The Ethics of Kant’s Practice: Or Deleuze’s Repetition of Kant

by

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I suppose that the term ‘knowledge’ can refer to various kinds of activities. In this thesis I study only one of them. I am interested in the kind of knowledge that cannot be separated from its object. In other words, I am interested in knowledge that is at the same time the object that it knows. I take ethics to be this kind of knowledge. This thesis is a study of certain works by Immanuel Kant and Gilles Deleuze. It argues that for these two thinkers what there is just is what is known in this sense. In other words, what there is just is what should be. In Kant the thing in itself is an ethical concept that we know through actualization. In Deleuze difference in itself is an ethical concept that we know through repetition.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Koje je bolje?
Jedan mali dečko
Nije ništa uživo,
Sve je shvato tužno,
Sve je shvato krivo.

Mučila ga često
I ta miso crna:
Zašto ni jedna ruža
Da nije bez trna?

Taj je dečko imo
Veseloga druga
Koga nije lako
Obarala tuga.

A zašto ga nije?
Verujte mi zato,
Jer je svašta lepše,
Veselije shvato.

Pa i on sad rece:
„Radujem se, druže,
Što se i na trnu
Mogu naći ruži!”

Jovan Jovanović Zmaj
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INTRODUCTION: Kant and Deleuze

Transcendental ethics

The first part of my thesis centers on the issue of actualization of abilities in Kant’s critical philosophy. First, I want to say something about this word ‘actualization.’ The word is Kant’s. In the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason Kant distinguishes between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. He argues that whereas theoretical knowledge determines its object, practical knowledge makes its object actual. “Now if reason is to be a factor in these sciences [that deal with formal rules] something in them must be known a priori, and this knowledge may be related to its object in one or other of two ways, either as merely determining it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also making it actual. The former is theoretical, the latter practical knowledge of reason” (CPR Bx).\footnote{For Kant’s and Deleuze’s (as well as Deleuze and Guattari’s) texts I use short forms as follows: Critique of Pure Reason (CPR), Critique of Practical Reason (CPPr), Critique of the Power of Judgment (CJ), Kritik der reinen Vernunft (KrV), Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (G), Metaphysics of Morals (MM), Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason (R), Prologomena to Any Future Metaphysics (P), Difference and Repetition (DR), The Logic of Sense (LS), Kant’s Critical Philosophy (KCP), Nietzsche and Philosophy (NP), Time-Image (TI), Desert Islands & Other Texts (DI), Anti-Oedipus (AO), Essays Critical and Clinical (CC), A Thousand Plateaus (ATP), What is Philosophy? (WP), Negotiations (N). For all other texts, I identify the author and the page reference in parentheses in the body of the text. The full citation can be found in the Works cited.} In my thesis I argue that ethics for Kant just is the making actual or the actualization of the ability to will by means of the ability to reason, in short, ethics for Kant just is the actualization of the rational-will or, in simple words, it is living autonomously. Since for Kant these abilities are transcendental, ethics for him, I claim, is the actualization of the transcendental.

However, since I use this interpretation, that for Kant ethics is the actualization of the transcendental, in order to argue in the second part of my thesis that Deleuze’s ethics follows essentially the same pattern, one wonders about the relationship between Kant’s word ‘actualization’ and Deleuze’s uses of that same word. In other words, Deleuze also talks about the actualization of the transcendental (which he also calls the virtual), but he by no means
associates such an actualization with ethics. On the contrary, he often claims that ethics is precisely the counter-actualization of the transcendental. For this reason, it seems that I am ascribing a position to Deleuze that he himself explicitly denies. But I am not. I claim that the issue is one of semantics. In other words, it just so happens that one of them calls the same process actualization whereas the other calls it counter-actualization. In order to see this, the first thing to do is to think about the nature of the transcendental in both Kant and Deleuze. My thesis does some violence to both Kant’s and Deleuze’s notions of the transcendental in order to bring these two thinkers closer together. However, I think that in both cases this violence is justifiable.

In Kant the transcendental is supposed to stand for the conditions of possibility of experience. However, I argue that Kant’s transcendental is more than that. I have always wondered why it is the case that Kant thinks that he can affirm the thing in itself in practice but deny it in theory. In order to solve this problem I came to the conclusion that when Kant talks about the thing in itself in practice he must just mean the transcendental subject. But then of course I wondered what that transcendental subject is. If you accept that the transcendental subject cannot be what he calls the soul, that is, the illegitimate transcendental idea, and also if you recognize that the search for any kind of substantial transcendental subject in Kant is an exercise in futility, I think that you will come to the following conclusion. When Kant talks about the transcendental subject he means nothing other than the various abilities that he discusses throughout his critical philosophy. And so, I combine these two ideas. The thing in itself is the multiplicity of abilities. What does this mean? Abilities are not just transcendental. They are also ontological. But not only that because the transcendental subject is nothing other than those abilities, that means that the transcendental subject is not transcendent but rather immanent.
Let us look at Deleuze's notion of the transcendental. Deleuze often argues that his transcendental does not stand for the conditions of possibility of experience, but rather stands for the conditions of real experience. In this sense, for Deleuze the transcendental is ontological. However, just because for Deleuze the transcendental is ontological that does not mean that it cannot also be phenomenological. In other words, just because for Deleuze the transcendental is ontological that does not mean that subjectivity does not play an important role in his account of the transcendental. Perhaps one can deny this point in relation to the works that Deleuze co-authors with Guattari such as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. (Alistair Welchman does precisely that in his “Kant’s Post-Critical Metaphysics”). But one can certainly not deny it in relation to *Difference and Repetition* (or even *The Logic of Sense* for that matter). In this work, Deleuze discusses the transcendental in relation to what he calls the passive self and also sometimes the Overman. In this instance, it is important to recognize that Deleuze in this work conceptualizes the transcendental in terms of the Idea and that the term ‘the Idea’ always refers us to some kind of subjectivity. In this sense, I argue that for Deleuze the transcendental is not only ontological. It is also phenomenological. In *Une philosophie de l’ événement* Francois Zourabichivili argues that “the question that every reader of Deleuze must confront...is how this thinker could coordinate two positions, which, at first, look incompatible: the transcendental and the ontological” (quoted in Boundas 2009 19).

Now we have Kant’s transcendental and Deleuze’s transcendental in front of us. So what about ethics as actualization and counter-actualization? Let me begin with Kant. I have said that for Kant ethics is nothing other than the actualization of the transcendental which is nothing other than actualization of abilities. But Kant is more specific than that. In *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant argues that practice differs from theory because practice primarily deals with the
ability to will. This is important. It is also important to recognize that Kant defines the ability to will as the ability to desire. So we have this point. Ethics is about the actualization of the ability to desire. But what does this mean? It just means being able to want. Actually it means something even more specific than that. If actualization of ability is something concrete, that is, some kind of activity, then ethics just is wanting. This seems like a rather silly, primitive interpretation of Kant. Nonetheless, it is, I argue, what Kant means. It is important to recognize that Kant thinks that such wanting is difficult to do. You do not want if some matter—and that can be any matter including what we take to be the universal moral value or even desire itself—determines your wanting. When that happens you give up your wanting for that matter. On the contrary, you want only when your wanting is pure, the pure will, when desire itself is the first moment of your activity. Kant argues that it is reason that opens me up to this desire. This is why Kant can use the words ‘reason’ and ‘the will’ interchangeably in his practical philosophy. In any case, I claim that Kant calls such a life that wants autonomy. To me it is clear that such a life is synonymous with experimentation, in other words, it is engaging people and situations for absolutely no reason at all not even that engagement itself. (In fact that may be the last obstacle of this Kantian ethics, to want to want).

Here I hope that you see the connection to Deleuze’s notion of counter-actualization. Yes Deleuze talks about ethics as the counter-actualization of the transcendental, but thereby he does not mean the opposite of what I just described. It is not like he argues that ethics is about not wanting or about wanting some matter. He too means something like wanting that has no end or purpose not even that wanting itself. Still, I do not want to say that Deleuze just exactly repeats what Kant already says. He repeats with difference. Deleuze has a more complex and more vivid understanding of the transcendental. For him the transcendental does not just stand for desire
whereby the human being experiments. Instead, for Deleuze the transcendental stands for the potential field of differential elements of any phenomenon whereby it experiments including the human being. Nevertheless, it is the case that for Deleuze as well as for Kant ethics is drawing on that potential field, drawing on that transcendental in order to experiment, or better which allows for experimentation. Thus Deleuze can talk of ethics of societies, or animals, of art and so on. Really, Deleuze just applies Kant to everything. Still, it is worthwhile noting that in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari do call that transcendental field ‘desire.’ Perhaps this is why Foucault describes this work as the work of ethics. I agree. It is the work of ethics in the most traditional, Kantian sense. In any case, I hope that you now see that Kant’s actualization is Deleuze’s counter-actualization and that for both that activity is ethics. In each case we have a notion of the self that is immanent to the ontological transcendental within which he experiments.

The reason why my thesis is controversial is because Deleuze himself does not think he does what I say he does. In other words, Deleuze often acknowledges that he takes the transcendental from Kant, but he certainly does not think that he takes ethics from Kant. In fact, he is quite critical of it. However, one of the most important claims of my thesis is: if you take the transcendental from Kant, you also take his ethics. But why? Kant’s transcendental is not just about the conditions of possible experience, it is about the conditions of real experience. In fact, Deleuze himself thinks this in his *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Thus for Kant the transcendental

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2 In fact, for this reason I argue that one need not take the detour through Salomon Maimon’s *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* in order to discuss Kant’s influence on Deleuze. (There are many commentators who emphasize the importance of Maimon for Deleuze’s relationship to Kant: Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell Eds. *Deleuze and the Fold: A Critical Reader*; Beth Lord, *Kant and Spinozism*; Graham Jones and Jon Roffe Eds. *Deleuze’s Philosophical Legacy*; and Daniela Voss, “Maimon and Deleuze”). But there are other, more substantial reasons. Maimon points out that the intensive magnitude is composed of differentials. However, he argues for this point in relation to the understanding. In other words, for Maimon differentials are Ideas of the understanding which it has vis-à-vis the infinite understanding. Part of my interpretation of Deleuze is his criticism of the transcendent subjectivity, the Cogito. If we stick too closely to Maimon in our interpretation of Deleuze’s relationship to Kant,
subject is already within that which she conditions, namely, the abilities, and specifically in practice, desire. Therefore, when you begin your story about the transcendental and how the subject is immanent to the transcendental and how that immanence really is experimentation, like Deleuze does, then you are really back to Kant's ethics. Perhaps, here one might say that actually you are also back to Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Perhaps. However, here I would say that, as I have already emphasized, I think that in *Difference and Repetition* (and *The Logic of Sense*) Deleuze does talk in terms of subjectivity that experiments whereas if we rely on Spinoza we risk doing away with subjectivity altogether and falling into experimentation as such. (On the side note, I do not think that such an ethics is possible or at least not in this historical moment).

I want to situate this project. There are many commentators who recognize that Kant exerts an important influence on Deleuze. For example, in “Deleuze, Kant and the Question of Metacritique” Christian Kerslake argues that *Difference and Repetition* is the continuation of the project that Kant initiates in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kerslake continues this project in his *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze*. However, Kerslake does not think, like I do, that Deleuze continues Kant’s ethics. In fact, in *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy* he argues that Kant’s ethical project is untenable (Kerslake 60-3). In a sense, this approach to the relationship between Kant and Deleuze has received a widespread acceptance. Thus, for example, the editors of *Thinking Between Deleuze and Kant: A Strange Encounter* Edward Willatt and Matt Lee think that they can examine the relationship between Kant and Deleuze by restricting themselves to Kant’s theoretical philosophy. This is why the essays in this collection consider only Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (Willatt and Lee 1). An important figure

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there is a danger that we will not only return to the Cogito but to an infinite Cogito, to Geist or Spirit, in other words, to a more extreme example of the kind of transcendent subjectivity that Deleuze criticizes. (A good discussion of Maimon’s thought can be found in Frederick C. Beiser’s *The Fate of Reason*).
in the relationship between Kant and Deleuze is Daniel W. Smith. Smith has written on the relationship between Kant and Deleuze on theoretical issues in “Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition,” “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality” and in “Deleuze, Kant and the Theory of Immanent Ideas.” Smith has also written on Deleuze’s ethics in “The Place of Ethics in Deleuze’s Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence,” “Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics” and in “Deleuze and Derrida: Immanence and Transcendence.” However, in none of these publications does Smith think that Deleuze’s ethics are Kantian. On the contrary, Smith thinks that Kant’s ethical project fails to live up to its own standards of immanence (Smith 1998 253-4). Thus Smith argues that Deleuze’s ethics follows Spinoza and Nietzsche.

There are many other commentators who write about Deleuze’s ethics. In “Affirmation versus Vulnerability: On Contemporary Ethical Debates,” “The Ethics of Becoming Imperceptible” and Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics Rosi Braidotti argues that Deleuze’s ethics follows Spinoza and Nietzsche, but not Kant. In fact, in Transpositions Braidotti associates Kant’s ethics with the kind of “moral universalism” (Braidotti 2006 13) that Deleuze criticizes. This interpretation of Deleuze’s ethics pretty much holds across the board. In Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics Ronald Bogue argues that Deleuze’s ethics follows Nietzsche and Spinoza but not Kant (Bogue 8). In the collection Deleuze and Ethics edited by Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun not one of the writers establishes the positive relationship between Kant’s ethics and Deleuze’s ethics. In fact, all of them argue against such a relationship. For example in “The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Αρχή” Levi R. Bryant shows the insufficiency of Kant’s ethics in comparison to Deleuze’s. In “Deleuze, Values and Normativity” Nathan Jun argues that Deleuze’s ethics follows Spinoza and

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3 Braidotti recently coedited the collection of essays Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze.
Nietzsche. In “Existing Not as a Subject But as a Work of Art: The Task of Ethics or Aesthetics?” Kenneth Surin argues that Kant’s ethics have no influence on Deleuze’s ethics because Kant separates ethics from aesthetics whereas Deleuze does not. Furthermore, there are also many commentators who argue that Deleuze’s ethics follows the Stoics. Two examples are John Sellars in “Ethics of the Event” and Ian Buchanan in Deleuzism: A Metacommentary. Again, neither of these commentators emphasizes Kant’s ethics. On the other hand, in The Deleuze Reader, and “What Difference Does Deleuze’s Difference Make?” Constantin V. Boundas argues that Deleuze’s ethics follows Spinoza, Nietzsche and the Stoics, but not Kant.

There are many commentators who discuss the relationship between ontology and ethics. In The Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze Keith Ansell Pearson sees an immediate relationship between Deleuze’s ontology and his ethics. However, Pearson does not argue for this relationship in terms of Kant. Instead, he relies on the Stoics, Bergson, Spinoza and Nietzsche. Similarly, in Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology and Immanence and Philosophy: Deleuze Miguel de Beistegui establishes a continuity between Deleuze’s ontology and his ethics. “Between ontology and ethics, there is no difference in kind, no gap, and no complex mediation, but a continuity: the being of man is entirely co-extensive with that of nature” (Beistegui 105). However, as this statement suggests de Beistegui thinks that it is Spinoza, not Kant, who influences Deleuze in this regard. In Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction, Toddy May also argues for the immediate relationship between Deleuze’s ontology and his ethics. However, in order to establish this relationship May invokes Bergson, Nietzsche and Spinoza, but not Kant.4

4 There are also other commentators who acknowledge the relationship between Deleuze’s ontology and his ethics but do not focus on it, e.g. Jay Lampert in Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History. Manuel Delanda’s Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy. In Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide William James gives some insightful examples of the relationship between Deleuze’s ontology and his ethics.
There are however at least two commentators who seem to me to express views that are similar to mine. For example, in “The Place of Ethics in Deleuze’s Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence” Daniel W. Smith argues: “Somewhat surprisingly, Deleuze presents this immanent conception of ethics not, as one might expect, as a rejection of Kantianism but, on the contrary, as its fulfillment” (Smith 1998 253). (Actually this is not similar to my view. It is my view). John Protevi makes a similar argument but in the political register in the Kant chapter of his Political Physics. There Protevi argues that Kant conceptualizes what he calls ‘the reservoir of force’ or “the self-ordering potential of the people in immanent democratic structuring” (Protevi 2001 188). In this sense, as I understand them, both Smith and Protevi argue that Kant does think of the ontological transcendental in both ethics and politics. Still there is an important difference between their views and mine. Both Smith and Protevi claim that Kant fails to pursue that ontological transcendental. Smith argues that Kant sacrifices such ethics at the altar of empty formalism and infinite guilt (Smith 1998 253-254). And Protevi thinks that Kant sacrifices such politics because of his commitment to hylomorphism. “Kant cannot see this [reservoir of force] because of the limits of his hylomorphic production model, which insists on dead, chaotic matter and a transcendent imposition of order from a spiritual source” (Protevi 2001 188). (Protevi makes a similar argument in “The Organism as the Judgment of God: Aristotle, Kant and Deleuze on Nature”). If I am right to say that these commentators and I share a common ground then we can say that in a sense I do take my cue from them. The important difference again is that, unlike Smith, I do think that Kant delivers on his insight regarding the ontological

Still, none of these commentators discusses this relationship in terms of Kant. On the other hand, in Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation Peter Hallward sees the relationship between Deleuze’s ontology and his politics but argues that precisely for that reason Deleuze does not have a politics. Following Alain Badiou’s interpretation of Deleuze in Deleuze: The Clamour of Being (Badiou 44-5), Hallward argues that Deleuze is a pre-critical philosopher. In this sense, neither Hallward nor Badiou recognizes the importance of Kant for Deleuze, let alone the importance of Kant’s ethics for Deleuze’s ethics.
transcendental in ethics. (I do not really discuss Kant’s politics in this thesis and therefore defer to Protevi on this issue).

On a personal note, I began this project with an interest in the traditional philosophical question of ‘the Good.’ In Kant I saw an ethics substantial enough that was still not morality. In Deleuze I saw a contemporary philosopher, not a historian or something else, but a philosopher, who managed to do away with all forms of transcendence and yet still managed to speak meaningfully about ethics. So I connected the two. Perhaps, they do not quite fit. In this sense, perhaps my thesis is in the final instance Deleuzian. There is a different way of saying this same thing. The lesson I take from this thesis is that an activity and activity only can be ‘the Good.’ And so it will really be the concrete activities that this thesis inspires, if any, and not the quality of its scholarship that will determine its ‘value.’
PART I: The ethics of practical knowledge

“Do you really require that a mode of knowledge which concerns all men should transcend the common understanding, and should only be revealed to you by philosophers? Precisely what you find fault with is the best confirmation of the correctness of the above assertions. For we have thereby revealed to us, what could not at the start have been foreseen, namely, that in matters which concern all men without distinction nature is not guilty of any partial distribution of her gifts, and that in regard to the essential ends of human nature the highest philosophy cannot advance further that is possible under the guidance which nature has bestowed even upon the most ordinary understanding” (CPR A831/B859).

Chapter 1: Knowledge and illusion

Introduction

In the first part of my thesis I aim to say something original and meaningful about Kant’s ethics. However, there is a good reason why a study of his ethics cannot begin with the Critique of Practical Reason. If we focus primarily on this work, our understanding of that concept that makes this work itself possible can only be partial. For Kant, a human being is free because he is not simply an appearance or a phenomenon but is also more than that. What that more is is precisely the matter of some controversy. Kant uses many terms to refer to that more. Some of these terms are the intelligible, the noumenal and the thing in itself. It is because Kant first develops these terms in the Critique of Pure Reason that the study of his ethics cannot begin with the Critique of Practical Reason but must rather begin with the Critique of Pure Reason. For this reason, my first goal is to understand what Kant means by the intelligible, the noumenal and the thing in itself. This is why also I only arrive at the discussion of Kant’s ethics in chapter 3.

There is however something controversial about using this concept itself as an entry point into the Critique of Pure Reason. Some commentators think that Kant’s theoretical philosophy has no room for the thing in itself at all and that we had better do away with it altogether. For
instance, in *The Science of Knowledge* Fichte writes that “we recognize [the thing in itself] to be the uttermost perversion of reason, and a concept perfectly absurd; all existence, for us, is necessarily sensory in character, for we first derive the entire concept of existence from the form of sensibility; and are thus completely protected against the claim to any connection with the thing-in-itself” (Fichte I 472). Thus if “the thing-in-itself is a pure invention and has no reality whatever” (Fichte I 428), then using the thing in itself as an entry point into the *Critique of Pure Reason* makes for a misguided method. But this is not the only attitude that commentators adopt towards the thing in itself. On the other hand, there are commentators who think that the thing in itself plays an important role in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For example, in *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques* Karl Ameriks argues that the thing in itself is in fact Kant’s starting point in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. “An alternative approach—and one that I see as reflecting Kant’s own historical and logical trajectory—is to leave open the thought that sometimes it can be proper to start instead with things in themselves, so that the relevant question becomes: What else might there be to talk about? In other words, in some contexts (and, I will argue, in fact the most common ones) it can be talk about appearances (in some non-trivial sense), rather than about things, that calls for explanation” (Ameriks 23). In this sense, there is a tension in scholarship regarding the thing in itself. Either the thing in itself plays no real role in this work or it plays the most important role. It is for this reason that using the thing in itself as an entry point into the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to study Kant’s ethics, as I propose to do, is a controversial matter. One either risks finding nothing or hopes to find everything. In a sense, however paradoxical this may sound, in this essay I attempt to hold both of these positions at once. In order to do so, however, I will defend a very particular, two-sided interpretation of the thing in itself. This is what I do in chapter 2.
There are not many sections in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that directly discuss the thing in itself. Actually, there is only one. In Chapter III of the Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment (Analytic of Principles) Kant talks about “the ground of the distinction of all objects into phenomena and noumena” (*CPR* B257). Other than this chapter, there are also various passages throughout the work that directly discuss this concept. There are many interpretations of the thing in itself that focus exclusively on this chapter and on these passages. I discuss many of these interpretations below. Like all interpretations, these ones also have both their merits and limitations. However, in this essay, I attempt to study the concept of the thing in itself differently. I offer a more indirect approach. In other words, instead of beginning with Chapter III of the Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment (Analytic of Principles) or with the passages that directly discuss the thing in itself, I begin with what I take to be the general aim of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and then allow the thing in itself to arise in the context of that discussion. I think that the main goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to define knowledge, in other words, to explain what knowledge is. My goal is to show how the thing in itself arises within Kant’s account of knowledge. For this reason chapter 1 deals with Kant’s account of knowledge. I think that such an indirect approach to the thing itself has two advantages over the more direct approach.

Kant does discuss the thing itself directly in the sections that I have just mentioned. However, his discussion of this concept in these sections is often contradictory and inconsistent. For example, at times Kant seems to say that we can know the thing in itself; at other times he seems to say that we cannot. At times Kant seems to say that the thing in itself is what ontologically transcends appearances; at other times he seems to say that the thing in itself is a way of considering appearances, in other words, that the thing in itself is an epistemological
concept. When we approach these discussions directly, we cannot make sense of Kant’s claims. We are always forced either to pick and choose or, on the other hand, to force an interpretation. However, if we place these discussions in their proper context, in other words, if we understand them from the point of view of the main goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I show that we can in fact understand them. This is the first advantage of the indirect approach to the thing in itself. It makes sense of what seem to be contradictory and inconsistent statements. The second advantage is different in character. When we approach the thing itself directly, we give a false sense of the weight that this concept has in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. Again, Kant does not spend much time discussing this concept directly. In fact he spends much more time on other issues such as for example on the Analogies of Experience. But I doubt that for that reason one ought to conclude that the discussion of the Analogies of Experience is more important for Kant’s project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* than his discussion of the thing in itself. On the other hand, when we approach the thing in itself indirectly, that is, when we allow it to arise in the context of Kant’s account of knowledge, we restore the important role that this concept plays in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and also in Kant’s critical philosophy itself.

My discussion of Kant’s account of knowledge focuses on the transcendental analytic, specifically, on the analytic of concepts. In this sense, my discussion of Kant’s account of knowledge is rather general. The reader will discover that I have very little if nothing to say about the many nitty-gritty aspects of his account of knowledge. For example, I have absolutely nothing to say about Kant’s discussion of the schematism. This is not to say that I think that these aspects of his account of knowledge are unimportant or irrelevant. On the contrary, I think they are. However, the reader will remember that my ultimate goal in tackling Kant’s account of knowledge in the first place is to arrive at an interpretation of the thing in itself. For this reason, I
discuss only as much of Kant’s account of knowledge as it allows me to arrive at this interpretation and not more. If the reader thinks that those many nitty-gritty aspects of Kant’s account of knowledge such as the schematism contradict my general discussion to the extent that it jeopardizes my interpretation of the thing in itself, then I have failed. Clearly, I think that is not the case. In other words, I think that whatever I say about the thing in itself in the context of my general discussion of Kant’s account of knowledge is not contradicted by the many nitty-gritty aspects of that account. Furthermore, I often discuss Kant’s account of knowledge in opposition to his account of transcendental illusion. For this reason, I also discuss certain sections of the transcendental aesthetic and the transcendental dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, in this case as well, and for the exact same reasons, I offer a rather general account. Therefore, the reader will not find much of the discussion of the paralogisms, the antinomies or the ideal of reason.
What is a faculty?

Empirical knowledge or what Kant also calls experience is composed of two elements. “For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself” (CPR B2). Kant puts the distinction between the two elements of experience in terms of matter and form. “That experience contains two very dissimilar elements, namely, the matter of knowledge [obtained] from the senses, and a certain form for the ordering of this matter, [obtained] from the inner source of the pure intuition and thought which, on occasion of the sense-impressions, are first brought into action and yield concepts” (CPR B118/A86). This distinction between the matter and the form is in fact the most basic distinction of the Critique of Pure Reason. However, it is not on this distinction that Kant focuses this work. Instead, what primarily interests Kant is just one of these elements of experience. “If our faculty of knowledge makes any such [formal] addition, it may be that we are not in a position to distinguish it from the raw material, until with long practice of attention we have become skilled in separating it” (CPR B2). In an important sense, the Critique of Pure Reason is that long practice of attention. And this is how Kant defines the task of the Critique of Pure Reason: “for the chief question is always simply this:—what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience?” (CPR Axxvii). In other words, that the Critique of Pure Reason is the study of the form of experience means that it is a study of the faculty of knowledge or of the various faculties that compose it. What is a faculty?

Perhaps we get a sense for what a faculty is if we consider the exact role it plays in experience. I have already quoted the following sentence. “For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own
faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself” (CPR B2). It is however instructive to look at the German text. “Denn es könnte wohl sein, dass selbst unsere Erfahrungserkenntnis ein Zusammengesetztes aus dem sei, was wir durch Eindrücke empfangen, und dem, was unser eigenes Erkenntnisvermögen (durch sinnliche Eindrücke bloss veranlasst,) aus sich selbst hergibt” (KrV B2). In this sentence, Kant’s point is not just dass unsere Erfahrungserkenntnis ein Zusammengesetztes aus dem sei, was wir durch Eindrücke empfangen, und dem, was unser eigenes Erkenntnisvermögen...aus sich selbst hergibt. Instead, I argue, his important point is in brackets. Here Kant claims that sinnliche Eindrücke veranlassen unser Erkenntnisvermögen. Why is this point important? I stress the word veranlassen. What does this word mean? Let us look at Guyer and Wood’s translation of this passage. “For it could well be that even our experiential cognition is a composite of that which we receive through impressions and that which our own cognitive faculty (merely prompted by sensible impressions) provides out of itself…” (CPR B2). Kant’s important point in brackets is that sensible impressions prompt the faculty of knowledge. This statement already gets us closer to answering the question of what faculty is. Faculty is a kind of thing that needs to be prompted in the first place. But what does it mean to prompt?

To prompt does not mean to create. In this sense, that sensible impressions prompt the faculty of knowledge does not mean that they create it. For Kant the faculty of knowledge is inherent. “The pure intuitions [of receptivity] and the pure concepts of understanding are elements in knowledge, and both are found in us a priori” (CPR B166). Still, that the faculty of knowledge needs to be prompted at all suggests that this faculty is inherent but in a particular kind of way. Perhaps a different passage can help illuminate this point. “We can, however, with regard to these concepts, as with regard to all knowledge, seek to discover in experience, if not
the principle of their possibility [das Prinzipium ihrer Möglichkeit], at least the occasioning causes of their production [die Gelegenheitsursachen ihrer Erzeugung]” (CPR A86/B119). Sensible impressions prompt the faculty of knowledge in the sense that they erzeugen it. In other words, sensible impressions generate or produce the faculty of knowledge. For this reason, we can say that the faculty is in fact inherent. However, to the extent that it is generated or produced, it is not inherent as something already given. This point should already attune us to the insufficiency of the English term ‘faculty,’ which both Kemp Smith as well as Guyer and Wood use to translate Kant’s terms das Vermögen, die Fähigkeit or die Kraft. The English word ‘faculty’ connotes something static, in other words, something that already is, and is perhaps in some specific place such as in my brain. However, these German terms have no such connotations. In other words, none of these terms connotes something that already is and is, as it were, in some specific place such as in my brain. Instead, each of these German terms connotes something rather dynamic. Das Vermögen, die Fähigkeit or die Kraft is not. At the same time however that does not mean that each of these terms designates a nothing. Instead, das Vermögen, die Fähigkeit or die Kraft is not, however, it very well can be. Perhaps we can say that each of these terms designates a kind of potentiality. For this reason, perhaps it is best not to translate each of these terms as faculty, but rather as ‘ability.’

We have asked what faculties are. Perhaps we can think of them in terms of inherent potentialities, in other words, in terms of abilities. This definition allows us to gain a full meaning of the word veranlassen. That sensible impressions prompt the faculty of knowledge means that they actualize the ability to know. “The impressions of the senses supplying the first stimulus [den ersten Anlaß], the whole faculty of knowledge opens [eröffnen] out to them, and experience is brought into existence [Erfahrung zustande zu bringen]” (CPR A86/B119). In other
words, sensible impressions are what turns the ability to know into actual knowing, in other words, into the activity of knowledge. What does this mean? When we ask what faculties are we ask how they exist. If we answer this question by saying that faculties are inherent potentialities, we in fact say that they do not exist, or at least, that they do not yet exist. If something is only potential it means by definition that it is not yet actual. For this reason, the only way to answer the question of what faculty is, in other words, of how faculty exists is to say that it is an activity.

This is how Heidegger defines faculties. In *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* he writes: “in his Critique Kant treats of pure intuition, pure thinking, a priori knowledge, the principle of contradiction, and other principles—none of which is extant in the sense of spatial and temporal things. As an activity of the subject, all thinking for example is outside time and even more so non-spatial. All of this is not extant and nevertheless is not nothing” (Heidegger 1997 139). Faculties are abilities which is to say that they are, in other words, that they exist as activities. In what follows, I discuss Kant’s account of knowledge from the perspective of this definition of faculty. In other words, I show in what sense, certain abilities such as the ability to understand and the ability to reason are already certain activities such as the activities of conceptualizing, synthesizing and so on. One of the difficulties with the *Critique of Pure Reason* is its highly technical language. It is difficult to understand. I hope that my discussion of this work will allow the reader to see the *Critique of Pure Reason* in more straightforward terms. When Kant talks about the transcendental conditions of experience, he is just talking about certain abilities that human beings have and that they develop in certain activities. For example, one can say that I have the ability to understand in the sense that I conceptualize or synthesize (activity). Nothing more and nothing less is meant by the term the transcendental condition of experience. (Of course, in some sense, language betrays us here. And
below one of the things that I will attempt to do is to argue away the words such as ‘I’ and ‘have.’ What ‘I’ is just is abilities actualized as activities or the transcendental subject).

My interpretation of the faculties attempts to provide an alternative to what seem to be two mutually exclusive alternatives. First, I want to argue that faculties are not simply psychological mechanisms. I do not think that such an interpretation makes sense within Kant’s critical philosophy. For Kant psychology is part of nature. However, faculties are supposed to be precisely those activates that represent nature, in the sense that they constitute nature. Thus faculties cannot both be nature and constitute nature. Second, I want to argue that faculties are not mere epistemic conditions. I do think that this interpretation of faculties is on the right track. However, it does not go far enough. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant wonders what he can legitimately know. In this sense, it is legitimate for the reader to ask what within Kant’s critical philosophy justifies faculties themselves. In other words, such a question is suggested by Kant’s critical philosophy itself. It is a Kantian question. However, when we interpret faculties as mere epistemic conditions that Kantian question sounds confused. If faculties are mere epistemic conditions then we just cannot know them, because they are precisely what allows for knowledge in the first place. This interpretation of the faculties takes the form of ‘since experience does take this form that means that…’ In this sense, such an interpretation denies what is the most important, Kantian question about the faculties. But what are exactly these epistemic conditions? How exactly do they exist? In other words, what such an interpretation of the faculties omits is the fact that it is precisely because faculties are epistemic conditions, they must also be ontological. Thus the faculties are neither on the order of nature, nor simply on the order of logic. They are on the order of the thing in itself. In this sense, I introduce my interpretation that faculties are potentialities. In what follows I explain how such potentialities turn into concrete
activities in both experience and morality. By the way that faculties are potentialities suggests that their actualization into concrete activities does not follow a necessary course. This means that perhaps for Kant we could have had a different experience and different morality than the one we already do. Unfortunately, my thesis does not deal with this complex issue.

My first goal is to discuss the difference between the ability to understand and the ability to reason. I discuss these abilities in terms of the many activities that they are. Then I make an argument that on the first view does not seem altogether that original. I argue that Kant distinguishes between the ability to understand and the ability to reason in terms of sensation. In other words, it is because sensation actualizes the ability to understand into its activities that these activities allow human beings to know or to experience. On the other hand, it is because sensation does not actualize the ability to reason into its activities that these activities do not allow human beings to know or to experience, but rather present them with illusions. I conclude that this sensation that thus distinguishes between on the one hand knowledge or experience and illusion on the other hand suggests a presence of what Kant calls der Gegenstand. In this sense, I argue, it is really the presence of der Gegenstand that actualizes the ability to understand into its activities that then give human knowledge or experience rather than present them with an illusion. In other words, it is the presence of der Gegenstand that actualizes the inherent possibility of knowledge into actual knowledge. “Both [intuition and concepts] may be either pure or empirical. When they contain sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object [der Gegenstand]), they are empirical. When there is no mingling of sensation with representation, they are pure” (CPR A50/B74). I propose that Kant’s account of knowledge gives rise to two concepts of the thing in itself. In the next chapter I proceed to argue that we cannot know one thing in itself, but that we can know the other.
The activity of analyzing

Kant analyzes the ability to understand in the ‘Transcendental Logic.’ Kant announces that the analysis of the ability to understand takes the form of the ‘analytic of concepts.’ “By ‘analytic of concepts,’” he writes, I understand “the hitherto rarely attempted dissection of the faculty of the understanding itself, in order to investigate the possibility of concepts a priori by looking for them in the understanding alone, as their birthplace, and by analyzing the pure use [Gebrauch] of this faculty” (CPR A66/B91). In other words, the analysis of the ability to understand looks at the birthplace of concepts and at the pure use of concepts. However, if abilities exist as activities, Kant’s intention to analyze the ability to understand in terms of the analytic of concepts suggests that the ability in fact exists as the two activities of analyzing, namely the activity of giving birth to concepts and the activity of using concepts purely. Thus it is in fact these two that Kant intends to analyze. In this sense, Kant writes: “logic, again, can be treated in a twofold manner, either as logic of the general or as logic of the special employment of the understanding. The former contains the absolutely necessary rules of thought without which there can be no employment whatsoever of the understanding...The logic of the special employment of the understanding contains the rules of correct thinking as regards a certain kind of objects” (CPR B76/A52).

