our empirical concepts.[245] In order to appreciate this point, we need to recognize that, for Kant, we can think of the content of an empirical concept in, at least, two different ways. To be sure, a concept has what we can think of as 'logical content', which grounds our theoretical cognitions. But Kant's analysis of aesthetic ideas points toward a further 'aesthetic content' of a concept, where the aesthetic content includes things like subjective connections and aesthetic 'feels'. It is to this latter kind of content that an artist can contribute; hence, Kant's claim that aesthetic ideas can add 'extensive undeveloped material' to a concept of the understanding.[246] For example, though Marcel Proust surely uses the famous passage about a tea-soaked madeleine from *Swann's Way* (1913) to many ends, one of the concepts it enriches for me is that of a madeleine.[247] The aesthetic idea and attributes involved in that passage augment my concept of a madeleine with subjective characteristics, like memory, childhood, and nostalgia.[248] To be sure, *Swann's Way* has not therefore broadened the logical content of the concept 'madeleine'; nevertheless, by expanding the aesthetic content of this concept, my understanding has been enriched with respect to that concept.

---

[243] See A320/B377

[244] KU 5:321

[245] See also Lüthe (1984): 72-74

However, once again, Kant maintains that this feature of an aesthetic idea has value not only in an aesthetic context, but also in a cognitive context. Using language we have already seen, Kant claims that by expanding the aesthetic content of our concepts, aesthetic ideas also conduct a 'business' by nourishing our understanding:

> The poet … accomplishes something that is worthy of business [*Geschäft*], namely providing nourishment to the understanding in play, and giving life to its concepts through the imagination.[249]

When we grasp only the logical content of a concept, we may not feel any subjective connection to that concept: perhaps it seems dry, boring, unexciting, etc. As a result, we may not enjoy theoretically engaging with or pursuing it. But when we encounter that concept in a work of art, it may suddenly become vivid, arousing our attention. Now, according to Kant, this can give nourishment to our understanding in play: we may find ourselves entertaining new possibilities or looking at the concept in different ways. As a result, our understanding is expanded as new horizons of theoretical cognition can open up to us. Reading Proust, for example, may incite us to pursue the concept of a madeleine, memory, or childhood, further in ordinary or, even, scientific cognition.[250] And though, again, the aesthetic content of a concept does not ground any particular theoretical judgment, nevertheless it can enlarge our understanding both by extending its concepts and by opening it to new horizons to pursue in our theoretical endeavors.

---

[246] KU 5:316, 317

[247] Proust (2002): 47-8

[248] Such that now whenever I eat a madeleine, my thoughts cannot help but circle back to Proust.

[249] KU 5:321

Finally, let's turn to how the aesthetic ideas that present emotions can play a cognitive function: they can contribute to our ability to perceive others, as well as our own selves. Though Kant does not dwell on this point, perhaps wishing to distance himself from 'psychological' approaches to aesthetics, e.g., Edmund Burke's,[251] his discussion of music certainly points in this direction. As we saw above, Kant argues that when we converse with other people in ordinary life, their speech will involve both the expression of affect, as well as the thoughts they wish to communicate.[252] However, in order to fully understand those thoughts and what the speaker wishes to communicate, we need to perceive the emotional tone, the affect, of their speech.[253] This perceptual competence with tone is something that music and its aesthetic ideas may help us with. Exposure to music not only makes us sensitive to affect, but also can help us discriminate the different shades of those affects: we are not just moved by the sadness we hear in Chopin's *Étude in E Major*, we are confronted with the different ways in which sadness can sound. This training in affect could, in turn, be utilized in our conversation with other people, aiding us in a more thorough grasp of what they are trying to communicate.

---

[250] Take, for example, Jonah Lehrer's (2007) use of Proust in *Proust Was a Neuroscientist*.

[251] See KU 5:277-8

[252] See Anthro 7:155

[253] See KU 5:328: "every expression of language has, in context, a tone that is appropriate to its sense; that this tone more or less designates an affect of the speaker and conversely also produces one in the hearer, which then in turn arouses in the latter the idea that is expressed in the language by means of such tone."

But even outside the context of verbal communication, we find that we can gain insight into our selves and others through an engagement with art that expresses emotion. Indeed, when we engage with a work of art whose aesthetic idea puts an emotion on display, we have a chance to investigate it without the 'stakes' involved in our ordinary exchanges with others. Art, as it were, gives us this distance, a distance that is useful for understanding the psychology of emotions. When we, for example, read Hughes's 'Wind', we are free to reflect on and contemplate how Hughes expresses the emotions associated with the end of the love affair, without ourselves being directly involved. This 'education' in emotions is one that we can, in turn, bring to bear on our ability to perceive a range of emotions in other people and in our own selves. In this way, art whose aesthetic ideas present emotions can distinctively aid in our efforts to perceive the nuances and subtlety involved in various human emotions, and, in turn, serve our cognition of human psychology.[254]

Far from it being the case, then, that aesthetic ideas can play no role in our perceptual experience, we find Kant offering a rich account of the various perceptual benefits of art. But given that Kant thinks aesthetic ideas engage the very same capacities, concepts, and emotions at work in ordinary cognition, it only makes sense that the aesthetic animation of those capacities, expansion of those concepts, or display of those emotions can enhance our cognitive lives as well.

---

[254] Without the inclusive interpretation, I think we can get, at best, a rather weak reading of the cognitive function of aesthetic ideas, according to which they could play a regulative role in cognition (see A508/B536-A515/B543). One could argue that the status of aesthetic ideas as maximal representations, which involve the connection of a wide array of intuitions to a concept, might act as a goal for us to pursue in cognition. However, this interpretation is a relatively thin one: the cognitive function of aesthetic ideas would, then, have little to do with the content of those ideas, but rather with their formal status as ideas. But, as I have argued, there is room on Kant's account to give a more robust, content-oriented account of the cognitive function of aesthetic ideas, which I believe does more justice to his views on this issue.

§6. The Aesthetic Enrichment of Perception

Ultimately, these considerations give us reason to revise the standard interpretations of Kant's account of aesthetic ideas. Though the moral interpretation is surely correct to emphasize that some aesthetic ideas, indeed ones that Kant privileges, present moral concepts, and though the rational interpretation is surely correct to emphasize that the concepts of reason presented by aesthetic ideas need not all be moral, neither interpretation can accommodate the aesthetic ideas that present empirical concepts and everyday emotions. Though these latter ideas may not have as much 'moral' worth as the former ideas, nevertheless Kant does accord them 'cognitive' worth, maintaining that they can augment our perceptual experience of the world, others, and our own selves.

These considerations, in turn, point toward the fact that far from the analysis of aesthetic ideas and genius being relevant only to his theory of aesthetic experience, Kant, in fact, uses this analysis to uncover something about ordinary perception. Indeed, just as we saw in the Schematism chapter of the first *Critique*, in his efforts to elucidate the nature of perceptual experience, Kant thinks it is fruitful to appeal to aesthetic notions and draw on aesthetic experience. This might be surprising if we thought Kant's theory of perception pivots only around sensibility and understanding; however, from the outset of the first *Critique*, Kant is clear that the productive imagination is, as he puts it, a "necessary ingredient in perception."[255] Given that we are perhaps most familiar with the exercise of the productive imagination in the aesthetic domain, it seems like a natural resource for Kant to turn to in order to clarify what he takes to be the crucial, if hidden aesthetic dimension of mundane perceptual experience. And, as we shall see in the following chapters, it is precisely this rich aesthetic texture of Kant's theory of perception that a century and a half later will inspire the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

---

[255] A120fn

Chapter Five: From Kant to Merleau-Ponty

Before we turn more directly to what I shall argue are the Kantian themes present in Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception, in this chapter I want to offer a brief discussion of Merleau-Ponty's more general attitude towards Kant's philosophy. It has become commonplace to read Merleau-Ponty as an *anti-Kantian*, i.e., to suppose that he dismisses Kant's philosophy out of hand as overly intellectualist and intends for his own philosophy to challenge and hopefully supplant Kant's.[256] To be sure, there are some *idealist* aspects of Kant's philosophy that Merleau-Ponty will reject; however, Merleau-Ponty was also sensitive to what he regards as *proto-phenomenological* features of Kant's philosophy that he will, in fact, appropriate. In what follows, I want to trace Merleau-Ponty's motives for seeing Kant's philosophy as being pulled in these two idealist and phenomenological directions.

Let's begin with what Merleau-Ponty takes to be the idealist, intellectualist side of Kant. That Merleau-Ponty was disposed to read Kant along these lines is unsurprising given that his understanding of Kant was influenced by two French Neo-Kantians: Léon Brunscvicg and Pierre Lachièze-Rey. As a student at the École Normal Supérieure from 1926 to 1930, Merleau-Ponty's education was indelibly shaped by Brunschvicg, one of the foremost figures in the French university system. Indeed Brunschvicg, alongside Henri Bergson, dominated the French philosophical scene for the first three decades of the 20th century.[257] As Merleau-Ponty retrospectively remarks,

---

[256] We find this notably in the Dreyfus-McDowell debates: Dreyfus (2006); McDowell (2007a), (2007b). We also find it in the literature on Merleau-Ponty (see Carman (2005): 59, (2008a): 12, (2008b): 47; Matthews (2006): 31; Romdenh-Romluc (2011): 20, 54l and Rockmore (2011): Chapter 6), as well as in the literature on Kant (see Waxman (1991): 18, 195, 212fn40; Longuenesse (1998): 204, 271, 395; and Melnick (2009): 126-130).

> Around 1930, when I finished my philosophical studies, how did things appear in France, from the philosophical point of view? It may be said that two influences, and only two, were dominant, and that the first of these was much more important: the key philosophical thought of the epoch in France had been that of Léon Brunschvicg… There was quite another influence at the same time as Brunschvicg, but it remained in the background for diverse reasons: this was the influence of Henri Bergson.[258]

Summarizing Brunschvicg's influence, Merleau-Ponty claims,

> Brunschvicg transmitted to us the heritage of idealism, as Kant understood it. For him, this idealism was flexible, but it was nonetheless for the most part Kantian idealism. We became acquainted with Kant… through Brunschvicg.[259]

Merleau-Ponty was thus disposed to understand Kant's philosophy in the following vein:

> this philosophy principally consisted of a reflexive endeavor, a *return to the self*. Whether pertaining to the perception of the objects that surround us or to scholarly activity, [Brunschvicg's] philosophy in all cases sought to grasp both exterior perception and the constructions of science as *creative and constructive activities of the mind*.[260]

In addition to Brunschvicg, Merleau-Ponty was also encouraged to read Kant as this sort of idealist by Lachièze-Rey. Although he was not as dominant a figure as Brunschvicg, Lachièze-Rey's work *L'idéalisme kantien* (1932) was one of the most influential Kant interpretations available at that time and one Merleau-Ponty was quite familiar with. What *L'idéalisme kantien* suggested to Merleau-Ponty was that Kant's philosophy involved "a return to the human being as the power to construct"[261] and that Kant thinks of "the experience of

---

[257] For a discussion of Brunschvicg's place in the university system, as well as a discussion of his philosophy more generally, see Gutting (2001): 40-48, Schrift (2006): 10-18, 107-8.

[258] "The Philosophy of Existence" (TPE) in *Texts and Dialogues*: 130-1

[259] TPE 130

[260] TPE 130, my emphasis

[261] *Nature* 22

the world as a pure act of constituting consciousness."[262] Between Brunschvicg and Lachièze-Rey, then, Merleau-Ponty was encouraged to read Kant as the ultimate 'intellectualist', i.e., as a philosopher who places the constituting and constructive mental activities of the subject at the heart of the human experience.

Now, as any reader of the *Phenomenology of Perception* will be well aware, Merleau-Ponty has little sympathy for this intellectualism in Kant's philosophy. As Merleau-Ponty summarizes his critique of Kant in the Preface, by conceiving of the subject as a constituting consciousness, Kant's philosophy "ceases to adhere to our experience and substitutes a reconstruction for a description."[263] He levies this charge against Kant because he thinks Kant fails to recognize a basic truth about the subject: we do not *constitute* or *construct* the world, we are *thrown into* a world we did not create.[264]

Although Merleau-Ponty eschews this strain of idealism in Kant's philosophy, it is important to acknowledge that he is aware of another strain in Kant, a phenomenological one, which he is quite drawn to. To this end, Merleau-Ponty was influenced by another set of Kant interpretations: Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*,[265] the German Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*,[266] and Lachièze-Rey's two shorter essays,

---

[262] *Phenomenology of Perception* (PhP): 253/290 (citations to the *Phenomenology* are to the English pagination/original French pagination). See also Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Lachièze-Rey's idealist view of the subject in 'The Cogito' chapter: 388-392/428432

[263] PhP xxiii/10

[264] See, e.g., SZ ¶29 and PhP 228/265, 341/383. In this vein, Merleau-Ponty takes over Heidegger's notion of 'being-in-the-world' [*In-der-Welt-sein*] (or '*être au monde*' for Merleau-Ponty) in *Being and Time* to characterize our most fundamental relationship to the world. See, e.g., PhP xxiv/11, xxviii/15.

[265] Merleau-Ponty cites Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* in the 'Temporality' chapter (PhP 561fn 22/484, 561fn 29/488, 561fn 31/489.

'The Possible Use of Kant's Schematism for a Theory of Perception' [*Utilisation possible du schématisme Kantien pour une théorie de la perception*] and 'Reflections on the Constituting Activity of the Spirit' [*Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante*].[267] Between these interpretations and his own exegesis of the first and third *Critiques*, Merleau-Ponty came to regard Kant as the forerunner of the phenomenological movement.

This led Merleau-Ponty to conclude that ultimately Kant's philosophy is pulled in two directions: towards idealism and towards phenomenology. There are, in particular, two passages that I think illustrate Merleau-Ponty's final evaluation of Kant along these lines. The first occurs in the 'Sensing' chapter of the *Phenomenology* in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Kant's view of experience.[268] On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Kant for at times taking an 'intellectualist' approach to experience and maintaining that it involves the interaction between a constituting subject who exists entirely 'for-itself' and constituted objects which exist 'for-us'.[269] On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty lauds Kant for at other times endorsing a more phenomenological approach to experience:

> As Kant himself said with insight, what is given is experience, or in other words the communication of a finite subject with an opaque being from which the subject emerges, but also in which the subject remains engaged.[270]

---

[266] See, e.g., Merleau-Ponty's claim that the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* contains "phenomenological and even existential analyses… of which we will again have to make use" (PhP 522fn 67/160). This will be the topic of Chapter Six.

[267] This will be the topic of Chapter Seven.

[268] PhP 226-230/263-267

[269] PhP 226-7/263

[270] PhP 227-8/264. I take Merleau-Ponty to have in mind Kant's claim in the Introduction to the first *Critique*, that "There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience; for how else should the cognitive faculty be awakened into exercise if not through objects that stimulate our senses and in part themselves produce representations, in part bring the activity of our understanding into motion to compare these, to connect or separate them, and thus to work up the raw material of sensible impressions into a

That Merleau-Ponty thinks of this as a phenomenological insight is evidenced by the fact that he immediately connects Kant's view to Husserl's view of experience in the *Cartesian Meditations* as a "pure and, so to speak, still-mute experience that must be brought to the pure expression of its own sense."[271] But the phenomenological parallels do not end here: Merleau-Ponty goes on to connect Kant's view of experience to Heidegger's view of facticity.[272] He claims that, "Kant already showed that the *a priori* is not knowable prior to experience, that is, outside the horizon of facticity."[273] To be sure, Merleau-Ponty immediately acknowledges that these phenomenological claims cut across Kant's intellectualist ones; however, Merleau-Ponty argues this is because Kant,

> has not followed his own program to its logical conclusion, for he set out to define our powers of knowledge through our factual condition and that should have obliged him to place every conceivable being against the background of this factual world.[274]

In effect, in this passage Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that even if Kant got carried away with his idealism, his philosophy is driven by a fundamental phenomenological view of human experience.[275]

We also find this assessment of Kant in Merleau-Ponty's *Nature* course notes. In this text, Merleau-Ponty argues that Kant's analysis of sensibility and understanding in the first

---

cognition of objects that is called experience? As far as time is concerned, then, no cognition in us precedes experience, and with experience every cognition begins" (B1).

[271] PhP 228/264, citing Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*: 38-9.

[272] See, e.g., SZ ¶12

[273] PhP 229/266

[274] PhP 229/226

[275] This is much the same thesis as we find in Heidegger's Kant interpretations (PIK and KPM), the latter of which Merleau-Ponty cites in the 'Temporality' chapter (PhP 561fn 22/484, 561fn 29/488, 561fn 31/489.

Critique betrays the tension between phenomenology and idealism in his view. Merleau-Ponty claims that Kant's discussion of sensibility in the Transcendental Aesthetic reveals that Kant recognizes the 'finitude' and 'facticity' of human experience:[276] insofar as our experience depends on our being passively affected by the world, it is contingent on a world being *given* to us.[277] However, in Kant's discussion of the understanding in the Transcendental Analytic, Merleau-Ponty maintains that Kant switches from focusing on "human being as happenstance" and focuses on the "human being as a power to construct."[278] On Merleau-Ponty's gloss of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant commits himself to the view that objects are constituted by the subject: "I carry within myself the possibility of an "object.""[279] According to Merleau-Ponty, we thus find in the Aesthetic and Analytic, "two directions in Kant. Within human contingence (*quid facti*) he discovers a positing power (*quid juris*). Human being is a facticity that gives itself validity de jure."[280] In fact, Merleau-Ponty argues that insofar as Kant is pulled in both of these directions he does not endorse the more extreme idealism that Brunschvicg does: for Brunschvicg, unlike for

---

[276] Nature 21, 22

[277] Nature 21

[278] Nature 22

[279] Nature 22. See, e.g., A104-6.

[280] Nature 22. Merleau-Ponty suggests that this tension in Kant's view of the human being has a correlate in his view of Nature: "On the one hand, Nature is something about which we cannot say anything except through our senses; hence the agnosticism of this idea. On every side, there is something fortuitous that we cannot know. On the other hand, Nature is know as *constructum*; it is the return to Spinozism. Kant's entire philosophy is an effort to unify these two meanings" (Nature 23). And Merleau-Ponty goes on to suggest that it is in his analysis of reflecting judgment in the third *Critique* that Kant is able to "connect these two meanings" (Nature 23). Merleau-Ponty also suggests that this tension is at work in Kant's theory of space (and likewise time): "space is at first the manner in which we are affected, a brute given of our human constitution; later on, it is no longer contingency but rather intrinsic necessity, synonymous with the possibility of a constitution of an object for us" (Nature 27, for a similar discussion of time, see Nature 28).

Kant, "Everything is constructed and given at once. The Kantian hiatus between the given and the constructed no longer exists"[281] Here, it appears that Kant's phenomenological commitments save him from being the intellectualist *par excellence*.

What the preceding discussion reveals is that Merleau-Ponty was a rather sensitive interpreter of Kant. Though he acknowledges that there are idealist themes in Kant's philosophy, he also acknowledges that the sort of phenomenological insights that drive Husserl, Heidegger, and himself are to be found in a nascent form in Kant's work. This, in turn, puts pressure on the predominant way of reading Merleau-Ponty as an anti-Kantian and reveals that more attention needs to be directed towards the *pro-Kantian* aspects of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy.

In the following chapters, I aim to take a step in this direction by examining the influence of Kant's philosophy of perception on Merleau-Ponty's own. More specifically, I shall show that Merleau-Ponty was drawn to precisely the same *aesthetic* features of Kant's theory of perception that we discussed in the preceding chapters. Indeed, I shall argue that various aspects of Merleau-Ponty's approach to perception are best understood as developments of Kant's theory of the productive imagination (Chapter Six), schematism (Chapter Seven), and genius and aesthetic ideas (Chapter Eight) from a phenomenological perspective.

---

[281] Nature 27

Chapter Six: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Productive Imagination

§1. Introduction

In this chapter, I shall begin exposing what I take to be the Kantian roots of Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception by examining his appropriation of Kant's theory of the productive imagination. In order to do this, however, I shall be turning to Merleau-Ponty's engagement with the German Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer. I believe Cassirer's use of Kant's productive imagination in the third volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1929) was instrumental in uncovering the productive imagination as a resource for Merleau-Ponty to develop from within a phenomenological framework.[282] In which case, I shall orient this chapter around an analysis of Merleau-Ponty's relation to Cassirer and, thereby Kant, on the topic of the productive imagination.

One of the more striking aspects of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* is his use of psychological case studies in pathology. For Merleau-Ponty, a philosophical interpretation of phenomena like aphasia and psychic blindness promises to shed light not just on the nature of pathology, but on the nature of human existence more generally.[283] Yet although Merleau-Ponty is surely a pioneer in this use of pathology, in this chapter I show his work is deeply indebted to an earlier philosophical study of pathology offered by Cassirer in the third volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. More specifically, I argue that

---

[282] Citations to *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis* (PSFv3) will be to the English pagination/original German pagination.

[283] Though Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the 'phantom limb' phenomena in the chapter titled 'The Body as an Object and Mechanistic Physiology' has garnered quite a bit of attention (see Gallagher (1995) and Carman (2008b): 98-102), in this paper I shall focus, instead, on the pathologies related to aphasia, agnosia, and apraxia, which are the subject of the chapters titled "The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity', 'The Body as a Sexed Bein', and 'The Body as Expression, and Speech'.

Merleau-Ponty, in fact, follows Cassirer in placing Kant's notion of the *productive imagination* at the center of his account of pathology and the features of existence it illuminates.

Recognizing Merleau-Ponty's debt to Cassirer and the Kantian tradition in this regard is crucial for two reasons. In the first place, it recommends we revise the prevailing way of interpreting Merleau-Ponty's use of pathology. Though the details of their views diverge, influential commentators like Hubert Dreyfus and Komarine Romdenh-Romluc agree insofar as they take Merleau-Ponty to use pathology primarily to teach us about *bodily action and movement*.[284] Even if this line of interpretation, which I shall label the 'motor-centric' interpretation, captures aspects of Merleau-Ponty's account, I show that it has too narrow a focus and leads us to neglect Merleau-Ponty's more fundamental aims with pathology, viz., elucidating what makes it possible for us to engage with the world in a wide variety of ways, as much through movement and perception, as through thought and emotion. I claim this is ultimately why Merleau-Ponty is drawn to the Kantian account of the productive imagination, a capacity that underwrites the different ways we engage with the world through 'sensibility' and 'understanding'.

However, there may be a reason that those writing about Merleau-Ponty's pathology have overlooked its Kantian features, viz., the prevailing tendency to interpret Merleau-Ponty as anti-Kantian. In this chapter, I shall begin rebutting this view by showing that although there are no doubt aspects of Kant's philosophy that Merleau-Ponty rejects, his theory of the productive imagination is not one of them. As we shall find, in virtue of his sensitive reading of Kant and Cassirer with respect to the productive imagination, rather than rejecting this feature of the Kantian account, Merleau-Ponty, in fact, gives it a central place within his account of pathology and, indeed, human existence.

---

[284] See Dreyfus (2007), Romdenh-Romluc (2007), (2011), as well as Kelly (2000), Carman (2008a)

In order to expose the Kantian and Neo-Kantian roots of Merleau-Ponty's analysis of pathology, I begin with a discussion of Cassirer's interpretation of pathology and his argument that pathology can be traced back to a problem with the 'representation function', a function Cassirer aligns with the productive imagination (§2). I next turn to Merleau-Ponty's discussion of pathology in the *Phenomenology*, in which I analyze, first, to what extent Merleau-Ponty is critical of Cassirer (§3), and, second, how Merleau-Ponty takes over the core of Cassirer's view in his own account of pathology as a problem for the 'function of projection' (§4).