Kant discusses the activity of giving birth to concepts in terms of the question: what is truth? He argues that there are two ways in which we can understand this question. “What is truth? The nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object is assumed as granted; the question asked is as to what is the general and sure criterion of the truth of any and every knowledge” (CPR A58/B83). In other words, we can look for the truth in the agreement between knowledge and objects. In this case, the criterion of truth is the content of the
object, that is, the object in its particularity. “If truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with
its object, that object must thereby be distinguished from other objects; for knowledge is false, if
it does not agree with the object to which it is related, even although it contains something which
may be valid of other objects” (CPR A58/B83). However, there is also an alternative. “Now a
general criterion of truth must be such as would be valid in each and every instance of
knowledge, however their objects may vary” (CPR B83/A59). In this case, the criterion of truth
is not about the agreement of knowledge with the object, but rather about the agreement of
knowledge with itself. “But, on the other hand, as regards knowledge in respect of its mere form
(leaving aside all content), it is evident that logic, in so far as it expounds the universal and
necessary rules of the understanding, must in these rules furnish criteria of truth. Whatever
contradicts these rules is false” (CPR A59/B84). In this sense, the general criterion of truth is not
about the content of the object, that is, it is not about the object in its particularity. Instead, it is
about the form of the object, that is, it is about the object in its generality. Therefore, the activity
of giving birth to concepts is in fact the activity of giving birth to the form of the object, that is,
the object in its generality.

Kant calls the form of the object ‘concept.’ For this reason, he argues, concepts do not
actually know. In other words, we do not have knowledge of concrete objects by means of
concepts. “The concepts are, however, for this very reason, mere forms of thought, through
which alone no determinate object is known” (CPR B150). Kant puts the same point in other
words. Concepts know objects mediately, in other words, conceptual knowledge must be
mediated knowledge. “Judgment is therefore the mediate knowledge of an object, that is, the
representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a concept which holds of many
representations, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an
object” (CPR A68/B93). That concepts do not know concrete objects, but know them only mediately means, for example, that there is no body that is an actual object and that every object is always already metal or some other particular which I know as body. “Thus the concept of body means something, for instance, metal, which can be known by means of that concept. It is therefore a concept solely in virtue of its comprehending other representations, by means of which it can relate to objects. It is therefore the predicate of a possible judgment, for instance, ‘every metal is a body” (CPR A69/B94). Thus Kant comes to the conclusion that the concept is a unity of representations. “Accordingly, all judgments are functions of unity among our representations; instead of an immediate representation, a higher representation, which comprises the immediate representation and various others, is used in knowing the object, and thereby much possible knowledge is collected into one” (CPR A69/B94).

Concepts are born in “the logical employment of the understanding [der Verstandesgebrauch],” specifically in “the logical function of the understanding in judgments” (CPR A70/B95). Therefore, “whereas all intuitions, as sensible, rest on affections, concepts rest on functions” (CPR A68/B93). Functions unify representations into concepts. “By ‘function’ I mean the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation” (CPR A68/B93). Thus the activity of judging in fact rests on representations. In other words, without representations concepts cannot be unities. However, that the activity of judging rests on representations does not mean that it rests on the contents of knowledge. “General logic, as has been repeatedly said, abstracts from all content of knowledge, and looks to some other source, whatever that may be, for the representations which it is to transform [verwandeln] into concepts by process of analysis” (CPR A77/B103). Therefore, functions do not unify this metal, this book, this chair, and so on into a concept of the body. If this were the case, then concepts would in fact
rest on contents of knowledge. In other words, they would be born in experience. But Kant explicitly denies this. “For in view of their subsequent employment, which has to be entirely independent of experience, they \textit{a priori concepts} must be in a position to show a certificate of birth quite other than that of descent from experience” (\textit{CPR B119/A87}). Thus we come to this question: on what representations does the activity of judging rest? It seems that of the two activities of analyzing the pure use of concepts must somehow precede their birth in the activity of judging.
The activity of combining

Kant does not just define the ability to understand in terms of the activity of analyzing. He also defines it in terms of the activity of combining. “But the combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition. For it is an act of spontaneity of the faculty of representation; and since this faculty, to distinguish it from sensibility, must be entitled understanding, all combination…is an act of the understanding” (CPR B130). Like the activity of analyzing, however, the activity of combining is really two activities. First, the activity of combining is the activity of synthesizing the manifold (die Synthesis). “To this act [combination] the general title ‘synthesis’ may be assigned, as indicating that we cannot represent to ourselves anything as combined in the object which we have not ourselves previously combined, and that of all representations combination is the only one which cannot be given through objects. Being an act of the self-activity of the subject, it cannot be executed save by the subject itself” (CPR B130). Second, the activity of combining is also the activity of unifying the manifold (die Einheit). “But the concept of combination includes besides the concept of the manifold and of its synthesis, also the concept of the unity of the manifold (CPR B131). Section 2 of ‘The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding’ explains the relationship between these two activities. Here Kant makes two arguments. First, the activity of unifying the manifold is simultaneous with the activity of synthesizing the manifold. Thus, Kant treats the two activities as in fact one activity: “combination is representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold” (CPR B131). However, Kant also argues that the activity of unifying the manifold is prior to the activity of synthesizing the manifold. For this reason, he also treats the two activities as separate. “The representation of this unity cannot therefore, arise out of the combination. On the contrary,
it is what, by adding itself to the representation of the manifold, first makes possible the concept of the combination” (CPR B131). Thus Kant argues both that when we unify, we already synthesize, and also that we unify before we synthesize. In order to understand on what representations the activity of judging rests we must understand the ability to understand as the activity of combining, that is, the relationship between the activity of unifying the manifold and the activity of synthesizing the manifold.

The activity of intuiting does not give an object. It only gives the manifold. In other words, it gives many. But many what? Kant argues that the activity of intuiting gives representations in space and time. Thus the manifold is the multiplicity of representations in space and time. Here Kant works at a high level of abstraction. He asks that we imagine the building block of experience, in other words, that out of which experience begins. He asks that we imagine the multiplicity of representations that are just in space and time. That the manifold is the multiplicity of representations in space and time means that these representations are in fact not my experience. My experience is not composed of the multiplicity of representations; instead, it is composed of many unified representations. In my experience this chair, this computer, that woman, and that baby are not disconnected representations. They are in fact my representations. In other words, they compose a unity. The question that Kant asks is how the manifold gets unified, in other words, how the multiplicity of representations becomes a unity of representations. Kant insists that it is nothing about representations themselves that unifies them. “Combination does not, however, lie in the objects, and cannot be borrowed from them, and so, through perception, first taken up into the understanding” (CPR B134). Instead, it is something about me that unifies these representations. However, Kant also claims, that this something is not the ability to sense. That I am able to sense representations does not mean that I am able to
understand them. “But the combination (conjectio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition” (CPR B130). The activity of intuiting representations only gives representations in space and time, but not unified representations in space and time. Therefore, it is the ability to understand, that is, the activity of combining, specifically, the activity of unifying that unifies representations. “On the contrary, it is an affair of the understanding alone, which itself is nothing but the faculty of combining a priori, and of bringing the manifold of given representations under the unity of apperception” (CPR B135). Kant calls this activity of unifying representations the ‘I think.’ “That representation which can be given prior to all thought is entitled intuition. All the manifold of intuition has, therefore, a necessary relation to the ‘I think’ in the same subject in which this manifold is found. But this representation is an act of spontaneity, that is, it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility” (CPR B132). It is because I think along these representations in space and time that I unify them into my representations. However, this activity of unifying the manifold is just one moment of the activity of combining. The other moment is the synthesis of concrete objects. “Such consciousness, however indistinct, must always be present; without it, concepts, and therewith knowledge of objects, are altogether impossible” (CPR A104).

The fact is that my experience is never just composed of my representations in space and time. Rather, it is composed of representations that are much richer, much more complex. In other words, in my experience representations are not just here or there, now or later. Instead, they are also causally connected, one or many, possible or impossible and so on. In other words, in my experience representations are concrete objects. Thus it is not enough to explain how a multiplicity of representations in space and time becomes a unity of representations in space and
time. In other words, it is not enough that representations in space and time are my representations. We must also explain how the unity of representations in space and time becomes a unity of objects. In other words, we must also explain how my representations become my objects. This is the task of the activity of synthesizing. However, since this activity is itself just another moment of the activity of combining, Kant argues, representations in space and time do not become objects outside of the unity of these representations. “For through the ‘I,’ as simple representation, nothing manifold is given; only in intuition, which is distinct from the ‘I,’ can a manifold be given; and only through combination in one consciousness can it be thought” (CPR B135). In other words, it is not as if I had the multiplicity of representations in space and time that then became a multiplicity of objects. If the multiplicity of representations in space and time is to become a multiplicity of objects they have to be my objects. In other words, representations become objects the moment representations become mine. This is not to say that there are no objects that are not mine, but rather that I never experience representations, but only objects. Thus Kant argues that “this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold which is given in intuition contains a synthesis of representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis” (CPR B133). In this sense, the activity of unifying the manifold is both prior to and simultaneous with the activity of synthesizing the manifold. My experience is always already an experience of objects. “The original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self is thus at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances according to concepts” (CPR A108).
The categories

Concepts do not rest on the contents of knowledge. However, they do rest on representations. It is now clear on what representations concepts rest. “Thought is knowledge by means of concepts. But concepts, as predicates of possible judgments, relate to some representation of a not yet determined object” (CPR A69/B94). Concepts rest on the manifold, that is, on the representations in space and time. The activity of synthesizing is the putting of these representations in space and time into concepts (‘der Begriff’). “By synthesis, in its most general sense, I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping [begreifen] what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge” (CPR B103/A8). In other words, the activity of synthesizing is the conceptualizing of the unity of the manifold: “only in so far as I can grasp [begreifen] the manifold in one consciousness, do I call them one and all mine” (CPR B134). However, if this were the only thing that the activity of synthesizing did, my experience would include only the form of representations in space and time. In other words, it would not include objects, since objects also have a certain content. Therefore the activity of synthesizing must perform still another function. The activity of synthesizing is the conceptualizing of the unity of the manifold in an imaginative way. “Still, the synthesis is that which gathers the elements for knowledge, and unites them to [form] a certain content…Synthesis in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result of the power of imagination” (CPR A78/B104). Kant argues that the activity of synthesizing includes the activity of imagining content where really there is none. “Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is not itself present” (CPR B151). However, Kant does not claim that imagination is an arbitrary creation: “representation in itself does not produce its object in so far as existence is concerned, for we are not here speaking of its causality by means of the will. None the less the representation is a
priori determinant of the object…” (CPR B125). What does Kant mean? It is precisely in conceptualizing representations that I imagine content into them. In other words, the content of representations must agree with concepts. “Imagination is to that extent a faculty which determines the sensibility a priori; and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of imagination” (CPR B152). For this reason, Kant argues that the activity of synthesizing is not the activity of imagining empirical content into representations. “This other [transcendental] logic, which should contain solely the rules of the pure thought of an object, would exclude only those modes of knowledge which have empirical content” (CPR B80/A56). Instead, the activity of synthesizing is the activity of imagining transcendental content into representations: “the same understanding, through the same operations by which in concepts, by means of analytical unity, it produced the logical form of judgment, also introduces transcendental content into its representations, by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general” (CPR A79/B105). Kant puts this same point in other words. First he writes this: “but that act of the understanding by which the manifold of given representations…is brought under one apperception, is the logical function of judgment. All the manifold, therefore, so far as it is given in a single empirical intuition, is determined in respect of one of the logical functions of judgment, and is thereby brought into one consciousness” (CPR B143). However, Kant cannot claim that it is the concept itself that determines the object. Again, concept is a mere form of representation. But an object is more than just its form. Therefore, Kant actually claims that it is the concept along with the imagined content that agrees with it—a kind of monster concept that Kant calls the pure concept of the understanding or the category—that determines the object. Thus Kant continues the same paragraph: “now the categories are just these functions of judgment, in so far as they are
employed in determination of the manifold of a given intuition. Consequently, the manifold in a
given intuition is necessarily subject to the categories” (CPR B43). In other words, “a manifold,
contained in an intuition which I call mine, is represented, by means of the syntheses of the
understanding, as belonging to the necessary unity of self-consciousness; and this is effected by
means of the category” (CPR B144). Therefore, it is only by means of the categories that I am
able to understand the manifold as or into objects. “Indeed, it is because [the understanding]
contains these [pure] concepts that it is called pure understanding; for by them alone can it
understand anything in the manifold of intuition, that is, think an object of intuition” (CPR
A80/B106).

I have defined the ability to understand in terms of the activities of unifying and
synthesizing. To be able to understand is to unify and synthesize, in other words, it is to turn the
multiplicity of representations in space and time into my experience of objects. “Understanding
is, to use general terms, the faculty of knowledge. This knowledge consists in the determinate
relation of given representations to an object; and an object is that in the concept of which the
manifold of a given intuition is united. Now all unification of representations demands unity of
consciousness in the synthesis of them” (CPR B137). Now Kant’s analysis of the ability to
understand makes it seem as if the forms of representations preceded representations in space
and time to which they were then related by the activity of synthesizing. In other words, Kant’s
analysis makes it seem as if concepts preceded my experience of objects. This is in fact Kant’s
manner of presentation. However, Kant argues, specifically in the section on the transcendental
deduction that he does not think that this is what actually takes place in knowledge. There is no
knowledge that precedes the knowledge of objects in the sense that it can exist without objects.
All knowledge is always already knowledge of objects or otherwise it is nothing. Kant begins his
analysis with concepts in order to analyze in abstraction the concepts that we always already do use in knowledge. In this sense, Kant’s manner of presentation actually clashes with what he takes to be the case in knowledge, namely that concepts are always already concepts of objects. “Our nature is so constituted that our intuition can never be other than the sensible; that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us to think the object of sensible intuition is the understanding” (CPR B76/A52). In this sense, Kant does not claim that concepts lie prepared in the understanding. Rather, he claims, that it is pure concepts that lie prepared in the understanding and are developed in experience. “We shall therefore follow up the pure concepts to their first seeds and dispositions in the human understanding, in which they lie prepared, till at last, on the occasion of experience, they are developed and by the same understanding are exhibited in their purity, freed from the empirical conditions attaching to them” (CPR A66/B91). Thus in fact, concepts have birth before their birth in the activity of judging. Concepts are born in the activity of synthesizing. However, they are born as categories. Concepts are always already born as something other than themselves. Thus, it is not so much that concepts precede my experience of objects. Instead, it is the activities of combining that precede the activities of analyzing. “It will easily be observed that this action [synthesis] is originally one and is equipollent for all combination, and that its dissolution, namely, analysis, which appears to be its opposite, yet always presupposes it. For where the understanding has not previously combined, it cannot dissolve, since only as having been combined by the understanding can anything that allows of analysis be given to the faculty of representation” (CPR B130). In other words, we experience objects before we abstract concepts. “We must therefore look yet higher for this unity [the synthetic unity of the manifold], namely in that which itself contains the ground of the unity of diverse concepts in judgment, and
therefore of the possibility of the understanding, even as regards its logical employment” (*CPR* B131). In simplest terms, I experience objects before I do logic. “The synthetic unity of apperception is therefore the highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy” (*CPR* B134n).
The principle

Kant’s analysis of the ability to reason follows closely his analysis of the ability to understand. Like the ability to understand, the ability to reason is “the logical employment of reason (CPR B359/A303) and “the pure employment of reason” (CPR B623/A306). In other words, the ability to reason is a logical and a pure activity. First, “reason, like understanding, can be employed in a merely formal, that is, logical manner, wherein it abstracts from all content of knowledge” (CPR B355/A299). “But,” Kant continues, “it is also capable of a real use, since it contains within itself the source of certain concepts and principles which it does not borrow from the senses or from the understanding” (CPR A299/B356). Like his discussion of the ability to understand, Kant’s analysis of the ability to reason begins with the logical activity and then moves to the pure activity. “Following the analogy of concepts of the understanding, we may expect that the logical concept will provide the key to the transcendental, and that the table of the function of the former will at once give us the genealogical tree of the concepts of reason” (CPR A299/B356). However, again, that does not mean that Kant thinks that we use reason logically before we use it purely or even that we can use it logically before we use it purely. It is just that the logical use of reason reveals the formal knowledge that it contributes better than the pure use of reason does, because such logical use of reason abstracts from all matter.

“The former faculty [reason] has long since been defined by logicians as the faculty of making mediate inferences…” (CPR A299/B356). As a logical activity, the ability to reason is the activity of producing mediate inferences. “In every process of reasoning there is a fundamental proposition, and another, namely the conclusion, which is drawn from it, and finally, the inference (logical sequence) by which the truth of the latter is inseparably connected with the truth of the former” (CPR A303/B360). In other words, reason is the activity of
producing the judgment that necessarily connects the fundamental proposition and the conclusion. Kant calls such a judgment ‘der Vernunftschluss’ or the syllogism. But why is that the case? Whence this necessity? The analysis of “the logical employment of the understanding” (CPR A70/B95) gives the function or “the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation” (CPR A68/B93). In other words, “the logical employment of the understanding” (CPR A70/B95) demonstrates the way we understand. Kant makes an analogous point about the ability to reason. The ability to reason is the ability of principles. “In the first part of our transcendental logic we treated the understanding as being the faculty of rules; reason we shall distinguish from the understanding by entitling it the *faculty of principles*” (CPR B356/A300). But what are these principles? “The principle peculiar to reason in general, in its logical employment is:–to find for the conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion” (CPR A307/B364). If ‘the logical employment of the understanding’ gives concepts, ‘the logical employment of reason’ gives the principle. In other words, ‘the logical employment of reason’ demonstrates the way we reason. Specifically, the activity of producing the syllogism is the development of the principle ‘to find for the conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion.’ Thus, Kant argues, “knowledge from principles is, therefore, that knowledge alone in which I apprehend the particular in the universal through concepts. Thus every syllogism is a mode of deducing knowledge from a principle” (CPR A300/B357). Kant puts the same point in other words. “Secondly, reason in its logical employment, seeks to discover the universal condition of its judgment (the conclusion) and the syllogism is itself nothing but a judgment made by means of the subsumption of its condition under a universal rule (the major premiss)” (CPR A307/B364).
Concepts of reason

Kant follows ‘the logical employment of the understanding’ with the ‘pure employment of the understanding.’ In other words, he shows how the way we understand applies to objects. “The Transcendental Analytic has shown us how the mere logical form of our knowledge may in itself contain original pure a priori concepts, which represent objects prior to all experience, or, speaking more correctly, indicate the synthetic unity which alone makes possible an empirical knowledge of objects” (CPR A321/B378). In this sense, functions direct us to the categories. “The form of judgments (converted into a concept of the synthesis of intuitions) yielded [hervorbringen] categories which direct all employment of understanding in experience” (CPR A321/B378). Kant takes an analogous course with respect to the ability to reason. “Here we must follow the path that we have taken in the deduction of the categories; we must consider the logical form of knowledge through reason, to see whether perhaps reason may not thereby be likewise a source of concepts which enable us to regard objects in themselves as determined synthetically a priori, in relation to one or other of the functions of reason” (CPR B386/A330).

In other words, after showing how the syllogism develops our ability to reason (the principle), Kant proceeds to show how the pure employment of reason does so as well, in other words, how knowledge of objects does so as well. “The formal and logical procedure of reason in syllogisms gives us sufficient guidance as to the ground on which the transcendental principle of pure reason in its synthetic knowledge will rest” (CPR A306/B363).

The ability to reason as the activity of finding for the conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion does not concern itself with intuitions at all. Instead, it concerns itself with concepts of understanding. “Accordingly, even if pure reason does concern itself with objects, it has no immediate relation
to these and the intuition of them, but only to the understanding and its judgments—which deal at first hand with the senses and their intuition for the purpose of determining their object. The unity of reason is therefore not the unity of possible experience, but is essentially different from such unity, which is that of understanding” (CPR A307/B364). In short, “pure reason never relates directly to objects, but to the concepts which understanding frames in regard to objects” (CPR B392/A335). The ability to understand and the ability to reason are different abilities, because they are activities of unifying different things and therefore, in fact, activities of developing different concepts. The ability to understand as the activity of unifying objects in empirical intuition develops concepts of understanding. “Concepts of understanding are also thought a priori antecedently to experience and for the sake of experience, but they contain nothing more than the unity of reflection upon appearances, in so far as these appearances must necessarily belong to a possible empirical consciousness” (CPR A310/B367). On the other hand, the ability to reason as the activity of unifying concepts of understanding develops concepts of reason. “Whatever we may have to decide as to the possibility of the concepts derived from pure reason, it is at least true that they are not to be obtained by mere reflection but only by inference…[Concepts of understanding] first provide the material required for making inferences…” (CPR B367/A311). Kant also calls these concepts of reason transcendental ideas. “Meantime, just as we have entitled the pure concepts of understanding categories, so we shall give a new name to the concepts of pure reason, calling them transcendental ideas” (CPR A311/B368). Thus Kant gives the following definition. “The transcendental ideas are thus, in the first place, simply the categories extended to the unconditioned, and can be reduced to a table arranged to the [fourfold] headings of the latter” (CPR A409/B436). But this is not the complete definition of transcendental ideas. The ability to reason as the activity of finding for the
conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion is in fact the activity of extending the conditioned knowledge to the unconditioned. However, Kant argues, that the ability to reason as the activity of extending the conditioned knowledge to the unconditioned has an internal limit.

The nature of the ability to reason as the activity of extending the conditioned knowledge to the unconditioned determines what categories it turns into transcendental ideas. “The pure concepts of reason—of totality in the synthesis of conditions—are thus at least necessary as setting us the task of extending the unity of understanding, \textit{where possible}, up to the unconditioned, and are grounded in the nature of human reason” ($\textit{CPR}$ A323/B380). That the ability to reason is the activity of \textit{extending} the conditioned knowledge into the unconditioned suggests that it applies only to those categories in which the combination constitutes a series. In other words, I cannot extend something unless that something is extendable, that is, unless that something constitutes a series. Thus Kant completes his definition of the transcendental idea. “In the \textit{second} place, not all categories are fitted for such employment, but only those in which the synthesis constitutes a \textit{series} of conditions subordinated to, not co-ordinated with, one another, and generative of a [given] conditioned” ($\textit{CPR}$ B436/A410). However, even this definition is not quite complete. “But we soon become aware that the chain or series of prosyllogisms, that is, of inferred knowledge on the side of the grounds or conditions of a given knowledge, in other words, of the \textit{ascending} series of syllogisms, must stand in a different relation to the faculty of reason from the \textit{descending} series, that is, of the advance of reason in the direction of the conditioned, by means of episyllogisms” ($\textit{CPR}$ B388/A332). Kant talks about alteration as an example of the descending series, that is, of episyllogism. “Thus if I arrive at the proposition that all bodies are alterable, only by beginning with the more remote knowledge (in which the
concept of body does not occur, but which nevertheless contains the condition of that concept), namely, that everything composite is alterable; if I then proceed from this to a proposition which is less remote and stands under the condition of the last-named proposition, namely, that bodies are composite; and if from this I finally pass to a third proposition, which connects the more remote knowledge (alterable) with the knowledge actually before me, and so conclude that bodies are alterable - by this procedure I have arrived at knowledge (a conclusion) by means of a series of conditions (the premises)” (CPR B386). In other words, Kant’s point is that in the descending series reason does arrive at knowledge. If it is the case that the ability to understand conceptualizes that all things change and that all bodies are things, reason infers that all bodies change. In this way, reason arrives at the universal that is also actually the case. “The rule states something universally, subject to a certain condition. The condition of the rule is found to be fulfilled in an actual case. What has been asserted to be universally valid under that condition is therefore to be regarded as valid also in the actual case, which involves that condition” (CPR B386). In other words, we do know that all bodies change. However, Kant is not interested in the descending series, that is, in the episyllogism. Instead, he is interested in the ascending series, in other words, in the prosyllogism. What does that mean? Because the ascending series moves from the conditioned to its conditions and the descending series moves from the conditions to the conditioned, the activity of extending conditioned knowledge into unconditioned applies to the ascending series and not to the descending series. “For in the case of the given conditioned, conditions are presupposed, and are considered as given together with it. On the other hand, since consequences do not make their conditions possible, but rather presuppose them, we are not called upon, when we advance to consequences or descend from a given condition to the conditioned, to consider whether the series does or does not cease…” (CPR A410/B427). Thus
we come to this complete definition: transcendental ideas are the serial categories ascended to the unconditioned. In the ascending series, that is, in the prosyllogism God, immortality and freedom are universals, but they are not actually the case. Reason does not know them.
Transcendental deduction

The ability to understand and the ability to reason are both activities of thinking objects *a priori*. “We form for ourselves by anticipation the idea of a science of the knowledge which belongs to pure understanding and reason, whereby we think objects entirely *a priori*” (*CPR* A57/B82). Kant recognizes that this *a priori* character of thinking about objects is problematic. “Thus a difficulty such as we did not meet with in the field of sensibility is here presented, namely, how subjective conditions of thought can have objective validity, that is, can furnish conditions of the possibility of all knowledge of objects” (*CPR* B122/A90). Transcendental logic is a science that deals with this problem. “Such a science, which should determine the origin, the scope, and the objective validity of such knowledge, would have to be called *transcendental logic*, because…it concerns itself with the laws of understanding and of reason solely in so far as they relate *a priori* to objects” (*CPR* A57/B82). Specifically, transcendental deduction is that part of transcendental logic that explains how subjective conditions of thought also have objective validity. Transcendental deduction settles the question ‘by what right?’ we are justified in using concepts. “Now among the manifold concepts which form the highly complicated web of human knowledge, there are some which are marked out for pure *a priori* employment in complete independence of all experience; and their right to be so employed always demands a deduction” (*CPR* A85/B118). In fact, the goal of the transcendental deduction is even more specific. “The employment of this pure knowledge depends upon the condition that objects to which it can be applied be given to us in intuition. In the absence of intuition all our knowledge is without objects, and therefore remains entirely empty” (*CPR* B87/A63). In other words, the transcendental deduction explains that subjective conditions of thought have objective validity only if they apply to objects in intuition. However, even this statement needs to be specified
further. “Sensible intuition is either pure intuition (space and time) or empirical intuition of that which is immediately represented, through sensation, as actual in space and time” (CPR B147). Thus the transcendental deduction does not argue that subjective conditions of thought have objective validity because they apply to objects in pure intuition; rather, it argues that subjective conditions of thought have objective validity because they apply to objects in empirical intuition, that is, in experience. Kant argues that the categories satisfy this condition. “Even, therefore, with the aid of [pure] intuition, the categories do not afford us any knowledge of things; they do so only through their possible application to empirical intuition. In other words, they serve only for the possibility of empirical knowledge; and such knowledge is what we entitle experience” (CPR B148). The categories apply to objects in empirical intuition. “Our conclusion is therefore this: the categories, as yielding knowledge of things, have no kind of application, save only in regard to things which may be objects of possible experience” (CPR B148).

The problem with the transcendental ideas is that they do not apply to objects in intuition at all, let alone to objects in empirical intuition. “Accordingly, even if pure reason does concern itself with objects, it has no immediate relation to these and the intuition of them, but only to the understanding and its judgments—which deal at first hand with the senses and their intuition for the purpose of determining their object. The unity of reason is therefore not the unity of possible experience, but is essentially different from such unity, which is that of understanding” (CPR A307/B364). If subjective conditions of thought have objective validity because they apply to objects in empirical intuition, then since transcendental ideas do not apply to objects in intuition at all they have no objective validity. If “the explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate a priori to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction” (CPR A85/B118), this also means that there can be no transcendental deduction of transcendental ideas. “No objective
deduction, such as we have been able to give of the categories, is, strictly speaking, possible in the case of these transcendental ideas. Just because they are only ideas, they have, in fact, no relation to any object that could be given as coinciding with them. We can, indeed, undertake a subjective derivation of them from the nature of our reason…” (CPR B393/A336). In this sense, transcendental ideas are subjective conditions of thought that have no objective validity. “But such a principle does not prescribe any law for objects, and does not contain general ground of knowing or of determining objects as such; it is merely a subjective law for the orderly management of the possessions of our understanding, that by comparison of its concepts it may reduce them to the smallest possible number; it does not justify us in demanding from the objects such uniformity as will minister to the convenience and extension of our understanding; and we may not, therefore, ascribe to the maximum any objective validity” (CPR B361/A305). Transcendental ideas are just ideas. “I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason, now under consideration, are transcendental ideas” (CPR A327/B384). Transcendental ideas are the source of transcendental illusion.
Both knowledge and transcendental illusion are products of abilities. Specifically, knowledge is the product of the activity of conceptualizing, and transcendental illusion is the product of the activity of idealizing. However, if both knowledge and transcendental illusion are products of activities, what is the difference between them? Kant does not argue that it just so happens that the former activity gives knowledge whereas the latter gives transcendental illusion. Instead, he gives clear criteria to distinguish between knowledge and transcendental illusion. The transcendental analytic argues that we arrive at knowledge if we *a priori* think within experience; on the other hand, the transcendental dialectic argues that we arrive at transcendental illusion if we *a priori* think outside of experience. In this sense, it is experience that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought. “Possible experience is that which can alone give reality to our concepts; in its absence a concept is a mere idea, without truth, that is, without relation to any object. The possible empirical concept is therefore the standard by which we must judge whether the idea is a mere idea and thought-entity, or whether it finds its object in the world” (*CPR* A489/B517). For this reason, the term experience is important. The opening quotation gives a curious definition of experience that is functional throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason*. “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations, partly arouse the activity of our understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them, work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience?” (*CPR* B1). Knowledge begins with experience. However, experience is also the product of the ability to know. But this is not vicious circle. That knowledge begins with experience means that
begins with the matter of experience which activates the ability to know as the form of experience. I argue that when Kant claims that it is experience that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought he does not mean the form of experience; instead, he means the matter of experience.

This is how Kant frames the discussion of the transcendental logic. “This other logic, which should contain solely the rules of the pure thought of an object, would exclude only those modes of knowledge which have empirical content” (CPR B80/A56). But what is this empirical content from which the transcendental logic, that is, the transcendental analytic and the transcendental dialectic, abstracts? “Both [intuition and concepts] may be either pure or empirical. When they contain sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object [der Gegenstand]), they are empirical. When there is no mingling of sensation with the representation, they are pure. Sensation may be entitled the material of sensible knowledge” (CPR A50/B74).

The empirical content that transcendental logic abstracts from is sensation. In this sense, the transcendental logic “concerns itself with the laws of understanding and of reason solely in so far as they relate a priori to objects” (CPR A57/B82). Thus the transcendental logic deals with a priori thoughts in abstraction from sensation. However, whereas it is sensation that transcendental logic abstracts from in order to analyze the a priori thoughts, it is precisely in terms of sensation that it justifies those a priori thoughts, in other words, it is precisely sensation that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought. Thus, on the one hand, Kant argues in the transcendental analytic that the categories have objective validity because they apply in sense experience: “only thus, by demonstration of the a priori validity of the categories in respect of all objects of our senses, will the purpose of the deduction be fully attained” (CPR B145). On the other hand, he argues in the transcendental dialectic that the
transcendental ideas have no objective validity because they do not apply in sense experience: “I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason, now under consideration, are transcendental ideas” (CPR A327/B384). We come to this point. That it is the matter rather than the form of experience that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought means that it is the presence of sensation that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought. It is the presence of sensation that distinguishes between knowledge and illusion.

“Sensation presupposes the actual presence of the object” (CPR A50/B74). *Die Empfindung setzt die wirkliche Gegenwart des Gegenstandes voraus.* In order for there to be sensations there have to be objects that *stehen* the senses *entgegen, die Gegenstände*. Once again note Kant’s opening paragraph. “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects [Gegenstände] affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations, partly arouse the activity of our understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them, work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience?” (CPR B1). It is *die Gegenstände* that affect the senses and awaken the faculty of knowledge. What does this mean? That it is the presence of sensation that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought in fact means that it is the presence of *der Gegenstand* that determines the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought. Kant makes this point in the transcendental analytic. “Only thus, by demonstration of the *a priori* validity of the categories in respect of all objects of our senses, will the purpose of the deduction be fully attained. But in the above proof there is one feature from which we cannot
abstract, namely, that the manifold to be intuited must be given prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently of it. How this takes place remains here undetermined" (*CPR* B145). In a sense this statement does not seem to be saying anything extraordinary. In other words, Kant just seems to be saying that the categories are objectively valid because they apply to objects in intuition. But this is not the case. I have already distinguished between pure and empirical intuitions. “Both [intuition and concepts] may be either pure or empirical. When they contain sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object [der Gegenstand]), they are empirical. When there is no mingling of sensation with the representation, they are pure” (*CPR* A50/B74). I have also argued that the categories are objectively valid because they apply to objects in empirical intuition. “Even, therefore, with the aid of [pure] intuition, the categories do not afford us any knowledge of things; they do so only through their possible application to empirical intuition” (*CPR* B147). However, the fact is that empirical intuition presupposes the presence of *der Gegenstand*. “Space and time, as conditions under which alone objects can possibly be given to us, are valid no further than for objects [Gegenstände], and therefore only for experience. Beyond these limits they represent nothing; for they are only in the senses, and beyond them have no reality” (*CPR* B148). This point is key. The intuition is empirical because it applies to die Gegenstände. For this reason, I argue, at B145 Kant does not just say something ordinary such as that the categories are objectively valid because they apply to objects in intuition. He says something extraordinary such as that the categories are objectively valid because they apply to objects in empirical intuition, which is to say that the objective validity of the categories is determined by the presence of *der Gegenstand*. It is for this reason that “how this takes place [how the manifold to be intuited must be given prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently of it] remains here undetermined” (*CPR* B145). Kant here
knocks at the problem that seems to plague his critical philosophy as a whole, namely the problem of the thing in itself.
Chapter 2: The thing in itself as the transcendental subject

What is the thing in itself?

I have just defined the difference between knowledge and illusion in terms of the presence of *der Gegenstand*. How does the thing in itself arise in this context? In what follows I look closer into Kant’s account of knowledge. Here I call such knowledge theoretical knowledge or knowledge as representation. I argue that there is something inherently problematic in Kant’s account of knowledge as representation. My argument is this. Representational knowledge depends on the presence of *der Gegenstand* in the sense that it is *der Gegenstand* that actualizes it. However, I argue, it is precisely this *Gegenstand* that representational knowledge cannot know. But what is that *Gegenstand*? *Der Gegenstand* is not something that really exists, where the word really is taken in its non-technical, straightforward sense. Instead, *der Gegenstand* is what representational knowledge itself projects insofar as it is representational. In this sense, it is nothing about *der Gegenstand* itself that makes it unknowable to representational knowledge. Instead, representational knowledge projects *der Gegenstand* but precisely as unknowable to itself. This is the paradox of representational knowledge. In other words, *der Gegenstand* is nothing that representational knowledge decides to project but could also, as it were, decide not to project. *Der Gegenstand* is something that representational knowledge absolutely must project in order to be the kind of knowledge that it is. I have just argued that representational knowledge can only be knowledge to the extent that there really exists in the non-technical, straightforward sense *der Gegenstand*. Now I argue that this same *Gegenstand* is actually what representational knowledge, and this is putting it strongly, must pretend really exists in order to get off the ground at all, in other words, in order to count as the kind of knowledge that it is. I am aware that this point opens up all kinds of problems for Kant’s account of knowledge. For one, it makes this
account of knowledge viciously circular. But ultimately, it is not these problems that interest me. Instead, something else does.