§2. Cassirer's Diagnosis of Pathology: The Representation Function

In the early decades of the 20th century, more and more attention was paid in psychology to problems in pathology. Psychologists, such as Henry Head, Adhemar Gelb, and Kurt Goldstein, conducted extensive research and published case studies on patients suffering from three interrelated types of disorders: aphasia, agnosia, and apraxia.[285] Whereas aphasia relates to disorders affecting speech, e.g., being unable to name the color of a swatch placed before you ('color amnesia'), agnosia relates to disorders affecting one's capacities for recognition, e.g., psychic blindness, and for thought, e.g., being unable to perform basic arithmetic or understand analogies and metaphors. Meanwhile apraxia relates to disorders affecting one's capacity for action and movement: while a patient may be able to perform a

---

[285] I mention Head, Gelb, and Goldstein because they figure prominently in Cassirer's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts; however, they were also both familiar with the work of Pierre Marie, W. van Woerkom, Wilhelm Benary, and Hugo Liepmann.

‘concrete action’ in response to an actual task, e.g., sewing a wallet at work, she may be unable to perform an ‘abstract action’ in response to a merely imagined or possible scenario, e.g., mimicking the act of sewing a wallet in a psychologist’s office.

In the 1920s, Cassirer became familiar with this research and came to regard it as a source of philosophical insight.[286] This culminates in a lengthy chapter in the third volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* titled, ‘Toward a Pathology of the Symbolic Consciousness’. As the title of the chapter suggests, Cassirer thinks pathology can teach us something about ‘symbolic consciousness’ and, in particular, he thinks it reveals something about what he calls the ‘function of representation’ [*Darstellungsfunktion*], a topic to which we shall now turn.

2.1 The representation function

For our purposes, one of the most salient features of Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* is his claim that our consciousness is structured in such a way that we cannot have perceptual experiences that are devoid of meaning.[287] Targeting sense-data views, Cassirer takes issue with the claim that perception involves meaningless sense data we, then, interpret or mentally process: “We can never completely separate the sensory as such, as some naked “raw material” of sensation, from the whole complex of meaning relationships.”[288] Though Cassirer allows for the possibility that after the fact we can distinguish matter and meaning

---

[286] For a discussion of Cassirer and pathology, see Krois (2007).

[287] For a broader discussion of Cassirer’s Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, see Krois (1987), Bayer (2001), Luft (2004), Barash (2008), Friedman (2011).

[288] ‘Problem of the Symbol’ 416. See also PSFv3 14-5/18.

(form) *in reflection*, he denies that *in experience* the two can be separate. In experience, he claims, they form an "indivisible unity."[289]

In order to explain what in our consciousness provides for such pervasive meaningful perception, Cassirer introduces the notion of a 'symbolic function'. He characterizes a symbolic function as a structure of consciousness that allows us to experience the world in 'symbolic' form, i.e., it allows us to perceive the objects present to us as *symbols* of some meaning. Cassirer defines a symbol as "the different way [sensory matter] appears and how it signifies and refers, according to the perspective of meaning under which it comes," where the 'perspective of meaning' that determines what the object symbolizes is a symbolic function of consciousness.[290] He identifies three such 'symbolic functions': the expressive function [*Ausdrucksfunktion*], the representation function [*Darstellungsfunktion*], and the signification function [*Bedeutungsfunktion*]. Insofar as each function is a unique 'perspective of meaning', they allow us to perceive things as symbolic in a distinctive way. The expressive function allows us to see other persons, animate objects, and even inanimate objects as expressing subjective states, e.g., seeing someone's gesture as angry or a dog's face as puzzled.[291] Meanwhile, the signification function is what enables us to take things to be a symbol of 'pure relations', such as mathematical relations or logical relations, e.g., seeing a wavy line as a symbol of the Sine function.[292]

---

[289] 'Problem of the Symbol' 416. As he puts it in the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, "From the standpoint of phenomenological inquiry there is no more a "matter in itself" than a "form in itself"; there are only total experiences [*Gesamterlebnisse*] which can be compared from the standpoint of matter and form" (PSFv3 199/230).

[290] 'Problem of the Symbol' 416

[291] The expressive function corresponds to the cultural form 'myth' (see PSFv2).

In between the expressive and signification functions lies the representation function. According to Cassirer, the representation function allows us to understand what is present to us here and now as a *sign* of a meaning that is not only not-present, but also could be encountered in another situation:

> [with the representation function] the content first gains the imprint of a new universal form without losing its material 'particularity'… it has become a sign which enables us to *recognize* [*wiederzuerkennen*] it again when it appears… for only then does it become possible to find again in the simple, as it were, punctual "here" and "now" of present experience a "not-here" and a "not-now".[293]

For example, through the representation function, I am able to see this apple as a 'sign' of the concept 'red', where this concept is neither wholly located in, nor exhausted by this apple. Otherwise put, for Cassirer, the representation function is what ultimately allows us to see things in the world as publicly accessible objects and as bearers of objective properties.[294]

According to Cassirer, however, the representation function does not make just *one* meaning available to us; it saturates the object we experience with several *possible* meanings, meanings we could take the object to signify if we varied our point of view. For example, though I may be focused right now on the redness of the apple, I could vary my point of view and take the apple to signify the concept 'apple', 'round', or 'McIntosh'. As Cassirer makes this point, when we are guided by the representation function, the objects we

---

[292] PSFv3 200/231-233. This function corresponds to the cultural forms of science and mathematics (see Part III, PSFv3).

[293] PSFv3 114/133. See also PSFv3 235/273.

[294] This function corresponds to the cultural form 'language' (see also PSFv1).

experience are surrounded by a 'vector of meaning'[*Sinn-Vektor*], where this vector includes not only the actual meaning I take the object to point to, but also its possible meanings.[295]

When explaining how the representation function works, Cassirer makes what may seem like a surprising claim for a Neo-Kantian: representation does not occur *discursively*, i.e., it does not occur through a judgment in which we subsume sense data under a concept.[296] As Cassirer puts it, we "are not dealing with bare perceptive data, on which some sort of apperceptive acts are later grafted, through which they are interpreted, judged, transformed."[297] In contrast to this discursive picture, Cassirer argues that the representation function proceeds through a particular *non-discursive* mode of perception that he calls 'pregnant perception' [*Wahrnehmungsprägnanz*].[298]

According to Cassirer, pregnant perception involves a 'form of vision' or a way of 'seeing' things as pregnant with meaning.[299] When we perceive the world in this way, Cassirer claims we immediately see the world as 'symbolically pregnant'.[300] He defines 'symbolic pregnancy' as follows:

---

[295] PSFv3 222/258

[296] Though there may be alternative ways of discussing discursivity, as we shall find for Cassirer and Merleau-Ponty discursivity involves the act of mentally processing sense data through concepts in a judgment.

[297] PSFv3 202/234

[298] See PSFv3 235/273, 238-240/277-280. Cassirer notes that this is something that particularly struck him in his own interaction with a particular pathological patient: "The difference between the "representative pregnanc[y]" that characterizes the normal recognition of objects and the groping "discursively combining" method employed by the patient struck me forcefully every time I had occasion to see and speak with him" (PSFv3 240 fn55/279 fn1).

[299] PSFv3 272/316

[300] For a discussion of Cassirer on symbolic pregnancy, see Rosengren (2007).

> By symbolic pregnanc[y] we mean the way in which a perception as a sensory experience contains at the same time a certain nonintuitive meaning [*"Sinn"*] which it immediately and concretely represents.[301]

Now, insofar as pregnant perception is guided by the representation function, the 'non-intuitive meaning' the object has will be rife with possibilities: the object is 'pregnant', as it were, with its vector of meaning. However, as I just mentioned, Cassirer claims that the object has this vector of meaning not on account of a discursive act, which give us a *mediate* grasp of what we perceive; instead, he claims pregnant perception *immediately has* its meaning without these acts:

> it is the perception itself which by virtue of its own immanent organization, takes on a kind of spiritual articulation—which, being ordered in itself, also belongs to a determine order of meaning [*Sinnfügung*]. In its full actuality, in its wholeness and liveliness [*Ganzheit und Lebendigkeit*], it is at the same time a life "in" meaning [*Sinn*]. It is not only subsequently received into this sphere but is, one might say, born into it.[302]

We do not *judge* that an object is meaningful in pregnant perception; we *see* that it is.

Though this analysis of the non-discursive nature of the representation function may at first seem un-Kantian, Cassirer, in fact, takes himself to be making a very Kantian claim, for in order to explain how perception can become pregnant without the aid of discursive thought, Cassirer appeals to Kant's notion of the 'productive imagination'.[303] On Cassirer's reading of Kant, the productive imagination is a capacity we have that shapes intuition, without relying on discursive thought. This emerges in Cassirer's gloss of Kant's claim that the productive imagination is a 'necessary ingredient of perception',[304]

---

[301] PSFv3 202/324

[302] PSFv3 202, translation modified/234

[303] Cassirer takes this to reflect Kant's considered position: although Kant at times appears to allow for formless matter and matterless form, Cassirer claims Kant's considered position (the one arrived at in the Transcendental Deduction) is that matter and form are not, in fact, different elements of experience, but rather two 'constitutive moments' of the whole of experience (PSFv3 9/13, 194-5/224-5).

> An "ingredient of perception" in the strict sense can never be a factor which is simply added to the given sensation… to reinterpret it by judgment… Here we have no such subsequent completion but an act of original formation [*Formung*]… The meaning [*Sinn*] [of the intuition] is to be understood neither as a secondary and conceptual [*sekundär-begriffliche*] nor as an associative addition: rather, it is the simple meaning [*Sinn*] of the original intuition itself.[305]

So, on Cassirer's interpretation, the productive imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception because it forms the perception from the outset, such that we see the world as imbued with meaning.

However, Cassirer has another reason to align the representation function with the productive imagination, viz., the tight connection he sees between our productive imagination and ability to 'see' possibilities. Building on Kant's claim that the imagination is a capacity for representing objects even without their presence in intuition, Cassirer claims our productive imaginations give us the "ability to interchange present and nonpresent, the real and the possible."[306] According to Cassirer, this means we are never stuck in just one way of looking at an object; rather, we can engage in 'free play' and vary our point of view so different meanings emerge.[307] Indeed, it is through this free play of our imagination that we project the vector of meaning that surrounds the object of pregnant perception.

---

[304] References to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (KrV) are to the section number and A and B pagination of the first and second editions: KrV A120fn. All other references are to the volume and page of *Kants gesammelte Schriften.*

[305] PSFv3 134/155-6

[306] PSFv3 271/315. See Kant KrV B151 and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* 7:154.

[307] PSFv3 271/315

2.2 The representation function and pathology

As noted previously, on Cassirer's view, the representation function malfunctions in pathological experience. Cassirer argues that in pathology a patient's productive imagination is compromised, her capacity for pregnant perception diminishes, and the vectors of meaning 'disintegrate'.[308] Cassirer is clear that this does *not* amount to a total loss of these capacities or the destruction of all vectors of meaning, "for that would mean the extinction of sensory consciousness itself"; rather his claim is that in pathology, the patient's perception is more restricted, it "moves within narrower limits, in smaller and more restricted circles than in the case of normal perception."[309]

More specifically, Cassirer claims that pathological patients become oriented primarily towards meanings that are connected to what is "immediately perceived and desired."[310] To make this point, Cassirer compares the behavior of a pathological patient to the "merely purposive behaviour within the biological sphere."[311] He claims that animal perception is driven by the animal's needs and goals: the animal sees what is in front of it in terms of what is 'to be eaten', 'to be avoided', 'to be pursued', etc.[312] This leads the animal to focus on what is immediately present and practically relevant. To be sure, Cassirer does not want to say a pathological patient is just like an animal; instead, he uses this comparison to elucidate the narrow circles of the patient's perception.

---

[308] PSFv3 222/257

[309] PSFv3 222/257

[310] PSFv3 277/322

[311] PSFv3 276/321. This is how Cassirer glosses Gelb and Goldstein's claim that a pathological patient's behavior is 'closer to life' (PSFv3 226/262, 275/320)

[312] PSFv3 276/321

This diminishing of pregnant perception and the vectors of meaning manifests itself variously in the different pathologies Cassirer considers. Let's begin with disorders that directly affect perceptual experience, viz., aphasia and perceptual agnosia. In his discussion of aphasia, Cassirer argues that a patient's inability to name items stems from his inability to engage in pregnant perception. In color amnesia, for example, Cassirer suggests that the patient is unable to name a colored swatch because he no longer sees this swatch as a sign of the relevant color-species. Instead, the patient is focused exclusively on the immediate features of the swatch, e.g., its particular brightness and tone.[313]

Moving on to his analysis of perceptual agnosia, e.g., psychic or tactile blindness, we find that here too Cassirer argues that patients can no longer engage in pregnant perception, albeit in a more extreme form: it is not just that the patient's imagination fails to project multiple possible meanings around an object, the patient cannot even perceive aspects of an object as 'signs' *of* a particular object. For example, the patient cannot immediately grasp spatial features he perceive, e.g., something being 'wide below and narrow on top' or 'evenly broad and narrow', as features *of* an object.[314] Instead, he can arrive at an identification of the object only by resorting to the mediation of discursive thought.[315] Describing his own observations of a particular patient, Cassirer notes that, at first, the patient sees only 'a long black line with something wide on top' and that 'the thing on top is transparent and has four bars', and then draws the inference that the object is, therefore, a lamppost.[316]

---

[313] PSFv3 225-7/261-3

[314] PSFv3 239-240/278

[315] PSFv3 239-240/279

However, for Cassirer, the inability to 'see' in terms of possibilities does not just beset the way we perceive the world, it undermines our ability to grasp things *in thought* as well. This emerges in Cassirer's discussion of intellectual disturbances and cognitive agnosia related to arithmetical, analogical, and metaphorical thought. In order to perform basic arithmetic, Cassirer suggests we must be able to regard the numbers in different possible ways. For example, in order to do the equation 7-5 = 2, we must regard the number 7 as a 'relative zero' and count five steps backwards from it.[317] The patient, however, can only regard the number 7 as the seventh number in the ordinary number sequence, not as a possible 0. Likewise, in analogical or metaphorical thinking, we must be able to regard words or phrases as having both a literal and a figurative meaning; but for the patient, language only has literal meaning and is applicable only to an actual situation.[318] For example, a patient will be unable to say "It is bad, rainy weather today" if it is a sunny day.[319] Cassirer attributes these issues to a problem with the patient's productive imagination: he cannot freely vary his point of view; to the contrary, he is anchored in the actual, closed off from the possible:

> [the patient] can form a sentence when he has solid support in something given, immediately experienced; without this support he is rudderless—he cannot venture out on the high seas of thought, which is a thought not only of realities but also of possibilities. Hence he can express only what is actual and present, not what is merely imagined or possible.[320]

---

[316] PSFv3 241fn/279fn

[317] PSFv3 250/291, 255-6/296-8

[318] PSFv3 254-9/295-300

[319] PSFv3 254/295

[320] PSFv3 257/298-9

Finally, we find a variation on this same theme in Cassirer's analysis of apraxia; however, in these cases, it is his own body that the patient is unable to 'see' in terms of possibilities. While a patient is able to engage in 'concrete movements' called for by the actual task he is engaged in, e.g., hammering a nail in a workshop, he cannot engage in 'abstract movements', which are relevant to a non-actual situation, e.g., mimicking the act of hammering. On Cassirer's analysis, this is because the latter movements require the patient to be able to 'see' his body as capable of bearing on a merely possible or imagined situation; yet this is barred from the patient insofar as he is unable to spontaneously bring about those movements by projecting an imaginary scenario before himself.[321] As a consequence, the patient's actions have become 'fused' to particular concrete tasks and he is limited to concrete movement.[322]

Summarizing his view, Cassirer remarks,

> Even though the [pathological patient] can still apprehend and in general correctly handle what is "real," concretely present, momentarily necessary, he lacks the spiritual view in the distance [*geistige Fernblick*], the vision [*Sicht*] of what is not before his eyes, of the merely possible.[323]

This nicely captures Cassirer's ultimate diagnosis of pathology: while the representation function and the productive imagination normally give us a 'form of vision' that enables us to 'see' beyond what is given here and now to a wide range of possibilities, the patient's vision is confined to his immediate environment and to his concrete tasks. Though the patient is still conscious of the world around him, the 'amplitude' of his capacity for pregnant perception has diminished and this alters his *entire* way of relating to the world through perception and thought, language and action.[324]

---

[321] PSFv3 271/315

[322] PSFv3 271/315

[323] PSFv3 277, translation modified/322

§3. Merleau-Ponty on Cassirer's Diagnosis

Sixteen years later in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty takes up pathology from within a phenomenological framework. Though I shall argue that Merleau-Ponty takes over the core of Cassirer's analysis of pathology, it may initially be worried that Merleau-Ponty would have rejected Cassirer's account out of hand insofar as it turns on the function of *representation*. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty criticizes several representational accounts of pathology: as he says in no uncertain terms with respect to apraxia, "The history of apraxia would show how the description of Praxis is almost always contaminated and, in the end, rendered impossible by the notion of representation."[325] In what follows, I show that Merleau-Ponty's criticisms here are levied against *traditional discursive* accounts of representation. Yet since Merleau-Ponty recognizes the distinctiveness of Cassirer's non-discursive account of representation, we need not worry that he would have dismissed Cassirer's account so readily. To be sure, there are still aspects of Cassirer's view that Merleau-Ponty criticizes; however, given the uniqueness of Cassirer's position, Merleau-Ponty endeavors to preserve what he takes to be the fruitful aspects of it.

It will be helpful to consider, in the first place, the discursive terms in which Merleau-Ponty characterizes traditional representational accounts of pathology. On these accounts, a representation is what results from making a judgment in which we subsume raw sense data under a concept.[326] Accordingly, the 'representation function' on this view reflects a discursive capacity, i.e., a capacity we have for judging that the sense data is representative of the concept.[327] On such an account, pathological disorders amount to discursive disorders. If a patient, for example, cannot name a colored strip, this is because she cannot form a judgment in which she subsumes her sense data under the concept 'blue'.

---

[324] PSFv3 222/257

[325] PhP 525 fn99/172 fn2

Though Merleau-Ponty criticizes such representational accounts, he also acknowledges that this is not the type of account that Cassirer gives. We see this in Merleau-Ponty's analysis of Cassirer's views about symbolic pregnancy and the productive imagination.[328] Merleau-Ponty was struck by Cassirer's account of symbolic pregnancy, in fact so much so that he takes it over as his preferred way of characterizing his own phenomenological view of the relationship between matter and form.[329] We get a glimpse of this in Merleau-Ponty's summary remarks about the *Phenomenology* in 'The Primacy of Perception' (1946),

> we cannot apply the classical distinction of form and matter to perception, nor can we conceive the perceiving subject as consciousness which "interprets," "deciphers,"

---

[326] PhP 123/152, 129/160

[327] "A 'representative function'… consists in treating the sensory givens as representatives of each other and, when taken together, as representative of an "*eidos*"" (PhP 123/153).

[328] Though I will not pursue this further, Merleau-Ponty also distinguishes Cassirer's account from traditional representational accounts insofar as Cassirer acknowledges that representation is not the *only* way we have of relating to the world; we can relate to is through mythical and expressive attitudes as well (PhP 303/343, 304/344).

[329] Merleau-Ponty claims that Cassirer's analysis of the 'absolute simultaneity of matter and form' in symbolic pregnancy is one of the 'phenomenological and even existential analyses' contained in Cassirer's philosophy (PhP 521 fn 67/162 fn2, which I shall return to below).

> or “orders” a sensible matter according to an ideal law which it possesses. Matter is “pregnant” with form.[330]

Making this point with an explicit citation to Cassirer in the *Phenomenology*, he suggests that the correct account of perception will emulate Cassirer’s: “we must acknowledge the symbolic “pregnancy” of form in content as prior to the subsumption of content under form.”[331] Given that Merleau-Ponty is here wielding Cassirer’s account against traditional representational accounts of perception, we have good reason to think Merleau-Ponty set Cassirer’s account apart.

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty is sensitive to the fact that rather than emphasizing judgment, in his analysis of pathology, Cassirer emphasizes the productive imagination. This is important because, more generally, Kant’s notion of the productive imagination stands in Merleau-Ponty’s good favor, as something fruitful for phenomenology. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty thinks that the picture of the productive imagination that emerges from both the first and third *Critiques* is particularly promising for a phenomenological understanding of intentionality.[332] Recall that, in the first *Critique*, Kant argues that in order for experience (‘cognition’) to take place, intuitions must be combined with concepts.[333] However, he acknowledges that intuitions and concepts are two ‘heterogeneous’ representations,[334] the former are singular and immediate representations that have their seat in sensibility, whereas the latter are general and mediate representations that have their seat in the understanding.[335] In which case, Kant maintains that cognition can arise only if there is some further capacity, viz., our productive imagination, which is capable of mediating between sensibility and understanding.[336] As he puts it in the A Deduction, "We therefore have a pure imagination, as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, that grounds all cognition *a priori*."[337] In the Schematism chapter, Kant suggests the imagination is able to do this through its "hidden art [*Kunst*] in the depths of the human soul."[338] Picking up on this thread once again in the third *Critique*, Kant argues that the way the imagination operates in aesthetic experience and in artistic production can, in fact, elucidate the nature of 'the power of judgment' more generally.[339] For Kant, then, the productive imagination, with its 'hidden art', is a special capacity, without which no experience, no judgment would be possible.

---

[330] PrP 12. See also PhP 154/189

[331] PhP 304/344

[332] PhP xxxi/17-8

[333] KrV A50/B74-A52/B76

[334] This is the language Kant uses in the ‘Schematism’ chapter, e.g., KrV A137/B176

According to Merleau-Ponty, Kant's theory of the productive imagination is significant for phenomenology; in fact, in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* he argues that Kant's theory is the precursor of the theory of intentionality that emerges in the work of Heidegger and the later Husserl.[340] More specifically, Merleau-Ponty claims that a central feature of this phenomenological view of intentionality is the recognition that the intentionality of a *particular* act, e.g., of *this* perception or *this* judgment,[341] is grounded in a deeper intentionality, 'operative intentionality', that lies beneath each and every act.[342] This insight, however, is not original; rather, Merleau-Ponty traces it back to Kant's view of the hidden art of the imagination, which grounds all cognition:

---

[335] KrV A320/B376-7

[336] As Kant argues in the Schematism chapter, the productive imagination produces a distinctive representation he labels a 'schema,' which is capable of mediating between intuitions and concepts in a judgment (KrV A138/B177).

[337] KrV A124

[338] KrV A141/B180

[339] For an analysis of the connection between the Schematism and the third *Critique*, see Schaper (1964), Bell (1987), Gibbons (1994): Chs 2 and 3.

[340] Merleau-Ponty claims he has in mind Heidegger's views of 'transcendence' in *Being and Time* and Husserl's views in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (see PhP 441/480, 453/492).

> the hidden art of the imagination must condition the categorial activity; it is no longer merely aesthetic judgment that rests upon this hidden art, but also knowledge, and this art also grounds the unity of consciousness.[343]

Though this establishes Merleau-Ponty's favorable disposition towards the notion of the productive imagination, as I mentioned already he returns to this notion specifically in his discussion of pathology and Cassirer. In the chapter titled 'The Body as Expression, and Speech', Merleau-Ponty quotes Cassirer's discussion of pathology involving the disintegration of the vectors of meaning at length.[344] He cites this passage, in particular, because he thinks it reveals Cassirer's sensitivity to the productive imagination as the real root of pathology, evident even in intellectual disturbances:

> Such is the disorder of "thought" that is discovered at the basis [*fond*] of [color] amnesia. It clearly has to do less with judgment than with the milieu of experience in which judgment is born [*prend naissance*], less with spontaneity than with the holds of this spontaneity upon the perceptive world and our power to imagine [*figurer*] any intention whatever in the world. In Kantian terms, it affects less the understanding that the productive imagination.[345]

Here, we see Merleau-Ponty applaud Cassirer for analyzing the problems of pathology not in the discursive terms of judgment, but rather in terms of the productive imagination. Far from rejecting Cassirer's account of pathology, then, we find Merleau-Ponty is drawn to it insofar as it offers a non-discursive alternative to traditional representational accounts.

---

[341] He refers to this as 'act intentionality' (PhP xxxii/18).

[342] PhP xxxii/18

[343] PhP xxxi/18

[344] PhP 197-8/233, citing PSFv3 222/257

[345] PhP 198/233

This being said, we must acknowledge that Merleau-Ponty does not think Cassirer's view is without fault. In an important footnote, Merleau-Ponty suggests that in spite of the "phenomenological and even existential analyses" contained in the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, portions of Cassirer's philosophy evince a "return to intellectualism."[346] In particular, Merleau-Ponty thinks that Cassirer, like other philosophers who over-'intellectualize' perception, fails to recognize the *bodily foundation* of the representation function. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, these accounts fail to see that,

> [the representation function] in turn rests upon a certain ground [*sol*]. Intellectualism's error is to make it depend on itself, to separate it from the materials in which it is realized, and to recognize in us, as originary, a direct presence in the world.[347]

The 'ground' Merleau-Ponty has in mind here is our bodily relationship to the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, although we can be directed towards the world through thought, our experience is shaped by the more basic intentionality of our bodies, which he labels 'motor intentionality'.[348] On his view, in order to be intentionally directed towards the world, it is enough for our bodies to be directed towards it:

> The gesture of reaching one's hand out toward an object contains a reference to the object, not as a representation, but as this highly determinate thing toward which we are thrown, next to which we are through anticipation, and which we haunt.[349]

---

[346] PhP 521-2 fn 67/162 fn2

[347] PhP 126/157. In this passage, Merleau-Ponty has in mind the 'representation function' both as it is described on the traditional accounts of pathology, offered by Head, Bouman, and Grünbaum, as well as Cassirer's version. Although, he goes on in this paragraph to note that Cassirer's view is distinct from the traditional accounts because he denies that there is a 'general symbolic faculty' (see PSFv3 275/320).

[348] PhP 113/141, 139-140/171-174

Considered in this light, his charge against Cassirer is that he, like the other intellectualists, neglects this bodily basis of thought and, as a result, gives an account of pathology that fails to do justice to the bodily ground of these disorders.[350] After all, Merleau-Ponty urges, for a patient suffering a brain injury, it would be "absurd to think that the shrapnel collided with symbolic consciousness. Rather, his Spirit is affected through vision."[351]

What we ultimately find in Merleau-Ponty's appraisal of Cassirer is ambivalence. On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty appreciates the distance between Cassirer's account and traditional representational accounts. On the other hand, he criticizes Cassirer for not going far enough: though Cassirer recognizes that a discursive approach to the representation function and pathology will not do, he does not yet recognize the need to explicitly acknowledge the body's place within an account of pathology. Even so this is not an ambivalence that leads Merleau-Ponty to reject Cassirer all together; rather, just as we saw with the notion of symbolic pregnancy, Merleau-Ponty is going to take over the aspects of Cassirer's account of pathology that he thinks are phenomenologically viable.

§4. Merleau-Ponty's Diagnosis of Pathology: the Function of Projection

We are now in a position to examine Merleau-Ponty's positive account of pathology and what, I argue, are its Kantian roots. I show that Merleau-Ponty follows Cassirer in offering what I shall call an 'imagination-centric' account of pathology. Though the imagination does not take shape in the representation function as it did for Cassirer, we find Merleau-Ponty

---

[349] PhP 140/172

[350] PhP 126-7/157-8

[351] PhP 127/158

give it new shape in his account of the 'function of projection', which is at the heart of his analysis of pathology.

4.1 The motor-centric interpretations

My imagination-centric interpretation differs from what I have labeled the 'motor-centric' interpretation that currently dominates the literature. On this latter interpretation, Merleau-Ponty uses his account of pathology primarily to elucidate bodily movement and action. What inclines commentators more generally towards this type of interpretation is the fact that the topic of the body and its movements dominates Merleau-Ponty's treatment of pathology. The majority of his analysis of pathology is to be found in Part One of the *Phenomenology*, 'The Body' and, in particular, in the chapters titled 'The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity', 'The Body as a Sexed Being', and 'The Body as Expression, and Speech.'[352] Indeed, Merleau-Ponty sets up his discussion of pathology by focusing on apraxia, i.e., the pathology associated with movement[353] and he uses this discussion to draw out some of his central philosophical theses about the body, e.g., the 'motor intentionality' of our bodies and the 'body schema'.[354]

There are, however, two competing varieties of the motor-centric interpretation presently on offer. First, drawing on Merleau-Ponty's claims that we have a 'pre-reflective' or 'pre-logical' experience of the world, there is the *unreflective* motor-centric interpretation according to which Merleau-Ponty intends for pathology to clarify how we unreflectively relate to the world through our bodily actions and movements.[355] Commentators like Hubert Dreyfus, Sean Kelly, and Taylor Carman[356] have defended this position, maintaining that Merleau-Ponty uses pathology to highlight features of 'absorbed coping', i.e., our bodily way of dealing with the world that occurs without the intervention of thought or reflection.[357] Challenging this line of thought, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc has put forth a *reflective* variety of the motor-centric interpretation, according to which Merleau-Ponty uses pathology to explain an important kind of bodily action, viz., action guided by thought.[358] On her account, the textual evidence suggests that Merleau-Ponty uses pathology not just to highlight our unreflective capacities, but also to elucidate a particular reflective capacity, viz., "the power to reckon with the possible.'"[359] On her gloss, the power to reckon with the possible is "the power to access—and so use—motor skills that are relevant to merely possible tasks and environments,"[360] where 'merely possible' refers to the tasks or environments I represent in thought.[361] Though her account is still oriented towards explaining bodily action, her view is unique insofar as she allows for reflection to play a pivotal role in guiding that action.[362]

---

[352] Though we shall not consider it here, Merleau-Ponty treats the pathology associated with the phantom limb in the chapter titled 'The Body as an Object and Mechanistic Physiology'.

[353] Merleau-Ponty opens his discussion of pathology with an analysis of the problems Gelb and Goldstein's patient 'Schneider' faces with respect to concrete and abstract movements (PhP 105-112/132-140).

[354] PhP 112-3/140-1, 100-3/127-131

---

[355] It is Merleau-Ponty's claims that we have a 'pre-reflective' and 'pre-logical' relationship to the world (e.g., PhP 241/279, 311/351, 349/311, 547fn3/357) that leads commentators to think he endorses the view that we have an *un*reflective or *non*-conceptual relation to the world (see, e.g., Carman (2008a): 28, 81, Dreyfus (2006): 47-8, Kelly (2002)).

[356] It is not surprising that Dreyfus, Kelly, and Carman offer similar interpretations: they all draw on Dreyfus's interpretation of Heidegger and his interpretation of Heidegger's notion of 'understanding' as the 'know-how' we have for dealing with what is 'ready-to-hand' (*zuhanden*) without needing to rely on thought or reflection (*Being and Time* ¶31). See Carman (2008a): 224.

[357] See Dreyfus (2007). More specifically, he argues that the study of pathology illuminates the flexibility involved in normal absorbed coping: while normally we can experience the world as 'summoning' us to a new task to cope with, pathological patients are no longer open to new ways of coping with the world (63, 64, 69). Kelly (2000) emphasizes that apraxia reveals something important about two different ways we have of engaging with the world, through 'grasping' movements and 'pointing movements'. Meanwhile, Carman (2008a) claims that Merleau-Ponty's discussion of pathology reveals, one, something about the 'noncognitive intelligence' of our bodies (111, 113), and, two, the fact that normally our bodies *directly* give us an intuitive world, whereas the patient has to construct this world in thought (115-117).

[358] Romdenh-Romluc (2007), (2011): 93-102.

[359] Merleau-Ponty uses the phrase 'reckon with the possible' on PhP 112/139 and the notion of reckoning with the possible is one Cassirer also references on PSFv3 243/283: "Orientation in this space [the space of possibility] presupposes an ability of consciousness to actualize these possibilities freely and reckon [*zu rechnen*] with them in advance, in an intuitive and intellectual anticipation."

In what follows, I show that the motor-centric interpretation's exclusive emphasis on what pathology teaches us about bodily action, whether this be guided by thought or not, is misplaced. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty devotes a great deal of attention to the relationship between pathology and bodily action; however, this constitutes but one aspect of his overall project. As the imagination-centric interpretation reveals, Merleau-Ponty has a more fundamental aim, viz., highlighting something like the productive imagination that underwrites the *various* ways we deal with the world through action, perception, emotion, and thought. Indeed, as I bring to light in what follows, this is why Merleau-Ponty places the 'function of projection' at the center of his account of pathology.

---

[360] Romdenh-Romluc (2007): 52, (2011): 94.

[361] She gives examples of performing kick-boxing moves against an imagined assailant ((2011): 97), and mimicking martial arts moves in a fight scene against an 'imagined' alien ((2007): 51).

[362] To her account, Dreyfus (2007) objects that whatever Merleau-Ponty says about thought in this context is only in service of explicating the account offered by Goldstein, which Merleau-Ponty rejects (62). Indeed, Dreyfus suggests that Merleau-Ponty cannot address how thought guides bodily action because Merleau-Ponty has 'nothing to say' about how abstract thought is possible (67). This, I think, goes too far. While it may be true that giving a fully developed account of abstract thought is not Merleau-Ponty's aim in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, it is unfair to say that he has 'nothing to say' on this topic. For, as will emerge in my discussion of the function of projection and intentional arc below, Merleau-Ponty recognizes that we are human beings who have both bodies and minds, and that any proper account of the phenomenology of *our* perception must take into account how our bodily engagement with the world is shaped by our cognitive lives, and vice versa.

4.2 The function of projection

For Merleau-Ponty, the function of projection is a capacity or ability we have that enables us to organize the world in light of our personal intentions.[363] As he puts it, the function of projection makes up capable of,

> organizing the given world according to the projects of the moment, and of constructing upon the geographical surroundings a milieu of behavior and a system of significations that express, on the outside, the internal activity of the subject… the normal person's projects polarize the world.[364]

If I, for example, am engaged in the task of gardening, I might see a tree as 'too shady', in which case I experience the world as organized in light of my intention to garden. To be clear, for Merleau-Ponty these intentions are not necessarily mental representations, motor intentions in our bodies will do. Furthermore, they need not be deliberate or fully conscious; we can project the world in light of implicit and explicit intentions alike. Yet regardless of the status of these intentions, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that the function of projection grounds them all, underwriting practical, cognitive, and emotional intentions alike.

In order to clarify the function of projection, Merleau-Ponty introduces the notion of the 'intentional arc'.[365] On his view, the intentional arc is a set of *possible* subjective intentions that issue from the function of projection, i.e., the range of possible ways we could organize and re-organize the world through that function.[366] Every particular intention on the arc betrays the same *general* form of intentionality: they are intentions which issue from the function of projection and so organize the world in subjective terms. So whether we consider perceptual, practical, or intellectual intentions, they will be grounded in one and the same arc. It is in this regard that the function of projection with its intentional arc begins to reveal its Kantian roots. As we saw above, for Kant, the productive imagination is responsible for unifying two seemingly radically distinct capacities: sensibility, i.e., our capacity to be receptive to the world and the source of intuitions, and understanding, i.e., our capacity to actively think about the world and the source of concepts. According to Kant, "Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of [the] transcendental function of the imagination, since otherwise… there would be no experience."[367] Echoing this thought, Merleau-Ponty claims that the function of projection is a 'more fundamental function'

---

[363] Merleau-Ponty also characterizes the function of projection in terms of our ability to place ourselves in a situation, e.g., PhP 137/169. However, I take this formulation to be a different way of making the same point: the world organized through a subjective intention just is a situation I have created or put myself into.

[364] PhP 115/143

[365] PhP 137/169-170, 160/194

[366] PhP 157, 183

> beneath intelligence and beneath perception … the life of consciousness—epistemic life, the life of desire, or perceptual life—is underpinned by an "intentional arc"… This intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity."[368]

Like Kant before him, then, there is a special function (of imagination, of projection) that is capable of mediating between the divergent ways we have of relating to the world: through the senses and reason alike.

This being said, it is important to recognize that, for Merleau-Ponty, *within* the intentional arc, i.e., within the set of intentions governed by the same kind of *generic* intentionality, *specific* types of intentions are more basic than others. In particular, he claims that our motor intentions are more basic than our intellectual intentions. As we saw earlier,

---

[367] KrV A124

[368] PhP 137/169-170

Merleau-Ponty takes it to be the case that bodily actions can involve motor intentions, which do not require and can be prior to thought. Now, although Merleau-Ponty privileges motor intentions *within* the arc, as our analysis has revealed, there is a still more fundamental intentionality that underwrites all of the intentions on the arc, viz., the general intentionality of the function of projection. This, in turn, is why he is drawn to the Kantian productive imagination: it, on Merleau-Ponty's interpretation, can capture this fundamental intentionality.

However, Merleau-Ponty has a further reason for linking the productive imagination to the function of projection: like Cassirer before him, Merleau-Ponty takes the function of projection to open us up to *possibilities*. In Merleau-Ponty's words, our existence is not "enclosed in the actual"; in addition to being "mobilized by real situations… [we can] be situated in the virtual."[369] Emphasizing this point in the Sexuality chapter, Merleau-Ponty claims that in addition to being open to, say, sexual possibilities, there are always other "motor, perceptual and even intellectual possibilities" open to us.[370] This freedom to divert myself into different possibilities falling on the intentional arc is something guaranteed to me through the function of projection. Indeed, it is what Merleau-Ponty claims gives our lives a "degree of vitality and fecundity."[371]

Although this way of presenting the function of projection may seem like what Romdenh-Romluc has in mind in her discussion of the power to reckon with the possible, there is an important difference between our accounts: I take 'reckoning with the possible' to be more pervasive than Romdenh-Romluc does. Romdenh-Romluc gives what we could call a practical reading of the power to reckon with the possible, it is meant to explain a sub-set of practical actions, viz., those that involve the exercise of our motor skills in response to a merely possible environment that is represented in thought. By contrast, on my reading, the 'possible' we reckon with through the function of projection is the intentional arc and the many different intentions falling on it. That is to say, I am reckoning with the possible any time I take up or am open to the motor, perceptual, intellectual, etc. intentions on the arc. Ultimately, just as we saw with Cassirer's representation function, Merleau-Ponty's function of projection and intentional arc are not meant to elucidate motor activity alone, but rather how we relate to the world in a rich variety of ways.

---

[369] PhP 111/139

[370] PhP 158/193

[371] PhP 160/195

4.3 The function of projection and pathology

Turning now to Merleau-Ponty's account of pathology, we find that he, like Cassirer before him, identifies his version of the Kantian productive imagination, viz., the function of projection, as the root of pathological disorders. On his view, in pathological experience the function of projection no longer works properly: the patient is no longer able to project the world in light of multiple possible personal intentions. She can no longer be oriented towards the world in the plethora of ways the function of projection normally provides for. Instead, echoing Cassirer, Merleau-Ponty claims the patient's experience is 'enclosed in the actual': she can only experience the world as it is actually given to her or in light of an actual task she is engaged in.[372] Framing this in terms of the intentional arc, Merleau-Ponty continues a quote we have already looked at by saying, "This intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity. And this is what 'goes limp' in the disorder.[373] Rather than pathology elucidating only our motor existence, then, we find Merleau-Ponty endeavors to elucidate what has gone wrong in a patient's life *as a whole*.

---

[372] PhP 111/139

Merleau-Ponty devotes a fair bit of attention to explaining how this works in the case of apraxia, and this is what the motor-centric interpretations tend to focus on. In normal experience, Merleau-Ponty suggests a person,

> does not have his body available merely as implicated in a concrete milieu, he is not merely situated in relation to tasks set by his trade, nor is he merely open to real situations. Rather, in addition he possesses his body as the correlate of pure stimuli stripped of all practical signification; he is open to verbal and fictional situations that he can choose for himself or that a researcher might suggest.[374]

The patient, by contrast, is confined to the actual, barred from 'verbal and fictional situations'. Shy of being able to freely put herself in these latter situations, the patient can only engage in concrete movements, relevant to 'the actual', i.e., what is immediately present to him or relevant to a particular task.[375]

However, it is important to see that Merleau-Ponty's account of apraxia is but one moment of his overall analysis of pathology. Indeed, he sees the problem underlying apraxia as manifesting in other pathological disorders as well. Beginning with aphasia, he argues that in an experience like color amnesia, if a doctor asks the patient to group the 'red' samples together, he cannot do so because he cannot organize the world in light of that task. He cannot see the samples as possibly having meaning related to the word 'red' or to the doctor's request; instead, each sample is inert and remains "confined within its individual existence."[376] Likewise in perceptual agnosia, Merleau-Ponty claims a patient cannot immediately recognize an object upon a doctor's request because the request, 'tell me what object that is', is an empty one: it does not signal to the patient a task he could undertake and organize the world in light of.[377]

---

[373] PhP 137/170

[374] PhP 111/139

[375] PhP 106-109/133-137

Merleau-Ponty goes on to suggest that these issues with the function of projection are also expressed in *intellectual* disorders, disorders that tend to be neglected by the motor-centric interpretation. For example, Merleau-Ponty claims that if a patient is not able to use or understand a metaphor, this is because he is not able to project different possible ways a word could have meaning. A patient cannot, for example, understand the metaphor 'the chair leg' because he does not take the word 'leg' to include a possible reference to chairs.[378] Likewise, in disorders affecting a patient's ability to engage in mathematical thought, Merleau-Ponty claims he is unable to project the number in multiple ways; he is confined to seeing the number only as occupying a fixed place in the number sequence.[379] Or, in geometrical disorders, Merleau-Ponty suggests that if a patient cannot make a square from four isosceles triangles, this is because he cannot project those triangles in terms of an 'imaginary meaning', i.e., as possible constituents of a square.[380]

---

[376] PhP 197/232

[377] PhP 110/137

[378] PhP 129/160-1

[379] PhP 135/167

[380] PhP 133/165

However, though Merleau-Ponty is concerned, in part, with explaining how each *particular* disorder manifests the same problem, it is crucial to recognize that the center-piece of his analysis is his explanation of why pathology manifests *holistically*, i.e., why linguistic, perceptual, motor, and cognitive disorders go hand in hand. According to Merleau-Ponty, when a patient's intentional arc 'goes limp', this reverberates across her experience as she is 'confined to the actual' in everything she does, perceives, thinks, and feels.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the holistic effect of pathology most in his discussion of one of Gelb and Goldstein's patients, 'Schneider', who suffered a brain injury from a shell splinter. As Merleau-Ponty suggests in the chapter titled 'The Body as a Sexed Being', one of the results of Schneider's injury is his inability to both initiate sexual contact, and, if he stumbles into such a situation, bring the act to completion. Merleau-Ponty analyzes this situation as follows,

> The patient has lost the power of projecting before himself a sexual world, of putting himself into an erotic situation, or, once the situation is under way, of sustaining it or of following it through to satisfaction… the tactile stimuli themselves… have, so to speak, ceased speaking to his body… because the patient has ceased posing to his surrounding that silent and permanent question that defines normal sexuality.[381]

However, Merleau-Ponty goes on to point out that Schneider's sexual problems are accompanied by a wide-range of other problems: he can no longer place himself,

> within an affective or ideological situation… Faces are neither pleasant nor unpleasant… The sun and the rain are neither joyful nor sad… the world is affectively neutral… He would like to be able to think about politics or religion, but he never even tries.[382]

---

[381] PhP 159/193-4

[382] PhP 159-160/194

According to Merleau-Ponty, Schneider suffers from this *suite* of problems because the intentional arc of his life has given way: the multiple possible intentions normally available have become leveled down. According to Merleau-Ponty, Schneider's case leads us to,

> Discover sexual life as an original intentionality as well as the vital roots of perception, motricity, and representations, by grounding all of these "processes" upon an "intentional arc" that weakens for the patient and that for the normal subject gives experience its degree of vitality and fecundity.[383]

Schneider's injury, then, has struck at his ability to project the world freely and, as a result, the 'degree of vitality and fecundity' normally guaranteed to us by the function of projection, has gone from his experience as a whole.

4.4 Merleau-Ponty's advance of the productive imagination

So far, I have emphasized that rather than being motor-centric, Merleau-Ponty's account of pathology, like Cassirer's before him, is imagination-centric. This interpretation makes better sense of not only Merleau-Ponty's claims that pathology is traceable back to the function of projection and intentional arc, but also his emphasis on the holistic effect of pathology. However, even if the imagination-centric interpretation is right and points towards the Kantian roots of Merleau-Ponty's account of pathology, Merleau-Ponty does not simply appropriate the productive imagination as it is presented in Kant or in Cassirer; for, unlike his predecessors, he explicitly takes up the *embodied* nature of the productive imagination.

Regardless of whether Kant or Cassirer ultimately thought the productive imagination has an important relationship to us as embodied human beings, this is not a feature of their account either chooses to emphasize.[384] By contrast, Merleau-Ponty highlights the bodily nature of the productive imagination in the three following ways. To begin, Merleau-Ponty maintains that our productive imagination can be exercised through motor intentions *without* resorting to intellectual intentions. On his view, then, the productive imagination is a capacity that can sometimes manifest bodily and sometimes intellectually.[385] Second, as we saw above, Merleau-Ponty claims that these motor intentions are *more basic* than intellectual intentions. In which case, he takes the intellectual exercise of our productive imaginations to be parasitic on their embodied exercise. Third, however, Merleau-Ponty also acknowledges that there is a *reciprocal* relationship between the motor intentions and intellectual intentions involved in the intentional arc. It is not just that the motor intentions ground our intellectual intentions, but they are dynamically related to one another:

---

[383] PhP 160/195

> there is no single movement in a living body that is an absolute accident with regard to psychical intentions and no single psychical act that has not found at least its germ or its general outline in physiological dispositions.[386]

Just as our motor intentions ground our intellectual intentions, so too do our intellectual intentions impact our motor ones. It appears, then, that in virtue of all being on one intentional arc and issuing from one function of projection, our subjective intentions will influence and interact with one another. It is in these ways that Merleau-Ponty pushes the Kantian line of thought in new, explicitly embodied directions.

---

[384] To be clear, this is not to say that Kant or Cassirer could not accommodate views of embodiment in this regard, rather the point is that they did not, as Merleau-Ponty did, see it as something necessary to address.

[385] As Merleau-Ponty put it, our lives involve "this back-and-forth of existence that sometimes allows itself to exist as a body and sometimes carries itself into personal acts" (PhP 90/117).

[386] PhP 90/117-8

Ultimately, I take this to be symptomatic of much of Merleau-Ponty's engagement with the aesthetic features of Kant's theory of perception. He will at once acknowledge that something in Kant is phenomenologically fruitful, but will then develop it further given his commitments to elucidating the bodily nature of perceptual experience. Though in this chapter we have seen him do this with the productive imagination, in the next chapter we shall see him do this with Kant's notion of schematism as well.

Chapter Seven: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Schematism

§1. Introduction

In this chapter, I shall turn my attention to a cornerstone of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception, viz., his theory of the 'body schema' and argue that it has its roots in Kant's theory of schematism. This claim may initially meet resistance for the standard reading tempts us to think that Merleau-Ponty would have dismissed Kant's theory of schematism as overly intellectualist, hence, having no bearing on his own account of the *body* schema. However, I show that this does not accurately capture how Merleau-Ponty conceived of Kant's view. For just as was the case with the productive imagination, thanks to the influence of a Neo-Kantian, this time Pierre Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty was sympathetically disposed towards Kant's theory of schematism. As we shall find, one of the hallmark features of Lachièze-Rey's interpretation is the claim that, for Kant, schematism, perception, and embodiment are intimately interconnected. Lachièze-Rey's interpretation thus exposed Kant's theory of schematism as a resource for Merleau-Ponty to draw on in his own account of perception and, in particular, in his theory of the body schema.

In order to trace the development of the theory of schematism from Kant through Lachièze-Rey and into Merleau-Ponty, I present Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of this Kantian theory (§2) and examine Merleau-Ponty's evaluation of this interpretation of Kant in the *Phenomenology* (§3). I next analyze the basic features of Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema and its role in perceptual experience and emphasize the Kantian concerns and themes that are clearly present in it (§4).