I argue that Kant calls *der Gegenstand* the thing in itself. However, I discuss this notion of the thing in itself that representational knowledge paradoxically depends on in order to oppose it to another notion of the thing in itself on which representational also depends. But this time around, I argue, this dependence is not paradoxical. It is real. This other notion of the thing in itself just is ability. For there to even be representational knowledge, there really has to be abilities, in other words, abilities really have to exist. This is where the most controversial point of my thesis happens. I argue that for Kant there is the thing in itself in the first sense where it stands for the paradoxical *Gegenstand*, and there is the thing in itself in the second sense where it stands for the real ability. The question for me is how Kant can justify the existence of these abilities on which representational knowledge really depends. In some sense, this question seems silly. Is it not the case that the fact of representational knowledge, in other words, the fact that we do have knowledge proves their existence? But I argue that the issue is not that simple. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant outlines clearly the criteria of justification. These criteria just are knowledge itself. In other words, we justify something to the extent that we know it. It is often taken to be the case that knowledge in the *Critique of Pure Reason* just is representation. However, to the extent that knowledge is reduced to representation, there cannot be any justification of abilities, in other words, there cannot be justification of the thing in itself in the second sense. Actually, I want to make a stronger argument here. I argue that to the extent that that knowledge is reduced to representation, abilities, that is, the thing in itself in the second sense, can only be justified in the form of *der Gegenstand*. Representational knowledge turns our abilities, in other words, our powers, what we are really all about into external objects of
knowledge. I claim that representational knowledge of the transcendental subjects is its transcendental objectification. But this is only the negative point. I also want to make a positive one.

I argue that in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant does not just understand knowledge in terms of representation. Instead, he also understands knowledge as practical knowledge or knowledge as actualization. In this case, knowledge takes the form that we are not necessarily used to. In this case, to know just means to actualize. But what does one actualize? One does not actualize those objects that one represents. In other words, one does not actualize appearances. On the other hand, one does not also actualize *der Gegenstand*. *Der Gegenstand* is the transcendental object that representational knowledge projects. Instead, there is only one thing that one actualizes. One actualizes inherent possibilities. If one projects the transcendental objects, one actualizes the transcendental subject. In this sense I argue, this other kind of knowledge, in other words, knowledge as actualization justifies abilities, in other words, it justifies the thing in itself in its second sense. This argument allows me to make a transition to Kant’s ethics. The kind of knowledge that knows the thing in itself in the second sense that Kant introduces in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is what Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason* calls freedom. I proceed to given an example of this knowledge. In other words, I develop Kant’s ethics. I have argued above that we cannot study Kant’s ethics directly, that is, by looking at the *Critique of Practical Reason* because we must first understand the concept of the thing in itself that makes that work itself possible and that therefore we must begin with the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Now a different truth presents itself. We can only understand the *Critique of Practical Reason* from the point of view of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but it is really the *Critique of Practical Reason* that grounds the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In other words, knowledge as
actualization grounds knowledge as representation. There is a different way of saying this. Representation is a form of actualization. Or better yet, theory is already however minimal, however an embarrassing form of practice.
The ability to reason

The goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* seems clear enough from the preface. “I do not mean by this [critique of pure reason] a critique of books and systems but of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience” (*CPR* Axii). Specifically, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the critique of the abilities to understand and to reason. “For the chief question is always simply this:–what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience?” (*CPR* Axvii). In this sense, the goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to determine the extent of *a priori* knowledge. However, this definition of the goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not specific enough. What complicates it is that Kant does not only have one kind of *a priori* knowledge in mind, but rather two. “Now if reason is to be a factor in these sciences something in them must be known *a priori*, and this knowledge may be related to its object in one or other of two ways, either as merely determining it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also making it actual. The former is *theoretical*, the latter *practical* knowledge of reason” (*CPR* Bx). Therefore, the goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is really this: to determine the extent of *a priori* knowledge where such knowledge is understood both as the determination of the object and as the making actual or as the actualization of the object. When we define the goal of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in these terms, we understand in what sense this work argues that we can in fact know the thing in itself. “The *analysis of the metaphysician* separates pure *a priori* knowledge into two very heterogeneous elements, namely the knowledge of things as appearances, and the knowledge of things in themselves” (*CPR* Bxxin). I argue that we know the thing in itself not in the sense that we determine it, but rather in the sense that we actualize it. In other words, we do not know the thing in itself as *der Gegenstand* but we do know it as the ability.
Theoretical knowledge

Kant argues that the scientific method consists in the determination of objects \textit{a priori}. “Mathematics and physics, the two sciences in which reason yields theoretical knowledge, have to determine their objects \textit{a priori…”} (CPR Bx). Kant describes the method of the first mathematician. “The true method, so he found, was not to inspect what he discerned either in the figure, or in the bare concept of it, and from this, as it were, to read off its properties; but to bring out what was necessarily implied in the concepts that he had himself formed \textit{a priori}, and had put into the figure in the construction by which he presented it to himself” (CPR Bxii). Kant also describes the method of modern physicists. “They learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own, and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature’s leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answer to questions of reasons’ own determining” (CPR Bxiii). Kant proposes to discover the path upon which theoretical knowledge can securely travel by adopting the scientific method to metaphysics. “The examples of mathematics and natural science…seem to me sufficiently remarkable to suggest our considering what may have been the essential features in the changed point of view by which they have so greatly benefited. Their success should incline us, at least by way of experiment, to imitate their procedure, so far as the analogy which , as species of rational knowledge, they bear to metaphysics may permit” (CPR Bxvi). In this sense, the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} is a work on method. “This attempt to alter the procedure what has hitherto prevailed in metaphysics, by completely revolutionizing it in accordance with the example set by the geometers and physicists, forms indeed the main purpose of this critique of speculative reason. It is a treatise on the method…” (CPR Bxvii).
In the scientific method, reason does not just observe data. “Accidental observations, made in obedience to no previously thought-out plan, can never be made to yield a necessary law, which alone reason is concerned to discover” (CPR Bxiii). However, that is not to say that reason creates data. Instead, Kant argues, in the scientific method reason frames the observed data in accordance with its own laws. “Reason, holding in one hand its principles, according to which alone concordant appearances can be admitted as equivalent to laws, and in the other hand the experiment which it has devised in conformity with these principles, must approach nature in order to be taught by it” (CPR Bxiii). In this sense, the scientific method is a push and pull kind of exercise. Reason passively observes data but at the same time actively imposes its own laws onto them: “while reason must seek in nature, not fictitiously ascribe to it, whatever as not being knowable through reason’s own resources has to be learnt, if learnt at all, only from nature, it must adopt as its guide, in so seeking, that which it has itself put into nature” (CPR Bxiv). “It is thus,” Kant concludes, “that the study of nature has entered on the secure path of a science” (CPR Bxiv). That Kant proposes to adopt the scientific method to metaphysics means that scientific metaphysics follows this same pattern. In scientific metaphysics reason also does not just observe objects. “Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption ended in failure” (CPR Bxvi). Nor does reason create objects. Instead, in scientific metaphysics objects conform to reason. “We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects [die Gegenstände] must conform [sich richen] to our knowledge” (CPR Bxvi). What does it mean for metaphysics to become scientific? In other words, what does it
mean for objects to conform to knowledge? Kant does not answer this question in the preface. Instead, in a sense the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole is his answer to it.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* develops an account of knowledge that Kant calls transcendental idealism. Transcendental idealism is not a material idealism. In other words, Kant does not develop an account of knowledge as creation of objects. “In the latter case [where the representation alone must make the object possible], representation in itself does not produce its object [der Gegenstand] in so far as existence is concerned, for we are not here speaking of its causality by means of the will. None the less,” Kant continues, “the representation is *a priori* determinant of the object [der Gegenstand], if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to *know* anything *as an object*” (*CPR* B125/A93). Kant understands transcendental idealism as a formal idealism. We supply the form but receive the matter from the senses. “That experience contains two very dissimilar elements, namely, the *matter* of knowledge [obtained] from the senses, and a certain *form* for the ordering of this matter, [obtained] from the inner source of the pure intuition and thought which, on occasion of the sense-impressions, are first brought into action and yield concepts” (*CPR* B118/A86). In fact, I argue for the stronger thesis. We supply the form only on the occasion of the senses supplying the matter. “For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself” (*CPR* B2). In this sense, according to transcendental idealism we do not determine everything in regard to objects. Instead, we determine only something in regard to them. “This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori* determining something in regard to them prior to their being given” (*CPRB* xvi). Specifically, we do not determine the matter of the object. The matter is the
object that *steht* knowledge *entgegen, der Gegenstand.* Instead, we determine the form of the object. In this sense, transcendental idealism is an account of knowledge as representation, that is, as re-presentation of the matter by means of forms. Kant calls these representations appearances. Thus “appearances are only representations of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in themselves” (*CPR B164*). That knowledge takes the form of representation in fact carries important consequences for the thing in itself.

Representational knowledge commits itself to the existence of that which is represented and that something is the thing in itself. Karl Ameriks recognizes this point in *Interpreting Kant's Critiques:* “ultimately Kant has in mind the thought that whenever he goes so far as to understand something as an appearance in the transcendental sense of a *mere* appearance…he is taking this also to imply the existence of something that is truly a thing in itself and *not* a mere appearance…[T]hroughout Kant's discussions, the notion of a thing is always basic, and the notion of a mere appearance is to be understood as derivative, as something introduced because of a feature that cannot sustain the status of being a proper characterization of the thing *simpliciter*” (Ameriks 34). But that is not all. Representational knowledge commits itself to the existence of the thing in itself understood as the object that *steht* that knowledge *entgegen, der Gegenstand.* For this reason, Kant calls this thing in itself the transcendental object. “Now, also, we are in a position to determine more adequately our concept of an object [der Gegenstand] in general. All representations have, as representations, their object [ihren Gegenstand]. Appearances are the sole objects which can be given to us immediately, and that in them which relates immediately to the object [der Gegenstand] is called intuition. But these appearances are not things in themselves; they are only representations, which in turn have their object [der Gegenstand]— an object which cannot itself be intuited by us, and which may, therefore, be
named the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object [der Gegenstand] = x” (CPR A109). In this sense, representational knowledge posits the existence of the transcendental object that is separate, external and opposed to it. “We may, however, entitle the purely intelligible cause of appearances in general the transcendental object, but merely in order to have something corresponding to sensibility viewed as a receptivity. To this transcendental object we can ascribe the whole extent and connection of our possible perceptions, and can say that it is given in itself prior to all experience” (CPR A494/B523). This is the context for the opening paragraph. “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects [die Gegenstände] affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations, partly arouse the activity of our understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them, work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience?” (CPR B1). This is how John N. Findlay in “The Central Role of the Thing in Itself” renders this point. “The transcendental object, the unknowable thing-in-itself, [is] the thing which primitively affects our sensibility and in so doing stimulates our slumbering understanding, and makes it, in the role of the half-conscious productive imagination, produce the appearances which it afterwards itself analyzes and judges about” (Findlay 52). Representational knowledge and the transcendental object go hand in hand.

The unknowability of things in themselves follows from representational knowledge. “The object of experience, then, are never given in themselves, but only in experience, and have no existence outside it” (CPR B521/A493). That the thing in itself is the transcendental object that affects us means that it cannot both appear and actually be that appearance. “Transcendental object…is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance” (CPR A288/B345). In
The Bounds of Sense  P.F. Strawson recognizes this point. “Nothing which emerges from any affecting relation can count as knowledge or awareness of the affecting thing as it is in itself. Therefore there can be no knowledge or awareness of things which exist independently of that knowledge or awareness and of which that knowledge or awareness is consequently an effect” (Strawson 238-9). In other words, that we represent the thing in itself means that representation is not the thing in itself. Thus in Kant and the Claims of Knowledge Paul Guyer argues: “of course, that the concepts of such things [in themselves] will not include spatial and temporal predicates follows from the fact that the things themselves lack spatial and temporal properties, but it is clearly Kant’s view that the concept of a thing in itself lacks such predicates precisely because a thing in itself must lack any such properties” (Guyer 334). That objects conform to knowledge by definition means that objects do not correspond to knowledge. If we determine something in regard to objects prior to their being given then that something cannot itself be part of those objects. Otherwise we would not determine that something. Instead, the object would be that something on its own. But it is not. “That which, while inseparable from the representation of the object, is not to be met with in the object in itself, but always in its relation to the subject, is appearance” (CPR B70n). What we know cannot be what is. In A Short Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason A.C. Ewing acknowledges this point. “For the assertion of things-in-themselves then merely amounts to saying that there is something real which we wrongly apprehend as subject to space and time and about which we can know nothing positive. For there must be something real, and if space and time are appearances the real must be distinguished from physical objects and minds as revealed in introspection” (Ewing 192-3). In fact, Kant argues, the correspondence between knowledge and objects can be established only at the expense of the necessity of knowledge. “A middle course may be proposed between the two
above mentioned, namely, that the categories are neither self-thought first principles a priori of our knowledge nor derived from experience, but subjective dispositions of our thought, implanted in us from the first moment of our existence, and so ordered by our Creator that their employment is in complete harmony with the laws of nature in accordance with which experience proceeds—a kind of preformation-system of pure reason” (CPR B167). In other words, if knowledge corresponded to objects such knowledge would not be necessary. “There is this decisive objection against the suggested middle course, that the necessity of the categories, which belong to their very conception, would then have to be sacrificed” (CPR B168). Thus representational knowledge exists on the basis of the insurmountable opposition between itself and the object. “For if we were speaking of a thing in itself, we could indeed say that it exists in itself apart from relation to our senses and possible experience” (CPR B522/A494). For this reason, Kant argues, “we have no insight whatsoever into the inner [nature] of things” (CPR A277/B333). Lucy Allais acknowledges this point in “Kant’s One World: Interpreting Transcendental Idealism:” “we cannot know the intrinsic nature of things, even though the appearances of things are the way things, or the intrinsic natures of things, appear” (Allais 678). Nevertheless, representational knowledge does attempt to surmount this insurmountable opposition. In “The Thing in Itself in Kantian Philosophy,” George A. Schrader argues that “only if the thing in itself is also the thing which appears, is Kant’s position consistent and defensible” (Schrader 30).

That we cannot know the thing itself does not mean that we cannot think it. “But our further contention must also be duly borne in mind, namely, that though we cannot know these objects [of experience] as things in themselves, we must yet be in a position at least to think them as things in themselves” (CPR Bxxvi). In this sense, the thing in itself is in fact some kind of
appearance. “The distinction, which our Critique has shown to be necessary, [is] between things as objects of experience and those same things as things in themselves” (CPR Bxxvii). Gerold Prauss develops this point in *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*. Prauss studies closely the language of Kant’s three *Critiques*, *Prologomena*, the *Groundwork*, and the *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Science*, and argues that in the majority of cases Kant does not use the locution ‘Ding an sich,’ but rather uses ‘Ding an sich selbst’ (Prauss 14-6). However, Prauss argues, if we consider the context within which this locution itself appears, we realize that it is an abbreviation of an even longer locution, namely ‘Ding an sich selbst betrachtet.’ “Ausdrücke wie ‘Ding an sich’ oder ‘Ding an sich selbst’ sind nämlich gar nichts anderes als Verkürzungen des Ausdrucks ‘Ding an sich selbst betrachtet’” (Prauss 20). This is an important omission, Prauss argues, because “genau von diesem ‘betrachtet’ her empfangen [diese Ausdrücke] überhaupt erst ihren ganz bestimmten Sinn” (Prauss 20). In this sense, when we study the locution ‘Ding an sich selbst betrachtet,’ we realize that the ‘an sich selbst’ does not refer to ‘Ding,’ but rather to ‘betrachtet.’ “Die Wendungen ‘an sich’ und ‘an sich selbst’ gehören eben nicht zu ‘Ding’, sondern allein zu diesem ‘betrachtet’, dessen Art und Weise sie näher bestimmen…Genau dies ist der eigentliche und ursprüngliche Sinn der Ausdrücke ‘Ding an sich’ und ‘Ding an sich selbst’, der jedoch bis heute verkannt wird” (Prauss 22). Thus, Prauss claims, Kant talks about a particular way of considering things, namely as ‘an sich selbst,’ rather than about things that exist as ‘an sich selbst.’ “Will man [diese Ausdrücke] angemesen verstehen, so muss man sie in einer Weise lessen, die ihre scheinbare sprachliche Einheit entlarvt, nämlich ‘Ding, -- an sich’ und ‘Ding, -- an sich selbst’, weil damit gemeint ist: ‘Ding, -- an sich selbst betrachtet’ (Prauss 23).” Kant specifies the meaning of the thing in itself as an appearance.

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5 In “The Complementarity of Phenomena and Things in Themselves” W.H. Werkmeister gives an identical interpretation of the thing in itself as appearance. “It seems clear from the passages quoted (and from others that
Kant distinguishes between two kinds of appearance. “In dealing with those concepts and principles which we adopt a priori, all that we can do is to contrive that they be used for viewing objects from two different points of view—on the one hand, in connection with experience, as objects of the sense and of the understanding, and on the other hand, for the isolated reason that strives to transcend all limits of experience, as objects which are thought merely” (CPR Bxixn). Things in themselves are not appearances of the abilities to sense and to understand. Instead, they are appearances of the ability to reason. Thus Kant talks about the “appearance, which always has two sides, the one by which the object is viewed in and by itself (without regard to the mode of intuiting it – its nature therefore remaining always problematic), the other by which the form of the intuition of this object is taken into account” (CPR B55/A39). Specifically, Kant talks about “things when they are considered in themselves through reason” (CPR A28/B44). Many commentators develop this point. Henry E. Allison argues that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is to “be understood as holding between two ways of considering things (as they appear and as they are in themselves)…” (Allison 2004 16). We can consider objects in terms of the ability to sense, that is, we can intuit them in space and time. Thus we consider objects as appearances. “Accordingly, in considering thing as they appear, we are considering them in the way in which they are presented to discursive knowers with our forms of sensibility” (Allison 2004 16). On the other hand, we can, to put it negatively, consider

could be added) that in most of the relevant statements Kant uses the terms ‘things in itself’ and ‘things in themselves’ as abbreviations of the expression ‘things viewed (or contemplated) without reference to our experiencing them in sensory intuition.’ That is to say, the distinction between the objects of experience as phenomena and as things in themselves is not an ontological distinction but one of the perspective of viewing the objects. Kant…says ‘when I view all things not as phenomena but as things in themselves’ (A206/B257. italics added). This implies, I submit, that ‘in itself’ and ‘in themselves’ are adverbial rather than adjectival determinants and should be read: ‘thing-considered-in-itself’ and ‘things-considered-in-themselves’ —hyphenated.” (Werkmeister 303).
objects in abstraction from this ability, that is, in abstraction from intuition in space and time, or, to put it positively, we can consider objects purely intellectually. Thus we consider objects as they are in themselves. “Conversely, to consider [things] as they are in themselves is to consider them apart from their epistemic relation to these forms or epistemic conditions, which, if it is to have any content, must be equivalent to considering them qua objects from some pure intelligence or ‘mere understanding.’” (Allison 2004 16).

The thing in itself is the thought of reason. However, this thought fails to know the thing in itself. “To think an object and to know an object are thus by no means the same thing” (CPR B146). But why does reason fail? This point is fundamental. Kant argues that it is nothing about reason itself that makes it fail. “The perplexity into which it [reason] thus falls is not due to any fault of its own” (CPR Avii). The ability to reason is the activity of thinking the unconditioned. In this sense, the ability to reason makes no pretensions at knowledge whatsoever. “Reason does not really generate any concept” (CPR A409/B436). Therefore reason itself cannot fail to know the thing itself. Instead, the ability to reason is the activity of thinking the unconditioned that can be used in two different ways. In “Kant’s Two Priorities of Practical Reason,” Frederick Rauscher argues that “Kant uses the terms ‘theoretical reason’ and ‘practical reason’ as short for ‘theoretical or practical ‘use’ [Gebrauch] of reason’” (Rauscher 400). Most of the time Kant talks about the theoretical use of reason in the Critique of Pure Reason. “It [reason] begins with

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6 There are many commentators who defend this negative interpretation of the thing in itself as appearance. Arthur Melnick’s Kant’s Analogies of Experience argues that “the notion of a thing in itself is the notion of a concept of an object that does not require for its sense any reference to a cognitive subject. This is opposed to our notion of an object (thing) that has for its content or meaning the semantic connection of a subject with what is given to him” (Melnick 154). In “The Complementarity of Phenomena and Things in Themselves” W.H. Werkmeister writes that “it seems clear from the passages quoted (and from others that could be added) that in most of the relevant statements Kant uses the terms ‘things in itself’ and ‘things in themselves’ as abbreviations of the expression ‘things viewed (or contemplated) without reference to our experiencing them in sensory intuition.’” (Werkmeister 303). Carl J. Posy’s “The Language of Appearances and Things in Themselves” argues that “empirical singular concepts (concepts of particular appearances) make essential reference to the notion of a knower with an articulated epistemic structure, and intellectual singular concepts explicitly exclude any such reference” (Posy 342). Nicholas Rescher’s “On the Status of Things in Themselves in Kant” argues that “the thing in itself is the creature of the understanding (Verstandeswesen) arrived at by abstracting from the conditions of sensibility” (Rescher 291).
principles which it has no option save to employ in the course of experience, and which this experience at the same time abundantly justifies it in using” (CPR Avii). We must understand the failure of reason in the context of the uses of reason. It is only because representational knowledge demands that a priori thoughts be used in experience that reason offers its thoughts as knowledge in the first place. “There are fundamental rules and maxims for the employment of our reason (subjectively regarded as a faculty of human knowledge), and…these have all the appearance of being objective principles. We therefore take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts…for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves” (CPR A297/B354). However, representational knowledge does not only use reason for knowledge. In a sense, it also misuses it. When representational knowledge demands that a priori thoughts be used in experience, it does not just tempt reason to offer its thoughts as knowledge. It also sets up standards for knowledge that it knows reason cannot meet. “The employment of this pure knowledge depends upon the condition that objects to which it can be applied be given to us in intuition” (CPR B87/A63). But the ability to reason just is the activity of thinking thoughts that do not apply to objects in intuition: “it has no immediate relation to these and the intuition of them, but only to the understanding and its judgments—which deal at first hand with the senses and their intuition for the purpose of determining their object” (CPR A307/B364). Thus reason goes beyond experience in terms of experience. “The most that it [reason] can do is to free a concept of understanding from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience, and so to endeavor to extend it beyond the limits of the empirical, though still, indeed, in terms of its relation to the empirical” (CPR A409/B436). Thus reason fails to know the thing in itself. And Kant argues that what reason thinks does not count as knowledge. “As regards objects which are thought solely through reason, and indeed as necessary but which
can never—at least not in the manner in which reason thinks them—be given in experience, the attempts at thinking them (for they must admit of being thought) will furnish an excellent touchstone of what we are adopting as our new method of thought, namely that we can know \textit{a priori} of things only what we ourselves put into them” (\textit{CPR} Bxviii). For this reason, Kant concludes, reason plays a negative role in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}. “On a cursory view of the present work it may seem that its results are merely \textit{negative}, warning us that we must never venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience. Such is in fact its primary use” (\textit{CPR} Bxxiv). However, it is important to note that this is not Kant’s whole story about reason.
Practical knowledge

“These principles [with which the speculative reason ventures beyond its proper limits] properly belong [not to reason] but to sensibility, and when thus employed they threaten to make the bounds of sensibility coextensive with the real and so to supplant reason in its pure (practical) employment” (CPR Bxxv). When reason fails to know the thing in itself in the name of representational knowledge, we do not become disillusioned with representational knowledge, but rather with reason. In other words, we become suspicious of thinking as such. That we do that, however, has an important consequence for representational knowledge. When we suspect thinking, we extend representational knowledge over what is real, über alles zu erweitern, in other words, we identify what is real with what we know representationally. However, since we only know appearances representationally, we identify what is real with appearance. Thus we arrive at this conclusion. There is nothing in itself. There is only appearance. This conclusion is in fact inconsistent. Representational knowledge demands the existence of the thing in itself, “otherwise we should be landed in the absurd conclusion that there can be appearance without anything that appears” (CPR Bxxvii), but it is precisely this existence that it cannot deliver. Jacobi expressed this inconsistency perfectly that is at the heart of Kant’s account of theoretical knowledge. “However contrary to the spirit of the Kantian philosophy it may be to say that objects make impressions on the senses, and in this way produce representations, it is hard to see how the Kantian philosophy could find an entry point for itself without this presupposition, and make any kind of presentation of its doctrine...Without this presupposition, I could not find my way into the system whereas with it I could not stay there” (quoted in Sassen 173). But the fact is that Kant’s analysis of reason in the Critique of Practical Reason does not end with theoretical
reason. In fact, Kant thinks that the misuse of reason by representational knowledge ‘threatens to supplant reason in its practical use.’

The *Critique of Pure Reason* becomes positive the moment it recognizes that it is not reason itself, but rather reason as used by representational knowledge, namely the theoretical reason that fails to know the thing in itself. “Criticism has previously established our unavoidable ignorance of things in themselves, and has limited all that we can *theoretically* know to mere appearances” (*CPR* Bxxix). In this sense, Kant does not argue that we cannot know the thing in itself. He argues that we cannot know the thing in itself representationally. “The true correlate of sensibility, the thing in itself, is not known, and cannot be known, through these representations” (*CPR* B45/A30). In other words, “how things may be in themselves, apart from the representations through which they affect us, is entirely outside our sphere of knowledge” (*CPR* B235/A190). In other words, the *Critique of Pure Reason* becomes positive the moment it recognizes that reason is an ability that can also be used practically. Thus when reason fails in theoretical use, it opens itself up for practical use. “So far, therefore, as our Critique limits speculative reason, it is indeed *negative*; but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason, nay, threatens to destroy it, it has in reality a *positive* and very important use” (*CPR* Bxxv). Furthermore, that reason cannot know the thing in itself representationally does not mean that it cannot know it practically. “But when all progress in the field of the supersensible has thus been denied to speculative reason, it is still open to us to enquire whether, in the practical knowledge of reason, data may be found sufficient to determine reason’s transcendent concept of the unconditioned, and so to enable us, in accordance with the wish of metaphysics, and by means of knowledge that is possible *a priori*, though only from a practical point of view, to pass beyond the limits of possible experience”
(CPR Bxxi). In fact, Kant argues, reason does know the thing in itself practically. “At least this is so, immediately we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary *practical* employment of pure reason—the *moral*—in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility” (CPR Bxxv). “[Reason]” in other words, “is in itself not only a theoretical but also a practical faculty, and as such is not bound down to natural conditions” (CPR B425). However, that we cannot know things in themselves theoretically but can know them practically does not mean that practice succeeds where theory fails. In a sense, the two kinds of knowledge run two different kinds of businesses.

“To *know* an object I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its actuality as attested by experience, or *a priori* by means of reason. But I can *think* whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself, that is, provided my concept is a possible thought. This suffices for the possibility of the concept, even though I may not be able to answer for there being, in the sum of all possibilities, an object corresponding to it” (CPR Bxxviin). Kant argues that it is not enough from the perspective of either representational or practical knowledge just to think the thing in itself in order for it to have objective validity. “But something more is required before I can ascribe to such a concept objective validity that is, real possibility; the former possibility is merely logical” (CPR Bxxviin). However, Kant does argue that there is not only one way of determining the objective validity of things in themselves, namely, theoretical knowledge; instead, there is also another way, namely practical knowledge. “This something more need not, however, be sought in the theoretical sources of knowledge; it may lie in those that are practical” (CPR Bxxviin). In other words, that representational knowledge denies objective validity to things in themselves does not mean that all knowledge denies objective validity to things in themselves. Practical knowledge in fact affirms the objective validity of
things in themselves. But what is that knowledge? Practical knowledge does not determine the objective validity of things in themselves from the point of view of representational knowledge: “[practical] reason, in thus proceeding, requires no assistance from speculative reason…” (*CPR* Bxxv). In other words, it is not the case that reason knows the thing in itself representationally when it is used practically. If that were the case practical knowledge would not be knowledge that is different in kind than representation. But it is. “Now if reason is to be a factor in these sciences something in them must be known *a priori*, and this knowledge may be related to its object in one or other of two ways, either as merely *determining* it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also *making it actual*. The former is *theoretical*, the latter *practical* knowledge of reason” (*CPR* Bx). That reason knows the thing itself practically means that it actualizes it. In this sense, practical reason actually knows the thing in itself that is different in kind from the thing itself that the representational reason does not know. In other words, practical reason knows the thing in itself that is not the transcendental object.

Reason thinks three things. These are God, immortality and freedom. However, it is important to note that already in the preface to the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant develops the positive value of reason not in relation to all three of these thoughts, but only in relation to one of them, namely freedom (*CPR* xvii-xxxi). “But though I cannot know, I can yet *think* freedom” (*CPR* Bxxviii). On the other hand, Kant argues, “the discussion as to the positive advantage of critical principles of pure reason can be similarly developed in regard to the concept of *God* and of the *simple nature* of our *soul*; but for the sake of brevity such further discussion may be omitted” (*CPR* Bxxx). However, by the time of the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant recognizes that such a discussion cannot actually be developed. Reason does think three thoughts, but it is only one of them, namely freedom that reason knows practically. “But
among all the ideas of speculative reason freedom is also the only one the possibility of which we know a priori...because it is the condition of the moral law, which we do know” (CPrR5:4). On the other hand, “the ideas of God and immortality, however, are not conditions of the moral law but only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law, that is, of the mere practical use of pure reason; hence with respect to those ideas we cannot affirm that we cognize...—I do not merely say the reality but even the possibility of them” (CPrR5:4). In fact, this is why in the “Dialectic of pure practical reason” of the “Doctrine of the elements of pure practical reason” of the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant considers only God and immortality as real postulates, but not freedom. Alenka Zupančič recognizes this point in Ethics of the Real. “Unlike the two other postulates, which—as Kant stresses at the beginning of the Dialectic—do not enter the determining ground of the will, freedom, as indissolubly linked to the moral law, is the very determining ground of the will. Thus, in the Critique of Practical Reason freedom does not have only the function of a postulate, but is also, as a condition of any ethics, a fact, a ‘fact of reason.’ So in a certain sense there are only two genuine postulates: the immortality of the soul, and God” (Zupančič 75-6). But what does it mean to know freedom practically?

When reason is used by representational knowledge it offers the thoughts of God, immortality and freedom as knowledge. But what form do these things in themselves take? The thing in itself that theoretical reason does not know is the transcendental object. God, immortality and freedom are objects that are separate, external and opposed to representational knowledge. In other words, God, immortality and freedom are objective facts. I do not mean objective fact in the non-technical, straightforward sense. Instead, I mean it in the technical, critical sense. Theoretical reason projects the thoughts of God, immortality and freedom as something separate, external and opposed to itself. It is in this sense that it understands them as
objective facts. It is as if they really existed independently of theoretical reason. But everything changes with practical knowledge. The thing in itself cannot take the form of the transcendental object when reason is used in practical knowledge. “Here, too, the enigma of the critical philosophy is first explained: how one can deny the objective reality to the supersensible use of the categories in speculation and yet grant them this reality with respect to the objects of pure practical reason” (CPrR 5:5). These are important words. “The reality thought of here does not aim at any theoretical determination of the categories and extension of cognition to the supersensible but…what is meant by it is only that in this respect an object belongs to them, because they are either contained in the necessary determination of the will a priori or else are inseparably connected with the object of its determination; hence that inconsistency disappears because one makes a different use of those concepts than speculative reason requires” (CPrR 5:5). Reason does not happen to know practically what reason really does not know representationally. Practical knowledge is actualization. Reason cannot actualize the thing in itself if the thing in itself is the transcendental object that is separate, external and opposed to that actualization, in other words, if it is an objective fact. The thing in itself that reason actualizes must in fact be internal and identical to that actualization. In other words, reason can only actualize the thing itself that is already its own. In this sense, freedom cannot be an objective fact that we can know representationally. Instead, it must be a subjective fact that we can bring about. “The practical idea is, therefore, always in the highest degree fruitful, and in its relation to our actual activities is indispensably necessary. Reason is here, indeed, exercising causality, as actually bringing about that which its concept contains; and of such wisdom we cannot, therefore, say disparagingly it is only an idea” (CPR B385/A329). Therefore the thing in itself that reason actualizes is not the transcendental object. It is in fact the transcendental subject.
Most of the time Kant does not differentiate between knowledge of objects and self-knowledge. “The only difference is that the representation of myself, as the thinking subject, belongs to inner sense only, while the representations which mark extended beings belong also to outer sense” (CPR A371). But there is a good reason for that. From the point of view of representational knowledge even self-knowledge is re-presentation of the thing in itself that affects it. “If, then, as regards the latter (outer sense), we admit that we know objects only in so far as we are externally affected, we must also recognize, as regards inner sense, that by means of it we intuit ourselves only as we are inwardly affected by ourselves” (CPR B157). In this sense, representational self-knowledge posits the existence of the self in itself that precedes self-knowledge. “The whole difficulty is as to how a subject can inwardly intuit itself; and this is a difficulty common to every theory. The consciousness of self (apperception) is the simple representation of the ‘I’, and if all that is manifold in the subject were given by the activity of the self, the inner intuition would be intellectual. In man this consciousness demands inner perception of the manifold which is antecedently given in the subject, and the mode in which this manifold is given in the mind must, as non-spontaneous, be entitled sensibility” (CPR B68). But that is not all. This self in itself takes the form of the transcendental object. “Though the ‘I,’ as represented through inner sense in time, and objects in space outside me, are specifically distinct appearances, they are not for that reason thought as being different things. Neither the transcendental object which underlies outer appearances nor that which underlies inner intuition, is in itself either matter or a thinking being, but a ground (to us unknown) of the appearances which supply to us the empirical concept of the former as well as of the latter mode of existence” (CPR A380). However, that self-in itself takes the form of the transcendental object does not mean that it actually is the transcendental object. For Kant transcendental object is not an actual
object. “Although to the question, what is the constitution of a transcendental object, no answer can be given stating what it is, we can yet reply that the question itself is nothing, because there is no given object [corresponding] to it” (CPR A479/B507n). Thus we should really speak of transcendental objectification. Things take the form of the transcendental object under the gaze of representational knowledge. Representational knowledge projects the transcendental object. Zupančič recognizes this point: “dialectical illusion is not really an illusion of something; it is not a false or distorted representation of a real object. Behind this illusion there is no real object; there is only nothing, the lack of an object” (Zupančič 66). Kant discusses the transcendental objectification explicitly in relation to the transcendental subject. “Accordingly,” he continues the paragraph already quoted, “all questions dealt with in the transcendental doctrine of the soul are answerable in this latter manner, and have indeed been so answered; its questions refer to the transcendental subject of all inner appearances, which is not itself appearance and consequently not given as object, and in which none of the categories (and it is to them that the question is really directed) meet with the conditions required for their application” (CPR A479/B507n). The transcendental subject takes the form of the transcendental object in order to be known representationally. For this reason, Kant never discusses what is to be known in representational self-knowledge in terms of the transcendental subject. Here there is no transcendental subject to speak of. There is only the transcendental object. Thus Kant insists that “we compare the thinking ‘I’... with the intelligible that lies at the basis of the outer appearance which we call matter” (CPR A360). In other words, Kant insists that “the thinking ‘I’, the soul [be] (a name for the transcendental object of inner sense)” (CPR A361).