§2. Lachièze-Rey's Interpretation of Schematism

In his major work *L'idéalisme kantien*, Lachièze-Rey was interested primarily in idealist themes in Kant, especially the active role a subject plays in making our experience of objects, space, time, etc., possible. However, much of Lachièze-Rey's understanding of Kant was shaped by his reflections on Kant's last unfinished work, the *Opus Postumum*, a work in which Kant explicitly considers the role the body plays in experience, albeit only in tantalizingly brief and scattered fragments.[387] As a result, Lachièze-Rey's Kant interpretation focuses, in part, on what can and should be said, from a Kantian point of view, about the relationship between the transcendental activities of the subject and our embodied engagement with the world. Given that this relation is displayed vividly in perceptual experience, Lachièze-Rey was interested in Kant's view of perception and, significantly for our purposes, read Kant's discussion of schematism as pivotal in this regard. This, indeed, is the guiding topic of his essay 'The Possible Use of Kant's Schematism for a Theory of Perception' [*Utilisation possible du schématisme Kantien pour une théorie de la perception*] and an important theme in his essay 'Reflections on the Constituting Activity of the Spirit' [*Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante*] as well.[388]

In what follows, I want to draw our attention to two features of Lachièze-Rey's discussion of Kant's theory of schematism as a theory of perception: first, the implications he takes it to have for how Kant understands the relationship between imagination and judgment in perception, and, second, the role he suggests Kant accords the body within this framework. Recall that Kant introduces his analysis of schematism in an effort to explain how judgments in which we subsume an intuition under a concept are possible. According to Lachièze-Rey, this has implications for how we are to understand perceptual experience from a Kantian perspective. More specifically, Lachièze-Rey suggests that it reveals that, for Kant, in order to have perceptual experience, it is not enough to grasp the world solely through concepts, judgments, and the understanding; these 'intellectual' ways of being oriented towards the world must be supplemented by a more 'intuitive' way of being oriented towards the world through schemata and imagination.

---

[387] 'La Vie de Lachièze-Rey' in Lachièze-Rey (2006): 5-6

[388] Translations are my own

Lachièze-Rey tends to make these points by using language of 'intentions'. In this context, the term 'intention' is not meant to refer solely to something practical, e.g., my intention to drink champagne; instead, Lachièze-Rey is using the term in its broader phenomenological connotation, as referring to any state, practical, theoretical, perceptual, etc., through which we are 'directed towards' or 'aim at' the world. And in the 'Schematism' essay, Lachièze-Rey argues that concepts and schemata, for Kant, represent two types of intentions through which we can be directed towards the world: concepts involve what he calls 'intellectual intentions', whereas schemata involve 'intuitive intentions'.[389]

On this view, in perception, our concepts involve intellectual intentions that direct us towards objects in the world in light of common properties those objects share with others.[390] For example, my concept 'dog' directs me towards judging certain objects I perceive as dogs, i.e., as having the properties common to dogs, e.g., furryness, four-leggedness, in general. However, Lachièze-Rey urges that merely having intellectual intentions does not yet guarantee that we will actually perceive objects as instantiating those properties. For wanting to apply a concept and knowing how to do so are two different things. Consider, for example, the difference between wanting to apply the concept 'dog' and knowing what furyness and four-leggedness *look like*. It is the latter that is needed to form an image of a dog, something not necessarily guaranteed by simply wanting to apply a concept. On the Kantian view, we are able to successfully form images of concepts in perceptual experience if we have schemata that provide us with a grasp of what the sensible conditions are under which that concept can apply.[391] As Lachièze-Rey glosses this point, what we need are further intuitive intentions that direct us towards these sensible conditions.[392] In which case, he takes schemata to involve intuitive intentions that orient towards the ways concepts manifest concretely. For example, my schema of 'dog' directs me towards what is distinctive in the perceptual appearances of objects of this kind, i.e., that are furry, fourlegged, etc.

---

[389] Schematism 174. The intuitive intentions Lachièze-Rey is interested in are not the ones involved in intuitions that arise passively through sensibility. Rather, he is interested in the 'dynamic' intuitive intentions that have their seat in the imagination.

[390] As Lachièze-Rey puts it in the Reflections essay, these intentions direct us toward the 'ideal object', i.e., the concept or common property instantiated in something we perceive (127).

According to Lachièze-Rey, if we understand concepts and schemata in this intentional light, then we shall find that, in Kant's theory of perception, concepts *depend on* schemata in the following sense. Lachièze-Rey claims that the '*raison d' être*' of an intellectual intention is to be realized in the world; however, this is not possible unless the intuitive conditions under which those intentions can be realized are specified.[393] In which case,

---

[391] See A136/B175 for Kant's description of schemata as the 'sensible conditions' 'under which objects in harmony with… concepts can be given'.

[392] Schematism 174. In the Reflections essay, he suggests that these intentions direct us towards the 'incarnations' of 'ideal objects', i.e., the sensible appearances of a concept (127).

Lachièze-Rey maintains that intellectual intentions need intuitive intentions to specify those conditions, hence need the latter in order to be fulfilled.[394] Or, as he puts it, the *raison d' être* of an intellectual intention would be 'lost' [*perdraient*] were it not connected to an intuitive intention.[395] This means, from Lachièze-Rey's perspective, that, for Kant, perception is not a purely intellectual matter; but rather that our understanding of the world through concepts and acts of judgments must be grounded in an intuitive comprehension of the world through the imagination and schemata. Otherwise put, we are able to form the types of images requisite for perceptual experience only if our intellectual grasp of the world is supplemented by an intuitive one.

However, Lachièze-Rey goes on to suggest that from a Kantian perspective, having concepts and schemata are not enough for us to have perceptual experience. In order for this to take place, there must be a way for the intuitive intentions involved in our schemata to be realized in the world, and this, he urges, occurs through the activity of our *body*. As Lachièze-Rey makes this point, intuitive intentions must be realized through the 'intermediary of the motricity [*motricité*] of the body,' which serves as the intention's 'instrument'.[396] On his view, although a schema may direct us towards the conditions under which a certain concept applies, unless those intentions are realized through certain bodily movements, we will never being able to form images and, thus, have perceptual experience.

---

[393] Schematism 175

[394] Schematism 175: "*ce dynamisme intuitif ne saurait jamais être absent, car c'est lui qui assure entre l'initiative spirituelle et son effet la continuité grace à laquelle seule peut être opérée la constitution de cet effet.*" Lachièze-Rey does not think this dependency goes both ways, for he argues that it is possible for us to have intuitive intentions that do not depend on intellectual ones, e.g., in the case of mathematical construction (Schematism 175).

[395] Schematism 175

[396] Schematism 180. See also Reflections 133.

For example, in order to actually perceive that furry animal as a dog, my intellectual and intuitive intention must be realized through certain acts of my body, e.g., I must move my eyes or perhaps pet it with my hands, in order to form an image of a dog.[397] This bodily movement, Lachièze-Rey claims, is the 'real, concrete, material' 'operation' required for our intuitive intentions, and thereby our intellectual intentions, to be fulfilled.[398] In this way, Lachièze-Rey suggests that, at least implicitly, Kant's theory of schematism points towards the pivotal role our body plays in perceptual experience.

In the end, although we might have expected a Neo-Kantian like Lachièze-Rey to interpret Kant's theory of perceptual experience in solely intellectualist terms, we, to the contrary, find him arguing that Kant's theory of schematism reveals the limits of the intellectual in perceptual experience. Indeed, we find him urging that, for Kant, in order for perceptual experience to take place, our intellectual orientation towards the world must be augmented by our imaginative grasp of the world through schemata, as well as the movements of our bodies.

§3. Merleau-Ponty's Evaluation of Kant's Schematism

As the repeated references throughout the *Phenomenology* indicate, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of Kant was heavily influenced by Lachièze-Rey's work. Although Merleau-Ponty was reticent about the idealist commitments Lachièze-Rey attributes to Kant,[399] he was intrigued by his interpretation of schematism for it revealed to him a more sympathetic side of Kant. Indeed, it suggested to him that far from Kant being a thoroughgoing intellectualist who ignores the role of the body in perception, Kant's theory of schematism points towards the fact that perception can take place only if there is imaginative and bodily activity occurring prior to judgment. In this way, Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of Kant bridges the gap for Merleau-Ponty between his views and Kant's, a gap we might otherwise have thought insuperable.

---

[397] Reflections 134

[398] Reflections 140

[399] See, e.g., PhP 387-392/427-432

Merleau-Ponty most directly addresses Kant's theory and Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of schematism in his discussion of geometry in the chapter of the *Phenomenology* entitled 'The Cogito'.[400] In this section, Merleau-Ponty offers his analysis of how we acquire geometrical knowledge and selects as his example how we know that triangles "always will have a sum of angles equal to two right angles."[401] According to Merleau-Ponty, a geometrical figure is not, first and foremost, an object of 'pure thought', i.e., an idea, but rather an object of intuition, i.e., a spatial figure, a '*Gestalt*'.[402] For this reason, he argues in a Kantian vein[403] that the knowledge of a triangle cannot arise through 'pure thought', i.e., through the understanding alone:[404]

> one cannot construct a logical definition of the triangle that equals the fecundity of vision of the shape and that allows us, through a sequence of formal operations, to reach the conclusions that had not first been established with the help of intuition.[405]

---

[400] PhP 403-8/443-8

[401] PhP 407/448

[402] PhP 404/444

[403] For Kant's view of mathematical construction, see A717/B745 and A734/B760. For an overview of secondary literature on his view, as well as her own interpretation of it, see Shabel (1998)

[404] PhP 403/443

[405] PhP 404-5/445

For both Kant and Merleau-Ponty, it is, in particular, intuitive acts of construction that first provide us with knowledge about geometry. To use one of Merleau-Ponty's examples, in order to discover that the interior angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees, we must, whether "on the paper, on the blackboard, or in the imagination," draw a triangle, "extend a side, [and] draw a line through the vertex that is parallel with the opposite side."[406] This constructed figure, in turn, demonstrates to us that the truth about the interior angles of triangles.

At the same time, Merleau-Ponty argues that not just any intuitive act will provide us with this knowledge. If we randomly draw lines on a page, "no demonstration would result from the construction."[407] Instead, our act of construction must be underwritten by a particular 'intention', viz., to construct a figure that reflects properties shared by all triangles.[408] In order to characterize the sort of constructive act he has in mind, Merleau-Ponty appeals to Kant and claims it must be an "act of productive imagination."[409] I believe he alludes to Kant's theory of schematism here because, as we saw above, Kant claims that when the imagination produces a schema, it produces something that is at once sensible and general. So too Merleau-Ponty thinks that in mathematical construction we must engage in an act through which we produce a figure that is both sensible, i.e., spatial, and general, i.e., disclosive of common properties of triangles. Or, as Merleau-Ponty makes this latter point, the figure we construct must be "bursting with indefinite possibilities of which the construction actually drawn is merely one particular case."[410] And it is only through a special intuitive act, an 'act of the productive imagination', that we are able to construct such complex figures.

---

[406] PhP 403/444

[407] PhP 406/446

[408] PhP 406/446

[409] PhP 406/446

Yet the parallels Merleau-Ponty draws between his view and Kant's do not stop here. Betraying the influence of Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty argues furthermore that both he and Kant conceive of the acts involved in mathematical construction as essentially related to our embodiment. In a rather striking passage, Merleau-Ponty suggests,

> according to Kant himself, [the construction of a triangle] is not a purely spiritual operation and makes use of the motricity of the body… the geometer… only knows the relations that he is interested in by tracing them out – at least virtually – with his body. The subject of geometry is a motor subject.[411]

So when Merleau-Ponty, defending his own view, claims that "my construction is [not] subtended by a concept of the triangle… Rather… [I construct] by means of the body," he, in fact, takes himself to be making a *Kantian* claim.[412] In this vein, Merleau-Ponty appears to regard Kant, in the Schematism at least, as an ally.

This being said, Merleau-Ponty nevertheless chastises Kant for not going far enough. By reading Kant through the lens of Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty was led to believe that the bodily acts through which we construct a geometrical figure are "merely an "instrument" of constituting consciousness," i.e., of some mental intentions.[413] The body itself lacks its own intentionality here; instead, it is "simply one object among objects," which the mind uses as a means to its own ends.[414] This, however, is precisely the sort of view of embodiment that Merleau-Ponty endeavors to reject in the *Phenomenology*.

---

[410] PhP 406/446

[411] PhP 406/446

[412] PhP 407/447-8

[413] PhP 407/447

One of Merleau-Ponty's central theses is that the body and its movements *in themselves* already involve a form of 'original intentionality' or way of being directed towards the world: "Bodily movement can play a role in the perception of the world if it is itself an original intentionality, a way of being related to the world that is distinct from knowledge [*connaissance*]."[415] Although he does not think this is *always* the case, Merleau-Ponty thinks our perceptual experience *often* involves being directed towards the world solely through our bodily movements, without being guided by a mental representation or intention.[416] In his words,

> to move one's body is to aim at the things through it, or to allow one's body to respond to their solicitation, which is exerted upon the body without any representation. Motricity is thus not, as it were, a servant of consciousness.[417]

Suppose, for example, I unthinkingly reach for a champagne flute. On Merleau-Ponty's analysis, though I am certainly directed towards the flute through the movement of my arm, this movement need not be the 'instrument' of a mental intention; rather, the movement itself can involve an original intending of the flute. As Merleau-Ponty describes such a case,

> The gesture of reaching one's hand out towards an object contains a reference [*reference*] to the object, not as a representation, but as this highly determinate thing

---

[414] PhP 407/447

[415] PhP 407/447. This is a topic he also addresses in the chapter titled 'The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity', see, e.g., PhP 113/140-1, 139-140/171-2.

[416] For a discussion of bodily behavior that *is* guided by mental representations, see Romdenh-Romluc (2007), (2011): 93-102.

[417] PhP 140/173

> toward which we are thrown, next to which we are through anticipation, and which we haunt.[418]

Or to take another one of Merleau-Ponty's examples, suppose you see a friend across the quad and gesture for him to come over, he declines, so you gesture more adamantly. Merleau-Ponty suggests that in such a case our gesture need not be the outward expression of a mental intention, but rather the gestures themselves intend or aim at the friend:

> When I motion to my friend to approach, my intention is not a thought that I could have produced within myself in advance… The distance that separates us and his consent or refusal are *immediately* read *in* my gesture… If, for example, I realize that my friend does not want to obey, and if I thereby modify my gesture, we do not have two distinct conscious acts. Rather, I see my partner's resistance, and my impatient gesture emerges from this situation, *without any interposed thought*.[419]

These two examples are meant to illustrate the possibility that in some cases our motor intentions can act autonomously, without depending on some further mental intention.

Returning to the analysis of geometry, Merleau-Ponty agrees with the Kantian claim that the acts of the productive imagination through which we construct geometrical figures are, indeed, acts of a motor subject. However, Merleau-Ponty takes himself to part ways with Kant insofar as he denies that these acts necessarily express a mental intention. Instead, he claims that our bodily gestures themselves can involve the intention requisite for geometrical construction. Merleau-Ponty suggests that rather than regarding a triangle as an object for me to contemplate, I can regard a triangle as "pole towards which my movements are directed."[420] That is to say, I can grasp a triangle as something that indicates a certain way I can move, e.g., how I move my hands or eyes when tracing things in a triangular fashion.[421] Merleau-Ponty describes this as the 'motor formula' of a triangle and argues that it is possible for us to engage in constructive acts that elucidate this motor formula without recourse to mental intentions.[422] In such cases, he claims, our movements themselves involve the intentions required for construction. For example, Merleau-Ponty thinks I, through the act of drawing, can be intentionally directed towards the constructed triangle as evincing more generic properties of triangles: I aim at the triangle drawn as indicative of the 'pole of movement' associated with *any* triangle. Yet, on his view, it is my movements and their motor intentions that orient me towards the triangle in this way, not my mental intentions. And he objects that this is a possibility Kant's view could not account for.

---

[418] PhP 140/172

[419] PhP 113/141, my emphasis

[420] PhP 405/445

In the end, we find that Merleau-Ponty's chief criticism of Kant's theory of schematism is not that he neglected the body all together, but rather that Kant has not yet correctly characterized the role the body plays in it. This is significant because it means Merleau-Ponty was not inclined to dismiss Kant's theory of schematism as having no bearing on his own account of embodied perception. To the contrary, Merleau-Ponty, thanks to Lachièze-Rey's interpretation, saw Kant's discussion of schematism as a starting point, a resource for him to develop within his own phenomenological framework. The result of which was nothing other than his theory of the body schema.

---

[421] Merleau-Ponty describe these patterns of movement as a particular "modality of my hold on the world" (PhP 405/445).

[422] PhP 406/446

§4. Merleau-Ponty and the Schematism of the Body

In the early 20th century, the term 'body schema' was popularized by psychologists, like Henry Head and Paul Schilder, and used to explain the proprioceptive awareness each of us has of our own bodies.[423] Though Merleau-Ponty thinks the body schema gives us proprioceptive awareness of our selves,[424] he also thinks the body schema grounds our perception of the world around us.[425] As Merleau-Ponty makes this point, "The theory of the body schema is implicitly a theory of perception."[426] It is in this vein that Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema is most indebted to Kant and, in what follows, I highlight four often overlooked Kantian themes in his account of the body schema.[427]

4.1. A Kantian problem

I want to begin by considering the basic problem in perception Merleau-Ponty thinks his theory of the body schema solves. As we saw in Chapter Three, Kant issues his theory of schematism in response to what I called the 'problem of homogeneity'. According to Kant, in order for us to make a judgment in which we apply a concept to an intuition, there must be something 'homogeneous' between the two; however, given that concepts are mediate, general representations, whereas intuitions are immediate, singular representations, the question arises what could be homogeneous between the two? That this problem bears any resemblance to what motivates Merleau-Ponty may initially seem implausible. For throughout the *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty takes aim at 'intellectualists' who think perception requires representations and judgment and defends, to the contrary, a perceptual theory oriented around the *direct* perceptual relation we have to the world through our bodies.[428] And it is in this context that he introduces his theory of the body schema. However, a closer look reveals that in spite of these dissimilarities on the surface, Merleau-Ponty's schematism is, indeed, motivated by something like Kant's problem of homogeneity.

---

[423] Scott (1956): 145 suggests that Head derived this notion from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In addition to Scott, see Gallagher (1986) for a discussion of the historical use of the term body schema and also for an analysis of the distinction between the body schema and body image.

[424] We see this clearly in Merleau-Ponty's classic example of the body schema, "If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are accentuated and my whole body trails behind them like a comet's tail. I am not unaware of the location of my shoulders or my waist; rather, this awareness is enveloped in my awareness of my hands and my entire stance is read, so to speak, in how my hands lean upon the desk" (PhP 102/129). For a discussion of what role the body schema plays in this example, see Smith (2007): 12, 16 and Carman (1999): 221, (2008): 107.

[425] For a discussion of how the body schema makes external perception possible, see Gallagher (1986) and Carman (1999): 218-223, (2008): 102-111.

[426] PhP 213/249

[427] Carman (1999): 218-9 and (2008): 105-6 is an exception insofar as he acknowledges that the notion of art/know-how from Kant's theory of schematism is implicit in Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the body schema. This shall be the topic of sections 5.4 below; however, in sections 5.1-3 I shall touch on themes Carman does not address.

To see this, we need to recognize that although Merleau-Ponty does not speak of intuitions and concepts, there is an analogue in his view. As I mentioned above, Kant defines an intuition as a singular representation, i.e., of whatever particular object is presently impinging upon you.[429] Meanwhile, a concept is a general representation, i.e., of some property or featured shared by multiple objects.[430] In which case, one way we could characterize the difference between intuitions and concepts is by emphasizing their heterogeneity: whereas the former are *highly particular*, the latter involve a more *general form of meaning*. If we now turn to Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception, we find that even if he does not employ talk of representation, he nevertheless thinks perceptual experience involves the convergence of something highly particular with something general, hence the problem of homogeneity arises in his theory as well.

---

[428] See, for example, the chapter titled "Attention' and 'Judgment" (PhP 28-51/50-77)

[429] See A320/B377

[430] See A320/B377 and A68/B93

For Merleau-Ponty, what is particular in perception is what is immediately present to us, i.e., the "perspectival appearances" or what Husserl calls 'adumbrations' of the object we grasp from our present embodied point of view.[431] Consider, for example, the various appearances or adumbrations we might perceive of a house: "I see the neighboring house from a particular angle. It would be seen differently from the right bank of the Seine, from the inside of the house, and differently still from an airplane."[432] Or consider looking at a partially shaded white wall, the adumbrations involved in this experience will be a wall with patches of white and gray. For Merleau-Ponty, these sort of perspectival appearances or adumbrations count as the particular of perceptual experience.

As for the general, Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea that a concept, which he defines as a mental representation we subsume intuitions (sense data) under, is the most basic form of generality at work in perception.[433] Instead, he argues that there is a more basic form of generality, of meaning [*sens*] and signification [*signification*], that we are familiar with through our bodies. He cashes out these meanings in terms of structures that are accessible to our bodies: the meaning of a thing "is not at first a signification for the understanding, but rather a structure available for inspection by the body."[434] Now, these, what I shall call 'structural meanings' are general in the sense that more than one object can share the same structure. Let's consider the structural meaning associated with the color blue. According to Merleau-Ponty, "Blue is what solicits a certain way of looking from me, it is what allows itself to be palpitated by a specific movement of the gaze."[435] More specifically, he suggests that blue is something 'adductive', that we find attractive and inviting; it is something that seems to 'yield to our gaze'.[436] This blue-structure is something repeatable, something that, say, a blue carpet, blue ribbon, and blue swatch of paint could share in common and, on Merleau-Ponty's account, this would mean that they all share the meaning 'blue'.[437]

---

[431] PhP 211/247

[432] PhP 69/95

[433] For Merleau-Ponty's definition of concepts, see PhP 123/152, 129/160, 183/257

Now, like Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is a question of how our perceptual experience could bridge the gap between what is highly particular and general: given that adumbrations are given perspectivally and are situation-dependent, whereas structural meanings transcend any one particular perspective or situation, how could the former bear on the latter?[438] Merleau-Ponty offers a nice recapitulation of his version of this problem in a text called the 'Primacy of Perception', a brief summary he gave of the

---

[434] PhP 334/376

[435] PhP 218/255

[436] PhP 217/254, 218/255 (Merleau-Ponty notes that the latter quote is from Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, but cited by Goldstein and Rosenthal).

[437] Though I cannot pursue Merleau-Ponty's theory of color further here, it should be noted that this analysis of structural meanings does not exhaust this theory. Although he thinks it is possible for different objects to have the same structural meaning associated with a color, the color of each object is not *exactly* the same: "A color is never simply a color, but rather the color *of* a certain object, and the blue of a rug would not be the same blue if it were not a wooly blue" (PhP 326/368, my emphasis). As we see here, Merleau-Ponty thinks the color an object has will be determined, in part, by that object: "it is impossible to describe fully the color of a carpet without saying that it is a carpet, or a woolen carpet, and without implying in this color a certain tactile value, a certain weight, and a certain resistance to sound" (PhP 337/379). So although multiple different objects can share the same color-structure, the way that structure is filled out in each object will be different. I shall return to these issues again in Chapter Eight.

[438] This, of course, is not to say that structural meanings transcend our bodily perspective all together, just that they transcend any *one* perspective we might take on an object.

Phenomenology shortly after its publication. He asks, in a Husserlian vein, "If we consider an object which we perceive but one of whose sides we do not see… how should we describe the existence of these… nonvisible parts of present objects?"[439] If I am looking at a lamp whose backside is hidden from my view, how is it, nevertheless, possible for me to "grasp the unseen side as present," i.e., to perceive the lamp *as* having a backside?[440] Indeed, it seems that in order to grasp this lamp *as* a lamp at all, as opposed to, say, a cardboard cut-out, this projection of its backside is pivotal.[441] Or, to vary the problem, suppose you are looking at the partially shaded white wall.[442] How is it possible, in spite of appearing white and gray at parts, for you to perceive this wall *as* the same white through and through? In these cases, what is at issue is how it is possible for us to grasp something presented perspectivally and in a particular situation to have meaning over and beyond those limits. In other (Kantian) words, how is it possible for a structural meaning, which seems heterogeneous with an adumbration, to come to bear on it in perceptual experience? This, I take it, is Merleau-Ponty's version of Kant's problem of homogeneity.