Representational self-knowledge does not really fail because it does not go far enough. Representational self-knowledge goes as far as it can go. It is just that it does not go in the right
direction. Even when it goes towards the transcendental subject, it goes towards the transcendental object. In “How to Know Unknowable Things in Themselves” Desmond Hogan brings out precisely this point. He distinguishes between two different ways of understanding what it is that Kant means when he talks about the unknowability of things in themselves. “Consider again the following propositions expressible by the claim that agent A cannot have a priori knowledge of feature of reality F: (a) Non-empirical knowledge of F exceeds A’s cognitive capabilities. (b) F lacks a ground through which it could be non-empirically known” (Hogan 57). Hogan argues that commentators have emphasized the a-unknowability at the expense of the b-unknowability of the thing in itself. However, Hogan continues, Kant means precisely the opposite. “Commentators have proceeded unquestioningly from the assumption that Kant’s Critical denials of a priori knowledge of reality in itself reduce to the a-unknowability claim that a priori cognition of things in themselves exceeds our cognitive capabilities. We have already seen that this assumption is false. I propose that some of the CPR’s denials of the possibility of a priori knowledge of things in themselves incorporate Kant’s claim that some features of things in themselves cannot be non-empirically cognized in the stronger sense of being b-unknowable” (Hogan 58). That we cannot know things in themselves just means that “some features of reality are unknowable in the sense of lacking a ground through which they could be non-empirically cognized in principle (‘b-unknowability’)” (Hogan 58). Hogan discusses freedom in this regard. We cannot know freedom not so much because freedom exceeds our cognitive capabilities. Instead, we cannot know freedom because freedom just is the kind of thing that has no ground. “Kant does not merely think that a priori knowledge of free acts exceeds our cognitive powers. He rather means to point out that in the case of a feature of reality lacking a determining ground, there is nothing through which it could be cognized in principle” (Hogan 56). In other words, we
cannot know freedom not so much because the determining ground of a free act exceeds our cognitive capabilities. Instead, we cannot know freedom because freedom is the kind of thing that has no determining ground, that is, we cannot it because it does not exist in that way. Hogan gives textual support for this interpretation. “He [Kant] writes, for example, that ‘no one can grasp the coming about of a free action, because it is the start of all coming about’ (R4180); again, we must not ‘make the conditions of possible knowledge of things into conditions of things [in themselves]: for if we do this then freedom is destroyed’ (R6317); or again, ‘The possibility of freedom cannot be grasped because one cannot grasp any first beginning…For our understanding cognizes existence through experience, but reason comprehends it when it cognizes it a priori, that is through grounds…Now first beginnings have no grounds, thus no comprehension through reason is possible” (R4338; cf. R4006, R4156, R5185, Ak 28:332-3)” (Hogan 56). Hogan concludes that “Kant’s mature philosophy thus holds…that free acts lack a determining ground through which they could be non-empirically cognized in principle” (Hogan 56). In this sense, Hogan argues, representational self-knowledge does not so much fail because it does its job badly. It fails because the job that it does so well is inappropriate for what it is trying to accomplish. Still, Hogan argues, we learn from failures just as much as we learn from successes. “Kant’s claim to know that there is nothing through which some features of things in themselves could be non-empirically known is a claim to substantive knowledge of the metaphysical constitution of things in themselves. This substantive claim does not conflict with Kant’s global denial of knowledge of things in themselves, it is rather part of that denial. As a metaphysical claim regarding reality in itself, it does however provide Kant with a key toehold in the supersensible, and anchors further conclusions about that realm” (Hogan 60). That representational self-knowledge does not know freedom means that it knows that freedom is the
kind of thing that it cannot know. The transcendental subject is just not the transcendental object no matter how much representational self-knowledge tries to make it be one. Representational self-knowledge fails because that which it tries to know is qualitatively different from what it projects into it.

That representational self-knowledge turns the transcendental subject into the transcendental object means that it can only know it as an appearance. “Even the inner and sensible intuition of our mind (as object of consciousness) which is represented as being determined by the succession of different states in time, is not the self proper, as it exists in itself—that is, is not the transcendental subject—but only an appearance that has been given to the sensibility of this, to us unknown, being” (*CPR* B521). Kant never tires of making this point. “Everything that is represented through a sense is so far always appearance, and consequently we must either refuse to admit that there is inner sense, or we must recognize that the subject, which is the object of sense, can be represented through it only as appearance, not as that subject would judge of itself if its intuition were self-activity only, that is, were intellectual” (*CPR* B68). We can only know the transcendental subject in the form of the transcendental object which is to say as an appearance. “Although my existence is not indeed appearance (still less mere illusion), the determination of my existence can take place only in conformity with the form of inner sense, according to the special mode in which the manifold, which I combine, is given in inner intuition. Accordingly I have no knowledge of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself” (*CPR* B158). However, that we can only know the transcendental subject as an appearance is a problem. Hermann Andreas Pistorius was first to point out the problem. “I found nothing that would have explained to me how, according to the author’s system, appearance could be possible at all, if that through which all appearing becomes possible (which must, accordingly, be
presupposed prior to all appearance and cannot therefore itself be an appearance) is supposed to be appearance. In one word, I could not see how appearance could be possible at all if representation and thought themselves are supposed to be appearance” (quoted in Sassen 94). Transcendental subject gives appearance. Therefore it cannot itself be appearance. If appearance were to give appearance then knowledge would not be necessary, in other words, it would not be the imposition of concepts. However, because representational knowledge turns the transcendental subject into the transcendental object it only knows it as an appearance. In this sense, Pistorius’ point is an inverted version of Jacobi’s famous point. Representational knowledge requires the existence of the transcendental subject who knows representationally, however, it cannot know that transcendental subject. “Hence” Schelling writes in the System of Transcendental Idealism “the first problem of philosophy can also be formulated as that of finding something which absolutely cannot be thought of as a thing. But the only candidate here is the self…Now if the self is absolutely not an object, or thing, it seems hard to explain how any kind of knowledge of it is possible, or what sort of knowledge we have of it” (Schelling 368-9). There are at least two commentators who think that knowledge of the transcendental subject is impossible.

In “The Inconceivability of Kant’s Transcendental Subject” A.J. Mandt argues that “Kant consistently treats the formal conditions of knowledge as formative activities constitutive of experience…However, if the forms of experience are indistinguishable from constitutive acts, the analysis of experience necessarily presupposes an agency that engages in these acts” (Mandt 15). For this reason, Mandt argues, Kant must explain this agency. “There is one metaphysical question that, by its very nature, the Critique must address. This question concerns the nature of reason itself. The organizing and unifying principles of the Critique is that embodied in Kant’s
‘Copernican hypothesis’ which regards reason as the ‘source’ and groundwork of all knowledge and experience” (Mandt 16). Mandt recognizes that Kant does not shy away from this task: “it might be objected that the entire Critique is, after all, an account of reason” (Mandt 16). However, Mandt argues, Kant does not complete this task successfully. He argues that Kant’s account of this agency, that is, of reason is dogmatic. “The Critique itself is inspired by an interest of reason in self-knowledge and made possible by its powers of self-reflection. Yet these interests and powers are merely presupposed. No effort is made to ground them in appropriate a priori principles. In other words, Kant’s critical science is silent about its own foundations as a rational enterprise” (Mandt 16). In this sense, Mandt argues that the Critique of Pure Reason does not explain how we can know the transcendental subject. “This is a crucial point for it means that a large element of indeterminacy infects the Critical account of reason, and hence of subjectivity. The Critique proceeds without an altogether clear understanding of what it is doing, and how it is possible to do it” (Mandt 16). For this reason, Mandt concludes, the Critique of Pure Reason implodes.

In Kantian Humility Rae Langton makes a similar argument. She argues that the difference between appearances and things in themselves is not a difference between two ontologically different sets of things, but is rather the difference between two ontologically different properties of one and the same set of things. “There is one world, one set of things, but two kinds of properties: Intrinsic properties, and properties that are ‘in opposition’ to the intrinsic, namely relational properties. The labels ‘phenomena’ and ‘noumena’ seem to label different entities, but really they label different classes of properties of the same set of entities” (Langton 12). However, Langton identifies the thing in itself with the transcendental subject. “Kant suggests that the intrinsic properties of substances are thoughts—that things as they are in
themselves are thinkers” (Langton 209). She elaborates on this point. “Kant thus thinks that the most fundamental existents are—in this sense—not physical…To go further, and say that the non-physical things are more basic and fundamental than the physical things, brings one perhaps a little closer to idealism. To go further still, and not only deny that the fundamental things are physical, but assert that they are mental in nature, would be to come much closer to idealism…Here we must record that Kant comes close to doing both of these” (Langton 207-8). Langton concludes that we cannot know things in themselves: “we have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties of things…There is indeed an entire aspect of the world that remains hidden from us” (Langton 12). In fact, this entire aspect of the world that remains hidden from us is once again us. Thus, Langton concludes, her interpretation “does make a metaphysician of a philosopher who is supposed to have abandoned metaphysics” (Langton 6).

Representational self-knowledge is a torturous enterprise for a good reason. Every time we know some self in itself as the transcendental object we ask what self it is that does that knowing. And when we know that self in itself as the transcendental object we ask the same question and so on. In Problems from Kant James van Cleve asks the question: “but what about these minds or acts? Do they owe their existence to being apprehended?” (van Cleve 136). In this sense, representational self-knowledge always tries to get behind itself and it is precisely in this getting behind itself that it fails. There is always a remainder. But what is this remainder? In the Bounds of Sense P.F. Strawson distinguishes between the transcendental object that affects and the transcendental subject that is affected. “Within this [supersensible] sphere there obtains a certain complex relation (or a class of cases of this relation) which we can speak of, on the model of a causal relation, in terms of ‘affecting’ and ‘being affected by.’ Let us call it the A-relation” (Strawson 236). Thus the remainder is nothing other than die Vermögen, die Fähigkeiten, die
Kräfte, in other words, the abilities. “There belongs to the affected things in any such case a feature called ‘sensibility’ in respect of which that thing is affected. But there also belongs to the same things a feature called ‘understanding’ in respect of which that thing is active, affecting itself in respect of its sensibility” (Strawson 236). Representational self-knowledge fails to know the abilities because it is those abilities that allow for representational self-knowledge in the first place. Thus Kant argues that “it is, indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object that which I must presuppose in order to know any object and that the determining self (the thought) is distinguished from the self that is to be determined (the thinking subject)” (CPR A409). In “Kant and Sartre on Self-Knowledge” David Jopling echoes Kant’s point: “we cannot know ourselves immediately and directly qua spontaneous agency because the very activities involved in the acquisition of this knowledge always already presuppose what they seek” (Jopling 78). However, that does not mean that we have to admit ignorance in regard to abilities. Kant certainly does not. “All human insight is at the end as soon as we have arrived at basic powers or faculties; for there is nothing through which their possibility can be conceived, and yet” Kant claims “it may not be invented and assumed at one’s discretion” (CPrR 5:47). How can we know abilities? Schelling writes in System of Transcendental Idealism: “the self is pure act, a pure doing, which simply has to be nonobjective in knowledge, precisely because it is the principle of all knowledge. So if it is to become an object of knowledge, this must come about through a type of knowing utterly different from ordinary knowledge” (Schelling 368-69).

In order to understand in what sense we can know abilities we must remember what abilities are. I have argued that abilities are inherent possibilities. But how do we know inherent possibilities? We cannot know inherent possibilities by means of representation, because inherent possibilities are not. In other words, we cannot represent something that is not present.
For this reason, we must know abilities in a different way. I argue that we know abilities in the sense that we actualize them. But what does this mean? In the case of actualization knowledge and what is known are not two different things. In other words, in the case of actualization abilities are not know from the point of view of something other than themselves. Actualization just means the development of abilities into activities. In this sense, knowledge as actualization is nothing other than the use of abilities. For example, when I use the ability to sense as the activity of intuiting that intuiting just is the knowledge of that ability. When I use the ability to understand as the activity of conceptualizing that conceptualizing just is the knowledge of that ability. And so on. In this essay, I have tried to explain in what sense we can know the thing in itself understood not so much as der Gegenstand or the transcendental objects, but rather as the ability, that is, as the transcendental subject. I hope that now the answer to this question is clear. We know the thing in itself in the sense that we use it. Van Cleve recognizes this point. In the first instance, he argues that we cannot know abilities “since in that case there would be either an absurd infinite regress to ever higher acts or else an impossible feat of existential bootstrapping, some items pulling themselves into existence by virtue of their own self-apprehension” (van Cleve 136). However, van Cleve reconsiders the latter option: “even if literal self-apprehension were deemed possible (as in some Indian philosophies), we would have to accord to ‘both’ terms of the relation the status of existence an sich, for a mere content cannot do any apprehending. I must confess that this way of proving the existence of things in themselves does not show that there are things distinct from our own selves or other conscious beings” (van Cleve 136-7). Self-apprehension is possible to the extent that it names the process of coming into being of the apprehended self. That apprehended self, in other words, that actualized ability, in other words, that activity just is the thing in itself. Perhaps we can call it the self in itself. This is why
Schelling writes that “the question whether the self is a thing-in-itself or an appearance is itself intrinsically absurd. It is not a thing at all, neither thing-in-itself nor appearance…—Seen in its true light, the dilemma thus amounts to this: everything is either a thing or nothing; which can straightaway be seen to be false, since there is assuredly a higher concept than that of a thing, namely the concept of doing, or activity” (Schelling 375-76). Mandt also recognizes this point: “there is in Kant no thing-in-itself that, from time to time, acts. There is only the activity itself in its various modalities. Kant’s transcendental subject is therefore identical with transcendental activity—it exists precisely insofar as, and in the manner that, it acts” (Mandt 26). In what follows I explain what may be the best example of knowledge as actualization. This example is freedom.
Chapter 3: The actualization of freedom

What is not humanity?

The reader will have noticed that I take an unusual approach to Kant’s critical philosophy. I would like her to adhere to this insight as she reads my discussion of Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason. When one reads commentaries on Kant’s ethics one is used to dealing with certain familiar issues. For example, it is inevitable that one encounters the discussion of the value of humanity, in other words, the discussion of how we are to treat humanity in others and in ourselves as an end in itself. I think that these discussions are important. However, I also think that it is crucial that we contextualize such discussions. In other words, I think that there is a danger in approaching Kant’s practical philosophy primarily in terms of issues such as the value of humanity. If we discuss Kant’s practical philosophy in these terms, we risk fundamentally misunderstanding it; specifically, we risk handing it over to dogmatism. A good example of such an interpretation, I think, is Allen W. Wood’s Kantian Ethics.

Wood makes several arguments in Kantian Ethics. In the first instance, he argues that in Kant’s practical philosophy the fundamental value takes the form of humanity, and moreover, that by humanity Kant means rational nature. “In Kantian ethics, the fundamental value is humanity or rational nature as an end in itself” (Wood 85). This itself is not a controversial statement in the context of Kant scholarship. For example, in Creating the Kingdom of Ends Christine Korsgaard makes a similar argument: “the distinctive feature of humanity, as such, is simply the capacity to take a rational interest in something: to decide, under the influence of reason, that something is desirable, that it is worthy of pursuit or realization, that it is to be deemed important or valuable…as an end—for its own sake. It is this capacity that the Formula of Humanity commands us never to treat as a mere means, but always as an end in itself”
It is however the sense in which Wood takes humanity to be the value that makes his interpretation of Kant’s practical philosophy problematic. Wood writes that for Kant “rational nature is described as an end – an end in itself. Kant calls it a self-sufficient,’ ‘independent,’ or ‘selfstanding’ (selbstständig) end, in contrast to an ‘end to be produced.’ It is an end in the sense of something for the sake of which we act” (Wood 85). In this sense, Wood claims, the value of humanity does not succeed action. Instead, it precedes action. “In the claim that rational nature is an end in itself, rational nature is not being thought of a state of affairs to be produced by an action. Instead, an ‘end in itself’ is something already existing whose value grounds even our pursuit of the ends produced by our actions” (Wood 85). For this reason, Wood argues that Kant’s practical philosophy does not begin with action. Instead, it begins with the value of humanity that determines action. “This value is to motivate obedience to a categorical imperative – a principle that rationality constrains us without presupposing any end to be produced” (Wood 86). What is the problem with this interpretation of Kant’s practical philosophy?

What Wood says about Kant’s practical philosophy is something that I think anyone who has given the slightest thought to the nature of practice understands immediately. We do not just act. Instead, we consider the value of others and ourselves as the moral standard against which we act. This is of course not to say that every time we act we have to again and again think about this value. Over time, we simply become the kinds of beings who act in the name of these values. All this is well. However, I doubt that it has much to do with Kant’s practical philosophy. In fact if it did, Kant’s practical philosophy would be open to a very serious objection. Wood himself recognizes this objection. “Kant’s arguments for the bold thesis that humanity is an end in itself are terse and obscure…We may have to face the fact that the mere claim that human beings have
absolute worth as ends in themselves may in the end be more compelling all by itself than any argument that Kant or anyone else could ever offer for it” (Wood 88-9). Thus Wood writes that “perhaps, therefore, no argument about ultimate value can be expected to convince everyone – there are simply too many possible views about what is ultimately valuable…But it helps when that claim of ultimate value is one that many people, perhaps even most people, are prepared to accept even without argument” (Wood 89). Wood argues that Kant’s arguments about the value of humanity are unconvincing. But that is not all. Wood concludes with a stronger insight. He argues that in his practical philosophy Kant does not actually argue, but rather presupposes that humanity is the value. “Kant’s argument does not work by showing that rational beings are ends in themselves but only by showing that in setting ends according to reason, we must presuppose that they are” (Wood 93). In fact, Wood even goes one step further. Wood argues that not only is it the case that Kant does not argue for the value of humanity. Instead, Wood argues that such an argument would altogether be impossible. “This also means we must not expect more of a claim, or an argument for it, than is reasonable. When we ask the impossible, ignoring an argument’s real but necessarily limited accomplishments, we will find the argument unsatisfactory, but that is our fault, and not a defect in the argument” (Wood 93). Thus we come to this point: if Kant’s practical philosophy begins with the value humanity, it is not a critical, but is rather a fundamentally dogmatic philosophy. This is the problem with claiming that Kant’s practical philosophy beings with the value of humanity. Such a claim threatens to turn Kant’s critical practical philosophy into dogmatism. On the other hand, I argue that the value of humanity is not the beginning of Kant’s practical philosophy. Here I want to merely state Kant’s position in opposition to Wood. Below I will argue for it.
Kant recognizes the insufficiency of every practical philosophy that begins with value no matter what form that value takes. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant talks about “the errors of philosophers with respect to the supreme principle of morals” (*CPrR* 5:64). In what do these errors consist? “For they sought an object of the will in order to make it fit into the matter and the ground of a law…, whereas they should first have searched for a law that determined the will a priori and immediately, and only then determined the object conformable to the will” (*CPrR* 5:64). I explain Kant’s position in basic terms. A person performs many actions is his life. The question is: in whose name are such actions performed? We can say that different people have different values. In fact, we can even say that one person acts in the name of different values. We can even say that one person acts in the name of different values in different circumstances, and so on. Kant’s point however is this. If you act in the name of value that means that you take that value as an object of your action. However, that you take that value as an object of your action means that value exerts its influence over you. Kant puts this point in stronger terms. Kant argues that really it is the value that is making you act. But how can a value make you act? Kant develops this point in following terms. The value is making you act because it promises the feeling of pleasure. This means that in the final analysis it is really the feeling of pleasure that the value promises that acts. For this reason, Kant concludes, when practical philosophy begins with the value it must end with heteronomy. “For, it will have been seen from the Analytic that if one assumes any object under the name of a good as a determining ground of the will prior to the moral law and then derives from it the supreme practical principle, this would always produce heteronomy and supplant the moral principle” (*CPrR* 5:109). In fact, Kant is radical in the sense that he makes no qualitative distinction among values. “Now, whether they [philosophers] placed this object of pleasure, which was to yield the supreme concept of good, in
happiness, in perfection, in moral feeling, or in the will of God, their principle was in every case heteronomy…” (CPrR 5:64). In a sense, beginning with value obliterates the very thing (the action) that it is meant to determine. On the other hand, the fact that Kant puts the problem of the beginning of practical philosophy with value in terms of heteronomy attunes us to what Kant really thinks constitutes the proper beginning of all practical philosophy. And this is not value. Instead, it is action itself. In this part of my essay I explain Kant’s practical philosophy beginning with action. Near the end of my discussion I give a suggestion how we are to understand the value of humanity in the context of Kant’s practical philosophy that begins with action.
The will

In this essay I am trying to explain in what sense we can know the thing in itself understood as abilities. I have argued that such knowledge must take the form of actualization. To know abilities means to actualize them. In this part of my essay I hope to explain in what sense this is the case in practice. In order to do this, however, it is important to recognize the way in which Kant frames his entire practical project. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate uses of abilities. Kant does exactly the same thing in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. However, there is an important twist. In theory, knowledge begins with sensibility, moves to the understanding and finally ends with reason. “All our knowledge starts with the senses, proceeds from thence to the understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is no higher faculty to be found in us for elaborating the matter of intuition and bringing it under the highest unity of thought” (*CPR* B355/A299). On the other hand, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* this order is reversed. “The Analytic of practical pure reason divides the whole sphere of all the conditions of its use quite analogously with that of theoretical reason, but in reverse order” (*CPrR* 5:89). Thus knowledge begins with reason. “A critique of the Analytic of reason, insofar as it is to be a practical reason…must begin from the possibility of practical principles a priori.” (*CPrR* 5:90). It then moves to the understanding. “Only from these could it proceed to concepts of objects of a practical reason, namely, to the concepts of the simply good and evil, in order first to give them in keeping with those principles (for, prior to those principles these cannot possibly be given as good and evil by any cognitive faculty)” (*CPrR* 5:90). And finally it ends with sensibility. “Only then could the last chapter conclude this part, namely the chapter about the relation of pure practical reason to sensibility about its necessary influence upon sensibility to be cognized a priori, that is, about moral feeling” (*CPrR* 5:90).
In short, “in the present Critique we shall begin with principles and proceed to concepts, and only then, where possible, from them to the senses, whereas in the case of speculative reason we had to begin with the senses and end with the principles” (CPrR 5:16). We must keep in mind too that “here sensibility is not regarded as a capacity for intuition at all but only as a feeling (which can be a subjective ground of desire)” (CPrR 5:90). In order to explain the sense in which abilities are actualized in practice, I look at both legitimate and the illegitimate uses of abilities.

In other words, just as in the Critique of Pure Reason I show both what happens when we actualize abilities beginning with sensibility and then beginning with reason, here too I explain what happens when we actualize abilities beginning with reason and then beginning with feeling. Still, my treatment of the abilities in practice differs than my treatment of abilities in theory. And this difference has to do with the will and its causality. Unlike in theory, in practice the actualization of abilities always happens in relation, in fact by means of, to put it even more strongly, through the will and its causality.

Kant gives a reason for his reversal of the legitimate and illegitimate orders of the uses of abilities in practice compared to theory. “The ground for doing so lies, again, in this: that now we have to do with a will and have to consider reason not in its relation to objects but in relation to this will and its causality” (CPrR 5:16). Nevertheless, Kant does not explain the meaning of this reason. In other words, just because we are dealing with the will and its causality does not immediately explain why practical philosophy must begin with reason and not with feeling. In order to understand Kant’s meaning it is important to understand what it is that Kant means by the will. German der Wille is the noun of the verb wollen. What does wollen mean? In English there is something tricky about the verb ‘to will.’ Its meaning hovers somewhere between ‘to intend’ and ‘to want.’ In other words, its meaning is suspended somewhere between the
determination of the world and self-determination. German \textit{wollen} has a bit of this same problem. However, unlike in English where the meaning more often than not falls towards the former, in German the meaning falls towards the latter. For this reason, \textit{wollen} is actually best translated not by ‘to will’ but by ‘to want.’ Thus the will is for lack of a better word, the want. However, that the will is the want does not mean that it is on the order of the body. In other words, the will is not an appearance. On the contrary, Kant argues, the will is a faculty. Kant defines the will as “the faculty of desire” (\textit{CPrR 5:55}). When we acknowledge that the will is an ability, we understand the meaning of Kant’s reason for the reversal of the legitimate and illegitimate orders of the uses of abilities in practice compared to theory.

I have already suggested the complex nature of abilities. That something is an ability means that it has to be actualized for it even to be. I have also argued that abilities exist as activities. The same point holds here. That will is an ability means that it must be actualized into an activity in order to be. We have seen that the activity of the ability to sense is intuiting. The activity of the ability to understand is conceptualizing. But what is the activity of the ability to want? In the context of the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason} Kant talks about actualization in terms of \textit{Bestimmung}, in other words, in terms of determination. Kant argues that both reason and feeling determine the will. When reason determines the will, the ability to want becomes an activity that I call the rational-will. On the other hand, when feeling determines the will, the ability to want becomes an activity I call the feeling-will. In what follows I argue that the difference between the activity of the rational-will and the activity of the feeling-will is that in the former case the will wants and causes whereas in the latter case it does not. In other words, the former activity is the activity of wanting causing, whereas in the latter case it is not. Here then is the meaning of the reason for Kant’s reversal of the legitimate and illegitimate orders of
the uses of abilities in practice compared to theory. When we begin with reason the will can do what it is supposed to do. When we begin with feeling it does not. I have said that in this part of my essay I explain the sense in which abilities are actualized in practice. I begin with the difference between the rational-will and the feeling-will not only because in practice all actualization happens through the will, but also because this beginning covers both the legitimate and illegitimate uses of abilities in practice. Moreover, I have said that Kant’s practical philosophy begins with practice. Beginning with the distinction between the rational-will and the felling-will allows me to explain what it means to begin with action as well as what action is in opposition to something that is not an action.
Form over matter

The ability to want can become an actual will through what Kant calls the matter of the will. “By ‘the matter of the faculty of desire’ I understand an object whose reality is desired” (CPrR 5:21).

The matter of the will is the object that we want such that the ability to want becomes some actual wanting. How does the matter actualize the ability to want? “For, the determining ground of choice is then the representation of an object and that relation of the representation to the subject by which the faculty of desire is determined to realize the object. Such a relation to the subject, however, is called pleasure in the reality of an object” (CPrR 5:21). The matter of the will actualizes the ability to want as some wanting through the feeling of pleasure. This point ought to make sense. However, Kant is radical when he makes no qualitative distinction among the material objects of the will. “It is surprising that men, otherwise acute, believe they can find a distinction between the lower and the higher faculty of desire according to whether the representations that are connected with the feeling of pleasure have their origin in the sense or in the understanding” (CPrR 5:23). In other words, Kant does not make a qualitative distinction between higher and lower material objects of the will. “However, dissimilar representations of objects may be—they may be representations of the understanding or even of reason, in contrast to representations of senses—the feeling of pleasure by which alone they properly constitute the determining ground of the will (the agreeableness, the gratification expected from the object, which impels activity to produce it) is nevertheless of one and the same kind…” (CPrR 5:23).

For Kant all will is lower will as long as it is determined by the matter of the will: “all material practical rules put the determining ground of the will in the lower faculty of desire…” (CPrR 5:22). But why is there no difference between wanting freedom and wanting slavery? It is
important to acknowledge that for Kant it does not so much matter what you want as how you want. This alone ought to attune us to the radical nature of Kant’s practice.

The actualization of the will is the turning of the ability to want into some wanting. The paradox of the material-will is that it annihilates the very will that it actualizes. That I want an object means that the feeling of pleasure comes first. The will comes second, as a result of the feeling of pleasure, and for that reason actually does not come at all. How can there be a will that does not will? There is only the feeling of pleasure. In this sense, when I want an object, there is no wanting even though there seems to be one. This of course does not mean that I cannot want another object. I can always want freedom rather than slavery. However, the point again is that here there is no will. Again there is only the feeling of pleasure. “For when one inquires about the determining grounds of desire and puts them in the agreeableness expected from something or other, it does not matter at all where the representation of this pleasing object comes from but only how much it pleases” (CPrR 5:23). For this reason, the atmosphere of the material-will is always the same no matter the matter. This actual wanting presents itself as the only wanting there is. In other words, this actual wanting presents itself as wanting itself. I arrive at the same conclusion over and again: I have no say in wanting, whatever I want, I must want. In other words, when I want an object I cannot even say that I am the one who wants. It is as if wanting happens to me. And is this not precisely how it is to want an object, to be overrun by a feeling, a feeling of pleasure? Some wanting happens and must happen. But this conclusion is stupid. It is not a surprise that I must want what I want when I give up the want for the object, in other words, for the feeling of pleasure, in short, when desire itself becomes nothing other than pleasure. Kant calls such a will appropriately pathological will. “A will is purely animal (arbitrium brutum), which cannot be determined save through sensuous impulses, that is,
"pathologically" (CPR 802/B830). Is not the essence of all pathology the inability to will? The material-will is a lower will in the sense that it is not a will at all. How does a will become higher will? That the will is pathologically affected does not mean that it is necessitated. “For a will is sensuous, in so far as it is pathologically affected, i.e. by sensuous motives; it is animal (arbitrium brutum), if it can be pathologically necessitated. The human will is certainly an arbitrium sensitivum, not, however, brutum but liberum. For sensibility does not necessitate its action” (CPR A534/B562). Something other than the matter of the will must determine the will for it to be a will at all.

The will becomes the higher will when it is determined by something that is true of the human will as such. But what is that? No matter of the will is true of the human will as such no matter how many people agree on it. “But suppose that finite rational being were thoroughly agreed with respect to what they had to take as objects of their feelings of pleasure and pain and even with respect to the means they must use to obtain the first and avoid the other;…this unanimity would still only be contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and merely empirical and would not have that necessity which is thought in every law, namely objective necessity from a priori grounds…” (CPrR 5:26). In other words, no matter of the will is true of the human will as such even if all people agreed on the matter. But what is it then that is true of the will as such? Nothing other than the form of willing itself. In other words, the only thing that is true of the human will as such is the willing itself. “Now, all that remains of a law if one separates from it everything material, that is, every object of the will (as its determining ground), is the mere form of giving the universal law” (CPrR 5:27). Therefore Kant’s point is that the will becomes higher will when it is determined by the form of willing itself. “All material practical rules put the determining ground of the will in the lower faculty of
desire, and where there are no merely formal laws of the will sufficient to determining it, neither could any higher faculty of desire be admitted” (CPrR 5:23). But this seems odd. The will becomes the higher will when it is determined by willing itself. But is not the whole problem precisely that the will cannot will? How then can it determine itself to willing?

Zupančič argues that “Kant uses this term [pathological] to designate that which does not belong to the order of the ethical. We should stress, however, that this notion of the pathological must not be considered the opposite of the ‘normal.’ On the contrary, in Kant’s view, it is our ‘normal’ everyday actions that are more or less always pathological. Hence the alternative to the pathological cannot be the normal but will, rather, involve such concepts as freedom, autonomy, and the formal determination of the will” (Zupančič 7). That the normal will is pathological means that it must first of all overcome itself as the normal pathological will in order to be able to will. But how does the will become an abnormal, healthy will? The point is not to want yet another object. Such wills are tormented forever. ‘Oh that is want I really wanted all along.’ ‘Ah actually that is what I really wanted all along.’ Pathology is a particular kind of attitude of wanting objects whatever they may be, and thus not wanting at all. Thus the point is to change this attitude altogether. “However, that a human being should become not merely legally good, but morally good…that, so long as the foundation of the maxims of the human being remains impure, cannot be effected through gradual reform but must rather be effected through a revolution in disposition [die Gesinnung]…And so a ‘new man’ can come about only through a kind of rebirth as it were a new creation…and a change of heart” (Religion 6:47). But how does this revolution in attitude happen? The affirmative nature of Kant’s thought consists in his belief that reason independently of feeling of pleasure can determine the will. “There is an absolutely necessary practical employment of reason—the moral—in which it inevitably goes beyond the
limits of sensibility” (*CPR* Bxxv). “Pure reason” Kant writes “is here considered in its practical use, and consequently as proceeding from *a priori* principles and not from empirical determining grounds” (*CPrR* 5:90). The will becomes a higher will that can determine itself when it is determined by reason. “And thus either there is no higher faculty of desire at all or else *pure reason* must be practical of itself and alone, that is, it must be able to determine the will by the mere form of practical rule without presupposing any feeling and hence without any representation of the agreeable or disagreeable as the matter of the faculty of desire, which is always an empirical condition” (*CPrR* 5:25). Kant also puts this point in positive terms. “Then only, insofar as reason of itself (not in the service of inclinations) determines the will, is reason a true *higher* faculty of desire, to which the pathologically determinable is subordinate, and the only is reason really, and indeed *specifically*, distinct from the latter, so that even the least admixture of the latter’s impulses infringes upon its strength and superiority, just as anything at all empirical as a condition in a mathematical demonstration degrades and destroys its dignity and force” (*CPrR* 5:25). But in what sense does reason determine the will?

“Reason therefore provides laws which are imperatives, that is, *objective laws of freedom*, which tell us *what ought to happen*—although perhaps it never does happen—therein differing from *laws of nature*, which relate only to *that which happens*. These laws are therefore to be entitled practical laws” (*CPR* A802/B830). That reason tells what ought to happen rather than what does happen demonstrates that reason is autonomy. “*Autonomy* of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of duties in keeping with them; *heteronomy* of choice, on the other hand, not only does not ground any obligation at all but is instead opposed to the principle of obligation and to the morality of the will. That is to say, the sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of the law (namely from a desired object) and at the same time
in the determination of choice through the mere form of giving universal law that a maxim must be capable of” (5:33). Kant often talks about morality in terms of Gesinnung (MM 6:393, R 6:25, 6:26, 6:47, 6:51 and 6:72). Matthew Caswell recognizes this point in “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good, the Gesinnung, and the Theory of Radical Evil.” “The conception of the Gesinnung appears sporadically throughout (almost) all of Kant’s practical philosophy, and is always used to refer to the basic moral orientation or attitude of a finite agent” (Caswell 190).

For this reason perhaps the best way to understand reason as autonomy is in terms of an attitude. Kant captures the moral law in few different formulas. Perhaps the universal law formula is the most important one. “I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law” (Gr 402). But what does this formula of what ought to happen mean? “A maxim is the subjective principle of volition: an objective principle...is the practical law” (Gr 402n). A maxim is what the individual subject wants. The law is what the individual as a human being wants. Thus what ought to happen is that what the individual subject wants become what he wants as a human being. As Lewis. W. Beck recognizes: “there is thus a trichotomy, not a dichotomy, to wit: (a) mere maxim, (b) law, (c) law which is also a maxim” (Beck 82). But what does the individual want as a human being? As long as we understand what the individual human being wants in terms of some object, the moral law will sound either too pessimistic or too optimistic for its own good. What the individual subject wants as a human being will be either peace and love or war and hate depending on what we think the real object of human desire is. But the point is that none of these options allows for willing as such. In each case we are after the feeling of pleasure. But the feeling of pleasure is not true of the human will as such. Instead, what unites all human beings is not so much the object of their will whatever it may be, but rather willing as such. “The moral law, however, is thought as objectively necessary
only because it is to hold for everyone having reason and will” (*CPrR* 5:36). In other words, it is the form of willing itself that is true of the human will as such. In this sense, that what ought to happen is that what the individual subject wants become what he wants as a human being just means that the individual subject want the form of willing as such, that he want to want. “Therefore, either a rational being cannot think of his subjectively practical principles, that is, his maxims, as being at the same time universal laws or he must assume that their mere form, by which they are fit for a giving of universal law, of itself and alone makes them practical laws” (*CPrR*5:27). But this interpretation of the moral law as the universal law is still incomplete. That the universal law demands that the individual subject want to want does not mean that it demands that the individual now wants autonomous attitude as yet another object of the will. Kant is quite clear that no object overcomes the pathological attitude: “we have seen that anything which presents itself as an object of the will prior to the moral law is excluded from the determining grounds of the will…” (*CPrR* 5:74). And this includes the autonomous attitude itself. Instead, something else completes the interpretation of the moral law as the universal law. Reason does not just demonstrate autonomous attitude by expressing what ought to happen. What reason expresses in that demonstration of autonomous attitude is itself autonomous attitude. Reason is a double affirmation. For this reason, in order for the will to actually be determined by reason it has to take the lesson of the autonomous attitude to heart. In other words, the will cannot just want to want. Instead, the will actually has to want. In this sense, Kant argues, reason does not determine the will as an object, that is, by the promise of the feeling of pleasure. The problem of the child who cannot stop asking why because he needs to, he wants to satisfy himself. But willing itself offers no pleasure or displeasure. Instead, reason determines the will immediately. “In a practical law reason determines the will immediately, not by means of an
intervening feeling of pleasure or displeasure, not even in this law, and that it can as pure reason be practical is what alone makes it possible for it to be lawgiving” (CPrR 5:25). Thus reason determines, actualizes the will to be the autonomous will. Autonomous will wills.
Transcendental freedom

Kant often argues that transcendental freedom is a problem for theoretical knowledge, but not for practical knowledge. “The question of transcendental freedom is a matter for speculative knowledge only, and when we are dealing with the practical we can leave it aside as being an issue with which we have no concern.” (CPR A803/B832). But why is transcendental freedom a problem for theoretical knowledge? Theoretical knowledge deals with sensible objects. However, “transcendental freedom… must be thought as independence from everything empirical and so from nature generally, whether it is regarded as an object of inner sense in time or also of outer sense in both space and time” (CPrR 5:97). In other words, transcendental freedom is an intelligible object. For this reason, there can be no theoretical knowledge of transcendental freedom. “We could not hope to meet with this connection in actions actually given in experience as events of the sensible world, since causality through freedom must always be sought outside the sensible world in the intelligible world” (CPrR 5:105). Kant repeats this point over and again. “It is, however, absolutely impossible to give anywhere in experience an example of it, since among the causes of things as appearances no determination of causality that would be absolutely unconditioned can be found; hence we could defend the thought of a freely acting cause, when we apply this to a being in the sensible world, only insofar as this being is also regarded on the other side as a noumenon” (CPrR 5:48). That there can be no theoretical knowledge of transcendental freedom is the reason why transcendental freedom is the problem for it. “Transcendental freedom is thus, as it would seem, contrary to the law of nature, and therefore to all possible experience; and so remains a problem” (CPR A803/B832). Thus theoretical knowledge can only think but cannot know freedom. “But though I cannot know, I can yet think freedom” (CPR xxviii). Still, perhaps it is not so much important to understand why
transcendental freedom is a problem for theoretical knowledge as it is to understand why transcendental freedom is not a problem for practical knowledge. It is not enough just to recognize that the meaning of ‘the sensible’ changes in practical knowledge. It is just as important to recognize that the meaning of ‘the intelligible’ changes as well.

Kant approaches the question of transcendental freedom in terms of character. “Every efficient cause must have a character, that is, a law of its causality, without which it would not be a cause” (CPR A539/B498). There are two such characters. First, there is the empirical character. “On the above supposition, we should, therefore, in a subject belonging to the sensible world have, first, an empirical character, whereby its actions, as appearances, stand in thoroughgoing connection with other appearances in accordance with unvarying laws of nature. And since these actions can be derived from the other appearances, they constitute together with them a single series in the order of nature” (CPR A539/B498). The causality of the empirical character is determined. “In its empirical character, therefore, this subject, as appearance, would have to conform to all the laws of determination. To this extent it could be nothing more than part of the world of sense…” (CPR A540/B568). However, we ought to be careful when interpreting such claims. We must always keep the meaning of the terms appropriate to whatever kind of knowledge we are talking about. “Here [in practice] sensibility is not regarded as a capacity for intuition at all but only as a feeling (which can be a subjective ground of desire)” (CPrR5:90). What is it that determines the causality of the empirical character? Note it cannot be the laws of nature. If the laws of nature determined that causality then sensibility in practice would in fact have to be regarded as the capacity for intuition. But that is precisely not how it is regarded. Instead, sensibility is feeling as the subjective ground of desire. Therefore, Kant argues, it is actually feeling as the subjective ground of desire that determines this causality.
Allison draws out the conclusion of Kant’s position in this regard. “Thus, in contrast to most contemporary theorists,” he argues, “Kant’s determinism at the empirical level does not rest on the assumption of either the reducibility of action explanations to neurophysiological ones or of a token-token identity between physical and psychological states. On the contrary, the relevant causal factors seem to be largely psychological in nature, that is, the beliefs, desires, and intentions of the agent” (Allison 1990 31). The feeling as the subjective ground of desire that determines the causality of the empirical character is pleasure. In this sense, Kant’s point is not so much that it is the laws of nature that determine the causality of the empirical character. Instead, his point is that it is the pathological attitude that determines the causality of the empirical character. When I act not because I want to act, but because the feeling of pleasure wants me to act, Kant argues, my action is not free action. It is a reaction, a passion. And is not the essence of pathology its reactionary, its passionate nature?

“Secondly, we should also have to allow the subject an intelligible character, by which it is indeed the cause of those same actions [in their quality] as appearances, but which does not itself stand under any conditions of sensibility, and is not itself appearance. We can entitle the former the character of the thing in the [field of] appearance, and the latter its character as thing in itself” (CPR A539/B498). What is this intelligible character? Theoretical knowledge is limited to objects of possible experience. For this reason, theoretical knowledge knows the intelligible character only in terms of its empirical effects. “Thus the will of every man has an empirical character, which is nothing but a certain causality of his reason, so far as that causality exhibits, in its effects in the [field of] appearance, a rule from which we may gather what, in their kind and degrees, are the actions of reason and the grounds therefore, and so may for an estimate concerning the subjective principles” (CPR A550/B578). Thus Kant talks about the “empirical
character (which is no more than the appearance of the intelligible)” (CPR A541/B569). However, that theoretical knowledge knows the intelligible character only in terms of its empirical effects means that it does not know it at all. “Since this empirical character must itself be discovered from the appearances which are its effect and from the rule to which experience shows them to conform, it follows that all the actions of men in the [field] of appearance are determined in conformity with the order of nature, by their empirical character and by other causes which cooperate with that character; and if we could exhaustively investigate all the appearances of men’s wills, there would not be found a single human action which we could not predict with certainty, and recognize as proceeding necessarily from its antecedent conditions” (CPR A550/B578). Thus, theoretical knowledge concludes that there is no intelligible character. “So far, then, as regards this empirical character there is no freedom; and yet it is only in the light of this character that man can be studied—if, that is to say, we are simply observing, and in the manner of anthropology seeking to institute a physiological investigation into the motive causes of his actions” (CPR A550/B578). But it is not surprising that theoretical knowledge knows no intelligible character. From the point of view of theoretical knowledge such an object can only be thought. And, in fact, it can only be thought as the correlate to the empirical character. For this reason the intelligible character is thought as the transcendental object. “This intelligible character can never, indeed be immediately known, for nothing can be perceived except insofar as it appears. It would have to be thought in accordance with the empirical character—just as we are constrained to think a transcendental object as underlying appearances, though we know nothing of what it is in itself” (CPR A540/B568). But the intelligible character is neither the empirical character nor the transcendental object. Instead, the intelligible character is the transcendental subject. “In this way the acting subject, as causa phaenomenon, would be
bound up with nature through the indissoluble dependence of all its actions, and only as we ascend from the empirical object to the transcendental should we find that this subject, together with all its causality in [the field] of appearance, has in its *noumenon* certain conditions which must be regarded as purely intelligible” (*CPR* A545/B573). In this sense, the intelligible character is something that we can only know practically. But practical knowledge does not represent its object. Hence, Kant talks about “the transcendental subject, which is empirically unknown to us” (*CPR* A545/B573). Instead, practical knowledge makes its object actual. “Now if reason is to be a factor in these sciences something in them must be known *a priori*, and this knowledge may be related to its object in one or other of two ways, either as merely determining it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also *making it actual*. The former is *theoretical*, the latter *practical* knowledge of reason” (*CPR* Bx). The actualization of the transcendental subject just is transcendental freedom.

“The effects of such an intelligible cause appear, but its causality is not so determined. While the effects are to be found in the series of empirical conditions, the intelligible cause, together with its causality, is outside the series” (*CPR* A537/B565). But what does it mean to say that the intelligible character is outside the series of empirical conditions? Again we must keep the meaning of the terms clear. The intelligible in practice is not opposed to the sensible in theory, that is, it is not opposed to the capacity for intuition. In this sense, the intelligible character is not the transcendental idea. Or the intelligible character is the transcendental idea but only to the extent that it is opposed to the sensible in theory. “By freedom, on the other hand, in its cosmological meaning, I understand the power of beginning a state *spontaneously*. Such a causality will not, therefore, itself stand under another cause determining it in time, as required by the law of nature. Freedom, in this sense, is a pure transcendental idea which, in the first
place, contains nothing borrowed from experience, and which, secondly, refers to an object that cannot be determined or given any experience” \((CPR\ A533/B561)\). Instead, we ought to oppose the intelligible in practice to the sensible in practice. This is why Kant calls the intelligible in the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason} the supersensible. However, once we oppose the supersensible in practice to the sensible in practice it is clear what it must be. “Whatever in an object of the senses is not itself appearance, I entitle \textit{intelligible}. If, therefore, that which in the sensible world must be regarded as appearance has in itself a faculty which is not an object of sensible intuition, but through which it can be the cause of appearances, the \textit{causality} of this being can be regarded from two points of view. Regarded as the causality of a thing in itself, it is \textit{intelligible} in its \textit{action}; regarded as the causality of an appearance in the world of sense, it is \textit{sensible} in its \textit{effects}” \((CPR\ A538/B566)\). In practice ‘the intelligible’ refers to an ability. But what ability is that? In opposition to the sensible, that is, to the feeling of pleasure, the supersensible is reason. “Sometimes, however, we find, or at least believe that we find, that the ideas of reason have in actual fact proved their causality in respect of the actions of men, as appearances; and that these actions have taken place, not because they were determined by empirical causes, but because they were determined by grounds of reason” \((CPR\ A55/B578)\). Therefore, the causality of the intelligible character is determined by reason. Reason acts freely. But this point needs to be specified further.

To say that the causality of the intelligible character is not determined and is outside the series of empirical conditions means that it is not determined by the laws of nature. However, that does not mean that the intelligible is not determined by any laws. Kant argues that every causality and therefore even the causality of the intelligible character is determined by laws. “Every efficient cause must have a \textit{character}, that is, a law of its causality, without which it
would not be a cause” (*CPR* A539/B498). The difference however is the nature of these laws. The causality of the intelligible character is determined by laws that are other than the laws of nature. “But when we consider these actions in their relation to reason—I do not mean speculative reason, by which we endeavour *to explain* their coming into being, but reason in so far as it is itself the cause *producing* them—if, that is to say, we compare them with [the standards of] reason in its *practical* bearing, we find a rule and order altogether different from the order of nature” (*CPR* A550/B578). But what is that order? What are the laws that determine the causality of the intelligible character? “For it may be that all that *has happened* in the course of nature, and in accordance with its empirical grounds must inevitably have happened, *ought not to have happened*” (*CPR* A550/B578). It is the moral law that determine the causality of the intelligible character. But what is the moral law? I have already argued that the moral law is nothing other than the autonomous attitude. Reason actualizes the autonomous will. “Pure reason can be practical that is, can of itself, independently of anything empirical, determine the will and it does so by the fact in which pure reason in us proves itself actually practical, namely autonomy in the principle of morality by which reason determines the will to deeds” (*CPR* 5:42). In other words, “reason is concerned with the determining ground of the will, which is a faculty…of determining itself to effect objects (whether the physical power is sufficient or not), that is, of determining its causality” (*CPR* 5:15). Imagine willing without willing something. This is a paradox. Every time we will, we do will something. In other words, when we will, there is something willed. However the difference is this. That something that is willed can either come first or come second. When that something comes first, the will becomes sensible. When I will an object because it promises the feeling of pleasure, the will comes second to the feeling of pleasure and therefore in fact does not come at all. But that the will does not come at all just
means that it cannot will. It must yield to the feeling of pleasure. Desire becomes the feeling of pleasure. An ability becomes sensible. This is the paradox of the pathological attitude. The pathological attitude is the actualization of the ability to will as the annihilation of that ability. However, Kant argues, that when something is willed that something need not come first. It can also come in second. In other words, there is willing something where my relationship to that something is not mediated by the promise of the feeling of pleasure. Instead, such willing is immediate. This is pure willing. Autonomous attitude is just as paradoxical as the pathological attitude but in a different sense. When wanting itself wants that wanting presents itself as only one instance of wanting. Another wanting could just as well have happened. For this reason, my actuality does not parade for my ability. Instead, it is an opening onto it. Not only do I recognize that this wanting is my own matter. I recognize that all wanting, in other words, that wanting itself is my own matter. And is this not what human life is? I win my ability to want. I win my will. The autonomous attitude is the actualization of the ability to will as the preservation of the ability to will. In this sense, the will becomes in Kant’s terminology the ‘intelligible.’ “For, the law of the pure will, which is free, puts the will in a sphere quite different from the empirical, and the necessity that the law expresses, since it is not to be natural necessity, can therefore consist only in the formal conditions of the possibility of a law in general” (CPrR 5:34). In this sense, Kant links the intelligible with an autonomous will, that is, with having a will at all. Allison recognizes this point. “What Kant must do, then, according to this reconstruction, is to link membership in the intelligible world with a possession of a will. Moreover, this is precisely what we find him attempting” (Allison 1990 223). In fact this is why the autonomous will mutually excludes the pathological will. Yirmiyahu Yovel recognizes this point in “Kant’s Practical Reason as Will.” “The two rival sets (more precisely, the two motivations, not
necessarily their empirical recommendations) are always mutually exclusive, in the sense that only one of them can be adopted into the will’s determining ground, in which case the other is automatically rejected or ejected from that function (Yovel 284).

For Kant the transcendental subject acts freely. But what is the transcendental subject? I hope that we have arrived at a point where the words transcendental subject no longer denote some kind of mysterious entity that inhabits the human body. The transcendental subject is reason. Kant argues that reason acts freely. But what is reason? Reason is an ability, in other words, an inherent possibility. But how can an ability, an inherent possibility act freely? It cannot. For this reason, it is more appropriate to say that reason acts freely as the actualized ability, in other words, as the activity called the autonomous will. This is how we get to the following conclusion. It is the autonomous will that acts freely. This is why in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant himself cannot quite decide whether it is reason or the will that acts freely. “Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws—that is in accordance with principles—and only so has he a will. Since *reason* is required in order to derive actions from laws, the will is nothing but practical reason” (*Gr* 412). This indecision is consistent throughout this work. “A rational being counts himself, *qua* intelligence, as belonging to the intelligible worlds, and solely *qua* efficient cause belonging to the intelligible worlds does he give to his causality the name of a ‘will’” (*Gr* 453). Kant also echoes this same point in the *Critique of Practical Reason*: “a being capable of actions in accordance with the representation of laws is an *intelligence* (a rational being), and the causality of such a being in accordance with the representation of laws in his *will*” (*CPrR*5:125). Also this point of indecision has been recognized in the literature. For example in “Will and Reason: A Critical Analysis of Kant’s Concepts” Nathan Rotenstreich
writes: “will is generally and usually understood as an active attitude of human beings towards
the surrounding world or towards the ends of their desires or aspirations. That active attitude is
interpreted as an attitude - and indeed we say ‘willingness,’ implying already the presence of
will…” (Rotenstreich 37). But that is not all writes Rotenstreich. He argues that such a will is
autonomous in the sense that it also acts freely. “Once the aspect of an end is implied in the
attitude of will, we bring in an additional component, that is to say that of a conscious intentional
action brought about by will. In this sense will is not only a power or an active intention;
inherent in it is the aspect of decision or resolving decision - and the component of decision is
already imbued with a certain direction” (Rotenstreich 37). I have argued that we need not talk
about some mysterious entity that inhabits the human body in order to talk about freedom.
Instead, we can talk about freedom simply in terms of our ability to reason, specifically, in terms
of the autonomous will. But what is this autonomous will? Is it not itself mysterious? The
strength of this theory either rises or falls here.

The autonomous will is nothing other than the autonomous attitude which is nothing
other than one’s character. “It is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out
of it, which can be taken as food without qualification, except a good will. Intelligence, wit,
judgment, and any other talents of the mind we may care to name, or courage, resolution, and
constancy of purpose, as qualities of temperament, are without doubt good and desirable in many
respects; but they can also be extremely bad and hurtful when the will is not good which has to
make use of these gifts of nature, and which for this reason has the term ‘character’ applied to its
peculiar quality” (Gr 393). Therefore, when we talk about free acts, we need not be talking about
anything mysterious such as subject, reason or even the will, or we can talk about all those things
as long as we understand them in terms of one’s character. It is one’s character that acts freely.
This statement testifies to the radical nature of Kant’s account of transcendental freedom. The discussion of freedom often threatens to take on metaphysical proportions. However, for Kant the free act just is the kind of act that issues from a human being who has developed a particular kind of character, a kind of personality that is. “It can be nothing less than what elevates a human being above himself (as part of the sensible world), what connects him with an order of things that only understanding can think…It is nothing other than personality, that is, freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature, regarded nevertheless as also a capacity of a being subject to special laws – namely pure practical laws given by his own reason, so that a person as belonging to the sensible world is subject to his own personality insofar as he also belongs to the intelligible world” (CPrR 5:87). In this sense, it is just the character and not as it were something above and beyond the character that acts freely. “The function of transcendental freedom,” Zupančič argues, “is to delineate and preserve the empty place that shows that behind this fundamental choice there is nothing, there is no ‘meta-foundation’ of freedom. If the subject’s disposition is the cause of the ‘incorporation’ of one incentive rather than another, then the claim that transcendental freedom exists simply means that there can be no Cause behind this cause” (Zupančič 37). In this sense, transcendental freedom is not so much a matter of physics or metaphysics. To the extent that we are here dealing with character and personality, we can say that the matter of transcendental freedom is actually a matter of psychology. “Here then,” Kant says “as always happens when reason, in venturing beyond the limits of possible experience, comes into conflict with itself the problem is not really physiological but transcendental. The question as to the possibility of freedom does indeed concern psychology; since it rests on dialectical arguments of pure reason, its treatment and solution belong exclusively to transcendental philosophy” (CPR A535/B563). In a sense, the
problem of freedom is as simple as that. But there is a good reason why such simplicity escapes theoretical philosophy. We do not know our character in theory. “How, a law can be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will (though this is what essential in all morality) is for human reason an insoluble problem and identical with that of how a free will is possible” (*CPrR* 5:72). But we do know our character in practice. “However, in order to avoid misinterpretation in regarding this law as given, it must be noted carefully that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason which, by it, announced itself as originally lawgiving” (*CPrR* 5:31). We reach a point where theoretical philosophy must take the form of tautology. That I am free is a fact to the extent that I am free. Allison recognizes this point: “when Kant calls the moral law a fact he is not implying its self-evidence. On the contrary, the moral law is a fact for reason only because it is the expression of the fact of pure reason. Thus, the moral law is not justified by intuition, but by volition, by pure practical reason itself” (Allison 1990 271). Transcendental freedom is not a problem for practical knowledge because practical knowledge is the name for the actualization of transcendental freedom. “The practical idea is, therefore, always in the highest degree fruitful, and in its relation to our actual activities is indispensably necessary. Reason is here, indeed, exercising causality, as actually bringing about that which its concept contains; and of such wisdom we cannot, therefore, say disparagingly it is only an idea” (*CPR* B385/A329). There is a different way of saying this. Theoretical knowledge knows freedom not in any one of its theories, but only in the act of theoretical knowing, behind its own back as it were.

I have argued that Kant’s practical philosophy begins with action. I hope that so far I have explained what this means. The first principle of Kant’s philosophy is the actualization of the ability to reason as the activity of the rational-will in opposition to the feeling-will. In this sense, I hope to have explained my controversial claim that Kant’s practical philosophy does not
begin with value or even with feeling but rather with freedom. In what follows, I explain what
follows from this initial move. It is true that Kant’s practical philosophy does not begin with
value or feeling. However, that is not to say that his practical philosophy has no room for value
or feeling. The key simply is that we must respect the order of the use of abilities in practice.
Kant’s practical philosophy has room for value and feeling but only to the extent that they come
after or perhaps along with freedom. I have just explained the actualization of reason. In what
follows I explain the actualization of the other two abilities in the order of their legitimate use in
practice. In other words, first I discuss the actualization of the ability to understand and then the
actualization of the ability to feel. This discussion will allow the reader to see what exact role
value and feeling play in Kant’s practical philosophy.
The non-material objects of the will

Kant does not deny that the autonomous will has an object. The point however is that the object of such a will is not its determining ground. “Now it is indeed undeniable that every volition must also have an object and hence a matter; but the matter is not, just because of this, the determining ground and condition of the maxim” (CPrR 5:34). Kant argues that there are two objects of the autonomous will. These are good and evil. “The only objects of a practical reason are therefore those of the good and the evil” (CPr 5:58). For this reason, Kant argues, good and evil do not come before but rather after the moral law. “The concept of good and evil must not be determined before the moral law (for which as it would seem, this concept would have to be made basis) but only (as was done here) after it and by means of it” (CPrR 5:63). In this essay I focus only on the good and not on evil. The reason for this focus is because I am not so much interested in exploring the difference between these values as I am in explaining the actualization of the ability to understand in practice itself, in other words, as I am interested in locating the site that any value must occupy in Kant’s practical philosophy. So what is that good? “But good or evil always signifies a reference to the will insofar as it is determined by the law of reason to make something its object” (CPrR 5:60). What does it mean to say that the good signifies a reference to the will insofar as it is determined by the law of reason to make something its object? The object of autonomous will is the good will. However, we must carefully understand what Kant means by the good will. The good will is not good as an absolute value that precedes practice. If this were the case the good would not come after the moral law but would come before it. Instead, we must understand the good will just in terms of the autonomous will. “Reason has been imparted on us as a practical power, that is, as one which is to have influence on the will; its true function must be to produce a will which is good not as a means to some
further end, but *in itself* (Gr 64). The good will is the power that human beings have. This power we call autonomous attitude. In this sense “a good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes—because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone—that is, good in itself” (Gr 3). Robert Gahringer also recognizes this point in “Metaphysical Aspect of Kant’s Moral Philosophy.” “The Kantian view, I am here maintaining, defines the moral character of an immediate principle in terms of its ontological function…When someone has a real hammer, one really able to drive nails, one which is really what it ought to be, he says that he has a good hammer. The word ‘good’ is in this case essentially the equivalent of the Greek *alethes* (‘real’ as in ‘really’)…And we can talk about a good will: a good will is one which is really free and autonomous, hence distinct from impulse” (Gahringer 279). In opposition to the pathology of the material-will Kant identifies such a good will with freedom. “A will is purely animal (arbitrium brutum), which cannot be determined save through sensuous impulses, that is, pathologically. A will which can be determined independently of sensuous impulses, and therefore through motives which are represented only by reason, is entitled free will (arbitrium *liberum*)” (CPR 802/B830). “Freedom...as an ability to follow the moral law with an unyielding disposition, is independence from the inclinations; at least as motives determining (even if not as affecting) our desire” (CPrR5:117). However, Kant further specifies the terminology. The good will is practical freedom. “That independence, however, is freedom in the negative sense, whereas this lawgiving of its own on the part of the pure, and as such, practical reason is freedom in the positive sense” (CPrR 5:33). Kant confirms this definition in the Critique of Pure Reason. “Freedom in the practical sense is the will’s independence of coercion through sensuous impulses…There is in man a power of self-determination, independently of any coercion through sensuous impulses” (CPR A534/B562). In
Kant’s Theory of Freedom Allison acknowledges this point: “in the Dialectic, Kant defines freedom in the practical sense as the “will’s independence of coercion through sensuous impulses,” and he attempts to clarify this by means of the contrast between a ‘pathologically affected’ and ‘pathologically necessitated’ will” (Allison 1990 55). Also, Allison claims, “in the Canon, Kant describes practical freedom in substantially the same terms. Once again, he distinguishes between arbitrium brutum, which is pathologically determined, and arbitrium liberum ‘which can be determined independently of sensuous impulses, and therefore through motives which are represented only by reason’” (Allison 1990 55). The object of the autonomous will is the good will. But the good will is nothing other than practical freedom. However, the good will is not only the object of the autonomous will as practical freedom.

“For, in the present Critique we shall begin with principles and proceed to concepts” (CPrR5:16). In what sense do we move from principles to concepts in practice? Kant elaborates on this point in the Critique of Pure Reason. “He [man] is thus to himself…in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a purely intelligible object. We entitle these faculties understanding and reason. The latter, in particular, we distinguish in a quite peculiar and especial way from all empirically conditioned powers. For it views its objects exclusively in the light of ideas, and in accordance with them determines the understanding, which then proceeds to make an empirical use of its own similarly pure concepts” (CPR A547/B575). That we begin with principles and proceed to concepts in practice means that reason determines the understanding. Unlike theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge actualizes its object. Therefore that reason determines the understanding in practice means that the object that reason actualizes is understood. However, we must be careful. This understanding of the object that reason actualizes is not theoretical but rather practical. That we understand an
object theoretically means that we represent it. However, that we understand the object practically means that we make it real. “For, it [the good or evil will] is never determined directly by the object and the representation of it, but is instead a faculty of making a rule of reason the motive of an action (by which an object can become real)” (CPrR 5:60). In this sense, I understand practical freedom not so much by making it an object of representation. Rather, I understand practical freedom by making practical freedom real. But what does it mean to make practical freedom real? “If no determining ground of the will other than the universal lawgiving form can serve as a law for it, such a will must be thought as altogether independent of the natural law of appearances in their relations to one another, namely the law of causality. But such independence is called freedom in the strictest, that is, in the transcendental, sense. Therefore a will for which the mere lawgiving form of a maxim can alone serve as a law is free will” (CPrR5:29). That I make practical freedom real means nothing other than that I act freely. For this reason, Kant argues, the good will cannot be practical freedom without at the same time being transcendental freedom. “This freedom ought not, therefore, to be conceived only negatively as independence of empirical conditions. The faculty of reason, so regarded, would cease to be a cause of appearances. It must also be described in positive terms, as the power of originating a series of events” (CPR A554/B582). In this sense, Kant argues, the good will is the concept of the understanding as transcendental freedom. “Now, since the concepts of good and evil, as consequences of the a priori determination of the will, presuppose also a pure practical principle and hence a causality of pure reason, they do not refer originally to object…as do the pure concepts of the understanding or categories of reason used theoretically;…they are rather, without exception, modi of a single category, namely that of causality, insofar as the determining ground of causality consists in reason’s representation of a law of causality which, as the law of
freedom, reason gives to itself and thereby proves itself a priori to be practical” (CPrR 5:65). I understand practical freedom not by representing it as an object, but by making it into the transcendental freedom. This is the sense in which the good will is one of the “categories of freedom” (CPrR 5:65) (the other being evil). The good that is the object of the autonomous will is the action itself. “Thus good or evil is, strictly speaking, referred to action, not to the person’s state of feeling, and if anything is to be good or evil absolutely (and in every respect and without any further condition), or is to be held as such, it would be only the way of acting, the maxim of the will, and consequently the acting person himself as a good or evil human being, that could be so called, but not a thing” (CPrR 5:60). Thus Kant concludes that the object of the autonomous will is not just the good will as practical freedom but also as transcendental freedom. But this is nothing other than what it means to say that practical knowledge is an actualization. Reason actualizes itself in the good will as practical freedom and as transcendental freedom. “Practical reason, on the contrary, since it does not have to do with objects for the sake of cognizing them but with its own ability to make them real (conformably with cognition of them), that is, with a will that is a causality inasmuch as reason contains its determining ground;…it follows that a critique of the Analytic of reason, insofar as it is to be a practical reason (and this is the real problem), must begin from the possibility of practical principles a priori” (CPrR 5:90). But the good will as practical freedom and transcendental freedom is not the only object of the autonomous will.

I would like to draw together the two claims that I am making. I argue that the autonomous will does have an object. However I argue that this object is not the determining ground of the will. Instead, it is the object that the autonomous will actualizes. But what is this object? It is called the good will. However, when we look into the good will we recognize that
the good will is practical freedom and transcendental freedom. In this sense, I say that the object of the autonomous will is practical freedom and transcendental freedom. But how can this be? Is it not the case that the actualization of reason in the autonomous will just is the actualization of practical freedom and transcendental freedom? Does this not mean that the object of practical freedom and transcendental freedom is itself? It does. But that has to be Kant’s argument. In other words, Kant cannot subordinate practical freedom and transcendental freedom to an object that is not themselves because in that case he would be getting rid of the essence of freedom. Freedom is only freedom to the extent that it has no object that gives it direction. The only object that it can have is outside of direction. This outside is what makes freedom so difficult to do. However, Kant’s point is that when you do freedom, when you are free you recognize that the object of that freedom is nothing other than that freedom itself. This recognition he calls the good will. I started this chapter by arguing that Kant’s practical philosophy does not begin with value, but that it begins with action. I hope that the reader can now understand what I mean. For Kant value is the recognition of the actualization of freedom and the value of freedom in the act of freedom. In other words, the actualization of autonomy is actually the actualization of value. Kant calls this value humanity. To put it in technical language we can say that the actualization of the universal law is at the same time the universalization of the formula of humanity. For Kant humanity is valuable to the extent that it actualizes freedom. It is free human beings that are valuable to the extent that they recognize this value in or as themselves. I would like to elaborate and support this point.
Respect for humanity

The form of the law must determine the will immediately, that is, irrespective of any values. “A free will must find a determining ground in the law but independently of the matter of the law. But, besides the matter of the law, nothing further is contained in it than the lawgiving form. The lawgiving form, insofar as this is contained in the maxim, is therefore the only thing that can constitute a determining ground of the will” (CPrR 5:29). In other words: “for, pure reason, practical of itself, is here immediately lawgiving. The will is thought as independent of empirical conditions and hence, as a pure will, as determined by the mere form of law, and this determining ground is regarded as the supreme condition of all maxims” (CPrR 5:31). But what is this form of the law that determines the will immediately? “Now, all that remains of a law if one separates from it everything material, that is, every object of the will (as its determining ground), is the mere form of giving universal law. Therefore, either a rational being cannot think of his subjectively practical principles, that is, his maxims, as being at the same time universal laws or he must assume that their mere form, by which they are fit for a giving of universal law, of itself and alone makes them practical laws” (CPrR 5:27). The form of the law is the universal law. I have interpreted the universal law as the autonomous attitude. For this reason, Kant’s thesis is that the autonomous attitude must determine the will immediately, irrespective of the object. “Only a formal law, that is, one that prescribes to reason nothing more than the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims, can be a priori a determining ground of practical reason” (CPrR 5:64). Thus Kant argues that autonomy is the beginning of morality. “The sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of the law (namely, from a desired object) and at the same time in the determination of choice through the mere form of giving universal law that a maxim must be capable of” (CPrR 5:33). In fact, Kant goes on to
say “that independence, however, is freedom in the negative sense, whereas this lawgiving of its own on the part of pure and, as such, practical reason is freedom in the positive sense. Thus the moral law expresses nothing other than the autonomy of pure practical reason, that is, freedom, and this is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can accord with the supreme practical law” (CPrR 5:33).

In other words, “the mere practical form which consists in the fitness of maxims for giving universal law, first determines what is good in itself and absolutely and grounds the maxims of a pure will, which alone is good in every respect” (CPrR 5:74). This is a radical thesis. Kant says that the good does not precede the actualization of reason in practice, that is, the rational-will; rather it succeeds it. In other words, the rational-will produces the good. “Instead of the concept of the good as an object determining and making possible the moral law, it is on the contrary the moral law that first determines and makes possible the concept of the good” (CPrR 5:63). I have interpreted the rational-will in terms of autonomy. Thus autonomy produces the good. We can put this in other words. When I live autonomously, I produce the good. However, reason in practice also expresses itself as humanity. Therefore, I must say that humanity too produces the good. When I live like a human being, I produce the good. Thus Kant argues that the good is the object of reason in practice. “The only objects of a practical reason are therefore those of the good and the evil. For by the first is understood a necessary object of the faculty of desire…” (CPrR 5:58). In other words, “what we are to call good must be an object of the faculty of desire [the will] in the judgment of every reasonable human being…” (CPrR 5:61). In Creating the Kingdom of Ends Christine Korsgaard acknowledges this point: “what makes the object of your rational choice good is that it is the object of a rational choice…His idea is that rational choice has what I will call a value-conferring status” (Korsgaard 196). However, that the
good is the object that reason in practice produces does not mean that it is something other than that reason in practice itself. Reason in practice produces itself as the good. But what can this mean other than that reason in practice produces the good as the rational-will?

Reason in practice is not some abstract, eternal good. It does not exist as abstract eternal. Therefore, it cannot be such a good. Instead, I have argued that all abilities are only to the extent that they are activities. In this sense, reason in practice can be the good only as the rational-will, that is as the autonomous human living. Everything hinges on the difference between the feeling-will and the rational-will. When I raise myself above and beyond the heteronomous attitude of the feeling-will, that is, when I live with the autonomous, human attitude of the rational-will, I recognize such a life as good. In this sense, it is not my actions themselves that produce the good. It is how I act, or better still that I act that produces the good. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant writes that “it is only the faculty of desire, although not that which makes him dependent on nature (through sensible impulses), not that in regard to which the value of his existence rests on what he receives and enjoys; rather it is the value that he alone can give to himself, and which consists in what he does, in how and in accordance with which principles he acts, not as a link in nature but in the freedom of his faculty of desire; i.e., a good will is that alone by means of which his existence can have an absolute value…” (*CJ* 5:443). “Thus” in Kant’s words “nothing is left but the value that we ourselves give to our lives through that which we do not merely do but also do so purposively and independently of nature (*CJ* 5:434ft). Kant often talks about the “worth which human beings alone can give themselves” (*CPrR* 5:86). We can put this point in other words. Autonomous attitude is nothing other than a particular kind of living. If practice begins with reason, in other words, with autonomy and humanity that means that such autonomous living also reveals itself as human living. Freedom reveals itself as humanity. Kant
argues that such autonomous, human living reveals itself as the good. Thus Kant paradoxically argues both that humanity is the good and that the good is the object of humanity. Humanity becomes good in becoming itself. Kant’s formulation of the good as the end in itself speaks to this paradoxical nature of the good. Humanity can be the end in itself if it is what it is only in becoming itself.