4.2. A Kantian Solution

Not only does Merleau-Ponty pose this problem in a Kantian vein, but also solves it in one as well by resorting to a theory of schematism. For Merleau-Ponty, like Kant before him, in order for what is highly particular and general to converge in perceptual experience, there must be a schema that paves a way. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty chooses to frame schema in an explicitly bodily fashion; however, he follows Kant in suggesting that our schemata involve patterns or procedures that enable us to perceive something highly particular as having a more general meaning.

---

[439] PrP 14. Citations to *Primacy of Perception* (PrP) are to the English translation.

[440] PrP 14. See also PhP 69-74/95-100 and 331-339/373-382 for a discussion of object constancy.

[441] For a discussion of these issues in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, see Kelly (2005).

[442] See PhP 318-327/358-368 for a more extended discussion of color constancy.

Let's begin by considering the patterns of bodily movement Merleau-Ponty suggests underwrite the body schema. According to Merleau-Ponty, our bodies have various patterns of movement, which he labels 'arrangements' [*montages*] or 'typics' [*typiques*], which track or are 'synchronized' with structural meanings present to us in perception.[443] For example, just as there is a certain inviting structure associated with the color blue, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is a typical "motor reaction provoked by blue," something we could call "blue behavior."[444] Likewise, Merleau-Ponty suggests there is a typical pattern of eye-movement that tracks the movement of objects in our visual field; this 'natural arrangement [*montage*]' of our gaze, he argues, is the 'natural translation' of the movement of perceived objects.[445] Indeed, he claims that this arrangement can be so ingrained that if we, say, think we are moving our gaze but are eyes are, in fact, paralyzed, we will nevertheless perceive objects to be moving.[446] Or to use an example from another sense modality, Merleau-Ponty claims that we have certain patterns of movement that are a "typic [*typique*] of the tactile "world"," i.e., that allow us to track tactile meanings, e.g., smoothness or roughness, in what we perceive.[447]

---

[443] PhP 330/372. Although Landes translates '*typique*' as schema, I shall only translate '*schéma*' as schema and shall translate '*typique*' as typic. This has the advantage of preserving the allusion to Husserl's discussion of the notion of a 'typic' [*Typik*] in the *Crisis* and *Experience and Judgment*. It is worth noting that Kant also uses the notion of a 'typic' in the *Critique of Practical Reason* in a chapter titled 'Of the Typic [*Typik*] of Pure Practical Judgment', which is the practical analogue of the Schematism chapter in the first *Critique* (5:67-70). However, to my knowledge Merleau-Ponty does not ever discuss Kant's typic in his published writings or lectures.

[444] PhP 217/254

[445] PhP 49/74

[446] PhP 48-9/74

Now, on Merleau-Ponty's view, these arrangements or typics of bodily movement make up or are the 'annexes' of the body schema.[448] In which case, the body schema as a whole, through these various patterns of movement, has the function of attuning us to the various structural meanings in what we perceive. This, in turn, is why Merleau-Ponty thinks the body schema can solve the problem of homogeneity: when something highly particular solicits one of these patterns of movement, we will perceive that adumbration as having the structural meaning that *any* object that solicits that movement would have. If, for example, the patch of carpet present to me from my current point of view engages the 'blue behavior' that is part of my body schema, then I will perceive it *as* blue, i.e., as blue beyond what is given to me here and now. So too when I perceive only the front-side of a lamp, if that perspectivally given adumbration engages the patterns of behavior typically associated with lamps, which, in part, involves anticipating that they have back-sides, then I, in virtue of my body schema, am able to perceive it as a three-dimensional lamp. For Merleau-Ponty, then, like Kant, it is the patterns or procedures involved in our body schema that mediate between what is particular and general in perceptual experience.

4.3. A transcendental body schema?

Though there may be reasons to think Merleau-Ponty sets up his theory of the body schema in broadly Kantian terms, it may seem as if there is one important place they will part ways, viz., with respect to Kant's claims about *transcendental* schematism. Recall that in the Schematism although Kant discusses more empirical schemata, viz., those associated with pure sensible, mathematical concepts and with empirical concepts, his primary focus is on transcendental schemata, viz., those associated with the categories, that function as a condition of the possibility of *any* experience. Given that Merleau-Ponty is at various points in the *Phenomenology* highly critical of transcendental idealism, we might worry that he would reject the transcendental claims so central to Kant's theory of schematism.[449] However, in what follows, I show that if the transcendental claims we have in mind are Kant's claims that transcendental schemata make experience *in general* possible, then Merleau-Ponty himself thinks of the body schema in such terms. Indeed, as we shall see below, Merleau-Ponty thinks there are (call them 'transcendental') features of our body schema that make perceptual experience *as such* possible. So too he thinks there are (call them 'empirical') features of the body schema that reflect how it develops in experience, making *particular* kinds of perceptions possible.

---

[447] PhP 331/373

[448] PhP 49/74

The 'transcendental' features of Merleau-Ponty's body schema are the features that make it possible for us to find meaning in perception at all. As he makes this point, our body schema involves a "*universal* arrangement [*montage*], a typic [*typique*] of *all* perceptual developments and of *all* inter-sensory correspondences beyond the segment of the world we are actually perceiving,"[450] and "a typic [*typique*] of *every possible* being, or a *universal* arrangement [*montage*] with regard to the world."[451] These universal arrangements and typics gear us into meaning in the world as such, i.e., enable us to experience the world as a meaningful place. Moreover, he thinks there is something we would call transcendental about the annexes of the body schema, i.e., our senses:

---

[449] For Merleau-Ponty's critique of transcendental idealism, see, e.g., PhP lxxv/12, lxxix/16, 60-61-87-88

[450] PhP 341/383, translation modified, my emphasis

> To have senses such as vision is to possess this general arrangement [*montage*], this typic [*typique*] of possible visual relations with the help of which we are capable of taking up *every* given visual constellation.[452]

In virtue of having each sense, then, we are able to track meanings in what we perceive that are relative to that sense, e.g., my sense of touch enables me to perceive the world in tactile terms, whereas my sense of smell enables me to perceive it in aromatic terms.

However, like Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty does not take this account of the transcendental features of schematism to be exhaustive; rather Merleau-Ponty's analysis of *habit* and *habit-acquisition* points toward an empirical dimension of the body schema.[453] On his view, in the course of experience, the body schema is determined and developed in different ways, the result of which is an ever-evolving empirical body schema, which makes *particular* perceptual experiences possible, e.g., of dogs, of red, etc. He claims this determination and development occurs primarily through the acquisition of habit, insofar as it involves the "reworking and renewal of the body schema."[454] When we acquire a habit, we acquire what he describes as "the power of responding with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation" and in this way habits make new kinds of experiences possible.[455]

---

[451] PhP 453/492, translation modified, my emphasis

[452] PhP 341/383, translation modified, my emphasis

[453] See Merleau-Ponty's discussion of 'motor habits' at the end of the chapter titled 'The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity' (PhP143-148/177-183) and of 'perceptual habits' at the end of the chapter titled 'The Synthesis of One's Own Body' (PhP 153-5/188-190).

[454] PhP 143/177. See Carman (1999): 219-220 and (2008): 106-7 for a discussion of habit.

To use one of his examples, once I have learned to waltz, my body schema has been stretched in a new way and I have gained the ability to move in a waltz-like fashion in the circumstances that call for it, e.g., in a ballroom, practicing at home, etc.[456]

In addition to acquiring 'motor habits', Merleau-Ponty thinks our body schema is developed through the acquisition of 'perceptual habits'.[457] When a child, for example, learns to see colors, Merleau-Ponty suggests she acquires a 'perceptual habit'.[458] He describes this habit as a new 'style' of seeing and as an 'enriching' or 'reorganizing' of her body schema, which enables the child to see different things in different circumstances in the same way, e.g., as red.[459] In this way, our perceptual habits refine the 'universal' features of our body schema: it is not just that the body schema attunes us to tactile or aromatic meanings in general, it gears us into particular tactile meanings, say, the feel of velvet and particular aromatic meanings, say, the smell of espresso. In the end, for Merleau-Ponty, as was true of Kant, we can only understand how the body schema makes experience possible if we take into account both its transcendental and empirical features.[460]

---

[455] PhP 143/177

[456] PhP 143/178

[457] PhP 153-5/188-190

[458] PhP 154/189

[459] PhP 155/190

[460] This discussion seems to echo Kant's claims in Section IV of the Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* that the categories alone are not sufficient for experience, but rather they must be empirically determined in order for us to experience the world in conceptually laden terms (5:179-180). See Allison (2001): 32.

4.4. The art of the body schema

The preceding discussion of habit brings us to the fourth important Kantian theme in Merleau-Ponty's account: the reliance of the body schema on art or know-how.[461] As we saw in Chapter Three, on Kant's account, the production of a schema cannot be the result of a judgment, but rather depends on the imagination's 'hidden art in the depths of the human soul' and I argued that we ought to think of this art along the lines of know-how. In a similar vein, Merleau-Ponty argues that our acquisition of habits, hence the empirical determination of our body schema, is something that depends on the acquisition of a certain know-how, i.e., a certain skill.[462] As Merleau-Ponty succinctly puts this point, "in the acquisition of habit it is the body that "understands" [*comprend*]."[463] When I, for example, learn to waltz, it is not enough for me to have memorized a formula for where my arms go, where my feet go, what count to come in on, etc. What I need is for my body to 'catch (*kapiert*)' and 'understand' [*comprend*] the movement; I need to develop a waltzing *skill.*[464]

Though this is nicely illustrated in the case of motor habits, on Merleau-Ponty's view, our perceptual habits rely just as much on the body's know-how and skills. Consider, for example, our ability to see colors as constant in spite of varied lighting, e.g., when I see the wall as the same color white throughout, even though it is partially shaded. Merleau-Ponty suggests that, in these experiences, it is our gaze that "“knows” [*sait*] what such a patch of light signifies in such a context, and it understands [*comprend*] the logic of illumination."[465] This 'knowledge' is not theoretical, but rather reflective of our know-how with the logic of color and lighting. Indeed, the independence of these bodily skills from judgment comes out especially strikingly in cases of perceptual illusions, like the Müller-Lyer illusion.[466] In cases such as this, we intellectually know and judge that a certain relation between objects in the perceived world obtains, e.g., we judge that the lines are the same length, nevertheless we cannot help but *see* them as being of different lengths. This is because our perceptual skills are underwritten by bodily know-how, not intellectual knowledge.

---

[461] This is the Kantian feature of Merleau-Ponty's account that Carman (1999), (2008) most emphasizes: "What is essential to the concept of the body schema, and what it shares with its Kantian predecessor… is the notion of an integrated set of skills poised and ready to anticipate and incorporate a world prior to the application of concepts and the formation of thoughts and judgments" (2009: 219).

[462] This is what Noë (2004) has more recently coined 'sensorimotor knowledge', i.e., the kind of knowledge underwritten by 'sensorimotor skills': "to perceive not only depends on, but is constituted by, our possession of this sort of sensorimotor knowledge… in effect, perceiving is a kind of skillful bodily activity" (2).

[463] PhP 145/180

[464] PhP 144/178. This model of 'understanding' echoes Heidegger's analysis of understanding [*Verstehen*] in ¶31 of *Being and Time.*

Although it is in his discussion of habits that Merleau-Ponty most emphasizes that the body schema involves know-how and skills, there is something like a transcendental analogue. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is what we could call a transcendental logic of the world: "a logic of the world that empirical perceptions determine but that they cannot engender."[467] This logic is something he thinks we understand through our body schema; the universal features of the body schema enable us to "“understand”[*comprend*] not only some definite milieu, but rather an infinity of possible milieus," i.e., the world as such.[468] For Merleau-Ponty, this comprehension of the world does not occur through thought,[469] but rather through the "comprehensive hold" our bodies have on it.[470] Our body in general is, as he puts it, a "knowing-body" [*corps-connaissant*], and it gives us an understanding of the world as a meaningful place.[471] But, here, the understanding of the world we have through our body schema is not mediated through theoretical knowledge, but, as with Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is an art, a know-how that lies at the heart of this schema that makes us familiar with the logic of the world.

---

[465] PhP 341/383

[466] PhP 6/28

[467] PhP 427/466

[468] PhP 341/383

[469] PhP 430/469-470

In the end, then, we find that far from Merleau-Ponty rejecting Kant's theory of schematism as too intellectualist, Lachièze-Rey's interpretation paved the way for him to see it as promising for his own analysis of the body schema. And by incorporating some of Kant's insights about schematism into his own theory of perception, Merleau-Ponty once again reclaims and refines the proto-phenomenological elements he sees at work in Kant's philosophy of perception. Although so far we have concentrated on how Merleau-Ponty draws on the first *Critique*, in the following chapter we shall consider what he takes over from the third *Critique* as well.

---

[470] PhP 431/470

[471] PhP 431/470

Chapter Eight: Merleau-Ponty's Appropriation of Kant's Aesthetic Ideas

§1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I have argued that Merleau-Ponty appropriates two key themes present in Kant's treatment of perception in the first *Critique*, viz., the productive imagination and schematism. In this chapter, I want to turn our attention more directly towards the third *Critique* and consider to what extent Kant's analysis of genius and aesthetic ideas from this latter text influenced Merleau-Ponty's account of perception. We will, once again, adopt a bit of an indirect route to this topic: I believe an examination of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Marcel Proust brings to light these Kantian themes in his philosophy of perception.

From Merleau-Ponty's first works to his last, we find Marcel Proust's name occurring again and again.[472] It is not just that Merleau-Ponty borrows examples from Proust; rather, he takes Proust's project in *In Search of Lost Time* to be of a piece with his own philosophic endeavors. Indeed, as he suggests in 'Metaphysics and the Novel', his task as a phenomenologist cannot be separated from Proust's task, for they are both concerned with "giving voice to the experience of the world and showing how consciousness escapes into the world."[473] Or, as he makes this point in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, he like Proust is motivated,

---

[472] Merleau-Ponty not only references Proust in his published works (see *Structure of Behavior* (1942), *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), *Sense and Nonsense* (1948), *Signs* (1960)), but also intended for an analysis of Proust to play a central role in his last unpublished work *The Visible and Invisible.* A note from his commentary on Sartre's *What is Literature* written in 1948 indicates also that he had planned to do his own *What is Literature* in which he would do an entire literary study of Proust (along with Montaigne, Stendahl, Breton, and Arbaud) (*Prose of the World* xvi). But even in his lecture series and courses, he would return to Proust again and again (see *The World of Perception* (1948), *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes* (1954-5), 'The Concept of Nature' (1957-8) (in Nature), and 'The Child's Relation with Others' (1960) (in PrP).

> by the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness [*conscience*], the same will to seize the meaning [*sens*] of the world… as that meaning comes into being.[474]

In this way, he takes his project along with Proust's to "merge into the general effort of modern thought."[475] And, insofar as they are both in this struggle together, Merleau-Ponty believes he can turn to Proust for insight.

Yet in this chapter I argue that though Proust and Merleau-Ponty are certainly engaged in the 'effort of modern thought', this effort is situated within a broader Kantian context. Indeed, I show that the aspects of Proust's thought that Merleau-Ponty capitalizes on, in particular Proust's notion of a 'sensible idea', are, in fact, re-appropriations of Kant's doctrine of aesthetic ideas put forth in the *Critique of Judgment*.[476] As we saw above, Kant introduces his discussion of an aesthetic idea in an effort to analyze genius and the expressive content of works of art; however, we find that the legacy of this view extends far past an aesthetic context. For Merleau-Ponty, reading Proust through a Kantian lens, sees the notion of an aesthetic idea and genius as having import for how we understand experience more generally. More specifically, I show that Merleau-Ponty's theory of meaning as well as his theory of understanding are shaped through and through by his interaction with Kant via Proust. But this discussion not only promises to shed light on central aspects of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, but also on the place of phenomenology within the Kantian tradition: phenomenology is by no means meant to demolish or replace Kantian philosophy, but rather to refine and develop the truly 'modern' aspects of that philosophy.

---

[473] S/NS 28

[474] PhP xxxv/21

[475] PhP xxxv/21

[476] Merleau-Ponty is not alone in connecting Proust and Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas, Deleuze also does this in *Proust and Signs* (PS) (1964/72), identifying 'Essences' with 'aesthetic ideas' (PS 54) (more on this below). For Deleuze's analysis of Kant's aesthetic ideas, see *The Critical Philosophy of Kant* (1963): 56-8 and "The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics' (1963): 66-7. For a comparison of Merleau-Ponty's and Deleuze's Proust interpretations, see Carbone (2010): Chapter 2. I will also note various ways in which Merleau-Ponty's and Deleuze's interpretations converge and diverge in what follows.

In order to bring out Merleau-Ponty's appropriation of Kant refracted through Proust, I begin with a discussion of central texts in Proust's *Swann in Love* that figure prominently in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, viz., Proust's texts about the 'little phrase' from the sonata by Vinteuil and the notion of a 'sensible idea' (§2). With this set-up in place, I then turn to Merleau-Ponty's Kantian interpretation of Proust and his use of the notions of aesthetic ideas and sensible ideas in crafting his own theory of meaning (§3), as well as his own theory of understanding as something that involves genius and creativity (§4). I conclude with a discussion of what implications this has for how we understand the Kantian underpinnings of the 'general effort of modern thought', which Merleau-Ponty takes he and Proust to be engaged in (§5).

§2. Proust's Sensible Ideas

Before advancing to considerations of Merleau-Ponty's view, I want to also orient us within the texts from Proust that he will be drawing on. Though Merleau-Ponty discusses various aspects of *In Search of Lost Time* throughout his work, the passages that are most important for our purposes are those in which Proust takes up, what Merleau-Ponty labels 'sensible ideas'.[477] This occurs in Proust's description of Swann listening to the performance of the sonata by Vinteuil at the Marquise de Saint-Euverte's party toward the end of *Swann in Love*.[478] Throughout Swann's love affair with Odette, Vinteuil's sonata and especially one particular phrase, the 'little phrase', plays a recurring role as the "anthem of their love."[479] As their love affair progresses, though, the sonata ceases to speak to him solely about their happiness, but comes to suggest to him that that happiness is futile.[480] And, finally when Swann hears the performance of the sonata at the party, it precipitates the realization in him that, "the feeling Odette had for him would never revive, that his hopes of happiness would not be realized now."[481] This performance is also important because Swann is finally able to listen to the sonata and understand it on its own terms: rather than seeing it through a wholly subjective lens as a manifestation of his love affair, he comes to appreciate what Vinteuil was trying to express through it. Indeed, Swann comes to regard the sonata and its little phrase as involving 'Ideas' Vinteuil communicated to his audience.[482]

But, and this is the pivotal point for Merleau-Ponty, Proust suggests that the ideas involved in the sonata and little phrase are not 'ideas of intelligence'.[483] Here is what becomes so crucial for Merleau-Ponty,

---

[477] Citations are to Proust, Marcel. *Swann's Way.* transl. Lydia Davis. New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

[478] Swann's Way 358-366

[479] The sonata is introduced at Swann's Way 222-7, and labeled the 'anthem' of their love at 226.

[480] Swann's Way 227

[481] Swann's Way 366

[482] Swann's Way 362

[483] Merleau-Ponty cites 'ideas of intelligence' in V/I 152, 153

> Swann had regarded musical motifs as actual ideas, of another world, of another order, ideas veiled in shadows, unknown, impenetrable to the intelligence, but not for all that less perfectly distinct from one another, unequal among themselves in value and significance.[484]

Proust suggests that it is not only musical motifs that are included in this alternative category of ideas, but other "other notions without equivalents, like the notion of light, of sound, of perspective, or physical pleasure" fall in this category as well.[485] And though Proust himself does not use this phrase, Merleau-Ponty introduces the label 'sensible ideas' for the ideas falling in this category.[486]

A closer look at these sensible ideas reveals that they bear a rather striking resemblance to Kant's aesthetic ideas. As we saw in Chapter Four, Kant describes an aesthetic idea as,

> a representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.[487]

Turning to Proust, we find him suggest that in art we are familiar with sensible ideas, i.e., ideas that involve some meaning that resists conceptual articulation.. As we have already seen, Proust says these ideas are 'unknown, impenetrable to the intelligence' and, as he puts it a bit later, the "present an obscure surface to one's intelligence [*raison*]."[488] Elaborating on this point, Proust suggests that though Swann can try to analyze what it is about the little phrase that moves him, he recognizes that this will only give him a derivative grasp of the sonata:

---

[484] Swann's Way 362. Cited in V/I 151

[485] Swann's Way 363. Cited in V/I 149, 152

[486] V/I 151

[487] KU 5:314

[488] Swann's Way 363

> [Swann] had realized that it was to the closeness of the intervals between the five notes that composed [the little phrase], and to the constant repetition of the two of them, that was due this impression of a frigid and withdrawn sweetness; but in reality he knew that he was reasoning this way not about the phrase itself but about simple values substituted, for the convenience of his intelligence, for the mysterious entity he had perceived.[489]

His true understanding of the sonata, then, has its home in listening to it, surrendering to it, not trying to circumambulate it with his mind. As Proust's describes this experience in a rather Kantian way, Swann needs merely to be present to witness the world of the sonata come to life before him,

> First the solitary piano lamented, like a bird abandoned by its mate; the violin heard it, answered it as from a neighboring tree. It was as at the beginning of the world, as if there were only the two of them still on earth, or rather in this world closed to all the rest, constructed by the logic of a creator, this world in which there would never be more than the two of them: this sonata.[490]

Nevertheless, Proust makes it clear, as Kant did, that these sensible ideas *are* 'actual ideas', partaking in the general characteristics of ideas, and hence existing "on the same plane as the ideas of the intelligence."[491] In the first place, Proust suggests that just as ideas of intelligence, e.g., the idea of a triangle, enable us to perceive multiple particulars as instantiating one and the same idea, so too do sensible ideas enable us to recognize a unique 'value and significance' in the world.[492] For example, in the little phrase, Proust says that,

---

[489] Swann's Way 362. Cited in V/I 150

[490] Swann's Way 365. Merleau-Ponty alludes to this passage approvingly in *The World of Perception*, suggesting that "from among these sounds [of a piece of music] we discern the appearance of a phrase and, as phrase follows phrase, a whole and, finally, as Proust put it, a world" (WP 74).

[491] Swann's Way 362, 363

> one sensed a content so solid [*consistant*], so explicit, to which it gave a force so new, so original, that those who had heard it preserved it within themselves on the same plane as the ideas of the intelligence. Swann referred back to it as to the conception of love and happiness whose distinctive character he recognized at once.[493]

Each sensible idea, then, has a particular content that can open up a new type of meaning to us and enable us to encounter it in future experiences. As we just saw, Proust will sometimes makes this point, once again, in line with Kant by suggesting that sensible ideas offer us a re-created world. This emerges nicely in his description of what happens once someone has encountered Renoir's work,

> at this point the world (which was not created once and for all, but as often as an original artist is born) appears utterly different from the one we knew, but perfectly clear. Women pass in the street, different from those we used to see, because they are Renoirs… The carriages are also Renoirs, and the water, and the sky… Such is the new and perishable universe that has just been created.[494]

Once we experience Renoir's work, we enter into a new world, the world of Renoirs, where women, carriages, water, and sky take on new meaning *as* Renoirs[495].