That autonomous, human living is the good does not mean that such a living is the normative standard of moral judgment. In other words, in calling autonomous, human living good, Kant is not saying that it is this living that we must treat as valuable when we act. If Kant were saying this, he would be contradicting himself. I have already argued that no object can determine the will if the will is to be rational. “An end as an object which must precede the determination of the will by a practical rule and contain the ground of the possibility of such a determination – hence the matter of the will takes as its determining ground – is always empirical” (CPrR 5:41). This is most clearly the case with the good understood as autonomous, human living. If this good were to guide living then there would be no autonomous, human living. What makes a living autonomous and human is precisely the fact that is has no guide, in other words, that it is pure wanting and acting, the kind of wanting and acting that produces its own good, itself, the pure good will. Therefore if the good as autonomous and human living were to be the guide of living it would destroy the very living that made it possible in the first place. In this sense, Kant writes that “the moral law is the sole determining ground of the pure will. But since this is merely formal (that is to say, it requires only that the form of a maxim be universally lawgiving), it abstracts as determining ground from all matter and so from every object of volition. Hence, though the highest good may be the whole object of a pure practical reason, that is, of a pure will, it is not on that account to be taken as its determining ground, and the moral
law alone must be viewed as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion of the object” (*CPrR* 5:109). We can put this point in other words. Kant does not say that I lead an autonomous human life because supposedly such a life is good. Instead, he says that when I do lead such a life, it reveals itself as good. The moral law is not moral because there is some good that makes it so. Instead, the moral law is moral in making the good. The highest expression of this good is feeling, specifically the feeling of respect. This is how one moves from the actualization of the ability to understand to the actualization of the ability to sense in practice.

Practical knowledge, Kant argues, moves from principles (the moral law) to concepts (the good will) “and only then could the last chapter conclude this part, namely the chapter about the relation of pure practical reason to sensibility and about its necessary influence upon sensibility to be cognized a priori, that is, about *moral feeling*” (*CPrR* 5:90). Kant does not have anything against feelings. Instead, he has something against feelings as determinations of the will. To this extent he has something against the feeling of pleasure. On the other hand, Kant argues, the feeling need not only be the determination of the will. It can also be the product of the will, specifically, of the good will. “The feeling that arises from consciousness of this necessitation is not pathological, as would be a feeling produced by an object of the senses, but practical only, that is, possible thorough a preceding (objective) determination of the will and causality of reason” (*CPrR* 5:80). But what is this feeling that does not determine the will but rather that the will as the good will produces? “But what name could one more suitably apply to this singular feeling which cannot be compared to any pathological feeling? It is of such a peculiar kind that it seems to be at the disposal of reason, and indeed of practical pure reason” (*CPrR* 5:76). Kant calls this feeling respect. But how can the will as good will produce the feeling of pleasure? It is reason that actualizes the good will. In this sense, it is really reason that produces the feeling of
respect. “This feeling [of respect] (under the name of moral feeling) is therefore produced solely by reason” (CPrR 5:76). But what is reason? Reason is the moral law. Therefore it is really the moral law that produces the feeling of respect. “The law that demands this respect and also inspires it is, as one sees, none other than the moral law (for no other excludes all inclinations from immediate influence on the will)” (CPrR 5:80). But what does the feeling of respect that the moral law produces respect? This is key. The feeling of respect that the moral law produces respects nothing other than that moral law itself. “But since this law is still something in itself positive — namely the form of an intellectual causality, that is, of freedom — it is at the same time an object of respect…it is an object of the greatest respect and so too the ground of a positive feeling that is not of empirical origin and is cognized a priori” (CPrR 5:73). But the moral law is the universal law, in other words, it is the autonomous attitude. Kant argues that when I live autonomously, that is, when I want freely and act freely, I feel respect for that kind of human life. This is what humanity is. This is why “respect is always directed only to persons, never to things” (CPrR 5:76). Heidegger recognizes this point in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. “Reason, as free, gives to itself that for which the respect is respect, the moral law. Respect before the law is respect before oneself as that self which does not come to be determined through self-conceit and self-love. Respect, in its specific making-manifest, thus refers to the person” (Heidegger 111). I have argued that the object of the autonomous will is itself as practical freedom. I have also argued that the autonomous will understands itself as transcendental freedom. But the autonomous will does not just understand itself as transcendental freedom. It also senses, that is, feels respect for itself. This is the ultimate meaning of practical knowledge as actualization. It is self-realization. “By reason’s ‘practical’ feature” Yovel argues “Kant thus indicates our ability to project inherent rational goals as our
personal interests, and thereby find the motivational power needed to pursue them. This drive is neither a natural instinct nor a utilitarian interest, but the person’s drive toward rational self-realization, and thereby, toward autonomy” (Yovel 272). Practical freedom and transcendental freedom are autonomy and humanity and it is for that, in other words, for our reason actualized that we feel respect.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

Das Selbstbewusstsein

How can we know abilities? “But all human insight is at the end as soon as we have arrived at basic powers or faculties; for there is nothing through which their possibility can be conceived, and yet it may not be invented and assumed at one’s discretion” (CPR R 5:47). I have argued that we know abilities to the extent that we actualize them. There are two ways of actualizing abilities. It is true that theoretical knowledge experiences objects. But how does it do that? Theoretical knowledge experiences objects by means of abilities. But this point is not specific enough. Theoretical knowledge experiences objects to the extent that theoretical knowledge is the actualization of abilities. I experience in the sense that I actualize the ability to sense as the activity of intuiting objects, that I actualize the ability to understand as the activity of conceptualizing objects, and so on. “Therefore, in theoretical use of reason only experience can justify us in assuming them [basic powers or faculties]” (CPR R 5:47). However, we must not miss the most important point about theoretical knowledge. The actualization of abilities in theoretical knowledge moves from sensibility to the understanding and finally ends with reason. In this sense, theoretical knowledge actualizes abilities in experience because there exist objects that stehen that knowledge entgegen, die Gegenstände, and awaken it into action. “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects [die Gegenstände] affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations, partly arouse the activity of our understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them, work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience” (CPR B1). In other words, without die Gegenstände there would be no actualization of abilities in
theoretical knowledge. In this sense, the actualization of abilities in theoretical knowledge is not an accomplishment at all. I need not do much more than keep my senses engaged in order to actualize my abilities in theoretical knowledge. But everything changes in practice. In *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* Heidegger argues that “in the field of subjectivity, where freedom primarily determines the mode of being of the subject and this mode of being is characterized by the ‘I can,’ the faculty, i.e., possibility, is higher than actuality. Here it is not actuality that constitutes existence but rather the ‘I can’ as ‘I am able to’” (Heidegger 256). The actualization of practical knowledge begins with reason then moves to the understanding and finally ends with sensibility. In this sense, the actualization of abilities in practical knowledge does not depend on objects that *stehen* that knowledge *entgegen, die Gegenstände*. In other words, the actualization of abilities in practical knowledge does not happen in experience. Therefore, we can also not know abilities in experience. “But this substitute, adducing empirical proofs in place of a deduction from sources of cognition a priori, is also denied us here with respect to the pure practical faculty of reason. For, whatever needs to draw the evidence for its reality from experience must be dependent for its possibility upon principles of experience, whereas pure but practical reason, by its very concept, cannot possibly be held to be dependent in this way” (*CPrR* 5:47). In other words, freedom is just not the kind of thing that can be experienced. “Moreover the moral law is given, as it were, as a fact of pure reason of which we are a priori conscious, and which is apodictically certain, though it be granted that no example of exact observance of it can be found in experience” (*CPrR*5:47). Thus no matter how much I engage my senses, I do not actualize my ability to reason in practice, I am not free. Instead, in order to be free I have to make myself free from scratch and in absence of all objects. “Hence the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proved by any deduction, by any
efforts of theoretical reason, speculative or empirically supported, so that, even if one were willing to renounce its apodictic certainty, it could not be confirmed by experience and thus proved a posteriori; and it is nevertheless firmly established by itself” (CPrR 5:47). Kant repeats this same point in *Reflexionen*. “The distinction between empirically-conditioned and pure, yet still practical reason is foundational for the critique of practical reason, which asks if there is such a thing as the latter. Its possibility cannot be comprehended *a priori*, because it concerns the relation of a real ground to its consequent. Something must therefore be given, which can stem only from it; and its possibility can be inferred from this reality” (quoted in Allison 1990 234).

But what is it that has to be given in order for practical knowledge to actualize abilities? This is the beauty of freedom. What has to be given is precisely that which gives what is to be given. What has to be given is the intelligible character or the autonomous attitude: “while, in the case of theoretical cognition, concepts have no significance and principles no use except with respect to objects of experience, in the practical realm they range much further: namely to all rational beings in general and independently of all empirical determining grounds. Even if no object of experience corresponds to them, the mere character [*Denkungsart*] and disposition based on principles [*Gesinnungnach Principien*] is enough (R 7201: 19; 275-6)” (quoted in Allison 1990 234). In this sense, I actualize abilities in practical knowledge not because some object awakens my practical knowledge. I can wait all I want, and nothing will ever happen. Instead, I actualize abilities in practical knowledge because I myself awaken my practical knowledge. In this sense, freedom operates entirely in the dark. It is the ultimate leap. In the *Science of Knowledge* Fichte writes that “it is therefore not so trivial as it seems to some, whether philosophy starts out from a fact or an Act (that is, from pure activity which presupposes no object, but itself produces it, and in which the acting, therefore, immediately becomes the deed)” (Fichte I 468). In fact, because
practical philosophy does not start out from a fact but from an act that it ought not to surprise us that Kant associates freedom with *das Selbstbewusstsein*.

“This is a suitable place for explaining the paradox which must have been obvious to everyone in our exposition of the form of inner sense (§6): namely, that this sense represents to consciousness even our own selves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves. For we intuit ourselves only as we are inwardly affected, and this would seem to be contradictory, since we should then have to be in a passive relation [of active affection] to ourselves. It is to avoid this contradiction that in systems of psychology *inner sense*, which we have carefully distinguished from the faculty of *apparception*, is commonly regarded as being identical with it” (*CPR* B153). I know myself as some objective self. However, Kant argues, this objective self is not the only self there is. Clearly, there must also me some other self that knows the objective self. But what other self is that? At the danger of infinite regress, that other self cannot itself be just another objective self. Instead, that other self has to be the subject of that knowledge. But what is that subject? “What determines inner sense is the understanding and its original power of combining the manifold of intuition, that is, of bringing it under an apperception, upon which the possibility of understanding itself rest” (*CPR* B153). The subject of that knowledge is nothing other than the power of combining. The question is what kind of knowledge knows that power of combining? Such knowledge cannot itself be representational to the extent that representational knowledge uses the very power that it is attempting to represent. Instead, Kant suggests, such knowledge of the power of combining would have to be *das Selbstbewusstsein*. “Consequently, this subject cannot be known. The subject of the categories cannot by thinking the categories acquire a concept of itself as an object of the categories. For in order to think them, its pure self-consciousness, which is what was to be explained, must itself be
presupposed” (CPR B422). In this sense, das Selbstbewusstsein is not the consciousness of some objective self. “The analysis, then, of the consciousness of myself in thought in general, yields nothing whatsoever towards the knowledge of myself as object” (CPR B409). In Kant’s Criticism of Metaphysics W.H. Walsh writes that “only if [Kant] makes consciousness of mental activity continuous with mental activity itself will he be able to avoid awkward questions about what self it is that I know when I know what I am about” (Walsh 187). Das Selbstbewusstsein is nothing other than the consciousness as the power of combining. In this sense, das Selbstbewusstsein cannot really be called knowledge of the self at all. “The consciousness of the self is thus very far from being a knowledge of the self, notwithstanding all the categories which are being employed…Just as for knowledge of an object distinct from me I require, besides the thought of an object in general (in the category), an intuition by which I determine that general concept, so for knowledge of myself I require, besides the consciousness, that is, besides the thought of myself, an intuition of the manifold in me, by which I determine this thought” (CPRB158). Instead, das Selbstbewusstsein is more like knowledge as the self. “I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination” (CPR B158). Das Selbstbewusstsein is the actualization of the self. Fichte develops this point. “The self, we say, reverts into itself. So is it therefore not already present for itself before the occurrence of this reversion, and independently thereof? Must it not already be there for itself, in order that it may make itself the object of an act? And if so doesn’t your philosophy in the case already presuppose what it was meant to explain?” (Fichte I 459). Fichte insists: “I answer: not at all. It is only through this act, and first by means of it, by an act upon an act itself, which specific act is preceded by no other whatever, that the self originally comes to exist of itself” (Fichte I 459). Schelling writes that “the self simply has no existence, prior to that act whereby thinking

7 See also Fichte I 458, I 463, I 499.
becomes its own object, and is thus itself nothing other than thinking becoming its object, and hence absolute nothing apart from the thought” (366-67). Das Selbstbewusstsein is the act of the self as an act. Fichte writes that “self and self-reverting act are perfectly identical concepts” (I 462). And Schelling concludes that “what the self is, we experience only by bringing it forth, for nowhere but in the self is the identity of being and producing fundamental” (Schelling 371-2).³⁸ Representational knowledge knows some objective self. But das Selbstbewusstsein is the act of the self as an act. In this sense, das Selbstbewusstsein is the coincidence of acting and being. “For the categories are those functions of thought (judgment) as already applied to our sensible intuition, such intuition being required if I seek to know myself. If, on the other hand, I would be conscious of myself simply as thinking, then since I am not considering how my own self may be given in intuition, the self may be mere appearance to me, the ‘I’ that thinks is no mere appearance in so far as I think; in the consciousness of myself in mere thought I am the being itself, although nothing in myself is thereby given for thought” (CPR B429). Again it is Fichte who recognizes this point. “The intellect as such observes itself; and this self-observation is directed immediately upon its every feature. The nature of intelligence consists in this immediate unity of being and seeing…By being posited as intellect, that for which it exists is already posited with it. In the intellect, therefore—to speak figuratively—there is a double series, of being and of seeing, of the real and of the ideal” (Fichte I 436). But it is Schelling who drives this point home. “The task, in a nutshell, consists of finding the point at which subject and object are immediately one. This unmediated identity of subject and object can exist only where the presented is at the same time that which presents…But this identity of presenter and presented occurs only in self-

³⁸ For interpretation of self-consciousness as an example of knowledge as actualization see CPR A402, B153, B157, B158, B159, B407, B408, B409, B414, B415, B421, B422, B429, B430, B431, and B432. See also Allison (1990 36-7), Heidegger (254-258), Hurley (151-3), Keller (2-9), Kelly (244-8), Kitcher (380-3), Mandt (28-30), Reuscher (276-290), Walsh (185-9), and Wilkerson (51-4).
This is the reason that Kant associates *das Selbstbewusstsein* with freedom. Freedom operates entirely in the dark. It is the ultimate leap. But how does one operate in the dark? How does one leap? In English self-consciousness suggests a knowledge of some objective self. I am self-conscious when I am most insecure. But German *das Selbstbewusstsein* has no such connotations. In fact, it has the exact opposite connotations. An alternative translation of *das Selbstbewusstsein* is confidence. And does not confidence name the coincidence of acting and being? Am I not self-conscious precisely when there is no self to speak of other than the acting? When I lose myself in acting to acting? “And we should also become aware that in the consciousness of our existence there is contained a something *a priori*, which can serve to determine our existence – the complete determination of which is possible only in sensible terms – as being related, in respect of a certain inner faculty, to a non-sensible intelligible world” (*CPR* B430). In this essay I have wondered how it is possible to know the thing in itself understood as freedom. Perhaps there is an alternative way of interpreting Kant’s famous claim. “I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith” (*CPR* Bxxx). Believing in oneself is already an actualization of freedom. Thus, Schelling argues, “self-consciousness is the act whereby the thinker immediately becomes an object to himself, and conversely, this act and no other is self-consciousness. This act is an exercise of absolute freedom…” (Schelling 364-65).

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9 See also Schelling 366-67, 368-69, and 371-72.
Kant’s due

Fichte writes that “the object of idealism [self-in-itself] has this advantage over the object of dogmatism [thing-in-itself] that it may be demonstrated, not as the ground of the explanation of experience [the transcendental object], which would be contradictory and would turn this system itself into a part of experience, but still in general in consciousness” (Fichte I 428). But how do we demonstrate the self-in itself? We do not demonstrate the self-in-itself because we know it representationally. For this reason Fichte writes: “the object of this system, therefore, actually occurs as something real in consciousness, not as a thing-in-itself, whereby idealism would cease to be what it is and would transform itself into dogmatism, but as a self-in-itself; not as an object of experience, for it is not determined but will only be determined by me, and without this determination is nothing, and does not even exist; but as something that is raised above all experience” (Fichte I 428). In this sense, transcendental idealism does not have a theoretical justification. Schelling agrees with Fichte on this point. Schelling writes that “even idealism has no purely theoretical basis, and to that extent, if theoretical evidence alone be accepted, can never have the evidential cogency of which natural science is capable, whose basis and proof alike a theoretical through and through” (Schelling 331-32). This means that the self-in-itself will have to be demonstrated in a kind of knowledge that is other than theoretical knowledge. “The intellectual intuition alluded to in the Science of Knowledge refers” Fichte writes “to action, and simply finds no mention in Kant (unless, perhaps, under the title of pure apperception). Yet is it nonetheless possible to point out also in the Kantian system the precise point at which is should have been mentioned. Since Kant, we have all heard, surely, of the categorical imperative? Now what sort of consciousness is that?” (Fichte I 471). Fichte claims that “Kant forgot to ask himself this question, since he nowhere dealt with the foundation of all philosophy…This consciousness
is undoubtedly immediate, but not sensory; hence it is precisely what I call ‘intellectual intuition’” (Fichte I 471). Fichte continues: “the consciousness of this law…forms the basis for the intuition of self-activity and freedom; I am given to myself, by myself, as something that is to be active in a certain fashion, and am thereby given to myself as active in general; I have life within me, and draw it from myself” (Fichte I 466). In short, “only though this medium of the moral law do I behold myself; and in thus seeing myself, I necessarily see myself as self-active” (Fichte I 466). Fichte argues that the foundation of philosophy is freedom. Schelling reaches the same conclusion that Fichte does. “Anyone who has followed us attentively thus far will perceive for himself that the beginning and end of this philosophy is freedom, the absolute indemonstrable, authenticated only though itself.—That which in all other systems threatens the downfall of freedom is here derived from freedom itself” (Schelling 376). Transcendental idealism is justified in practical knowledge. But perhaps we ought to give Kant his due.

There is the theoretical and the practical use of reason. Theoretical use of reason thinks the thing in itself in terms of God, immortality and freedom. But it does not know the thing in itself. “Now all synthetic knowledge through pure reason in its speculative employment is, as has been shown by the proofs given, completely impossible. There is therefore no canon of its speculative employment; such employment is entirely dialectical” (CPR A796/B824). In this sense, the theoretical use of reason is negative. In other words, it warns against its own use. “The greatest and perhaps the sole use of all philosophy of pure reason is therefore only negative; since it serves not as an organon for the extension but as a discipline for the limitation of pure reason, and, instead of discovering truth, has only the modest merit of guarding against error” (CPR A796/B824). However, by warning against its own use, the theoretical use of reason suggests that there may be a different use of reason. “There must, however, be some source of
positive modes of knowledge which belong to the domain of pure reason, and which, it may be, give occasion to error solely owing to misunderstanding, while yet in actual fact they form the goal towards which reason is directing its efforts” (CPR A796/B824). What use of reason is that? “If it is proved that there is pure reason, its use is alone immanent; the empirically conditioned use, which lays claim to absolute rule, is on the contrary transcendent and expresses itself in demands and commands that go quite beyond its sphere – precisely the opposite relation from what could be said of pure reason in its speculative use” (CPrR 5:16). This different use of reason is practical. “Reason has a presentiment of objects which possess a great interest for it. But when it follows the path of pure speculation, in order to approach them, they fly before it. Presumably it may look for better fortune in the only other path which still remains open to it, that of its practical employment” (CPR A796/B824). “Consequently,” Kant continues, “if there be any correct employment of pure reason, in which case there must be a canon of its employment, the canon will deal not with the speculative but with the practical employment of reason”(CPR A797/B825). The theoretical use of reason thinks the thing in itself. However, the practical use of reason knows the thing in itself as freedom. “It is really the concept of freedom that, among all the ideas of pure speculative reason, alone provides such a great extension in the field of the supersensible, though only with respect to practical cognition” (CPrR 5:103). But we must stress that this practical knowledge is radically different than theoretical knowledge. “For, the moral law is not concerned with the cognition of the constitution of objects that may be given to reason from elsewhere but rather with a cognition insofar as it can itself become the ground of the existence of objects and insofar as reason, by this cognition, has causality in a rational being, that is, pure reason, which can be regarded as a faculty immediately determining the will” (CPrR 5:46). Reason in practice does not know freedom as an object. Instead, reason in practice knows
freedom as the objectification of itself. “The practical a priori concepts in relation to the supreme principle of freedom at once become cognitions and do not have to wait for intuitions in order to receive meaning, and this happens for the noteworthy reason that they themselves produce the reality of that to which they refer (the disposition of the will), which is not the business of theoretical concepts” (CPrR5:66). Thus Kant talks about “the grand disclosure brought to us through practical reason by means of the moral law, the disclosure, namely of an intelligible world through realization of the otherwise transcendent concept of freedom…” (CPrR 5:94). I do not know freedom because I observe it. Freedom is not something to be observed. Freedom is something to be done. We can put this in stronger terms. Kant argues that “life is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire. The faculty of desire is a being’s faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations” (CPrR 5:10n). Freedom is life. Life is not something to be observed. Life is something to be lived. Even if that living takes the form of observation as it does in the paradoxical case of the philosopher.
PART II: The ethics of repetition

“Despite the fact that it has been discredited today, the doctrine of the faculties is an entirely necessary component of the system of philosophy. Its discredit may be explained by the misrecognition of this properly transcendental empiricism, for which was substituted in vain a tracing of the transcendental from the empirical. Each faculty must be borne to the extreme point of its dissolution, at which it falls prey to triple violence: the violence of that which forces it to be exercised, of that which it is forced to grasp and which it alone is able to grasp, yet also that of the ungraspable (from the point of view of its empirical exercise). This is the threefold limit of the final power. Each faculty discovers at this point its own unique passion - in other words, its radical difference and its eternal repetition, its differential and repeating element along with the instantaneous engendering of its action and the eternal replay of its object, its coming into the world already repeating” (DR 143).

Chapter 5: The Kantian lesson

Introduction

My goal in this part of the essay is not to evaluate whether Deleuze’s reading of the many philosophers that he discusses is correct. In fact, I am not even interested in evaluating whether Deleuze’s reading of Kant is correct. In many cases, I think, Deleuze’s interpretations of other philosophers are questionable. I trust that the reader will recognize these inconsistencies, and I will not bother to point them out. I take it to be a truism that philosophers misinterpret other philosophers. In Organs Without Bodies Slavoj Žižek writes that “all great ‘dialogues’ in the history of philosophy are so many cases of misunderstanding: Aristotle misunderstood Plato, Tomas Aquinas misunderstood Aristotle, Hegel misunderstood Kant and Schelling, Marx misunderstood Hegel, Nietzsche misunderstood Christ, Heidegger misunderstood Hegel…” (Žižek ix). Still I invite the reader to look past Deleuze’s important misinterpretations in order to see the point that I am trying to make. My goal is to give the reader a sense for Deleuze’s way of
doing philosophy. In other words, my goal is to show how Deleuze thinks. I adopt this method for a specific reason.

Many commentators recognize that Kant exerts considerable influence over Deleuze. No one has done more than Christian Kerslake in this respect. In “Deleuze, Kant and the Question of Metacritique” Kerslake writes: “while my Kantian interpretation is not intended to adequately represent all aspects of *Difference and Repetition*, it is intended to articulate the ultimate, metatheoretical framework for Deleuze's philosophical work up to and including that book” (Kerslake 484). In *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy* Kerslake writes that “the main claim of this book is that the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze represents the latest flowering of the project, begun in the immediate wake of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, to complete consistently the ‘Copernican revolution’ in philosophy” (Kerslake 5). I agree with Kerslake to an extent. Thus I argue that Deleuze’s philosophy in most important respects follows Kant’s. In chapter 5 I do a close reading of Deleuze’s *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*. I argue that in this work Deleuze develops an original interpretation of Kant’s Copernican Revolution. Specifically, I argue, Deleuze thinks that Kant only executes the true Copernican Revolution in the *Critique of Judgment*. I call this true Copernican Revolution the Copernican Counter-Revolution. This Revolution claims not so much that reason is interested in subjecting objects to itself, but rather that reason is interested in according contingently with the productive aspect of the object in order to develop itself. In some sense, this point requires that we revise our terminology. Specifically, here we cannot talk about the object since the object is precisely what the subject synthesizes. However, if we understand the subject as something that is itself developed in relation to the object then that object can no longer be said to be an object. Instead, it must be
something else, a kind of paradoxical non-object object. In chapter 6 I explain in what sense this Copernican Counter-Revolution forms the basis for Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*.

The Cogito synthesizes the manifold under concepts. The Cogito does so independently of the manifold. In this way, the Cogito produces objects. For this reason, that is, because the Cogito produces objects by synthesizing the manifold independently of it, the Cogito is spontaneous. However, that the Copernican Counter-Revolution is characterized by the interest of reason in according contingently with the productive aspect of the object in order to develop itself means that something other than the Cogito forms the beginning of Deleuze’s philosophical inquiry. The self must be immersed in the object of its inquiry. However, that this is the case means that the object of its inquiry cannot be what the Cogito conceptualizes. In other words, the object of the Cogito is not the object of this immersed self. Deleuze calls this self, which is immersed in its object of inquiry that is not the object of the Cogito, the passive self. However, this self is not passive in the sense that it is a *tabula rasa*. Instead, it is important to remember that it is precisely the Cogito that the passive self is supposed to replace. And just as much as the Cogito synthesizes, so does the passive self. In other words, the passive self too brings a synthesis to the table. The difference however is that this synthesis is not conceptual. In fact, the synthesis of the passive self is qualitatively different than the conceptual synthesis of the Cogito. That the self is passive means that it does not have the privilege of independence from its object that the Cogito has. The passive self synthesizes within that which it synthesizes. This means that the passive self synthesizes sensibly, and even more, Deleuze argues, organically. In this sense, Deleuze argues, before there can be the spontaneous Cogito that synthesizes conceptually, there must be some kind of minimal self, if we can even call that a self, that synthesizes sensibly and organically and in that way gives birth to the Cogito as well as the concept. This grounding of
the Copernican Revolution is the essence of the Copernican Counter-Revolution. In other words, the Copernican Counter-Revolution names the emergence of the qualitative distinction of subjectivity and objectivity that characterizes the essential aspect of the history of western philosophy.

That the passive self does not synthesize conceptually means that that which it synthesizes cannot take the form of the object. Instead, that the passive self synthesizes within that which it synthesizes means that whatever that something is, it must take the following form: 1) it must be its whole reality, 2) it must be its whole chaotic reality to the extent that the passive self does not arrive to it with a concept in hand, and 3) it must be its whole, chaotic and productive reality to the extent that it is within it that the passive self develops concepts at all. Deleuze calls this non-objective object in which the passive self immerses itself difference. It is within difference that the passive self gets to know at all. Moreover, that this knowledge does not take the form of conceptual synthesis means that knowledge cannot be spontaneity. Instead, if knowledge arises out of the sensible and organic syntheses within that which has the power to differ, Deleuze thinks that such knowledge is most properly characterized as repetition. I do not bring knowledge to the object. Instead, the passive self develops knowledge within the object that does not yet exist. Still, that such knowledge is repetition does not make it any less important than spontaneous knowledge. Actually, Deleuze argues, that the contrary is actually the case. The opposite of necessary knowledge is contingent knowledge. But repetition is just as little contingent knowledge as it is necessary knowledge. Repetition is the very condition of the existence of the self and for that reason cannot be merely contingent. At the same time however, such repetition cannot be necessary, because it itself does not arise out of concepts. Instead, it is concepts that arise out of it. This is why too Deleuze finds it necessary to talk about the singular
knowledge as a kind of third to the contingent knowledge and the necessary knowledge. Repetition is the knowledge that repeats difference as a power. It repeats the object that does not exist, inasmuch as it does not exist. For if it existed repetition would not be possible. The object would already be known. I develop these arguments in chapter 6.

However, my analysis of the relationship between Kant and Deleuze does not end there. In some sense, this is only the beginning. Or as I have said earlier, I agree with Kerslake but only to an extent. While I think that establishing such a relationship between Kant and Deleuze is valuable, it does not actually go far enough. The problem is that such an encounter between Kant and Deleuze happens exclusively on Deleuze’s terms. In other words, it is Deleuze’s important misinterpretation of Kant in Žižek’s sense that allows Deleuze to be influenced by Kant in the first place. “Precisely when one philosopher exerted a key influence upon another, this influence was without exception grounded in a productive misreading...” (Žižek ix). However, if we remain on this level of analysis that I perform in chapters 5 and 6, the most that we establish is that Deleuze’s Kant influences Deleuze. In other words, the most that we show is that Deleuze’s productive misreading of Kant allows him to develop his own philosophy. But Deleuze is already aware of this. In his lectures on Kant he claims that “we are all Kantians” (www.webdeleuze.com). For this reason, I am actually interested in a further question. What would it mean to say that it is not just Deleuze’s Kant but rather that it is Kant himself who influences Deleuze?

The reader will notice that I rarely, if ever, put Kant and Deleuze into a direct dialogue. I doubt that such a confrontation is fair to Kant because Deleuze has had the chance to read and write about Kant whereas Kant has never had the chance and pleasure to read Deleuze. Instead, I propose a different strategy. This thesis is composed of two parts. And each of these parts stands
on its own. Still, there is an important connection between them. In the first part of the essay I deal with the issue of the thing in itself. More than that however, I establish how Kant thinks about the relationship between ontology and ethics. Specifically, I argue that what is often taken to be the ultimate ontological principle in Kant’s philosophy, the thing in itself, is actually an ethical principle. In this part of my thesis I hope to do the exact same thing but this time with Deleuze. In this part I deal with Deleuze’s concept of difference. More than that however, I show that Deleuze’s difference, like Kant’s thing in itself, is not an ontological concept; rather it is an ethical concept. Specifically, chapter 7 brings this point into focus by giving a sufficient reason for the arguments that I make in chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 5 and 6 I argue that Deleuze understands knowledge as repetition and object as difference. In chapter 7 I argue that difference is an ethical concept and that knowledge is nothing other than the development of that concept through repetition. Thus my point is that Deleuze prefers to understand knowledge as repetition and object as difference not because he thinks that that way of understanding these matters somehow gets us closer to the nature of reality, but rather because that way of understanding knowledge and object is more ethical. Deleuze’s arguments for repetition difference are ethical arguments, and they are ethical in the literal sense: knowledge is repetition and object is difference for the one who lives ethically. I develop such an ethics in Chapter 7. This then is the ultimate connection that I want to establish between Kant and Deleuze. When reading the two parts of my thesis beside each other, I hope that the reader will recognize not just the influence that Deleuze’s Kant has on Deleuze, in other words, not just the influence of which Deleuze is well aware, but rather the real influence that Kant himself has on Deleuze, in other words, the real influence of which Deleuze does not seem to have been aware. Deleuze thinks like Kant does.
But this is not the only significance of chapter 7. Deleuze often likens his writing of the history of philosophy to sodomy. “I suppose the main way I coped with it at the time was to see the history of philosophy as a sort of buggery or it comes to the same thing an immaculate conception. I saw myself as taking an author from behind, and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous” (N 6). But I claim that Deleuze’s relationship with Kant does not take the form of sodomy. Or if it does then it is unclear that it is Deleuze who sodomizes Kant. Deleuze thought that he has a special relationship with Nietzsche. “It was Nietzsche, who I read only later, who extricated me from all this. Because you just can’t deal with him in the same sort of way. He gets up to all sorts of things behind your back” (N 6). But Deleuze might have been wrong about that point. In chapter 7 I show that Deleuze seems to recognize the precise moment when he thinks he must depart from Kant in favour of Nietzsche. When Deleuze argues that difference is an ethical rather than an ontological concept he seems to think that it is Nietzsche rather than Kant who allows him to make that argument. In fact, Deleuze thinks that it is precisely Kant who stands in the way of this argument. On the other hand, I hope that after reading the first part of my thesis, the reader will see the irony of Deleuze’s arguments against Kant and in favour of Nietzsche. Making what seems to be the ultimate ontological concept into an ethical concept is not opposed to Kant’s critical philosophy. It is as the first part of my thesis argues the very essence of Kant’s critical philosophy. In this sense, what Deleuze says of Nietzsche actually seems to be truer of Kant. In other words, it is really with Kant that Deleuze has a special relationship despite himself. ‘You just can’t deal with Kant in the same sort of way. He gets up to all sorts of things behind your back.’ Perhaps it is this reverse sodomy that names the true encounter between Kant and Deleuze.
Deleuze’s engagement with Kant concerns the most fundamental concept of his critical philosophy, namely reason and its interests. “The [transcendental] method sets out to determine: 1) the true nature of reason’s interests or ends; 2) the means of realizing these interests” (KCP 3).

In “Deleuze, Kant and the Question of Metacritique” Kerslake recognizes this point. “But look now how the entire Critique is structured in terms of a teleology of reason—a fact all too often neglected but that Deleuze makes central to his interpretation” (Kerslake 486). However, Deleuze argues, what is original about Kant is not so much the point that reason has an interest. Other philosophers have made a similar point. “Rationalism, for its part, indeed recognizes that a rational being pursues strictly rational ends. But, here, what reason recognizes as an end is still something external and superior to it: a Being, a Good, or a Value, taken as a rule of will” (KCP 2). Instead, Kant’s original point is that reason has an interest in itself. “Kant asserts that supreme ends of reason are not only ends of reason, but that in positing them reason posits nothing other than itself. In the ends of reason, it is reason which takes itself as its own end. Thus there are interests of reason, but reason turns out to be the only judge of its own interests” (KCP 2-3). That reason has an interest in itself means that it has an interest in knowledge, freedom and judgment. In other words, reason wants to know; reason wants to be free; and reason wants to judge. Deleuze argues that for Kant it is the faculties that realize the interests of reason. For this reason, his engagement with Kant is a critical study of the faculties. The full title of Deleuze’s book on Kant reads: Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties.

Kant gives two definitions of the faculties. In the first instance, faculties are ways in which human beings relate to something other than themselves. “We can distinguish as many faculties of mind as there are types of relations” (KCP 3). However, what determines the nature
of these relations is what Deleuze calls representations. In this sense, faculties are ways in which human beings relate to something other than themselves by means of representations. What is a representation? “Strictly speaking, intuition, even if it is a priori, is not a representation, nor is sensibility a source of representation. The important thing in representation is the prefix: representation implies an active taking up of what is presented; hence an activity and a unity distinct from the passivity and diversity which characterize sensibility as such” (KCP 8). Representation is a particular kind of activity that allows human beings to synthesize what is presented. Deleuze counts three such representations. “There are thus three active faculties which participate in synthesis, but which are also sources of specific representations when any one of them is considered in relation to any other: imagination, understanding and reason” (KCP 9).