---

[492] Swann's Way 362

[493] Swann's Way 363. Cited in V/I 151

[494] Guermantes Way 323

[495] Making a similar point, the Neo-Kantian Cassirer says, "One needs only cast a glance at the truly great works of art of all time in order to become aware of this basic character. Each of these works leaves us with the impression that we have encountered something new, something we had not known before. It is no mere imitation or repetition that we are confronted with here; rather, the world always seems to be disclosed to us in new ways and from new angles. If the epic could do no more than capture past events and renew them in man's memories, there would be nothing to distinguish it from mere chronicle. But we need only think of Homer, Dante, and Milton to be convinced that in every great epic of world literature it is something quite different that confronts us. In no way does it concern a mere report of something past; rather, we are transported by the threads of the epic narrative into a worldview in which the totality of events and the entire human world appears in a new light" (*The Logic of the Humanities* 31-2).

Moreover, like Kant, Proust takes there to be a genius behind these sensible ideas who opens these newly created worlds to us. However, that being said, Proust's description of artistic genius do not quite map onto Kant's account of genius. In his descriptions of Vinteuil Proust has Swann compare him to a scientist (something Kant himself would not do).[496]

> "O audacity as inspired, perhaps," [Swann] said to himself, "as that of a Lovoisier, of an Ampére—the audacity of a Vinteuil experimenting, discovering the secret laws that govern an unknown force, guiding and urging on, across a region unexplored, toward the only possible goal."[497]

What emerges in this passage is the fact that Vinteuil does not create the sonata *ex nihilo*; he 'experiments' with the notes in such a way that he eventually 'discovers' the sonata. Or, drawing again on the metaphor of being an explorer, Proust describes the sonata as a 'supernatural creature' and Vinteuil as, "some explorer of the invisible [who] manages to capture [it], to bring it, from that divine world to which he has access, to shine for a few moments above ours."[498] Like a scientist or an explorer who engages in efforts that reveal and unveil something, like a new law or a new territory, Proust suggests that Vinteuil's function as an artist is to render something invisible visible: "Swann sensed that the composer had merely unveiled [the sonata], made it visible, with his musical instruments, following and respecting its sketched form."[499] As he says earlier, Vinteuil produces the little phrase in an effort "to imitate, to re-create" "these charms of intimate sadness"; indeed, it is the 'very essence' of this intimate sadness that Proust says the little phrase has 'captured' and 'made visible'.[500] This means that on the Proustian model of creative genius, an artist is not responsible for producing something out of nothing, but rather of concretely expressing, making visible, something that was, prior to that act, invisible.[501]

---

[496] In §47 of the third *Critique*, Kant argues that the term 'genius' is not properly applied to scientific thinkers, like Newton, because science can be taught, whereas genius is something that "no science can teach and no diligence learn" (KU 5: 317). As he infamously puts it, "everything that Newton expounded in his immortal work on the principles of natural philosophy, no matter how great a mind it took to discover it, can still be learned; but one cannot learn to write inspired poetry" (KU 5:308).

[497] Swann's Way 364. Cited in V/I 149

[498] Swann's Way 364

The artistic act of rendering visible is something that Proust also alludes to in his descriptions of the musicians performing the sonata. In these passages, Proust suggests that the role of the musician is to usher in the presence of the music, complete with its sensible ideas. He, indeed, uses such ritualistic language, saying that the musicians "perform the rituals [the sonata] required in order to makes it appearance."[502] And once the performance is underway, he indicates that the musicians have to keep up with the sonata: "the violinist had to leap to his bow to collect [it]."[503] Although Vinteuil, of course, was the first to render the sonata's sensible ideas visible, each time the piece is played the pianist and violinist also share this artistic responsibility.

---

[499] Swann's Way 364. Although this may sound rather Platonic, Deleuze argues that Proust was ultimately not a Platonist (see PS 100-102, 108-9). Carbone (2010) notes that Merleau-Ponty also puts forth an anti-Platonic reading of Proust in V/I and was planning to put forth this interpretation in a 1960-1 course titled 'Cartesian Ontology and the Ontology of Today' (9).

[500] Swann's Way 362

[501] For a more detailed discussion of creativity in Proust, see Deleuze PS 96-97, 111.

[502] Swann's Way 360. Cited in PhP 147/181

[503] Swann's Way 365. Cited in PhP 147/181

§3. Between Aesthetic and Sensible Ideas: Merleau-Ponty's Model of Meaning

With Kant's account of aesthetic ideas and Proust's account of sensible ideas now in place, we are in a position to consider the ways in which Merleau-Ponty appropriates these views in his philosophy. In particular, I aim to show that the Kant-Proust line of thought underpins both Merleau-Ponty's theory of meaning, as well as his view of understanding, in the sense of what it takes to grasp the meanings presented to us. It will be helpful before considering his positive project to consider the alternative, what he calls 'intellectualist', theory of meaning and understanding that he is rejecting.

3.1. The Intellectualist Theory

Throughout Merleau-Ponty's corpus he criticizes the 'intellectualist' approach to meaning. According to Merleau-Ponty, one of the hallmark features of intellectualism is its commitment to a theory of meaning that takes meaning, e.g., concepts, ideas, and forms, to be *separable from* the spatio-temporal instances to which these meanings apply. Whether we think of Platonic forms as part of an intelligible world or the Kantian categories as in the mind *a priori*, Merleau-Ponty suggests that they are varieties of meaning that are of an intellectual order, an order that is distinct from the sensible order of our empirical world.

Merleau-Ponty maintains that this theory of meaning has implications for how the intellectualist can understand experiences in which we find the particulars we come across to have meaning. He claims that the intellectualist is committed to these experiences involving intellectual acts in which we subsume that particular under some intellectual meaning, e.g., a concept:

> Intellectualism can only conceive of the passage from… sign to the signification, as an interpretation, an apperception, or an epistemic intention. Sensory givens and perspectives at each level would be contents grasped as (*aufgefaβt als*) manifestations of a single intelligible core.[504]

The 'sign' and 'significance', then, are separable for the intellectualist and the gap between them can be bridged only through an intellectual act.[505]

But Merleau-Ponty takes issue with this picture and much of the *Phenomenology* is devoted to explaining why the intellectualist cannot adequately do justice to experiences, most importantly perception, in which we grasp something in the world as meaningful. Though we cannot here go into the many criticisms he levies against the intellectualist, for now it will be enough to look at some of the phenomenological evidence he musters against this view. To get a sense of where he thinks the intellectualist goes wrong with respect to perception, let's consider his discussion of double vision.[506] Suppose, I am at a party and, as I am focused on a waiter across the room, I experience double vision of a champagne flute in front of me. Eventually, this double vision is resolved in favor of an experience of a single flute in front of me. How is it that the two duplicate images coalesce into a single image of one flute? If the intellectualist account is right, then the experience of the single flute is the result of an intellectual act in which the two images are subsumed under a single concept. But, according to Merleau-Ponty, this theory does not match the phenomenology of the experience:

---

[504] PhP 154/189

[505] It is not clear whether Merleau-Ponty would fault Deleuze's Proust interpretation for falling into the intellectualist camp. On the one hand, Deleuze claims that the 'apprenticeship' of the narrator in *In Search of Lost Time*, is an apprenticeship in learning to *interpret* signs of various orders, e.g., of the world, of love, of sensibility, of art. Hence, his description of the narrator as an apprentice in 'Egyptology' (PS 4, 92, 101-2). On the other hand, it does not appear to be the case that Deleuze's model of 'interpretation' is one that the intellectualist shares. Indeed, Deleuze puts forth his analysis of interpretation as an alternative to Platonism and the view that we can interpret signs in light of some prior Logos or concepts (see PS 100-102, 108-109). Instead, advocating for the 'Antilogos', he suggests intelligence must 'come after' our encounters with signs (PS 98) and meanings are developed only *through* the act of interpretation (PS 102). For Deleuze then, this act of interpretation is highly creative, more akin to what an artist does (indeed, this is why the narrator is able to do it only once he has become competent with signs in art). In this latter respect, Deleuze's view would be closer to Merleau-Ponty's than the intellectualist's.

[506] PhP 239-242/276-280

> If it were a spiritual act or an apperception, it would have to happen as soon as I notice the identity of the two images, while in fact the unity of the object keeps us waiting, right up until the moment when the focusing conjures [the duplicate images] away.[507]

For Merleau-Ponty, what this reveals is that a perceptual experience like this one does not depend on our mind projecting meaning onto what we perceive, but of our body coming to grips with the meaning already present.

Though Merleau-Ponty is particularly interested in showing how the intellectualist theory fails to do justice to perception, he thinks it fairs equally badly with respect to other types of experiences, e.g., conversing with someone, thinking through something, engaging with a work of art, etc.[508] Looking once again at the phenomenology of these experiences, he claims that we do not find ourselves to be engaging in explicit subsumption of particulars, e.g., words or artworks, under concepts; but rather of directly finding meaning *in* those particulars. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty claims that if we remain committed to the intellectualist view, we would have to deny that, in speech for example, we can learn anything,

> At first glance, one might believe that speech that is heard can bring him nothing: he gives the words and phrases their sense… Hence the experience of communication would be an illusion. One consciousness constructs – for X– this language machine that will give to another consciousness the opportunity to enact the same thought, but nothing actually passes from one to the other. Nevertheless, given the problem

---

[507] PhP 239-240/277. He goes on to claim that, "One passes from double vision to the unique object not through an inspection of the mind, but when the two eyes cease to function in isolation and are used as a single organ by a unique gaze" (PhP 241/279).

[508] I will return to his analysis of speech, thought, and aesthetic experience below.

> of knowing how according to all appearances consciousness learns something, the solution cannot consist in asserting that it knows everything in advance.[509]

Since, however, we *do* experience ourselves as learning something and feel as if something *is* being communicated to us, the intellectualist theory appears to be off the mark. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty suggests that we, in fact, resort to explicit subsumption of a particular under a concept only in extreme cases, like pathological illness. Discussing a particular pathological patient, Schneider, and his inability to grasp basic analogies, Merleau-Ponty claims,

> What compromises thought for Schneider is not that he is incapable of perceiving concrete givens as exemplars of a unique *eidos*, or of subsuming them under a category; rather, it is that he can only link them through an explicit subsumption.[510]

He continues by suggesting,

> If we were to describe the analogy as the apperception of two given terms under one concept that coordinates them, then we would be giving as normal a procedure that is nothing other than pathological and that represents the detour through which the patient must go in order to offer a substitution for a normal understanding of the analogy.[511]

Though he makes this point with respect to understanding analogies, it applies across the board: in 'normal' experience, we do not need to engage in explicit intellectual acts of subsumption or apperception in order to understand the meaning presented to us.

This criticism of intellectualism, in turn, raises several questions. What does Merleau-Ponty think is a more phenomenologically accurate alternative to the intellectualist model of meaning? And if not through mental acts, how is it that we make sense of what is presented to us?

---

[509] PhP 184/218

[510] PhP 129/160

[511] PhP 129/161

3.2. Merleau-Ponty's Theory of Meaning

Let's begin by considering the development of Merleau-Ponty's theory of meaning between the *Phenomenology* and *The Visible and Invisible*, focusing, in particular, on the use he makes of Kant's aesthetic and Proust's sensible ideas throughout. This emerges, in particular, in his analysis of meaning in terms of the notion of 'style'.

One of the cornerstones of Merleau-Ponty's theory of meaning is what I shall call the 'inseparability thesis': meaning, in its most basic form, is *inseparable from* its sensible embodiment.[512] In the *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty turns to Proust and the 'little phrase' to illustrate the inseparability thesis:

> The musical signification of the sonata is inseparable from the sounds that carry it… During the performance, the sounds are not merely the "signs" of the sonata; rather, the sonata is there through them and descends into them.[513]

On Merleau-Ponty's reading, then, the meaning of the sonata cannot be found anywhere other than *in* its notes. And, any effort at grasping that meaning through our intellect alone will fall short. Indeed, as we saw previously, when Swann tries to reason about the sonata, he puts in place of the real meaning of the sonata an intellectual substitute.[514] Making this point about the work of Cézanne, Merleau-Ponty claims,

> If I have never seen his paintings, then the analysis of Cézanne's œuvre leaves me the choice between several possible Cézannes; only the perception of his paintings will present me with the uniquely existing Cézanne, and only in this perception can the analyses take on their full sense.[515]

---

[512] Provided that we understand 'concept' in the narrow sense that he does, as an intellectual type of meaning that is separable from sensible instances.

[513] PhP 188/223

[514] This is not to say that the intellectual substitute tells us nothing about the sonata. Rather, on Merleau-Ponty's view at least, the 'intellectual signification' we can arrive at through analysis is still some type of meaning, but it is simply not the 'primordial signification' of the thing we experience (PhP 135/167).

But a worry might arise at this point: given that we tend to think of meaning as something that is *general* and *repeatable*, i.e., as something that allows us to recognize the same type of thing on multiple occasions, won't Merleau-Ponty's inseparable meanings fall short on this count? If the meaning of an object is located *in* that object, how could that object not exhaust it? In order to allay this worry, we need to look at Merleau-Ponty's analysis of meaning in terms of the notion *style*. On Merleau-Ponty's particular usage, style is meant to capture the unique character of something.[516] This usage should be familiar to us from an aesthetic context, where it is used to refer to an artist's particular style, e.g., the style of Stendahl or Vermeer.[517] It is also familiar to us as a way of capturing the unique character of an individual person, e.g., Jackie O.[518] As Merleau-Ponty illustrates this point, a particular woman,

> is an "individual, sentimental, sexual expression." She is a certain manner of being flesh which is given entirely in her walk or even in the simple shock of her heel on the ground—as the tension of the bow is present in each fiber of wood—a very noticeable variation of the norm of walking, looking, touching, and speaking.[519]

So too does he use this notion of style to capture what is particular about a city, like Paris:

---

[515] PhP 152/187

[516] Though Deleuze will also discuss style in his Proust interpretation, he and Merleau-Ponty do not use them in the same way. Merleau-Ponty's styles appear to be much closer to Deleuze's Essences insofar as they are highly singular: in Merleau-Ponty's words style is 'inimitable' (V/I 152) and in Deleuze's words Essence is 'absolute and ultimate Difference' (PS 41). This, however, is not a perfect isomorphism, for as I note below, Merleau-Ponty does not think of style in the 'spiritual' terms that Deleuze does. Meanwhile style, for Deleuze, is something that captures and presents Essences in a work of art: "An essence is always a birth of the world, but style is that continuous and refracted birth, that birth regained in substances adequate to essences [i.e., artworks], that birth which has become the metamorphosis of objects" (PS 48).

[517] See 'Indirect Languages and Voices of Silence' and 'Man and Adversity' in *Signs* for this use of style in the aesthetic context.

[518] See PhP 294/332, 342/384

[519] Signs 54

> each explicit perception in my journey through Paris—the cafés, the faces, the poplars along the quays, the bends of the Seine—is cut out of the total being of Paris, and only serves to confirm a certain style or a certain sense of Paris. And when I arrived there for the first time, the first streets that I saw upon leaving the train stations were… only manifestations of a still ambiguous, though already incomparable essence.[520]

Though these usages of style may be more standard, Merleau-Ponty further uses style in a less familiar, more mundane way to capture the character of everyday objects.[521] Merleau-Ponty suggests, for example, that the 'sensible givens' associated with a piece of wood, "modulate a certain theme or illustrate a certain style that wood is."[522] For Merleau-Ponty, then, the various properties of the wood are not contingently associated, nor are they united under a concept; rather, they are unified in virtue of being multiple expressions of one and the same style. Emphasizing this point earlier in the *Phenomenology*, he claims that,

> The unity of the thing, beyond all of its congealed properties, is not a substratum, an empty X, or a subject of inherence, but rather that unique accent that is found in each one, that unique manner of existing of which its properties are a secondary expression. For example, the fragility, rigidity, transparency, and crystalline sound of a glass express a single manner of being.[523]

This analysis of meaning as style promises to shed light on the worry about generality and repeatability mentioned above. The style of something is such that although it is manifest in each of its appearances, it is never exhausted by any of those appearances;

---

[520] PhP 294/332-3

[521] Here, we find a divergence between Merleau-Ponty's view of style and the view of style Deleuze offers in *Proust and Signs*: whereas Merleau-Ponty takes style to be of the same nature whether it is manifesting in a work of art or in a common object, Deleuze suggests that style (or 'Essence') takes a more singular shape in a work of art and a more general shape in a sensible sign (and even more general in the signs of love and worldly signs) (PS 89). Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty, the style of any object, aesthetic or no, any person, any city will involve elements of singularity and generality, as will be discussed below.

[522] PhP 476/514

[523] PhP 333/374-5

instead, that style is always available to us in future experiences of that object. Making this point in the 'Primacy of Perception', Merleau-Ponty suggests that,

> The perceived thing is not an ideal unity in the possession of the intellect, like a geometrical notion, for example; it is rather a totality open to a *horizon* of indefinite number of perspectival views which blend with one another according to a given style, which defines the object in question.[524]

The connection between style and horizon that we find in this passage is crucial for understanding Merleau-Ponty's view. For a style is general and repeatable insofar as it is something that we can encounter in future experiences that lay within the horizon of that style. As he says about the piece of wood already mentioned, the style of the wood "establishes an horizon of sense around this piece of wood and around the perception I have of it."[525] And any experience I have that remains within that horizon of meaning will involve me encountering the same meaning again and again.

Though Merleau-Ponty has touched on the connection between style and horizon in the *Phenomenology*, it is not until his engagement with Proust's sensible ideas in *The Visible and Invisible* that we find this view come to fruition. Underlining the importance of Proust's sensible ideas for him in this later text, Merleau-Ponty says,

> No one has gone further than Proust in fixing the relations between the visible and invisible, in describing an idea that is not the contrary of the sensible, that is its lining and its depth.[526]

What is more, he aligns sensible ideas with Kant's aesthetic ideas by calling the former ideas that are 'without concept'.[527] And it is by unpacking this claim about Proust and the connection to Kant that promises us insight into Merleau-Ponty's non-intellectualist theory of meaning, especially the role that style and horizon play in it.

---

[524] PrP 16, my emphasis

[525] PhP 476/514

[526] V/I 149

As we have already seen, in the *Phenomenology* Merleau-Ponty finds support for his inseparability thesis in Proust's description of Vinteuil's sonata. But, he develops and elaborates this view to a greater extent in *The Visible and Invisible*. Making a familiar point, Merleau-Ponty claims that sensible ideas "cannot be detached from the sensible appearances."[528] Indeed this is where he locates the distinction between ideas of intelligence and sensible ideas: whereas the sensible is an 'occasion' for us to think of a further idea of intelligence,[529] sensible ideas are given to us nowhere but 'in a carnal experience'.[530] And, on Merleau-Ponty's interpretation, this is why Swann's attempts at explicating the little phrase will fail: they step away from the carnal experience in which the true meaning of the sonata resides: "The explication does not give us the idea itself; it is but a second version of it, a more manageable derivative."[531]

Now, in this later text Merleau-Ponty understands the inseparability of sensible ideas from the sensible in a particular way, viz., as the invisible behind the visible. Quoting in full the earlier passage, he claims,

---

[527] V/I 152. Merleau-Ponty also cites the phrase 'without concept' at PhP xix, 293

[528] V/I 150

[529] In cashing out what this 'further' existence of an idea of intelligence amounts to, Merleau-Ponty suggests that these ideas have been "erected into a second positivity" (V/I 149).

[530] V/I 150. This is not to say that, for Merleau-Ponty, ideas of intelligence properly understood are wholly cut off from the sensible; rather, he argues that the ideas of intelligence are developments of those sensible ideas. Or as he will sometimes put it, "the "pure" ideality streams forth along the articulations of the aesthesiological body, along the contours of sensible things, and, however new it is, it slips through ways it has not traced, transfigures horizons it did not open, it *derives* from the fundamental mystery of those notions "without equivalent," as Proust calls them" (V/I 152, my emphasis).

[531] V/I 150

> [sensible ideas] could not be given to us *as ideas* except in a carnal experience. It is not only that we would find in that carnal experience an *occasion* to think of them; it is that they owe their authority, their fascinating, indestructible power, precisely to the fact that they are in *transparency behind the sensible*, or in its very heart.[532]

Merleau-Ponty distinguishes the type of invisibility or transparency he has in mind from two other sorts of invisibility: '*de facto*' invisibility and 'absolute' invisibility.[533] With a *de facto* invisible, e.g., an object hidden behind another, it is possible to make the invisible visible by putting ourselves in a better position to see it. Meanwhile, an absolute invisible is something like a Platonic form existing in an intelligible world over and above our sensible world. Merleau-Ponty suggests that the kind of invisibility involved in a sensible idea falls in neither of these categories: neither can it ever be converted into a visible, nor does it exist in a world other than the sensible one: "it is the invisible *of* this world, that which inhabits this world, sustains it, and renders it visible."[534]

In an effort to explicate the sort of invisibility he has in mind, Merleau-Ponty returns once again to the notion of style. He claims that the invisibility of a sensible idea is,

> a style, allusive and elliptical like every style, but like every style inimitable, inalienable, an interior horizon and an exterior horizon between which the actual visible is a provisional partitioning.[535]

---

[532] V/I 150, my emphasis

[533] V/I 151

[534] V/I 151. This appears to be another point on which Merleau-Ponty's Proust interpretation parts ways with Deleuze's. For Merleau-Ponty, sensible ideas are the lining of the visible or what he calls 'flesh'. But Deleuze emphasizes a distinction between the sensible ideas involved in art and all other 'signs': arguing that the signs and meanings involved in art are 'spiritual': "The sensuous signs are still material qualities, above all odors and tastes. It is only in art that the sign becomes immaterial at the same time that its meaning becomes spiritual" (PS 85, see also Chapter 4).

[535] V/I 152

In this passage, Merleau-Ponty is cashing out the notion of style in terms of the Husserlian notion of a 'horizon'. In *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl suggests that every object we experience has two horizons, an external one and an internal one. He describes an internal horizon as the field of possible experiences we could have of the particular object we are currently experiencing. It includes all of the characteristics of the object we could, but are not yet experiencing. If, for example, I am looking at the champagne in my flute, the internal horizon of the champagne will involve features of the champagne that I could possibly experience, e.g., its flavor, its texture, its aroma, etc. Meanwhile, the external horizon involves the field of possible experiences we could have of other objects that are related to the one we are currently experiencing. The external horizon of my champagne, for example, could include experiences of other types of champagne, of celebrations, of Reims, etc. And, according to Husserl, what we experience is situated in these horizons in such a way that those horizons that determine the objects we experience.

As we have already seen, in the *Phenomenology* Merleau-Ponty had appropriated the notion of horizon from Husserl, but he gives us a more detailed analysis of it and its connection to style in *The Visible and Invisible*. Indeed, we find one of his most sustained analyses of this in his discussion of the color red.[536] Merleau-Ponty claims that red,

> is not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could be only total or null, but is rather a sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and makes diverse regions of the colored or visible world resound at the distances.[537]

---

[536] V/I 131-3

[537] V/I 132

Consider his example of a red dress. Its interior horizon will involve the characteristics of that redness that we have not yet concerned ourselves with, e.g., the wooly texture of the red, how it will appear in different circumstances, etc.[538] But, the redness of the dress also has an external horizon. As Merleau-Ponty nicely puts it, the red dress is,

> [a] punctuation in the field of red things, which includes the tiles of roof tops, the flags of gatekeepers and of the Revolution, certain terrains near Aix or in Madagascar, it is also a punctuation in the field of red garments, which includes, along with dresses of women, robes of professors, bishops, and advocate generals, and also in the field of adornments and that of uniforms.[539]

And the redness of the dress that we experience will be shaped by these two horizons, as the 'partitioning' between them. Indeed, this is just what Merleau-Ponty takes the style of the redness of the dress to amount to. But, as in the *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that each red we come across, e.g., the red of the dress, of roof tiles, of a cloak, has an individual, 'inimitable' style precisely because each red will have its own unique internal and external horizons. As he puts it, the reds are literally,

> not the same as [they] appear in one constellation or in another, as the pure essence of the Revolution of 1917 precipitates in it, or that of the eternal feminine, or that of the public prosecutor, of that of the gypsies dressed like hussars who reigned twenty-five years ago over an inn on the Champs-Elysées.[540]

It is this description of style as the confluence of an internal and an external horizon that is meant to elucidate the notion of invisibility that is inseparable from the visible. Though style and its horizons are not literally visible, they manifest themselves to us through the visible. Indeed, they make the visible show up as it does. Consider, for example, van

---

[538] V/I 132

[539] V/I 132

[540] V/I 132

Gogh's style. Though there is not some object 'van Gogh's style' that we can stumble across in a museum, we see it appearing through the brushstrokes on his canvases and we take his style to differentiate those brush strokes from those of, say, Cézanne or Picasso. At the same time, his style is not something that exists in some intelligible heaven apart from those canvases; rather, it is there *in* them and could not be found apart from them. In other words, style is neither a *de facto* invisible, nor an absolute invisible, but rather an invisibility that is inseparable from the visible.

Yet, as we have already seen, even though a sensible idea with its unique style may be the invisible behind a particular visible, it is nevertheless something general and repeatable in virtue of having a horizon. But in *The Visible and Invisible* we get a new way to think about the generality of a horizon: it is like a world we can return to again and again. Here, Merleau-Ponty is following Kant and, later, Proust's suggestion that an aesthetic or sensible idea opens us up to a new world. As he puts it, sensible ideas are "these domains, these worlds that line [the visible]."[541] Or, in a variation on this same theme, he claims,

> With the first vision, the first contact, the first pleasure, there is initiation, that is not the positing of a content, but the opening of a dimension that can never again be closed.[542]

Each sensible idea, then, opens us onto a new world we can engage with in experience, e.g., the world of Renoir, the world of Jackie O., the world of red dresses, and this new dimension is one we can return to again and again. Herein lay the generality and repeatability of style and sensible ideas: insofar as we can enter into and engage with this new world, this new dimension on future occasions, we can experience a thing, a person, a city as having the same meaning in different circumstances.

---

[541] V/I 150

[542] V/I 151

In the end, what we find is that by modeling his conception of style as an inseparable, yet general type of meaning on the model of Kant's aesthetic ideas and Proust's sensible ideas, Merleau-Ponty takes himself to have hit upon an alternative to conceptualist and intellectualist accounts of meaning.

§4. Merleau-Ponty and the Ubiquity of Genius

So far, we have seen that sensible ideas veer towards Kant's aesthetic ideas insofar as they involve meaning that is 'without concept', embodied in a world we can enter in and return to, but cannot fully explicate. But it turns out this is not the only overlap between Kant and Proust, for we shall find that sensible ideas, like aesthetic ideas, requires genius. This may seem obvious when we consider sensible ideas that are aesthetic in nature, e.g., Vinteuil as the genius behind the little phrase. However, I show that for Merleau-Ponty genius is ubiquitous, something we all possess, and it is what allows sensible ideas, mundane and aesthetic alike, to emerge in our experience.[543]

If we consider Merleau-Ponty's analysis of artistic production, we find he, like Kant and Proust, reject a Platonic view of an artist as the mere imitator of nature.[544] Although it is often suspected that painters, in particular, are in the business of copying or re-presenting nature, Merleau-Ponty urges that "painting does not imitate the world but is a world of its own."[545] But Merleau-Ponty takes this point to apply to other art forms, like cinema, music, literature, and poetry as well.[546] At the same time, Merleau-Ponty argues that an artist is not just responsible for 'designating' or 'signifying' ideas for us to engage with intellectually.[547] In his essay 'Metaphysics and the Novel', Merleau-Ponty makes this point with respect to literature, claiming that,

---

[543] In this vein, Merleau-Ponty strikes one as rather a Romantic, echoing Novalis's claim, for example, that "Without geniality, none of us would exist at all. Genius is necessary for everything" (*Novalis Schriften II*: 420, #22). For a comparison of Novalis, in particular, and Kant on genius, see Kneller (2007): Chapter 7.

[544] WP 71

> The work of a great novelist always rests on two or three philosophical ideas… for Proust, the way the past is involved in the present and the presence of time gone by. The function of the novelist is not to state these ideas thematically but to make them exist for us in the way that things exist. Stendahl's role is not to hold forth on subjectivity; it is enough that he makes it present.[548]

As we find here, the 'function' of the artist, according to Merleau-Ponty, is to make an idea 'exist for us in the way that things exist', to 'make it present'. An iteration of this point is found in the *Phenomenology*, where Merleau-Ponty (in language echoed by *The Visible and Invisible*) maintains,

> The operation of expression, when successful, does not simply leave to the reader or the writer himself a reminder; it makes the signification exists as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, it installs this signification in the writer or the reader like a new sense organ, and it opens a new field or a new dimension to our experience.[549]

The text is something like a thing, an organism that the writer brings into existence, which in turn opens us a new dimension of experience to us. After discussing how this process of expression works in Proust with Vinteuil's sonata and Berma's Phaedra, he claims that aesthetic expression, in general, "confers an existence in itself upon what it expresses, installs it in nature as a perceived thing accessible to everyone."[550] Considered in this light, Merleau-Ponty's view of artistic production veers close to Proust's description of Vinetuil. Granted Merleau-Ponty does not talk about the artist as capturing some 'super natural creature'; however, he suggests that there is some idea, some world that the artist is responsible for bringing into existence, making present, and installing in the perceptible world as a thing. Following in Kant's and Proust's footsteps, then, genius is responsible for producing a work of art that makes a new world present to us.

---

[545] WP 71

[546] WP 73-6

[547] WP 75

[548] S/NS 26

[549] PhP 188/222-3

But Merleau-Ponty extends this model of genius farther than these predecessors did, arguing that genius is not only crucial for understanding artistic production, but our mundane experience as well: indeed, he argues that our ordinary experience of the world depends on our engaging in something like artistic expression. To see this, I want to begin by considering a domain of experience that we tend to think of in expressive terms, viz., speech. In the chapter, "The Body as Expression and Speech," Merleau-Ponty argues that we ought to think of the expression of thought through speech on the model of aesthetic expression. To be clear, Merleau-Ponty does not think *all* speech should be understood on this aesthetic model. It is only, what he labels 'speaking speech' [*parole parlante*] (alternatively,

---

[550] PhP 188/223. Though he thinks many artists are responsible for bringing meaning into existence, e.g., in composing a sonata or writing a novel, he also acknowledges that other artists, e.g., the violinist playing the sonata or Berma acting the part of Phaedra, do not bring meaning into being but they "rip the signs themselves… from their empirical existence and steal them away to another world" (PhP 188/223). Describing what an organist does earlier, again referencing Proust, Merleau-Ponty claims that, "During the rehearsal—just as during the performance—the stops, the pedals, and the keyboards are only presented to him as powers of such and such an emotional or musical value, and their positions as those places through which this value appears in the world… From then on, the music exists for itself, and everything else exists through it [citations to Proust]… In fact, his rehearsal gestures are gestures of consecration; they put forth affective vectors, they discover emotional sources, and they create an expressive space, just as the gestures of the augur define the *templum*… by entirely giving himself over to the music, the reaches for precisely the stops and the pedals that will actualize it" (PhP 146-7/181).

'authentic speech', or 'originating speech') that involves the genuine expression of thought.[551] Here, he is distinguishing speaking speech from another type he labels spoken speech [*parole parlée*] (alternatively, 'secondary' or 'second-order' speech), which we could think of as something like 'idle chatter' in which we simply say what 'one' says or voice "an already acquired thought."[552] By contrast, speaking speech, his examples of which include "the child who utters his first word, of the lover who discovers his emotion, of the "first man who spoke," or of the writer and the philosopher," involves actually expressing one's own thoughts.[553] By 'expression' in this context, Merleau-Ponty does not meant that speech 'designates' thought or is the 'clothing' of thought; instead, he claims that,

> the word and speech must cease to be a manner of designating the object or the thought in order to become the presence of this thought in the sensible world, and not its clothing, but rather its emblem or body.[554]

Here, we find a variation of his analysis of meaning discussed above: the words we use in speaking speech do not have a meaning locked in our mind that is separable from them; but rather what we mean is *in* what we say. It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty claims that speaking speech "does not translate a ready-made thought; rather, speech accomplishes thought."[555] After all, we tend to not know what we think until we try to say it or try to write it down; it is only in that act that what we mean coalesces and takes shapes for us.

---

[551] "Only [authentic speech] is identical with thought" (PhP 530fn 6/218).

[552] PhP 409/449. For a discussion of speaking and spoken speech, see Baldwin (2007).

[553] PhP 530fn 7/218

[554] PhP 187/222

[555] PhP 183/217

To this end, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the continuity that exists between mundane and aesthetic acts of expression. Or, as we might put it, the genius that underlies all manifestations of speaking speech. Indeed, immediately after discussing Proust and aesthetic expression and claiming that the latter involves bringing meaning 'into being', he claims that "despite appearances, the same is true for the expression of thoughts by speech."[556] As he puts it later in the *Phenomenology*, "originary speech… brings this thought into exixstence for us just as it does for others."[557] We, like an artist then, install something meaningful in the world when we engage in speaking speech. And even if the words we are using have been used before, as long as we are expressing, accomplishing a thought that is *our own*, then we like a composer who is, after all, confined to only so many possible notes, our speech involves a touch of genius.

But, for Merleau-Ponty, it is not only the expression of our thoughts through speech that involves genius; he holds the more radical view that all of our body activity exhibits some genius. Indeed, this is why he includes the phrase 'The Body as Expression' in the chapter just considered. In order to explore this view, I want to begin by considering the role he attributes to genius in perception. We find the beginning of this view in the brief chapter in the *Phenomenology* titled "'Attention' and 'Judgment'". What is particularly striking in this chapter is the fact that Merleau-Ponty uses Kant's view of genius in the third *Critique* *against* the overly intellectualist view of perception he attributes to Descartes.[558] In this discussion, Merleau-Ponty alludes to the distinction Kant draws between reflecting and determining judgment: whereas determining judgment imposes a concept we already have on something particular, reflecting judgment has to come up with a concept for that particular.[559] On Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of this distinction, determining judgment involves imposing meaning that is 'ready-made', whereas in reflecting judgment the individual objects itself "gives birth to its sense."[560] On his view then, reflecting judgment involves letting the meaning of an object emerge for us.

---

[556] PhP 188/223

[557] PhP 409/449

[558] An intellectualist view Merleau-Ponty also attributes to the more idealist aspects of the first *Critique*.

Now, this is precisely the capacity of giving birth to meaning within an object that we have already seen Merleau-Ponty attribute to an artist. However, what we find in the *Phenomenology* is that he, in fact, attributes this to every act of perception,

> *each perception*—and not merely perceptions of scenes that I discover for the first time—begins anew for itself the birth of intelligence and has something of a genial invention [*invention geniále*] to it.[561]

He continues by illustrating this with respect to our perception of a tree 'as a tree'. He claims that this perception requires that what we see be organized as if for the first to "to sketch [*dessiner*] out the individual idea of this tree."[562] That is to say, the meaning 'tree' needs to be traced in our perceptual field, in how what we see it organized, if we are to be able to perceive something as a tree.

---

[559] Kant describes this distinction as follows in the First Introduction, "The power of judgment can be regarded either as a mere faculty for **reflecting** on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle, for the sake of a concept that is thereby made possible, or as a faculty for **determining** an underlying concept through a given **empirical** representation. In the first case it is the **reflecting**, in the second case the **determining power of judgment** (EE 20:211). See also Section VI of the published Introduction (KU 5:179-181).

[560] PhP 45/69

[561] PhP 46/69, translation modified, my emphasis

[562] PhP 46/69

Merleau-Ponty describes this 'perceptual genius' again later in the *Phenomenology* when he describes our ability to see a one-dimensional cube drawn on a piece of paper as a three-dimensional figure.[563] This perception, he suggests, results from our gaze 'tracing' the lines of the drawing in such a way that a figure that has depth springs forth.[564] Significantly, though, he cashes out this activity of our gaze in terms of genius: "I organize the cube, and the gaze is this perceptual genius underneath the thinking subject who knows how to give to things the correct response that they are waiting for in order to exist in front of us."[565] But he makes it clear that this organization is *not* one in which I 'constitute' the cube, in the sense of bringing it forth from my mind alone; rather, I am motivated by the drawing, it 'indicates' and 'recommends' how I should trace it.[566] Here, Merleau-Ponty's account echoes Proust's analysis of Vinteuil's artistic process as not bringing the sonata forth from out of nothing, but as having "merely unveiled it, made it visible… following and respecting its sketched form."[567] So too does our gaze unveil and make visible the three dimensional-cube by following and respecting its sketched form. Though this applies to our perception of a cube, as we have already seen, for Merleau-Ponty every perception involves embodied acts, through our gaze, through touch, etc., that engage with phenomena in the way that brings about the 'birth of sense' in that object itself. To be sure, this does not mean that we simply project meaning over an object, that is the intellectualist view he wants to reject. To the contrary, on Merleau-Ponty's view we *let* the meaning take shape in the object it is inseparable from.

---

[563] PhP 274-5/312-3

[564] PhP 274/313

[565] PhP 275-6/313

[566] PhP 274/313

[567] Swann's Way 364

However, for Merleau-Ponty, the way in which perception involves genius is but one manifestation of the general genius that we have on account of being embodied. This view takes shape in his claim that "the body is eminently an expressive space."[568] By this he means that the movements our bodies engage in always involve letting meaning emerge in the world. Once again, he draws on Proust in this context, suggesting that the movements of our body are like that of a musician's 'gestures of consecration' that allows music to 'appear in the world'.[569] He continues by claiming, our body involves 'expressive movement' that "projects signifcations on the outside by giving them a place and sees to it that they begin to exist as things, beneath our hands and before our eyes."[570] We have already seen how our bodies do this through speech and perception, but in this passage he goes on to suggest further ways in which this occurs. Sometimes, he claims, the body "posits a biological world around us"[571] our bodies project around us a biological world, e.g., when it "transforms the physical world [and] makes "food" appear over here and a "hiding place" over there."[572] At other times, we can utilize our own bodies to express a new meaning, e.g., if I learn the Viennese Watlz, my body becomes a space that expresses elegance, restraint, and refinement.[573] And finally he claims that sometimes we build instruments, both literal and figurative, that go to make up the cultural world and they become new ways in which meaning can appear, e.g., as Vinteuil does with his score or Berma does playing Phaedra.[574] In each of these instants, our body engages in something like the process of artistic expression and this genius allows meaning to appear in the world.

---

[568] PhP 147/182

[569] PhP 147/181. Though Merleau-Ponty describes an organist in the body of the text, his footnotes are to Proust's description of the musicians and violinist discussed above.

[570] PhP 147/182

[571] PhP 147/182

[572] PhP 195/230

Stepping back, what we find is that according to Merleau-Ponty we are all like artists insofar as we can make meaning present in the world. Of course, this does not mean that we simply project some ready-made meaning over the world; rather, through our perceptions, movements, words, and thoughts, we are letting meaning spring forth in the world. This is our creativity: we are able to extend ourselves beyond the ways we used to see the world and, like Kant's genius or Proust's Vinteuil, we are able to open new dimensions of experience, uncover new worlds that are nevertheless intertwined, inseparable from the world we knew before.

§4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter I have tried to show is that there is reason to think of Merleau-Ponty's theory of meaning as an appropriation of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas channeled through Proust. In Proust's analysis of sensible ideas, Merleau-Ponty sees echoes of Kant's aesthetic ideas and a promising account of the type of meaning available to us in perceptual experience. For Merleau-Ponty was looking for a type of meaning that is both inseparable from what is sensible, but at the same time general and repeatable. It is in Kant and Proust, in the aesthetic model of meaning, that Merleau-Ponty finds the key to his own view. Hence, his reliance on aesthetic notions like style and sensible ideas to articulate the alternative to conceptualism he so sought. Yet it is not only the alternative to conceptualism that draws him to Kant and Proust; he draws on their analyses of genius because he takes meaning to be something we grasp through an act of expression. We are all, for Merleau-Ponty, geniuses insofar as we can let meaning spring forth in the world in the course of perceptual experience. And, in this respect, we find Merleau-Ponty taking up and extending the Kantian heritage past its original limits, uncovering what he takes to be the true import of Kant's aesthetic theories: revealing to us the art of everyday perceptual experience.

---

[573] PhP 148/182

[574] PhP 148/182

Conclusion

Whereas in the first part of this work, I endeavored to bring to light the aesthetic underpinnings of Kant's theory of perceptual experience, in the second part I argued that Merleau-Ponty was sensitive to these aesthetic aspects of Kant's view and, in fact, appropriates them within his own phenomenological framework. In order to appreciate this, however, we needed to deviate from the standard interpretation of these figures. Instead of reading Kant as a thoroughgoing intellectualist, we found there are aspects of his philosophy that betray him as a proto-phenomenologist. Similarly, rather than interpreting Merleau-Ponty as an anti-Kantian, we were attuned to the significant respects in which he is a Neo-Kantian.

By way of conclusion, I want to consider just how far we should understand the continuity between Kant and Merleau-Ponty to extend. Let's begin by asking how far Merleau-Ponty's Kantianism goes. There is no question that Merleau-Ponty eschews Kant's idealist commitments regarding the subject, the world, and experience; however, I think Merleau-Ponty will also part ways with Kant with respect to the role of representation in perception. As we saw in the early chapters, for Kant, an analysis of perception involves an analysis of representations (intuitions, concepts, images, schemata, aesthetic ideas) and the capacities responsible for those representations (sensibility, understanding, imagination). And it is clear Kant thinks of representations in mental terms for he describes them as 'modifications of the mind'.[575] However, Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea that perception needs to be mediated by mental representations at all.[576] He, instead, argues that we can be immediately at grips with the world in perceptual experience solely in virtue of our bodies and bodily intentions, without recourse to mediation by mental representations.

---

[575] A98. For Kant representations just are modes of thought in a broad sense, see, e.g., the Dohna-Wundlacken Logic, where he says, "The division *of all thought* – which has various forms that may be exhausted and brought into a system. The general thing that lies at the basis of all cognition is *representation*" (*Lectures on Logic* 24: 701, my emphasis).

Even still if we turn our attention away from Kant's talk of representations and consider the role the imagination plays in his theory, I think we shall find something sufficiently proto-phenomenological for Merleau-Ponty to appropriate. In his analysis of the productive imagination, we find that, for Kant, perceptual experience does not bottom out in acts of judgment where we subsume one representation under another, but rather in imaginative activities that are prior to judgment, indeed, that make judgment possible in the first place. This, however, strikes a chord with Merleau-Ponty insofar as he wants to bring to light our bodily experience of the world that precedes judgment. Indeed, his analysis of the function of projection, the body schema, perceptual meaning, and perceptual genius are all attempts to uncover this pre-propositional understanding we have of the world that underwrites our perceptual experience. And it is no accident that in each of these instances he draws on Kant, for he recognizes his debt to Kant in this vein.

But is there room in Kant's account of perception to acknowledge, as Merleau-Ponty clearly does, that our imaginative familiarity with the world prior to judgment is essentially a *bodily* familiarity? Or does Merleau-Ponty's insistence of the centrality of the body remove him from the limits of Kant's critical philosophy all together? In the past two decades, an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the role of embodiment in the *Critique of*

---

[576] This is a recurring theme throughout the *Phenomenology*, e.g., PhP xxiv/11, xxxii/19. For a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's critique of representationalism, see Carman (2008a): 15-19, 32-37.

Pure Reason.[577] While a number of commentators have emphasized the role the body must play in Kant's theory of sensibility,[578] others have emphasized the role it plays in his theory of self-consciousness.[579] Still others have urged that we should understand even Kant's theory of categories in bodily terms.[580] What is of interest for us, however, is whether the body plays a role in Kant's analysis of imagination in perception.

Let's approach this issue by considering whether we should think Kant's theory of schematism is anchored in the body. Although some commentators suggest that there may be *some* connection between schematism and embodiment,[581] in *Body and Practice in Kant*

---

[577] Although I shall restrict my focus to embodiment in the first *Critique*, it should be noted that numerous other commentators focus on the role of embodiment in Kant's theoretical philosophy in his pre-critical writings (see Laywine (1993), Shell (1996), Carpenter (1998)), his anthropological writings (see Pitte (1971), Munzel (1999), Brandt (1999), Zammito (2002)), and the *Opus Postumum* (see Shell (1996): 298-305, Förster (2000)).

[578] In *Kant's Intuitionism* (1995), Falkenstein argues "by claiming that space and time are forms of intuition [Kant] takes the responsibility for original space- and time-cognition out of the realm of thought and places it in the body – in effect giving space- and time-cognition an essential physiological basis" (10-11, see Chapter 3). Meanwhile, in *Ideal Embodiment* (2008), Nuzzo argues that, "Time and space as a priori forms of sensible intuition indicate, transcendentally, the cognitive dimensions of human embodiment" (13, see Chapters 1-3). Similarly Rukgaber argues, "the forms of intuition are the structure of our finite, embodied perspective" (166). See also Kaulbach (1960): Chapter 11 and Svare (2006): Chapter 5.

[579] In this vein, commentators consider what role the body plays in the Parologisms and Refutation of Idealism. Commentators like Strawson (1966): 37, Sellars (1970): 30, and Nuzzo (2008): Chapter 2 argue that Kant's theory of self-consciousness necessarily requires being conscious of ourselves as embodied. Cassam (1993) too explores this possibility, as well as its limits. However, commentators like Aquila (1992): 162ff, Longuenesse (2006), and Melnick (2009): Chapter 11 argue that Kant does not go this far.

[580] Kambartel (1976), Saugstad (1992), and Svare (2006): Chapters 8-11

[581] Sellars (1978) argues that we should think of schemata as perspectival recipes for the construction of image-models, i.e., recipes that specify how to produce the image-model of a particular concept in light of the "perceiver's body" (28) and the fact that through it he is "changing his relation to his environment" (31). Though she does not defend this claim at length, Gibbons (1994) claims that schematizing is an "activit[y] of embodied subjects who can recognize regions in space, as well as handedness, by occupying regions of space and having hands… That Kant thought such arguments inappropriate to the first *Critique* is unsurprising… None the less, their relevance to Kant's theory of… schematizing is based on the fact that these theories at least implicitly require an appreciation of the subjective conditions of judgment, which can include the embodied character of the cognizing subject and the felt character of her interaction with the world" (71).

Helge Svare urges that there is a *necessary* connection between the two.[582] Svare argues that, for Kant, the imagination is not merely a mental capacity, but one that is equally expressed through bodily activity and that, in the Schematism chapter, Kant is interested in this bodily dimension of the imagination.[583] Indeed, on Svare's reading, a schema just is "an embodied practice" that enables us to form images.[584] If Svare is right, then Kant's account of schematism already accommodates some of Merleau-Ponty's insights.

On the one hand, I am quite sympathetic to the suggestion that Kant would acknowledge that our schematizing activities are shaped by our embodiment. My schema for a dog, for example, was most likely shaped by me looking at and petting dogs as a child, just as my schema for the number five was shaped by my learning to count the fingers on my hand. On the other hand, I do not think this licenses us to suppose that Kant regarded the schematizing activities of the imagination as bodily activities or that he thought of schemata exclusively as embodied practices. In the first place, Kant defines the productive imagination as a 'faculty of the soul,'[585] describes its activities as 'functions of the soul'[586] and 'actions of the mind'.[587] And instead of characterizing schemata as bodily practices, he characterizes them in mental terms, as 'mediating representations'.[588] If we, furthermore, turn our attention to transcendental schemata, it seems unlikely that Kant would think of these as embodied practices. For Kant emphasizes that transcendental schemata are time-determinations, i.e., determinations of "Time, as the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense."[589] This is significant because Kant aligns inner sense with the sphere of the mental:

---

[582] See Svare (2006): Chapter 6. Svare also indicates his indebtedness to Kaulbach's interpretation of schematism (1960, 1965, 1968).