Here we arrive at the second definition of the faculty. If in the first sense, the faculties are ways in which human beings relate to something other than themselves by means of different kinds of representations, the faculties in the second sense are precisely those representations. In this sense there are as many faculties as there are kinds of representations, because there are as many ways of relating to things other than ourselves as there are those activities that determine those ways of relating. “In the first sense, ‘faculty’ refers to the difference relationships of a representation in general. But, in a second sense, ‘faculty’ denotes a specific source of representations. Thus there are as many faculties as there are kinds of representations” (KCP 7). Deleuze distinguishes between two faculties understood in this twofold sense. “Every representation is related to something other than itself; both to an object and to a subject” (KCP 3). On the one hand, the faculties of knowledge and desire relate to objects by means of representations. “In the first place, a representation can be related to an object from the standpoint of its agreement to or conformity with it; this case the simplest defines the faculty of knowledge. Secondly, the
representation may enter into a causal relationship with its object. This is the *faculty of desire*” (*KCP* 3). On the other hand, the faculty of feeling pleasure and pain relates to the subject by means of representations. “Finally, the representation is related to the subject, in so far as it affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force. This third relationship defines the faculty of the *feeling of pleasure and pain*” (*KCP* 4). Deleuze identifies Kant’s critical philosophy with the following concern. “It is a matter of knowing whether each of these faculties – on the basis of the principle in terms of which it is defined – is capable of a *higher form*. We may say that a faculty has a higher form when it finds *in itself* the law of its own exercise (even if this law gives rise to a necessary relationship with one of the other faculties). In its higher form, a faculty is thus autonomous” (*KCP* 4). In other words, Deleuze argues, Kant’s critical philosophy explains in what sense the laws of what it means to know, to desire and to feel pleasure and pain is found in those faculties themselves.

It is reason itself that determines what the laws of knowledge, of desire and of feeling of pleasure and pain are in each case. “An interest of reason is defined by what reason is interested in, in terms of the higher state of a faculty” (*KCP* 5). However, it is the faculties themselves that realize those laws. The question that Deleuze is interested in is how exactly this realization is accomplished. It is here that his two definitions of the faculty come together. “Let us consider a faculty in its first sense; in its higher form it is autonomous and legislative; it legislates over objects which are subject to it; an interest of reason corresponds to it. The first question of the Critique in general was therefore: ‘What are these higher forms, what are these interests and to what do they relate?’” (*KCP* 9). Human beings do not just know or desire an object and feel pleasure and pain. Instead, they do so by means of those laws that reason itself imposes. But how do the faculties of knowledge, desire and feeling of pleasure and pain find out what those laws
are? They do so only by actually knowing, desiring and feeling pleasure and pain. But what does this mean? “But a second question arises: ‘How does an interest of reason realize itself?’ That is to say, what assures the subjection of objects, how are they subjected? What is really legislating in a given faculty? Is it imagination, understanding or reason?” (KCP 9). I actually know, desire and feel the pleasure and pain by means of representations. “We can see that once a faculty in the first sense of the word has been defined so that an interest of reason corresponds to it, we still have to look for a faculty in the second sense, capable of realizing this interest, or of supporting the legislative task” (KCP 9). Thus it is the representations in relations that realize the interests of reason. For example, the faculty of the understanding imposes the laws of nature in the name of the theoretical interest of reason whereas the faculty of reason imposes the moral laws in the name of the practical interest of reason. Deleuze is interested in Kant to the extent that he develops two radically different ways in which this can happen. In this regard Deleuze distinguishes between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*.  

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Common sense

“A representation on its own is not enough to form knowledge. In order to know something, we need not only to have a representation, but to be able to go beyond it: ‘in order to recognize another representation as being linked to it…’” (KCP 4). However, there are two ways of synthesizing representations. First, my way of synthesizing representations can be something that I learn from experience. “When it depends on experience it is a posteriori. If I say: ‘This straight line is white’ this involves two different determinations: not every straight line is white, and that which is, is not necessarily so” (KCP 4). On the other hand, my way of synthesizing representations can be something that I impose on experience. “In contrast, when I say: ‘A straight line is the shortest distance’, or: ‘Everything which changes has a cause’, I am performing an a priori synthesis: I am affirming B as being necessarily and universally linked to A” (KCP 4). That I learn the law of synthesis from experience means that the faculty of knowledge mirrors experience. In this sense, it does not reach its higher form. “As long as the synthesis is empirical, the faculty of knowledge appears in its lower form: it finds its law in experience and not in itself” (KCP 5). On the other hand, that I impose the law of synthesis on experience means that the faculty of knowledge legislates over experience. In this sense, it does reach its higher form. “The object itself must therefore be subjected to the synthesis of representation: it must be governed by our faculty of knowledge, and not vice versa. When the faculty of knowledge finds its own law in itself, it legislates in this way over the objects of knowledge” (KCP 5). How exactly is the faculty of knowledge capable of reaching its higher form?

“But, on the other hand, we may ask what faculty, as a source of representations, ensures this subjection and realizes this interest? What faculty (in the second sense) legislates in the
faculty of knowledge itself? Kant’s famous reply is that only understanding legislates in the faculty of knowledge or in the speculative interest of reason” (KCP 10). It is the understanding that imposes concepts onto objects. But that is not all. That the understanding imposes concepts onto objects also means that it determines the functions of the other faculties understood as representations. Deleuze develops this point in “The Idea of Genesis in Kant’s Aesthetics.” “So, in the Critique of Pure Reason, the understanding disposes completely determinate a priori concepts for a speculative purpose; it applies its concepts to objects (phenomena) which are necessarily subject to it; and it induces the other faculties (imagination and reason) to carry out this or that function, with the aim of understanding, and in relation to the objects of understanding” (DI 57). Specifically, the understanding determines the imagination to schematize: “the imagination does not schematize of its own accord, simply because it is free to do so. It schematizes only to the extent that the understanding determines it, induces it to do so. It schematizes only for speculative purpose, in accordance with the determinate concepts of the understanding, when the understanding itself plays the role of the legislator” (DI 58). On the other hand, the understanding determines reason to look for a middle term: “reason reasons only for a speculative purpose, in so far as the understanding determines it to do so, that is, induces it to look for a middle term so it may attribute one of its concepts to the objects governed by the understanding” (DI 59). In this way the understanding harmonizes the faculty of knowledge in the interest of reason. “So it is that the faculties enter into harmonious relations or proportions according to the faculty that legislates for this or that purpose” (DI 58). Deleuze calls such a harmony common sense. “It is the understanding which legislates and which judges, but under the understanding the imagination synthesizes and schematizes, reason reasons and symbolizes, in such a way that knowledge has a maximum unity. Now, any accord of the faculties between
themselves defines what can be called a common sense” (KCP 21). That the understanding produces common sense just means that everybody agrees on what it means to know. To know means to impose concepts onto objects. In other words, it means to represent. Thus in Difference and Repetition Deleuze argues that “everybody knows, no one can deny, is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative” (DR 130). This is the essence of the great Kantian reversal called the ‘Copernican revolution:’ the subject does not mirror the object; instead, the subject legislates over the object that is subject to it. “The fundamental idea of what Kant calls his ‘Copernican Revolution’ is the following: substituting the principle of a necessary submission of object to subject for the idea of a harmony between subject and object…The first thing that the Copernican revolution teaches us is that it is we who are giving the orders” (KCP 14). 10 However, Deleuze claims, common sense comes at a price.

“One of the most original points of Kantianism is the idea of a difference in nature between our faculties. This difference in nature appears not only at the level between the faculty of knowledge, the faculty of desire and the feeling of pleasure and pain, but also between the faculties as sources of representations” (KCP 22). That understanding determined imagination and reason means that it denies their difference, in other words, it denies what those faculties can themselves do. “Left to its own devices, the imagination would do something else entirely than schematize. The same holds for reason: reasoning is an original act of reason…On its own, 10 Deleuze makes a parallel case for the faculty of desire. “According to reason’s practical interest, it is reason which legislates itself; the understanding judges or even reasons (although this reasoning is very simple and consists in a simple comparison), and it symbolizes (it extracts from natural sensible law a type for supersensible nature)” (KCP 34). Thus we reach another harmony. “This is how we encounter a new form of harmony, a new proportion in the harmony of the faculties” (KCP 34). Unlike, the faculty of knowledge, the faculty of desire legislates over the thing in itself, that is, over freedom. “It seems, therefore, that practical reason, in giving the concept of freedom an objective reality, legislates over the object of this concept. Practical reason legislates over the thing in itself, over the noumenal and intelligible causality of such a being, over the supersensible world formed by such beings” (KCP 31). Kant calls this harmony the moral common sense. “We must therefore speak of a moral common sense…Moral common sense is the accord of the understanding with reason, under the legislation of reason itself” (KCP 35). In moral common sense everybody agrees on what it means to be free.
reason would do anything but reason; this is what we see in the *Critique of Pure reason*” (*DI* 58). This is why common sense is a dictatorship. “In the first two Critiques, therefore, we cannot escape the principle of an agreement of the faculties among themselves. *But this agreement is always proportioned, constrained, and determinate*: there is always determinative faculty that legislates, either the understanding for speculative purpose, or reason for a practical purpose” (*DI* 57). And is it not the case that every time everybody agrees on something we find ourselves incapacitated? Here Deleuze asks an important question. Can there be a free harmony of the faculties? In other words, can there be a harmony of the faculties where each faculty does what it alone can do, where each faculty enjoys its own difference? “Thus the first two Critiques set out a relationship between the faculties which is determined by one of them; the last Critique uncovers a deeper free and indeterminate accord of the faculties as the condition of the possibility of every determinate relationship” (*KCP* 68). However to the extent that common sense is the realization of the interests of reason do these questions also not suggest another: can there be an interest of reason that does not impose itself onto its object? This is aesthetic common sense.
Aesthetic common sense

The faculties of knowledge and desire legislate in the interest of reason. “The understanding legislates for a rational speculative purpose, and reason legislates for its own practical purpose” (DI 68-9). That the faculties of knowledge and desire legislate in the interest of reason means that they legislate over a domain of objects that are subject to them: “all legislation implies objects on which it is exercised and which are subject to it” (KCP 47). Phenomena are objects that are subject to the faculty of knowledge, and things in themselves are objects that are subject to the faculty of desire, for example the moral laws: “there are only two sorts of objects, phenomena and things-in-themselves: the first are governed by the legislation of the understanding for a speculative purpose; and second, by the legislation of reason for a practical purpose” (DI 58-9). That the faculty of knowledge reaches its higher form means that it does not mirror the laws of objects of knowledge but that it imposes its own laws on the these objects. That the faculty of desire reaches its higher form means that it does not mirror the objects of desire but rather that it imposes its own laws on these objects (freedom). This is the fundamental difference between these two faculties and the faculty of feeling pleasure and pain. “On the one hand, contrary to what happens in the case of the other faculties, the higher form here does not define any interest of reason: aesthetic pleasure is independent both of the speculative interest and of the practical interest and, indeed, is itself defined as completely disinterested” (KCP 47). That the faculty of feeling is disinterested means that it does not have a domain of objects. In other words, the faculty of feeling does not legislate over objects that are subject to it. “The faculty of feeling does not legislate over objects; it is therefore not in itself a faculty (in the second sense of the word) which is legislative” (KCP 49). However, that the faculty of feeling is
disinterested, in other words, that it does not legislate over objects that are subject to it does not mean that the faculty of feeling does not legislate at all.

“When the faculty of knowledge is grasped in its higher form, the understanding legislates in that faculty; when the faculty of desire is grasped in its higher form, reason legisitates in that faculty. When the faculty of feeling is grasped in its higher form, it is judgment which legislates in that faculty” (KCP 61). Judgment is not a faculty like the understanding, imagination and reason. In other words, judgment is not a representation. Instead, judgment expresses the accord between representations. “Every time Kant speaks of judgement as if it were a faculty it is to emphasize the originality of its act, the specificity of its product. But judgment always implies several faculties, and expresses the accord between them” (KCP 59). In what sense does judgment express the accord between representations? “Judgment is always a complex operation which consists in subsuming the particular under the general” (KCP 58). Judgment expresses the accord between representations to the extent that it subsumes the particular under the general within them. However, there are two ways of doing this. Determining judgment expresses the accord between the faculties where one faculty legislates. “Judgement is said to be determining when it expresses the accord of the faculties under a faculty which is itself determining: that is when it determines an object in accordance with a faculty posited at the outset as legislative” (KCP 59). This is the case with the faculties of knowledge and desire. Deleuze argues that in the determining judgment “the general is already given, known, and all that is required is to apply it, that is to determine the individual thing to which it applies…” (KCP 58). When judgment subsumes the particular under the general in the faculties of knowledge and desire the general is already given in the legislating faculties, that is, in the understanding and reason. “Saying that judgment determines an object is equivalent to saying
that the accord of the faculties is determined, or that one of the faculties exercises a determining or legislative function” (*KCP* 59). In this sense, determining judgment judges by means of the faculties of understanding and reason. “In theoretical judgment imagination provides a schema in accordance with the concept of the understanding; in practical judgment understanding provides a type in accordance with the law of reason” (*KCP* 59). Thus determining judgment expresses the forced accord of the faculty of knowledge (common sense) and the forced accord of the faculty of desire (moral common sense). However, everything changes with the reflective judgment. In reflective judgment the general is not given; instead, “the general poses a problem and must itself be found” (*KCP* 58). But what does this mean? The reflective judgment does not express the forced accord between the faculties where one faculty legislates. Instead, it expresses the accord between the faculties where no one faculty legislates. Reflective judgment expresses the free accord of the faculties. “But in reflective judgement nothing is given from the standpoint of the active faculties;...All active faculties are thus exercised freely in relation to it. Reflective judgment expresses a free and indeterminate accord between all the faculties” (*KCP* 60).

That the faculty of feeling does not legislate over objects does not mean that it does not legislate. The faculty of feeling legislates over the subject. “Finally, the representation is related to the subject, in so far as it affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force. This third relationship defines the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and pain” (*KCP* 4). Specifically, it is judgment that legislates over itself in the faculty of feeling. “Kant therefore refuses to use the word ‘autonomy’ for the faculty of feeling in its higher form: powerless to legislate over objects, judgment can be only heautonomous, that is, it legislates over itself” (*KCP* 48). But what kind of judgment is this? “The faculty of feeling does not legislate over objects; it is therefore not in itself a faculty (in the second sense of the word) which is legislative” (*KCP* 49)? Judgment does
not legislate as determining judgment. Instead, judgment legislates as reflective judgment. Therefore legislation takes on a new meaning. The reflective judgment expresses the free and indeterminate accord between all the faculties. In this sense, that the reflected judgment legislates in the faculty of feeling means that all the faculties in their free and indeterminate accord legislate in the faculty of feeling. “This latter case is very different from the other two: aesthetic judgement is reflective; it does not legislate over objects, but only over itself; it does not express a determination of an object under a determining faculty, but a free accord of all the faculties…” (KCP 61). This is the harmony that we have been looking for: the aesthetic common sense. “Here, then, is an accord between the imagination as free and understanding as indeterminate. It is a free and indeterminate accord between faculties. This agreement defines a properly aesthetic common sense (taste)” (KCP 49).

How can there be a free accord between the faculties? How can there be aesthetic common sense? “It would seem that Kant runs up against a formidable difficulty. We have seen that he rejected the idea of a pre-established harmony between subject and object; substituting the principle of a necessary submission of the object to the subject itself. But does he not once again come up with the idea of harmony, simply transposed to the level of faculties of the subject which differ in nature?” (KCP 22). It is important to recognize the reason why this question is confused. “The previous two Critiques begin with ready-made faculties, and these enter determinative relations and take on organized tasks under the direction of one legislative faculty” (KCP 68). However, the opposite is true here. That an interest of reason does not correspond to the faculty of feeling, in other words, that the faculty of feeling is disinterested and does not legislate over objects that are subject to it, in other words, that there is no legislating faculty in the faculty of feeling in the second sense just means that faculties are not determined. Therefore
when Kant talks about the free accord of faculties he is not talking about the free accord of already determined faculties. In this sense, the free accord of faculties is not god given. “But it is not enough to invoke a harmonious accord of the faculties, nor a common sense as the result of this accord; the Critique in general demands a principle of the accord, as a genesis of common sense” (KCP 22). The reason why there is a free accord between the faculties in the faculty of feeling is precisely because the faculties in the faculty of feeling are indeterminate, that is, precisely because they are produced. “We explain the universality of aesthetic pleasure or the communicability of higher feeling by the free accord of the faculties. But is it sufficient to assume this free accord, to suppose it *a priori*? Must it not be, on the contrary, *produced* in us? That is to say: should aesthetic common sense not be the object of a *genesis*, of a properly transcendental *genesis*?” (KCP 50). But that is not all. Just because the faculties are produced does not mean that they immediately enter into a free accord. The faculties could be produced and still not enter into a free accord. However, these objections fail to understand the nature of the genesis of the faculties. That the faculties are produced means that their production is inseparable from their free accord. In other words, the faculties are produced such that they accord freely. Deleuze argues for the genesis of the faculties in or as the free accord in two senses. “In two respects, then, the *Critique of Judgment* releases us in a new element: 1) a contingent agreement of sensible object with all our faculties together, instead, of a necessary submission to one of our faculties; 2) a free indeterminate harmony of the faculties among themselves, instead of a determinate harmony presided over by one of the faculties” (KCP 59). The faculties are produced in free accord in relation to their objects. I now discuss the aesthetic judgment ‘this is beautiful’ that expresses this genesis.
An interest of reason determines the faculties of knowledge and desire. However, that a faculty of feeling is disinterested means that it is indeterminate. But just because the faculty of feeling is disinterested does not mean that it cannot unite with an interest of reason. “It may, however, be united synthetically with a rational interest” (KCP 52). But what kind of interest of reason would that be? It cannot be either the speculative or the practical interest. “Indeed how could it be otherwise, since there are only two sorts of objects, phenomena and things in themselves; the first are governed by the legislation of the understanding for a speculative purpose; and the second, by the legislation of reason for a practical purpose” (KCP 58-9). In other words, an interest of reason cannot be an interest in legislating over objects that are subject to it. The faculty of feeling just does not legislate over objects that are subject to it. “The key question it as follows: what kind of interest is it? Until now we have defined the interests of reason by a type of objects which found themselves necessarily subject to a higher faculty. But there are no objects subject to the faculty of feeling” (KCP 53). Instead, it is an interest of reason understood in a paradoxical, new sense. The principles of Copernican Revolution are well-known. “The fundamental idea of what Kant calls his ‘Copernican Revolution’ is the following: substituting the principle of a necessary submission of object to subject for the idea of a harmony between subject and object” (KCP 14). The subject does not mirror the object. It legislates over the object that is subject to it. But perhaps there is in Kant the Copernican Counter-Revolution. It is precisely this interest of reason in both its speculative and practical forms that the third interest of reason reverses. “This is the third interest of reason: it is defined not by a necessary subjection but by a contingent accord of Nature with our faculties” (KCP 54). In the Copernican Counter-Revolution the subject does not legislate over the object that is subject to it. The subject mirrors the object: “the great discovery of the Critique of Judgment, the final Kantian reversal” (KCP
It turns out that the sun moves just as the earth does. But what is this object that the subject mirrors? “But what can constitute a rational interest here? It cannot bear on the beautiful itself. It bears exclusively on the aptitude which nature possesses to produce beautiful forms, that is to say forms which are capable of being reflected in the imagination” (KCP 53). That the faculty of feeling unites with an interest of reason means that the faculties in the faculty of feeling contingently accord with the aptitude which nature possesses to produce beautiful forms. But what does that mean? That nature is not subject to the subject does not therefore mean that the subject is subject to nature. “This second agreement is quite special. It must be confused with a necessary subjection of the objects of nature; but it must not be taken as a final or teleological agreement either. If there were a necessary subjection, then the judgment of taste would be autonomous and legislative; if there were a real objective finality, then the judgment of taste would no longer be heautonomous” (DI 64), that is, as Kant writes “(‘we would have to learn from nature what we should find beautiful, in which case judgment would be subject to empirical principles’)” (KCP 64). Instead, that the faculties mirror the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful forms means that the faculties participate in the production of beautiful forms. The faculties coproduce beautiful forms. Deleuze argues that Kant calls this coproduction the genesis of the faculties. “That is to say that the interest of the beautiful…is concerned with the production of the beautiful in nature, and as such can serve as a principle in us for a genesis of the feeling of the beautiful itself” (KCP 53). This genesis of the faculties is always holistic. In other words, the genesis of the faculties is not a genesis of this or that faculty. Instead, it is the genesis of faculties in agreement among themselves. In this sense, the encounter of the faculties and nature produces the agreement of the faculties. “So it is that the internal agreement of our faculties between themselves implies an external agreement between nature and these same
faculties” (*DI* 64). For this reason, aesthetic judgment does not express the legislation of one determined faculty over nature that is subject to it, but rather expresses the agreement of generated faculties in their own agreement, one the one hand, and nature, on the other. “Precisely, however, since this agreement is external to the agreement of the faculties among themselves, and since it defines only the occasion when our faculties do agree, the purpose connected with the beautiful is not part of aesthetic judgment. From that point on, this agreement without goal can serve, without risking contradiction, as a genetic principle of the *a priori* agreement of the faculties in this judgment” (*DI* 65). In this sense, if “the first thing that the Copernican Revolution teaches us is that it is we who are giving the orders” (*KCP* 14), the first thing that the Copernican Counter-Revolution teaches us is that we are giving the orders that nature herself happens to be giving. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues, that being is univocal. “The words ‘everything is equal’ may therefore resound joyfully, on condition that they are said of that which is not equal in this equal, univocal Being: equal being is immediately present in everything, without mediation or intermediary, even though things reside unequally in this equal being” (*DR* 37). I explain in what exact sense the aesthetic judgment ‘this is beautiful’ expresses the free accord of the faculties of imagination and understanding as well as reason.

It is not the object but rather the form of the object that we judge to be beautiful. “But what representations can, in aesthetic judgement [‘this is beautiful’], have this higher pleasure as its effect? Since the material existence of the object remains indifferent, it is once again a case of the representation of a pure form. But this time it is a form of the object” (*KCP* 47). We must understand this point correctly. The form of the object that we judge to be beautiful is not the form of intuition. In other words, we do not judge space and time to be beautiful. Deleuze argues that sensibility is not a representation. “Strictly speaking, intuition, even if it is *a priori* is not a
representation, nor is sensibility a source of representations. The important thing in representation is the prefix: re-presentation implies an active taking up of that which is presented; hence an activity and a unity distinct from the passivity and diversity which characterize sensibility as such” (KCP 8). On the other hand, imagination, understanding and reason are sources of representations. “We must distinguish between, on the one hand, intuitive sensibility as a faculty of reception, and, on the other, the active faculties as sources of real representations” (KCP 8-9). In this sense, sensibility is not a faculty in the way imagination, understanding and reason are faculties. “There are thus three active faculties…which are also sources of specific representations when any one of them is considered in relation to any other: imagination, understanding, reason” (KCP 9). However, that sensibility is not a faculty also means that it cannot enter into the free and indeterminate accord between the faculties. In this sense, the form of the object that we judge to be beautiful must be other than the forms of intuition. “And this form cannot simply be that of intuition, which relates us to materially existing external objects” (KCP 47). What is this other form? When the faculty of the imagination is determined by the faculty of the understanding it schematizes. “But schematism is always the act of an imagination which is no longer free, which finds its action determined in conformity with a concept of the understanding” (KCP 49). But imagination is free of understanding (as well as of reason) in the faculty of feeling. “The imagination is liberated from the supervision of the understanding and reason” (DI 59). When the imagination is free, it does something other than schematize. “Left to its own devices, the imagination would do something else entirely than schematize” (DI 58). What does free imagination do? Well it does not do anything on its own. It is indeterminate. Instead, the free imagination is generated in the encounter with nature. The free imagination reflects the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful
forms. “In fact the imagination does something other than schematize: it displays its deepest freedom in reflecting the form of the object, it is ‘as it were, at play in the contemplation of the figure,’ it becomes productive and spontaneous imagination ‘as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions’” (KCP 49). Thus we find the form of the object that we judge to be beautiful. “In every respect, then, we must distinguish the intuitive form of sensibility from the reflected form of the imagination” (DI 59). The form of the object that we judge to be beautiful is the form of the object that the imagination reflects. “In fact, ‘form’ now means this: the reflection of a singular object in the imagination. Form is the aspect of an object which the imagination reflects, as opposed to the material element of the sensations which this object provokes in so far as it exists and acts on us” (KCP 47). But it is not just the imagination that is generated in the encounter with nature.

“When we say ‘this is beautiful’ we do not just mean ‘this is pleasant’: we claim a certain objectivity, a certain necessity, a certain universality” (KCP 48). In this sense, the judgment ‘this is beautiful’ always already involves the faculty of understanding. But what exactly is the nature of this involvement? The faculty of imagination does not determine the faculty of understanding to do anything. “It is true that in the Critique of Judgment the imagination does not take on a legislative function on its own account” (KCP 68). In other words, “the imagination cannot attain a role comparable to that played by the understanding in speculative judgment, or that played by reason in practical judgment” (KCP 59). Instead, the judgment ‘this is beautiful’ involves the faculty of the understanding as indeterminate. “We have seen the role played by the imagination: it reflects a particular object from the point of view of form. In doing this it does not relate to a determinate concept of the understanding. But it relates to the understanding itself, as the faculty of concepts in general: it relates to an indeterminate concept of the understanding. In other
words, the imagination, in its pure freedom, is in agreement with the understanding in its non-specified legality” (*KCP* 48). That the faculty of the understanding is indeterminate means that the judgment ‘this is beautiful’ does not contain a determinate concept. “Each time a determinate concept (geometric shapes, biological species, rational ideas) intervenes, aesthetic judgment ceases to be pure at the same time that beauty ceases to be free” (*KCP* 48). But there is good reason for that. The faculty of understanding is generated as indeterminate in its agreement with the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful forms. “Through ‘reflection’ we may undoubtedly discover a concept which exists already, but reflective judgment will be all the purer for having no concept whatsoever for the thing which it freely reflects, or if the concept is (in a certain sense) enlarged, limitless, indeterminate” (*KCP* 60). In this sense, in the aesthetic judgment ‘this is beautiful’ the determined understanding does not legislate over objects that are subject to it. “It is not the existence of the represented object which counts, but the simple effect of a representation on me” (*KCP* 46). Instead, the object is too much for the understanding. “How is the genesis of the sense of beautiful presented? It seems that the free materials of nature – colours, sounds – do not relate simply to the determinate concepts of the understanding. They overwhelm the understanding, they ‘give food for thought’ much more that that which is contained in the concept” (*KCP* 54). What is this food that nature provides that makes the understanding grow?

What overwhelms the understanding is the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful forms. If the imagination reflects this aptitude, Deleuze argues, “reason discovers the many presentations of its Ideas in sound, colour and free matter” (*DI* 65). In other words, the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful forms symbolizes the Ideas of reason such as the Idea of pure innocence. “The free materials of sensible nature symbolize the Ideas of reason; and in this way
they allow the understanding to expand, the imagination to free itself” (*KCP* 55). In this sense, the understanding becomes the faculty of “enlarged, limitless, indeterminate” (*KCP* 60) concepts. “For example, we do not merely relate colour to a concept of the understanding which would directly apply to it, we also relate it to a *quite different* concept which does not have an object of intuition on its own account, but which resembles the concept of the understanding because it posits its object by analogy with the object of intuition” (*KCP* 54). Deleuze’s favourite example is white lily. “Thus white lily is not merely related to the concepts of colour and of flower, but also awakens the Idea of pure innocence, whose object is merely a (reflexive) analogue of the white in the lily of flower” (*KCP* 54). But that is not the whole point. Not every white lily awakens the Idea of pure innocence. In other words, we only judge singular objects to be beautiful. “But the pure representation of the beautiful object is particular: the objectivity of the aesthetic judgment is therefore without a concept or (which amounts to the same thing) its necessity and universality are subjective” (*KCP* 48). It is never ‘all lilies are beautiful’, but only ‘this lily or that lily is beautiful’. “aesthetic judgment is…only always particular, of the type ‘this rose is beautiful’ (the proposition ‘roses in general are beautiful’ implying a logical comparison and judgment” (*KCP* 47). For this reason, the understanding as indeterminate does not play an objective, but rather a subjective role in the judgment ‘this is beautiful.’ In fact, the most that it does is communicate the feeling produced by the encounter with nature that is with reason. When we judge things to be beautiful we feel pleasure. “In aesthetic judgment the reflected representation of the form causes the higher pleasure of the beautiful” (*KCP* 47). The understanding as indeterminate, that is, “the understanding in its non-specified legality” communicates this feeling of pleasure. “We suppose that our pleasure is by rights communicable to or valid for everyone; we assume that everyone must experience this…However, this
supposition would be impossible without some sort of intervention from the understanding” (KCP 48). This is why the aesthetic judgment ‘this is beautiful’ is not an objective but is rather a subjective judgment. “Aesthetic common sense does not represent an objective accord of the faculties (that is, a subjection of objects to a dominant faculty which would simultaneously determine the role of the other faculties in relation to these objects), but a pure subjective harmony where imagination and understanding are exercised spontaneously, each on its own account” (KCP 49). In other words, not everybody agrees on what is beautiful, even though, everybody feels the pleasure associated with the beautiful. This is the difference between common sense, moral common sense and the aesthetic common sense. “Since it [aesthetic common sense] does not come into being under a determinate concept, the free play of imagination and the understanding cannot be known intellectually but only felt” (KCP 49). Nobody knows what beauty is, because beauty is not the kind of thing that can be known. It is neither the phenomenon, nor the thing in itself. But everybody feels beauty as pleasure.

We can put the main point of Deleuze’s Kant’s Critical Philosophy in following terms. There is an important difference between the first two Critiques and the third Critique. “The Critique of Judgment does not restrict itself to the perspective of conditions as it appeared in the other two Critiques; with the Critique of Judgment, we step into Genesis” (DI 69). For this reason, Deleuze argues, the Critique of Judgment grounds the two other Critiques. “This is tantamount to saying that the Critique of Judgement, in its aesthetic part, does not simply exist to complete the other two Critiques: in fact, it provides them with a ground” (DI 58). Whatever a faculty does even if it legislates in another faculty that faculty must first be developed. “How could any faculty, which is legislative for a particular purpose, induce the other faculties to perform complementary, indispensible tasks, if all the faculties together were not, to begin with,
capable of free spontaneous agreement, without legislation, without purpose, without predominance” (DI 58). Deleuze also puts this point in positive terms. “A faculty would never take on a legislative and determining role were not all the faculties together in the first place capable of this free subjective harmony” (KCP 50). It is in this sense that “the Critique of Judgment uncovers the ground presupposed by the other two Critiques: a free agreement of the faculties” (DI 58). We can put this in other words. In Kant’s Critical Philosophy Deleuze distinguishes between two different interests of reason. On the one hand, reason is interested in subjecting objects to itself. On the other hand, reason is interested in according contingently with the productive aspect of nature which exceeds it. Deleuze argues that one of these interests is primary. Specifically, he claims, reason is interested in subjecting objects to itself to the extent that in the first instance it is interested in according contingently with that productive aspect of nature which exceeds it. It is this point that Deleuze develops in Difference and Repetition. In other words, Difference and Repetition develops the ground of Kant’s critical philosophy. The title of the book names precisely this ground.
Chapter 6: The genesis of thought

Kant versus Kant

The insight of the Copernican Revolution is that the object is only an object in relation to a synthesis. But what is a synthesis? Synthesis is an imposition of the concept onto the manifold. Furthermore, that such synthesis is conceptual means that it is something that the self brings to the table. But not even that is the ultimate point. That the self synthesizes conceptually means that it is spontaneous. In other words, the conceptual synthesis is the demonstration of spontaneity. This freedom is not only positive in the sense that it names the conceptual synthesis. It is also negative. In other words, it names the independence of the self from the contingencies of nature. The self does not synthesize conceptually because it has received this power from nature. It does so completely on its own, in other words, it does so in abstraction from nature. In this sense, the conceptual synthesis is the condition of the possibility of empirical knowledge. In other words, without it, there is no empirical knowledge. Deleuze calls the self of the Copernican revolution the Cogito. He claims that the Cogito is the subject that unifies all of the other faculties under the faculty of the understanding in the sense that the concept subsumes representations of all the other faculties. In other words, the faculty of the understanding makes the representations of all the other faculties answer to the concept. For example in the Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that intuitions without concepts are blind and that the Ideas of reason are transcendental because they cannot be conceptualized. It is in this way, that is, because the Cogito unifies all of the other faculties under the faculty of the understanding in the sense that the concept subsumes representations of all the other faculties, that the Cogito confronts an object at all. “This is the meaning of the Cogito as a beginning: it expresses the unity of all the faculties in the subject; it thereby expresses the possibility that all the faculties will relate to a
form of object which reflects the subjective identity...” (DR 133). That the faculty of the understanding unifies all the other faculties such that the concept subsumes the representations of the other faculties means that the object that the subject confronts is identical to its own concept. In other words, the identity of the object just is the identity of the subject. This confrontation of the Cogito and the object is what Kant calls cognition. However, since such cognition takes the form of the concept that the Cogito itself imposes and which is the very source of the identity between itself and the object, such cognition is recognition. “Recognition may be defined by the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined or conceived” (DR 133). In this sense, cognition is like cognizing again what has already been somehow known. It is inevitable that one here recognize a Platonic influence. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant writes that “for Plato ideas are archetypes of the things themselves, and not, in the manner of the categories, merely keys to possible experiences” (CPR B370/A314). Still, Kant claims, “it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject, whether in ordinary conversation or in writing, to find that we understand him better than he has understood himself” (CPR B370/A314). Deleuze argues that for Kant Plato’s ideas are concepts. This is why Deleuze talks about the concepts in terms of identity. The concept is not identical to something else. Instead, it is identical to itself in the sense that it is stable, unified, simple, and eternal, in the broadest sense, in the sense that it is intelligible. “The ‘sameness’ of the Platonic Idea which serves as model and is guaranteed by the Good gives way to the identity of an originary concept grounded in a thinking subject” (DR 265-6). It is in relation to this account of cognition as recognition that Deleuze wants to say something original.
Deleuze claims that the Copernican Revolution is only a secondary revolution. That reason is interested in subjecting objects to itself to the extent that in the first instance it is interested in according contingently with that productive aspect of nature which exceeds it means that there is a cognition that precedes and makes recognition possible. In simple terms, there is a cognition that is not about cognizing something that has already been somehow known. Instead, it is about cognizing something that has never been known at all. In this sense, Deleuze’s cognition is about the encounter with difference. For Deleuze this kind of cognition names the true Copernican Revolution, the Copernican Counter-Revolution. The Copernican Counter-Revolution does not begin with the Cogito and the identity of the concept. Instead, it attempts to explain how such a Cogito and such a concept come to be in the first place. In other words, the encounter with difference is a productive encounter. It is what produces the Cogito and the concept in the first place. “That identity not be first, that it exists as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle become; that it revolve around the Different; such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical” (DR 41). Deleuze argues that cognition does not come before the encounter with difference. Instead, it is within that encounter that cognition comes to be at all. But that means that cognition must take the form that is other than recognition. Cognition can be recognition only to the extent that it does not come to be, only if it always has been. In other words, cognition can be recognition to the extent that it names the imposition of the identity of the concept. On the other hand, Deleuze argues that cognition that comes to be in its encounter with difference must altogether be prior to cognition as recognition. It must ground recognition. This
is what it means to say that difference must have its own concept. The concept must arise out of difference.