[583] Svare (2006): 191. More specifically, Svare argues that the imagination is our capacity to form images and that this could occur through mental and bodily activity: "when 'imagination' refers to the mental domain, this is only part of the meaning it has in the Kantian *corpus* at large. In its broadest sense, it refers to the human capacity for image production in general. This means that the imagination is at play whenever a person uses her body to create images or image-like structures. As for Kant's theory of schematism, I think 'imagination' should be understood here in this extended sense" (191). To bolster his position, Svare, drawing on the Transcendental Doctrine of Method (A713/B741) and the "On a discovery" essay (7:191), argues that there is an analogy between the imagination's activity in mathematical construction and in schematism and claims that in both instances the imagination operates both at the a priori level and through embodied practices (Svare (2006): 188-191). It is less clear to me that Kant is identifying construction through the body with construction in the imagination. For I take what is constructed through the body, e.g., the circle in the sand, to be *an image*, which by Kant's own lights does not have the generality appropriate to a mathematical concept or a schema: "In fact it is not images of object but schemata that ground our pure sensible concepts. No image of a triangle would ever be adequate to a concept of it. For it would not attain the generality of the concept which makes this valid for all triangle, right or acute, etc., but would always be limited to one part of this sphere" (A140-1/B180).

[584] See, e.g., Svare's (2006) claim that "what Kant calls a schema in the schematism chapter is an embodied practice in which the shape of an object is created or re-created by an embodied agent through the movement of its body, or parts of its body" (197).

> Wherever our representations may arise… as modifications *of the mind* they nevertheless belong to inner sense, and as such all of our cognitions are in the end subjected to the formal condition of inner sense, namely, time.[590]

In which case, by describing transcendental schemata as determinations of inner sense, Kant conceives of them as belonging to the mind.[591] But it is not just transcendental schemata that appear to be mental; Kant describes the schemata of pure sensible concepts in mental terms: "The schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere *except in thought*."[592] Meanwhile, Kant characterizes a schema of an empirical concept as a "rule for the determination of our intuition in accordance with a certain general concept," i.e., as a rule for producing an image of that concept. And it is clear from the A Deduction that Kant thinks of the imaginative synthesis through which images are produced in mental terms:

---

[585] A94

[586] A78/B103, A94, A124

[587] A102. Indeed, in the B Deduction Kant appears to claim that the productive imagination is nothing but the faculty of the understanding expressed in a certain way B152-4.

[588] A98

[589] A138/B177. As he makes this point a few pages later, "the schematism of the understanding through the transcendental synthesis of the imagination comes down to nothing other than the unity of all the manifold of intuition *in inner sense*" (A145/B185, my emphasis).

[590] A98-9

[591] Transcendental schemata, I believe, also pose a challenge to Svare's reading. Kant claims that, "The schema of a pure concept of the understanding can never be brought to an image at all, but is rather only the pure synthesis… which concerns the determination of inner sense in general" (A142/B181). And given that that bodily movements are ones that we can form an image of, it is not clear how these movements could count as transcendental schemata.

> since every appearance contains a manifold, thus different perceptions by themselves are encountered dispersed and separate *in the mind*, a combination of them… is therefore necessary. There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination… the imagination is to bring the manifold of intuition into an **image**, it must therefore antecedently take up the impressions into its activity.[593]

In order to produce an image, on Kant's view, the imagination must take up representations existing in the mind. And insofar as a schema is a rule that guides the determination of these representations, it would seem Kant is conceiving of it, once again, in mental terms.

Though I have so far focused on Kant's discussion of schematism, I believe we shall run into similar problems if we were to try and analyze his theory of aesthetic ideas in embodied terms. Although an artist surely will use her body to produce a work of art, when Kant talks about aesthetic ideas, he has in mind an intuitive representation produced through the interaction of two mental capacities, viz., the understanding and imagination. Hence Kant titles the section in which he introduces aesthetic ideas: "On the faculties of the mind that constitute genius."[594] In which case, even if Kant thinks there is a connection between the bodily activities that shape and result from genius, he thinks of genius primarily in these mental terms.

---

[592] A141/B180, my emphasis. See also Kant's description of the schema for number in general along the following lines "if I *only think*, a number in general, which could be five or a hundred, *this thinking* is more the representation of a method for representing a multitude (e.g., a thousand) in accordance with a certain concept" (A140/B179, my emphasis).

[593] A120

Yet even if Kant in the end thinks our imaginative activity in perception was somehow connected to our embodiment, he did not, as Merleau-Ponty did, explicitly argue that they *are* embodied. This, I think, betrays a fundamental difference between Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's approach to perceptual experience. For Merleau-Ponty, failing to explicitly address the bodily basis of schematism is an error; whereas it seems to me if Kant had a qualm about this, he would have made the bodily nature of our imaginative activity explicit in, e.g., the Schematism chapter or in his analysis of aesthetic ideas. This suggests to me that Merleau-Ponty does, indeed, advance a theory of perception beyond Kant's own.

However, I do not think this means Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception, therefore, ceases to be Kantian. Rather I take Merleau-Ponty to have been inspired by Kant's suggestions in the first and third *Critiques* that our perceptual experience depends on some imaginative activity that occurs prior to judgment. This is why he takes over Kant's analysis of productive imagination, schematism, genius, and aesthetic ideas in the ways he does. Nevertheless, framing the imaginative activity in bodily terms is an imperative for Merleau-Ponty, one the Kant did not appear bound by and it is here that Merleau-Ponty seems to exceed the limits of the first and third *Critiques*. Yet instead of reading this move as a radical subversion of Kant's theory of perception, I hope to have shown we have reason to regard it rather as a creative synthesis. And in so doing, I hope to have brought to light the subtle approach to perception that emerges from this broadly Kantian tradition, an approach that promises to restore the art in perception and make perception aesthetic again.

---

[594] KU §49

Bibliography

Abela, Paul. *Kant's Empirical Realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002).

Allais, Lucy. "Kant, Non-Conceptual Content, and the Representation of Space." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47.3 (2009): 383-413.

Allison, Henry E. *Kant's Theory of Taste*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2001).
—*Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2004).

Aquila, Richard. *Representational Mind: A Study of Kant's Theory of Knowledge*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press (1977).
—"Personal Identity and Kant's 'Refutation of Idealism'." In *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments*. eds. Ruth Chadwick and Clive Cazeaux. London: Routledge (1992): 143-167.

Allison, Henry E. (2001) *Kant's Theory of Taste*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
—(2004) *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Baldwin, Thomas. "Speaking and Spoken Speech" in *Reading Merleau-Ponty: On Phenomenology of Perception*. ed. Thomas Baldwin. London: Routledge (2007): 87-103.

Barash, Jeffrey. *The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Legacy of Ernst Cassirer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2008).

Bayer, Thora Ilin. *Cassirer's Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2001).

Bell, David. "The Art of Judgment." *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 96, No. 382 (1987): 221-244

Bennett, Jonathan. *Kant's Analytic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1966).

Berendzen, J.C. "Coping with Nonconceptualism: On Merleau-Ponty and McDowell." *Philosophy Today* 53.2 (2009):161-172.
—"Coping Without Foundations: On Dreyfus's Use of Merleau-Ponty." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 18.5 (2010): 629-649.

Bourgeois, Bernard. "La Kantisme de Pierre Lachièze-Rey" in *Interprétations de Kant*. Eds. Jean Quillien and Gilbert Kirscher. Lille: Diffusion Presses Universitaires de Lille (1992): 105-128.

Brandt, Reinhard. *Kritische Kommentar zu Kants Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner (1999).

Brown, Steven Ravett. "On the Mechanism of the Generation of Aesthetic Ideas in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12.3 (2004): 487-499.

Carbone, Mauro. *An Unprecedented Deformation: Marcel Proust and the Sensible Ideas.* New York: SUNY Press (2010).

Carman, Taylor. "The Body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophical Topics* 27.2 (1999): 205-226.
—"Sensation, Judgment, and the Phenomenal Field" in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. Ed. Taylor Carman and Mark B.N. Hansen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005): 50-73.
— *Merleau-Ponty*. London: Routledge (2008a).
— "Between Empiricism and Intellectualism." *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts.* Ed. Rosalyn Diprose and Jack Reynolds. Stocksfield: Acumen (2008b): 44-56.

Carpenter, Andrew. *Kant's Earliest Solution to the Mind/Body Problem*. Dissertation. Berkeley: University of California Press (1998).

Carr, J.L. *A Month in the Country*. New York: New York Review Books (1980).

Cassam, Quassim. "Inner Sense, Body Sense, and Kant's "Refutation of Idealism"." *European Journal of Philosophy*. 1.2 (1993): 111-127.

Cassirer, Ernst. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis.* Berlin: Bruno, 1929. Translated as*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Volume III: The Phenomenology of Knowledge.* transl. Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press (1957).
—"Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics: Remarks on Martin Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant" in *Kant: Disputed Questions.* ed. Molte Gram. Chicago: Quadrangle Books (1967): 131-57.
—"The Problem of the Symbol." transl. J.M. Krois. *Man and World*, 11 (1978): 411-28.
—*The Logic of the Cultural Sciences.* transl. S.G. Lofts. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000).

Chignell, Andrew. "Kant on the Normativity of Taste: The Role of Aesthetic Ideas." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 85: 3 (2007): 415-433

Chipman, Lauchlan. "Kant's Categories and their Schematism." *Kant-Studien* 63 (1972): 36-50.

Deleuze, Gilles. *The Critical Philosophy of Kant.* transl. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1984).
—*Proust and Signs.* transl. Richard Howard. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Prses (2000).
—"The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics." trasnl. Daniel Smith. *Angelaki* 5.3 (2000): 57-70.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental." *Topoi* 25 (2006): 43-49.

—"Reply to Romdenh-Romluc" in *Reading Merleau-Ponty: On Phenomenology of Perception*. ed. Thomas Baldwin. London: Routledge (2007): 59-69.

Durrell, Lawrence. *Balthazar*. London: Faber and Faber (1958).

Engstrom, Stephen. "Understanding and Sensibility." *Inquiry* 49.1 (2006): 2-25.
—*The Form of Practical Knowledge: A Study of the Categorical Imperative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2009).

Falkenstein, Lorne. *Kant's Intuitionism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (1995).

Förster, Eckart. *Kant's Final Synthesis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2000).

Friedman, Michael. "Ernst Cassirer." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ed Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2011 Edition): <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/cassirer/>.

Gallgher, Shaun. "Body Image and Body Schema: A Clarification." *Journal of Mind and Behaviour* 7 (1986): 541-554.
—"Body Schema and Intentionality" in *The Body and the Self*. ed. Jose Luis Bermúdez, et al. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (1995): 225-244.

Gammon, Martin. "Exemplary Originality: Kant on Genius and Imitation." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35 (1997): 563-592.

Gibbons, Sarah. *Kant's Theory of Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1994).

Ginsborg, Hannah. *The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition*. New York: Garland Publishing (1990).
—"Lawfulness without a Law: Kant on the Free Play of Imagination and Understanding." *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 25, No.1 (1997a): 37-81.
—"Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness" in *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls*. Eds. Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine Korsgaard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997b): 329-360.
—"Thinking the Particular as Contained Under the Universal." *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Ed. Rebecca Kukla. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2006): 35-60.
—"Was Kant a Nonconceptualist?" *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008): 65-77.

Gotshalk, D.W. "Form and Expression in Kant's Aesthetics." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 7:3 (July 1967): 250-260

Griffith, Aaron. "Perception and the Categories." *European Journal of Philosophy* 20.2 (2012): 193-222.

Gutting, Gary. *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2001).

Guyer, Paul. "Formalism and the Theory of Expression in Kant's Aesthetics." *Kant-Studien* 68: 1 (1977): 46-70
—*Kant and the Claims of Taste*. 1st edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1979). 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997).
—"Kant's Intentions in the Refutation of Idealism." *Philosophical Review* 92.3 (1983): 329-383.
—*Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1987).
—*Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993).
—*Kant*. London: Routledge (2006).

Hanna, Robert. "Kant and Nonconceptual Content." *European Journal of Philosophy* 13.2 (2005): 247-290.
—"Kantian Nonconceptualism." *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008): 41-64.

Heidegger, Maritn. *Sein und Zeit*. Gesamtausgabe Band II. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klaustermann (1976). Translated as *Being and Time*. Transl. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers (1962).
—*Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason. Transl. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1997).
—*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. 5th Edition. transl. Richard Taft. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1990).

Hemingway, Ernest. *In Our Time*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1925).
—*Ernest Hemingway Selected Letters: 1917-1961*. Ed. Carlos Baker. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons (1981).

Henrich, Dieter. "On the Unity of Subjectivity" in *The Unity of Reason*. transl. Günter Zöller. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1994): 17-54.

Hintikka, Jaakko. "Kant on the Mathematical Model" in *Kant Studies Today*. ed. Lewis White Beck. La Salle, Ill: Open Court (1969a): 117-40.
—'On Kant's Notion of Intuition (*Anschauung*)" in *The First Critique*. ed. T. Penelhum and J. Macintosh. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth (1969b): 38-53.

Hughes, Ted. *The Hawk in the Rain*. London: Faber and Faber (1957).

Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations*. transl. Dorion Cairns. Dordrecht: Kluwer (1999).
—*Experience and Judgment*. transl. James Churchill and Karl Ameriks. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1973).
—*The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. transl. David Carr. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press (1970).

Kambartel, Friedrich. *Erfahrung und Struktur*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (1976).

Kant, Immanuel. "Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics" in *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*. transl. David Walford, Ralf Meerbote. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992).
—*Critique of Pure Reason*. transl. Paul Guyer, Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998).
—*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* in *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*. transl. Gary Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in *Practical Philosophy*. transl. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Critique of Practical Reason* in *Practical Philosophy*. transl. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Critique of the Power of Judgment*. transl. Paul Guyer, Erich Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Metaphysics of Morals* in *Practical Philosophy*. transl. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* in *Anthropology, History, and Education*. transl. Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2007).
—"On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one" in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*. transl. Henry Allison. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).
—*Opus Postumum*. transl. Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1995).
—*Lectures on Logic*. transl. J. Michael Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992).
—*Lectures on Metaphysics*. transl. Karl Ameriks, Steve Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997).
—*Notes and Fragments*. transl. Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005).
—*Reflexionen*. Ed. Benno Erdmann. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (1882).
—*Kants gesammelte Schriften*. eds. Deutschen (formerly, Königlichen Preussichen) Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter (1902).

Kaulbaach, Friedrich. "Die Metaphysik des Raumes bei Leibniz und Kant." *Kant-Studien Ergänzungshefte*. Köln: Kölner Universitäts Verlag (1960): 7-152.
—*Der philosophische Begriff der Bewegung*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag (1965).
—*Philosophie der Beschreibung*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag (1968).

Kelly, Sean. "Grasping at Straws: Motor Intentionality and the Cognitive Science of Skillful Action" in *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus – Vol. II*. Eds. Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000: 161-177.
—"Merleau-Ponty on the Body." *Ratio*, 15 (4) (2002): 376-391.
—"Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty" in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. eds. Taylor Carman, Mark Hansen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005): 74-110.

Kneller, Jane. *Kant and the Power of Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2007).

Korsgaard, Christine. "Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant." *Journal of Ethics* 3 (1999): 1-29.

Krois, John Michael. *Cassirer: Symbolic Forms and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press (1987).
—"Philosophical anthropology and the embodied cognition paradigm: On the convergence of two research programs" in *Embodiment in Cognition and Culture*. Eds. Krois, Rosengren, Steidele, Westerkamp. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing (2007): 273-289

Kukla, Rebecca, ed. *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2006).

Lachièze-Rey, Pierre. "Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante" in *Recherches philosophiques*. Pairs: Bovin: 125-147 (1933-4).
—"Utilisation possible du schématisme kantien pour une théorie de la perception" in *Le Moi, le Monde et Dieu*. Paris: Aubier Éditions Montaigne (1950): 171-82.
—*L'idealisme kantien*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin (1950)
—*Lettres Philosophique: Correspondence avec Maurice Blondel*. Philosophis (2006).

Laywine, Alison. *Kant's Early Metaphysics and the Origins of Critical Philosophy*. Atascadero: Ridgeview Publishing Company (1993).

Lehrer, Jonah. *Proust Was a Neuroscientist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company (2007).

Longuenesse, Béatrice. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Transl. Charles T. Wolfe. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1998).
—"Self-Consciousness and Consciousness of One's Own Body: Variations on a Kantian Theme." *Philosophical Topics* 34.1/2 (2006): 283-309.

Luft, Sebastian. "Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Between Reason and Relativism; a Critical Appraisal." *Idealistic Studies*, 34.1 (2004): 25-47.

Lüthe, Rudolf. "Kants Lehre von den ästhetischen Ideen." *Kant-Studien* 75: 1 (1984): 65-74.

Makkreel, Rudolph. *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1990).

Maldiney, Henri. "Pierre Lachièze-Rey, in memoriam (1885-1957)." *Kant Studien* Vol. 50, Issue 1-4 (1958-9): 259-261.

Matherne, Samantha. "The Inclusive Interpretation of Kant's Aesthetic Ideas." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53(1) (Jan. 2013): 21-39.
—"Kant and the Art of Schematism." *Kantian Review* (forthcoming).

Matthews, Eric. *Merleau-Ponty: A Guide for the Perplexed.* London: Continuum (2006).

McDowell, John. *Mind and World.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1994).
—"What is Myth." *Inquiry*, 50: 4 (2007a): 338-351.
—"Response to Dreyfus." *Inquiry*, 50:4 (2007b): 366-370.
—*Having the World in View.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2009).

Melnick, Arthur. *Space, Time, and Thought in Kant.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers (1989).
—*Kant's Theory of Self.* London: Routledge (2009).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Structure of Behavior.* transl. Alden Fisher. Boston: Beacon Press (1963).
—*Phénoménologie de la perception.* Gallimard (1945). Translated as *Phenomenology of Perception.* transl. Donald Landes. London: Routledge (2012).
—"The Primacy of Perception" in *The Primacy of Perception.* transl. James Edie. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1964): 12-42.
—*Sense and Non-Sense.* transl. Hubert Dreyfus, Patricia Dreyfus. Evanston: Northwestern University Prses (1964)
—*Signs.* transl. Richard McCleary. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1964).
—*The World of Perception.* transl. Oliver Davis. London: Routledge (2004).
—"The Philosophy of Existence" in *Texts and Dialogues.* eds. Hugh Silverman and James Barry Jr. transl. Michael B. Smith. New Jersey: Humanities Press (1992).
—*The Visible and Invisible.* trasl. Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1968).
—*The Prose of the World.* transl. John O'Neill. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1973).
—*Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France.* transl. Leonard Lawlore, Heath Massey. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (2010).
—*Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France.* transl. Robert Vallier. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1995).

Munzel, Felicitas. *Kant's Conception of Moral Character: The "Critical" Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1999).

Noë, Alva. *Action in Perception.* Cambridge: MIT Press (1994).

Novalis. *Schriften: Die Werken vno Friedrich von Hardenbergs. Volume II.* eds. P. Kluckhohn, R. Samuel. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer (1965).

Nuzzo, Angelica. *Ideal Embodiment: Kant's Theory of Sensibility*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (2008).

Parsons, Charles. "Kant's Philosophy of Arithmetic" in *Philosophy, Science, and Method*. ed.S. Moregenbesser, P. Suppes, M. White. New York: St. Martin's Press (1969): 568-94.

Paton, H.J. *Kant's Metaphysics of Experience*. 2 Vols. New York: Macmillan (1936).

Pippin, Robert B. "Schematism and Empirical Concepts." *Kant-Studien* 67 (1976): 156-171.

Pitte, Frederick. *Kant as Philosophical Anthropologist*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff (1971).

Proust, Marcel. *Swann's Way*. transl. Lydia Davis. New York: Penguin Books (2002).
—*Guermantes Way*. transl. Mark Treharne. New York: Viking (2002).

Reath, Andrews. "Formal Principles and the Form of A Law" in *Kant's 'Critique of Practical Reason': A Critical Guide*. eds. Andrews Reath and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2010): 31-54.
—"Formal Approaches to Kant's Formula of Humanity" in *Kant on Practical Justification: Interpretive Essays*. eds. Sorin Baiasu and Mark Timmons. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013): 201-228.

Rockmore, Tom. *Kant and Phenomenology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2011).

Rogerson, Kenneth. *Kant's Aesthetics: The Roles of Form and Expression*. Lanham, MD: University Press of American (1986).
—*The Problem of Free Harmony in Kant's Aesthetics*. Albany: State University of New York Press (2008).

Romdenh-Romluc, Komarine. "Merleau-Ponty and the Power to Reckon with the Possible" in *Reading Merleau-Ponty: On Phenomenology of Perception*. Ed. Thomas Baldwin. London: Routledge (2007): 44-58.
—*Merleau-Ponty and* Phenomenology of Perception. London: Routledge (2011).

Rosengren, Mats. "Radical imagination and symbolic pregnance: A Castoriadis-Cassirer connection" in *Embodiment in Cognition and Culture*. Eds. Krois, Rosengren, Steidele, Westerkamp. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing (2007): 261-272.

Rothko, Mark. *Writings on Art*. ed. Miguel Lopez-Remiro. New Haven: Yale University Press (2006).

Rudisill, Philip. "Circles in the Air: Pantomimics and the Transcendental Object = X." *Kant-Studien* 2 (1996): 132-148.

Rukgaber, Matthew. "“The Key to Transcendental Philosophy”: Space, Time and Body in Kant." *Kant-Studien* 100 (2009): 166-186.

Salinger, J.D. *Catcher in the Rye*. New York: Little, Brown and Company (1951).

Savile, Anthony. *Aesthetic Reconstructions: The Seminal Writings of Lessing, Kant and Schiller*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc. (1987).

Schaper, Eva. "Kant's Schematism Reconsidered." *Review of Metaphysics*, 18:2 (1964): 267-292.

Schrift, Alan D. *Twentieth Century French Philosophy: Key Themes and Thinkers*. London: Blackwell Publishing (2006).

Scott, R.D. "Notes on the Body Image and Schema." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 1.2 (1956): 145-160.

Sedgwick, Sally. "McDowell's Hegelianism." *European Journal of Philosophy* 5.1 (1997): 21-38.

Sellars, Wilfrid. *Science and Metaphysics*. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company (1967).
—"…this I or He or It (The Thing) which thinks…" *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 44 (1970): 5-31.
— "The Role of the Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience." In *Categories: A Colloquium*. Ed. Henry W. Johnstone Jr. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University (1978): 231-245.

Shabel, Lisa. "Kant on the 'Symbolic Construction' of Mathematical Concepts." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 29.4 (1998): 589-621.

Shell, Susan Meld. *The Embodiment of Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1996).

Siewert, Charles. "Intellectualism, Experience, and Motor Understanding" in *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell/Dreyfus Debate*. Ed. Joseph Schear. London: Routlege (2013): Chapter 9.

Smith, A.D. "The Flesh of Perception" in *Reading Merleau-Ponty: On Phenomenology of Perception*. Ed. Thomas Baldwin. London: Routledge (2007): 1-22.

Strawson, P.F. *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*. London: Routledge (1966).
—"Imagination and Perception." Reprinted in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers (1974): 50-72.

Svare, Helge. *Body and Practice in Kant*. Dordrecht: Springer (2006).

Tonelli, Giorgrio. "Kant's Early Theory of Genius." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4: Part I, 109-131 and Part II (1966): 209-224.

Walsh, W.H. "Schematism." *Kant-Studien* 49 (1957/8): 95-106.

Warnock, G.J. "Concepts and Schematism." *Analysis*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (1949): 77-82.

Waxman, Wayne. *Kant's Model of the Mind: A New Interpretation of Transcendental Idealism*. New York: Oxford University Press (1991).

Wenzel, Christoph. "Spielen nach Kant die Kategorien schon bei der Wahrnehmung eine Rolle?" *Kant-Studien* 96 (2005): 407-426.

Wilson, Kirk. "Kant on Intuition." *Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1975): 247-65.

Young, J. Michael. "Kant's View of Imagination." *Kant Studien* 79 (1988): 140-64.

Zammito, John. *Kant, Herder and the Birth of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2002).

Zuidervaart, Lambert. ""Aesthetic Ideas" and the Role of Art in Kant's Ethical Hermeneutics." In *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays*. ed. Paul Guyer. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (2003): 199-208