The Copernican Counter-Revolution does not begin with the Cogito. In other words, it does not begin with the conceptual synthesis. But what does that mean? Without the Cogito and the conceptual synthesis there is no object. In simple terms without the subject there is no object. What is there then? The Copernican Counter-Revolution begins with the passive self. What is the passive self? Deleuze argues that Kant recognizes the insufficiency of the Cogito. This recognition takes the form of the critique of Descartes (as well as the form of self-critique). According to Descartes, that thought takes the form of a concept demonstrates the existence of the spontaneous subject, the Cogito. In simple terms, that I think conceptually demonstrates that I exist as a free self. However, according to Deleuze, Kant questions precisely this relationship between thinking and being. “It is as though Descartes’ Cogito operated with two logical values: determination and undetermined existence. The determination (I think) implies an undetermined existence (I am, because ‘in order to think one must exist’) – and determines it precisely as the existence of the thinking self: I think therefore I am, I am a thing which thinks” (DR 85). Deleuze argues that Kant disagrees with this point. In The Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that “in the consciousness of myself in mere thought I am the being itself, although nothing in myself is thereby given for thought” (CPR B429). Kant’s point is that my thinking does not demonstrate the existence of a being that is other than that thinking. In other words, my thinking does not demonstrate the existence of the thinking self. The most that it does demonstrate is the existence of that thinking. In other words, that I think demonstrates only that I think. Actually to the extent that even the word ‘I’ is superfluous here given that this thinking does not demonstrate
it, Kant argues, the most that thinking demonstrates is that there is in fact thinking. In this sense, Kant undermines the idea that for thinking demonstrates the existence of the Cogito.

Kant does not so much undermine thinking. In a sense, the entire *Critique of Pure Reason* is a meditation on the possibility of thinking. Instead, Kant undermines the Cogito. Is it not the case that one enters a labyrinth as soon as one attempts to find a self that underlies the various faculties in the *Critique of Pure Reason*? In the first part of this essay I too interpret the transcendental subject exclusively in terms of the multiplicity of faculties. But Kant’s point is not merely negative. That Kant undermines the Cogito also means that he undermines something else. That he undermines the Cogito does not mean that he undermines thought as such. He is quite clear that there is thought. His point is merely that such a thought does not demonstrate the Cogito. Therefore that Kant undermines the Cogito means that he undermines a particular kind of thought, a particular image of thought, namely the thought that the Cogito thinks, that is the thought that thinks in terms of the identity of the concept. In this sense, Deleuze paradoxically claims that Kant undermines thought as the conceptual synthesis. (This is a paradoxical claim because it seems that for Kant thought just is the conceptual synthesis). In any case, this negative point allows for a positive one. Deleuze argues that when Kant suggests that there is thought without the Cogito, he suggests that there is thought outside of the identity of the concept, in other words, that thought can be something other than the conceptual synthesis. Thus Deleuze argues that “when determination as such occurs, it does not simply provide a form or impart form to a given matter on the basis of the categories” (*DR* 275). What kind of thought is this thought outside of the identity of the concept? And who if not the Cogito thinks this thought that is not the conceptual synthesis?
“The entire Kantian critique amounts to objecting against Descartes that it is impossible for determination to bear directly upon the undetermined. The determination (‘I think’) obviously implies something undetermined (‘I am’), but nothing so far tells us how it is that this undetermined is determinable by the ‘I think’” (DR 85-6). Thought does not imply the existence of the Cogito. However, it does imply the existence of some kind of self. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that “the I think expresses the act of determining my existence. The existence is thereby already given, but the way in which I am to determine it, i.e., the manifold that I am to posit in myself as belong to it, is not yet thereby given” (CPR B157). This point is fundamental. What this self is, depends on what form the relationship between it and thought takes. In other words, we can only recognize what kind of self lies at the bottom of thought if we recognize the form that its relationship takes to thought. What is this relationship? Deleuze argues that there has to be a way in which thought relates to the self. “Kant therefore adds a third logical value: the determinable or rather the form in which the undetermined is determinable (by the determination)” (DR 86). If there was no way that thought related to the self, Kant would have to fall back into talking about the Cogito, in other words, about the identity of thought and self. Deleuze would have to fall back into talking about thinking as the demonstration of spontaneity. On the other hand, Deleuze argues, for Kant thought relates to the self in terms of something determinable. This is an interesting point. Even though Kant does not begin with Cogito, he does begin with thought. And it is this thought that relates to the self in terms of something determinable. Deleuze argues that this determinable for Kant is time. “Kant’s answer is well known: the form under which undetermined existence is determinable by the ‘I think’ is that of time...” (DR 86). Deleuze claims that for Kant thought relates to the self in terms of time. What does this mean? There is thought; there is time; and there is the self. That the determination
(I think) determines the undetermined (I am) in terms of the determinable (time) means that thought temporalizes the self. In other words, it means that thought does not so much demonstrate the Cogito outside of time, but rather the self in time. We can put this in simple words. The fact that we think demonstrates not so much that we exist outside of time, that we are intelligible, but rather that we live in time, that we are sensible. Thought implies the existence of some kind of self. But this self is not the active Cogito in other words the self in possession of the concept. Instead, it is the self in time, the passive self. Deleuze thinks that this is an important point. “The consequences of this are extreme: my undetermined existence can be determined only within time as the existence of a phenomenon, of a passive receptive phenomenal subject appearing within time” (DR 86). The self that thinks is not the spontaneous self, the Cogito. Instead, the self that thinks is the receptive, passive self. Therefore it is not like there is a self that demonstrates its freedom in thought. Instead, there is the thought and this thought implies the passive self. “As a result, the spontaneity of which I am conscious in the ‘I think’ cannot be understood as the attribute of a substantial and spontaneous being, but only as the affection of a passive self which experience its own thought – its own intelligence, that by virtue of which it can say I – being exercised in it and upon it but not by it” (DR 86). This is why Deleuze likes to say that for Kant another one thinks in me, that ‘I’ is another. This is how Kant explodes both the Cogito and thought as conceptual synthesis. More importantly, Deleuze finds his own project in this Kantian explosion. “Rather than being interested in what happens before and after Kant (which amounts to the same thing), we should be concerned with a precise moment within Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism…” (DR 58). So how does one continue this furtive and explosive moment within Kantianism? One begins with the passive self. However that one begins with the passive
self also means that one must understand the nature of thought in different terms. Thought is not a conceptual synthesis. However that does not mean that thought is not a synthesis at all. The passive self is not the Cogito, but it is not a *tabula rasa* either. This is how one arrives through Kant at Deleuze’s project in *Difference and Repetition*. 
Difference and repetition

Deleuze often suggests that philosophy is an ontology. One might think that for this reason Deleuze is a dogmatic philosopher, a metaphysician. Often, Deleuze himself seems to say as much. But I argue that this is not the case. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant talks about the object from the perspective of the Cogito which is to say that he talks about the appearance. But when Deleuze talks about difference he is no less critical than Kant. The only difference is in their respective starting points. In Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition James Williams writes that “the Deleuzian appeal to the transcendental is, thus, very different from the Kantian. It turns on the question where they begin, what they take as given…” (Williams 123). In fact, if the Copernican Counter-Revolution is to ground the Copernican Revolution, Deleuze must be a critical philosopher. In this regard it is important to note that Deleuze does not say that philosophy is an ontology without at the same time saying that being is univocal. “Philosophy merges with ontology, but ontology merges with the univocity of Being” (LS 179). But why is being univocal? The passive self does not arrive to being with a concept in hand. This means that the passive self does not confront an object but is rather immersed in it. In “Six Notes on the Percept” François Zourabichivili argues that “mind is the membrane of the external world, rather than an autonomous gaze directed towards it. Everyone may therefore say ‘I am the world, or a piece of the world’…” (Zourabichivili 197). Actually, to the extent that the passive self does not arrive with the concept in hand means that we cannot even talk about the object. Perhaps the most that we can say is that the passive self is immersed. But even this is saying too much. To the extent that the self is passive in other words that it does not arrive with the concept in hand means that this self is indistinguishable from its immersion, simply, that the passive self is its immersion. But even this extreme way of putting it also says too much. To the extent that the
passive self is to be immersed means that we cannot make any kind of distinction between it and its immersion. In other words, we cannot even talk about ‘immersion’ because immersion supposes a passive self that then immerses. What then are we to say? Rather than talk about the passive self and its immersion, the only thing that we can talk about is the univocal being. This is Deleuze’s first point. However, one need not stop at this level of analysis. While being is univocal, Deleuze argues, that does not mean that all beings are the same. “The univocity of Being does not mean that there is one and the same Being; on the contrary beings are multiple and different, they are always produced by a disjunctive synthesis, and they themselves are disjointed and divergent, *membra disjuncta*” (*LS* 179). Even though being is univocal, beings are different. And it is these differences among beings in the univocal being that suggest that being is not just univocal, but rather that this univocal being is itself difference. “With univocity, however, it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference” (*DR* 39). Difference names the productive power of the univocal being to differentiate and multiply beings. One of these beings is the passive self.

The self is not just immersed. If it was, it would not be possible to talk about it as passive. To say that the self is passive is to say that it does not arrive to being with a concept in hand. Still that the self does not arrive with the concept in hand does not mean that it does not do anything. It is only the kind of philosophy that thinks that the self is a self only to the extent that it is in possession of the concept that deems such a passive self a non-self. But Deleuze argues against this spontaneous notion of the self, the Cogito. For this reason, he also discredits its alternative whatever it may be. The self is still a self even though it is not in possession of the concept. Its passive nature is precisely what distinguishes it from the Cogito. Deleuze calls this passive nature of the self ‘repetition.’ Even though the self does not impose the concept onto being thus
separating out the subject from the object, it does repeat whatever being is. However, since that being is univocal that means that repetition itself happens within that being. Repetition is of being. “There is therefore nothing repeated which may be isolated or abstracted from the repetition in which it was formed, but in which is it also hidden” (DR 17). At times Deleuze borrows Nietzsche’s notion of perspectivism to talk about his repetition. For example in The Time-Image Deleuze writes: “‘perspectivism’ [is] not defined by variation of external points of view on a supposedly invariable object (the ideal of the true would be preserved). Here, on the contrary, the point of view [is] constant, but always internal to the different objects which [are] henceforth presented as the metamorphosis of one and the same thing in the process of becoming. Perspectives…express the metamorphoses of an immanent thing or being” (TI 144).

What is repetition? I cannot answer this question at this point. In a sense, this whole chapter answers this question. For now we can just say that repetition is a kind of passive activity. The reason why it is a passive activity is because it does not issue from the Cogito in opposition to the object. Instead, it issues from the passive self that is indistinguishable from its object and that for that reason we do not even have the right to call the object. Furthermore, that repetition is a passive activity that issues from the univocal being means that the univocal being is characterized by a particular power. Repetition just is the demonstration of that power. Deleuze calls this power of the univocal being that the passive self repeats ‘difference.’ “Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself” (DR 36).

The univocal being is the kind of being that differentiates itself. “However, instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself - and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it” (DR 28). One
demonstration of this power of differing is the repetition of the passive self. If the univocal being is the ground of philosophy we can say that it comes to the surface, it comes to be recognizable (I am using this word in its colloquial sense) as the repetition of the passive self. “It is as if the ground rose to the surface, without ceasing to be ground. There is cruelty, even monstrosity, on both sides of this struggle against an elusive adversary, in which the distinguished opposes something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to espouse that which divorces it. Difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression ‘make the difference.’ (DR 28). This is why Deleuze understands repetition in terms of the power of difference. Repetition one might say is the only thing that individualizes the self within the univocal being. It is what makes it different than other passive selves. “Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power: the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as ‘repetition’” (DR 41). Repetition is nothing other than the power of difference. In Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition James Williams argues that “the most important definition of repetition in the chapter on repetition for itself is that the ‘for itself’ of repetition is difference – there is no repetition of the same thing for any other thing, only an open variation that occurs within the individual” (Williams 92).

It is in this context that we ought to understand the question of what kind of philosopher Deleuze is. That repetition is the activity of the passive self means that repetition as an activity can only happen in the univocal being. It is only when the self becomes passive that it can repeat in the first place. That the Cogito imposes the concept and therefore confronts the object means that the Cogito is not in the univocal being. In other words, the Cogito is free. It transcends the
univocal being. For this reason, the Cogito cannot repeat. “For this reason, the world of representation is characterized by its inability to conceive of repetition for itself…” (DR 138). It cannot draw on the power of difference. But what does this mean? The object that the Cogito confronts is nothing other than the identity of the concept. This is Kant’s Platonic moment. “The ‘sameness’ of the Platonic Idea which serves as model and is guaranteed by the Good gives way to the identity of an originary concept grounded in a thinking subject” (DR 265-6). However, that the passive self repeats in the univocal being just means that it does not repeat in being that the Cogito understands as the object, in other words, in the identity of the concept. But what can this mean other than the passive self repeats in the univocal being understood as the power of difference? In this sense, the univocal being is not difference because it is different than the object that the Cogito confronts. Difference is different because it is different than the object understood as the identity of the concept. In other words, the univocal being is the power of difference because it does not conform to the identity of the concept. In this sense, the univocal being and the power of difference belong together. “With univocity, however, it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference” (DR 39). Repetition does not only require that being be univocal. It also requires that this univocal being not be the object as the identity of the concept. In other words, it requires that the univocal being be the power of difference. Deleuze’s overcoming of Platonism is at the same time an overcoming of a particular kind of Kantianism, namely the Copernican revolution that places the Cogito and the identity of the concept at the center of critical philosophy. “To restore difference in thought is to untie this first knot which consists of representing difference through the identity of the concept and the thinking subject” (DR 266).
Deleuze often says that difference is being to the extent that it is said of difference: “it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference” (DR 39). On its own this certainly sounds like a stupid argument, if it even sounds like one. But it is not stupid if we consider Deleuze’s starting point. To the extent that Deleuze does not start with the Cogito, but rather with the passive self means that being must be univocal and that univocal being must be the power of difference. This is why Deleuze claims that Kant’s discovery of the passive self is actually the discovery of the power of difference. “This third value suffices to make logic a transcendental instance. It amounts to the discovery of Difference;…no longer in the form of an external difference which separates, but in the form of an internal Difference which establishes an a priori relation between thought and being” (DR 86). In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant gives the following dichotomy. “Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge” (CPR Bxvi). But Deleuze suggests that we begin neither with the object nor with the subject. Instead, he suggests that we begin with the passive self. But what does this mean other than that philosophy must begin with difference and repetition? “We may conclude that there is no true beginning in philosophy, or rather that the true philosophical beginning, Difference, is in-itself already Repetition” (DR 129). In this sense, the point of philosophy, Deleuze argues, is “making repetition, not that from which one ‘draws of’ a difference, nor that which includes difference as a variant, but making it the thought and the production of the ‘absolutely different;’ making it so that repetition is, for itself, difference in itself” (DR 94). Difference and repetition are the same
thing. They are the power of the univocal being. It is in this sense that the univocal being, difference and repetition is the ground of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Deleuze is in fact even more critical than Kant as he must be.

Does philosophy not begin with experience and for that reason does it not begin with the Cogito? That philosophy begins with experience does not necessarily mean that it begins with the Cogito. The Cogito has not fallen out of the sky. It has been developed. And its development is repetition. For Deleuze however repetition is experience. In fact, for Deleuze repetition is the only real experience. To the extent that the Cogito confronts the univocal being as its object means that it is not immersed in it. For this reason, its experience of the univocal being must take an abstract form. The Cogito cannot really experience the univocal being. It must subsume that experience under abstract concepts. This is why for Kant “intuitions without concepts are blind” (*CPR* A51/B75). On the other hand, this is not what happens with the passive self. Repetition is real experience in the sense that it is not an experience of a self that confronts the univocal being as its object the way the Cogito does. It is not abstracted. Repetition is the real experience because it the experience of a self that is immersed in that which it experiences. “Repetition thus appears as difference without a concept, repetition which escapes indefinitely continued conceptual difference” (*DR* 13). There are syntheses before there is representation, before there is abstraction. But what does this mean other than that for Deleuze synthesis does not take a conceptual form, but rather takes the sensible, perceptual form? “On the contrary, we have seen that receptivity, understood as a capacity for experiencing affections, was only a consequence, and that the passive self was more profoundly constituted by a synthesis which is itself passive (contemplation-contraction)” (*DR* 87). For the passive self the form of experience is not something other than the matter of experience as it is for the Cogito. For the passive self the form
of experience is at the same time the matter of experience. In other words, what it experiences is made of the same thing that it experiences. It is as if the synthesis of the passive self is nothing other than that which it synthesizes synthesizing itself through it. In fact, this is why Deleuze likes to push his point about the passive synthesis to the extreme. The passive synthesis is not just sensible or perceptual. It is even more basic than that. It is organic. “However, in the order of constituent passivity, perceptual syntheses refer back to organic syntheses which are like sensibility of the senses; they refer back to the primary sensibility that we are” (DR 72-3). Thus rather than beginning with the concept, the passive self begins with an experience which is nothing other than a kind of internal resonance. This is how Keith Ansell Pearson describes repetition in *Germinal Life*. “A living being is able to proceed in this way on account of the fact that it enjoys an ‘internal resonance’ in its interactions with its milieu, meaning that it never passively adapts. A relation between two terms, therefore, is never one of separate individuals, but always an aspect of the internal resonance which characterizes the system of individuation. This resonance requires permanent communication and the maintenance of a metastability as the precondition of a becoming” (Pearson 92). I now turn to the discussion of this internal resonance, in other words, to the discussion of repetition as the real experience of the passive self. In other words, I explain how it is that the passive self individuates by repeating the power of difference within the univocal being.
The passive synthesis: take one

Deleuze talks about repetition in the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. When Deleuze talks about repetition, he is talking about three passive syntheses. But what are the three passive syntheses? I argue that when Deleuze talks about the three passive syntheses he is really talking about three ways in which the passive self acts. Furthermore, Deleuze claims that this activity does something important. It constitutes time. This is why Deleuze talks about three passive syntheses of time. The first thing to note in this regard is that for Deleuze time is something that needs to be constituted in order to be at all. In other words, time is not some objective reality that precedes the self and within which the self exists. What self would that be if we are to start with the passive self that is in the univocal being? However, this constitution of time is at the same time the constitution of something else. That the passive self constitutes time means that it also constitutes its own selfhood. This is the second thing to note. The selfhood of the self is not something given. Instead, it is something that the passive self constitutes through its own activity. Here we must not miss the fundamentally Nietzschean inspiration. In *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche writes that “there is no ‘being’ behind the doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything” (Nietzsche 25). For Deleuze the two constitutions of time and selfhood name one process of individuation. The moment the passive self due to its own activity experiences itself in time is the very same moment that it says ‘I.’ When Deleuze talks about the three passive syntheses of time he is describing this process of individuation, the process whereby the passive self says ‘I.’

Deleuze argues that there are two different ways of repeating. “Between the two repetitions, the material and the spiritual, there is a vast difference. The former is a repetition of successive independent elements or instants; the latter is a repetition of the Whole on diverse
coexisting levels” (*DR* 84). That repetition is the activity whereby the passive self constitutes the individual in time means that two different repetitions constitute two different individuals in two different times. It is important to understand the relationship between the first synthesis and the two other syntheses in order to understand this point. I agree that the second synthesis of time is important. However, the second synthesis is only one way of constituting the individual in time. On the other hand, Deleuze argues for the alternative way of constituting the individual in time. This alternative way is the third synthesis of time. In fact, Deleuze argues that the third synthesis of time must overcome the second synthesis of time. For this reason, we are not to understand the second and the third syntheses of time in linear terms. It is not the case that we must go through the second synthesis of time in order to reach the third synthesis of time. Instead, when Deleuze is talking about the second and the third syntheses of time, he is really talking about two alternative relationships to the first synthesis of time. In fact, he is talking about two mutually exclusive alternatives. It is either the relationship between the first and the second syntheses of time that constitutes the individual in time or it is the relationship between the first and the third syntheses of time that constitutes the individual in time. In the first instance, Deleuze talks about this individual in terms of the Cogito. In the second instance, he talks about it in terms of the Overman. In what follows I look at the three passive syntheses of time, in other words, I look at the three ways in which the passive self acts in order to become an individual in time. However, because Deleuze’s argument is complex, I first give a general overview of the three syntheses of time. In this general overview I ask for the reader’s patience. My goal here is not precision but rather simple presentation. I follow up this general discussion with a more detailed discussion of the three syntheses of time.
Deleuze calls the first synthesis of time contraction-contemplation. These words should already attune us to Deleuze’s Kantian connection. We have seen that Kant has argued that there is thought that does not imply the Cogito but rather implies the passive self. Contraction-contemplation is that thought. It is a thought (contemplation) that is nothing other than the sensible, perceptual, in fact organic synthesis (contraction). Contraction-contemplation is an activity of the passive self that constitutes time as the living present. In other words, this activity of contracting-contemplating gives the passive self a sense of what it means for it to exist in the present time. What this present time is depends on the nature of contraction-contemplation. Because each passive self contracts-contemplates differently, there are different living presents for different passive selves. Still that there is such a thing as the present time at all demonstrates that the passive self has become some kind of individual as result of its own activity. Its existence gets to have a meaning for it. The question that Deleuze asks is: how does one living present become another living present, in other words, how does time pass? We can understand this question in different terms. How does the passive self become more than just the individual who exists in its own living present? Deleuze claims that no matter how long or short the living present is for the individual that living present has to have a limit. In other words, whatever the living present is for the individual, it must at one point move into the past. The reason why Deleuze thinks this is the case is because the activity that constitutes time as the living present is not infinite. In other words, to contract-contemplate is itself a limited activity. The reason why this is the case is because infinite contraction-contemplation, Deleuze claims, “is not physically possible” (DR 76). For this reason, Deleuze claims, time must pass. Again we must be careful with this statement. That time must pass does not name some objective reality in which the individual exists. Instead, time must pass because the activity of contracting-contemplating
cannot be infinite. But how can time pass? We have seen that there is time at all to the extent that the passive self acts, in other words, to the extent that the passive self contracts-contemplates. Does this then not mean that time can pass only if the passive self manages to constitute time as passing? Time does not pass on its own. Time does nothing on its own to the extent that it is the activity of the passive self that constitutes it. But it is also the case that this constitution of time is nothing other than the activity of the passive self. However, the activity of the passive self is simultaneously the becoming of the individual. Thus we come to this point. Time can pass only if the activity of the passive self constitutes it as passing. But this means that time can pass only if the passive self becomes more of an individual, in other words, only if the passive self becomes an individual who does not just exist in the living present but who also becomes an individual who embodies time as passing. In order for time to pass the passive self must become the individual who passes time. This is the task of the second and the third synthesis of time: to explain how the passive self acts in order to make time pass.

Contraction-contemplation only constitutes time as the living present. Therefore, in order for time to pass, the passive self must do something other than contract-contemplate. The second synthesis of time is one way of doing that. Deleuze argues that the passive self constitutes time as passage from one living present to another in terms of what he calls reminiscence. Again, here we must not miss the Platonic inspiration. The passive self constitutes time as passage to the extent that it reminisces the Platonic Idea. But what does this mean? How can remembering something make time pass from one living present to another? In this regard it is important that we recognize the mythical structure of the Platonic Idea. To reminisce the Platonic Idea is not to remember something actual. It is to be inspired by something mythical. “Myth, with its circular structure, is indeed a story of a foundation. It permits the construction of a model according to
which the different pretenders can be judged. What needs a foundation, in fact, is always a pretention or a claim. It is the pretender who appeals to a foundation, whose claim may be judged well-founded, ill-founded or unfounded” (LS 255). To the extent that reminiscing the Platonic Idea is the activity of the passive self we can say that myth is the standard whereby the passive self acts. Deleuze’s argument is that this activity constitutes time as passage. In other words, it is only because the passive self acts in terms of the mythical standard that time passes. This mythical standard is the Good. But what does this mean other than that the passive self becomes the free individual by reminiscing the Platonic Idea? In other words, that the passive self acts in terms of the Good means that it becomes the free individual. The Good of the individual is freedom. It is in this sense that we can say that in the second passive synthesis of time the passive self constitutes time as passage and at the same time becomes the Cogito. The moment that the passive self experiences its own living present as passing to another living present is the very moment it experiences its own self as free. It can become something. It can become its own Idea. However, Deleuze argues, the second synthesis of time is actually insufficient. That the passive self constitutes time as passage in terms of the activity of reminiscing the Platonic Idea means that it does not really become. Deleuze puts this point in terms of possibility and actuality. “What difference can there be between the existent and the non-existent if the non-existent is already possible, already included in the concept and having all the characteristics that the concept confers upon it as a possibility? Existence is the same as but outside the concept” (DR 211). The passive self does not actually become. It merely assumes actually its own possible individual. We can put this point in other words. When we act in accordance with a standard the only individual we become is the standard individual. This is why such a standard individual cannot actually make the time pass. Such an individual always returns
to the same thing. In the second synthesis of time the passive self constitutes time as a circle. This also is why Deleuze writes: “unless we have not yet found the last word, unless there is a third synthesis of time...” (DR 85). There has to be an individual other than the Cogito. This individual is the Overman.

The third synthesis of time explains how the passive self constitutes time as passage, in other words, how the passive self becomes an individual without reminiscing the Platonic Idea. Deleuze argues that in the third synthesis of time the passive self does that by returning eternally. But how can one make time pass just by virtue of coming back again and again? In fact does not such a coming back again and again ensure precisely that time does not pass? Is this not the second synthesis of time all over again? In this regard it is crucial to understand Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s eternal return in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Deleuze reads the eternal return not to be the eternal return of the same (Platonic Idea) but rather to be the eternal return of difference. Thus Deleuze argues that the passive self constitutes time as passage to the extent that it comes back again and again where such coming back is actually also the coming back of difference. What does this mean other than that the passive self constitutes time as passage to the extent that it actually becomes an individual that is different than the Cogito. The question is how can it do that? The passive self constitutes time as passage by acting without a standard. However, we must be careful here. Acting without a standard is not the same as acting with lack of a standard. This dichotomy between the universal and relative action is the dichotomy of the Cogito. It is the Cogito that says that we either act in accordance with the Good or that all values become relative. “What disturbed us was that in renouncing judgment we had the impression of depriving ourselves of any means of distinguishing between existing beings, between modes of existence, as if everything were now of equal value” (CC 134). However, in
the third synthesis of time we sidestep the Cogito altogether, which is to say that we sidestep this dichotomy itself. An action need neither be universal nor relative. In both of these cases, the value is already given. In one case, it is given positively as the Good. In the other case, it is given negatively as the lack of the Good. “But is it not rather judgment that presupposes preexisting criteria (higher values), criteria that preexist for all time (to the infinity of time), so that it can neither apprehend what is new in an existing being, nor even sense the creation of a mode of existence?” (CC 134-5). However, to the extent that in the third synthesis of time the passive self acts without the standard means that it creates the standard. This creation is nothing other than the demonstration of the power of difference. There is individuation beyond the Cogito: “to have one more birth, and to break with one’s carnal birth—to become the offspring of one’s events and not of one’s actions, for the action is itself produced by the offspring of the event” (LS 149-150). The difference between the Cogito and the Overman is clear. The Cogito individuates in terms of the myth, that is, in terms of the Platonic Idea that exists above and beyond the univocal being. The Overman on the other hand individuates in terms of the power of difference, that is, in terms of the univocal being. He is neither universal, nor relative. He is singular. “As for the subject of this new discourse (except that there is no longer any subject), it is not man or God, and even less man in the place of God. The subject is this free, anonymous and nomadic singularity which traverses men as well as plants and animals independently of the matter of their individuation and the forms of their personality. ‘Overman’ means nothing other than this—the superior type of everything that is” (LS 107). This is why I said earlier that we need not understand the second and the third syntheses of time in linear terms. The second and the third syntheses of time name two and mutually exclusive relationship to the first synthesis. “As a result, the two repetitions stand in very different relations to ‘difference’ itself” (DR 84). In one
case the passive self passes from one living present to another as the Cogito. In other words, it does so as the Overman. I have just explained the three passive syntheses of time in general terms. I now turn to a detailed discussion of the three syntheses of time.
The passive synthesis: take two

“Hume takes as an example the repetition of cases of the type AB, AB, AB, A...Each case or objective sequence AB is independent of others” (DR 70). Hume attempts to explain in what sense there can be a repetition of cases. In order to answer this question, Hume introduces what he calls imagination. “Hume explains that the independent identical or similar cases are grounded in the imagination. The imagination is defined here as a contractile power like a sensitive plate, it retains the one case when the other appears” (DR 70). There are not just successive independent instants. There are contracted cases. That there are contracted cases means that there is some sort of weight, some sort of meaning. In this sense, Deleuze argues, imagination forms the first synthesis of time. “When A appears, we expect B with a force corresponding to the qualitative impression of all the contracted ABs. This is by no means a memory, nor indeed an operation of the understanding: contraction is not a matter of reflection. Properly speaking, it forms the synthesis of time” (DR 70). In what sense does time need to be constituted at all in this case? “A succession of instants does not constitute time any more than it causes it to disappear; it indicates only its constantly aborted moment of birth” (DR 70). A succession of independent instants becomes time in the sense that imagination contracts such instants into cases. These cases constitute the living presents, in other words, the presents that are weighty or meaningful. “Time is constituted in the originary synthesis which operates on the repetition of instants. This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living, present. It is in this present that time is deployed” (DR 70). What about the past and the future? The contracted case does not come before or after anything. There is no individual yet. Thus it just is the contracted case. But what is the contracted case? Contraction is retention and expectation. In this sense, rather than coming
before or after something, the living present contains the past and the future in or as itself. “It is in this [living] present that time is deployed. To it belong the past and the future: the past in so far as the preceding instants are retained in the contraction; the future because its expectation is anticipated in this same contraction” (DR 71). For this reason, Deleuze argues that past and future are not instants different from the present time. Instead, they are the dimensions of the present time. “The past and the future do not designate instants distinct from the supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself in so far as it is a contraction of instants” (DR 71). In other words, the only time there is is the living present. “The synthesis of time constitutes the present in time. It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present” (DR 76). Imagination is a passive synthesis. “In any case, this synthesis must be given a name: passive synthesis. Although, it is constitutive it is not, for all that, active. It is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection. Time is subjective, but in relation to the subjective of a passive subject” (DR 71). Kant argues that sensibility precedes the thinking self. However, he also argues that sensibility is blind without the Cogito. On the other hand, for Hume imagination names the sensibility that can see without the Cogito. “Hume explains that the independent identical or similar cases are grounded in the imagination. The imagination is defined here as a contractile power: like a sensitive plate, it retains one when the other appears” (DR 70). In other words, sensibility is constitutive even before there is the Cogito. In Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History, Jay Lampert makes a similar point: “so called ‘experience’ is no more a starting point than any other formed matter in flux. In this context, it is not accidental that Deleuze starts with Hume. For Hume, ‘experience’ need not be founded on subjectivity; it is first
of all a conjunction that allows data to ‘count as one’ (to use Badiou’s phrase)” (Lampert 13). Deleuze develops Hume’s imagination in what he calls contemplation.

It is not just the case that the sensible synthesis precedes the Cogito. It is also the case that a different kind of passive synthesis precedes the sensible synthesis. “We must therefore distinguish not only the forms of repetition in relation to passive synthesis but also the levels of passive synthesis...” (DR 73). Specifically, Deleuze argues, what is more basic than the sensible synthesis is the organic synthesis. “Hume’s example...leaves us at the level of sensible and perceptual synthoses...However, in the order of constituent passivity, perceptual synthoses refer back to organic synthoses which are like sensibility of the senses; they refer back to the primary sensibility that we are” (DR 72-3). Before there can be the sensible synthesis there first has to be an organism that senses. But how can there be an organism that senses? Organisms do not synthesize sensibly. Instead, they are themselves organic synthoses. “We are made of contracted water, earth, light and air- not merely prior to the recognition or representation of these, but prior to their being sensed. Every organism, in its receptive and perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations)” (DR 73). There can be organisms that sense because organisms are in the first place organic synthoses. Once again, we move from doing to being. In this sense, Deleuze argues, it is not only the case that the Cogito does not contract cases, it is also the case that organisms sensibly contract cases only to the extent that they are themselves organic contractions. Deleuze calls such organic contractions contemplations. “The passive self is not defined simply by receptivity – that is, by means of the capacity to experience sensations – but by virtue of contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes the sensations” (DR 78). What is the point of Deleuze’s development of Hume’s imagination into contemplation? “What is in question throughout this
domain that we have had to extend to include the organic as such? Hume says precisely that it is a question of the problem of habit” (DR 73). Deleuze radicalizes Hume’s passive synthesis.

It is not the case that organisms are a priori capable of contemplation. If that were the case there would be organisms before there is contemplation. But for Deleuze organisms are nothing other than contemplations. “What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed?” (DR 75). In this sense, contemplation is not something that an organism has. So how is contemplation possible? Contemplation never happens on its own. “To contemplate is to draw something from. We must always first contemplate something else...in order to be filled with an image of ourselves” (DR 74-5). Deleuze argues that repetition in the object is the condition of contemplation. “In considering repetition in the object, we remain within the conditions which make possible an idea of repetition” (DR 71). However, that does not mean that contemplation is something that repetition in the object imparts on organisms. In fact, repetition in the object is not a repetition at all. “The rule of discontinuity or instantaneity in repetition tells us that one instance does not appear unless the other has disappeared – hence the status of matter as mens momentanea. However, given that repetition disappears even as it occurs, how can we say ‘the second,’ ‘the third,’ and ‘it is the same’? It has no in itself” (DR 70). In this sense, repetition in the object must be the condition of contemplation in a different sense. “Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it” (DR 70). What does repetition change in the mind that contemplates it? “Whenever A appears, I expect the appearance of B. Is this the for-itself of repetition, an imaginary subjectivity which necessarily enters into its constitution? Does not the paradox of repetition lie in the fact that one can speak of
repetition only by virtue of the change or difference that it introduces into the mind which contemplates it? By virtue of a difference that the mind draws from repetition” (DR 70). Contemplation is not something that organisms bring to repetition in the object, but it is also not something that they take from repetition in the object. Both of these cases suppose that organisms are something other than contemplation. Instead, contemplation is something that organisms develop in relation to the repetition in the object. In other words, organisms draw themselves, their own difference, themselves as the power of difference from repetition in the object. In this sense, contemplation is the repetition of that which does not repeat. “The role of the imagination, or the mind which contemplates in its multiple and fragmented states, is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it. For that matter, repetition is itself in essence imaginary, since the imagination alone here forms the ‘moment’ of the vis repetativa from the point of view of its constitution: to makes that which it contracts appear as elements or cases of repetition. Imaginary repetition is not a false repetition which stands in for the absent true repetition: true repetition takes place in imagination” (DR 76). The object does not impose itself onto the subject. Nor does the subject impose itself on the object. The passive self learns something from the object that the object itself does not know, namely itself. It is in this sense that repetition in the object is the condition of contemplation. It allows for the constitution of contemplation. “In considering repetition in the object, we remain within the conditions which make possible an idea of repetition. But in considering the change in the subject, we are already beyond these conditions, confronting the general form of difference. The ideal constitution of repetition thus implies a kind of retroactive movement between these two limits. It is woven between the two” (DR 71). Deleuze argues that the development of contemplation is nothing other than the development of the passive self. “The question is whether or not the self itself is a
contemplation, whether it is not in itself contemplation, and whether we can learn, form behaviour and form ourselves other than through contemplation” (DR 73). The passive self does not contemplate. The passive self is contemplation. “There is a self wherever a furtive contemplation has been established whenever a contracting machine capable of drawing a difference from repetition functions somewhere. The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification – this term designating precisely the difference drawn” (DR 78-9). And contemplation is nothing other than the passive synthesis of time.

Contemplation constitutes time as the living present. For this reason, there are as many living presents as there are contemplations. “All our rhythms, our reserves, our reaction times, the thousand intertwinnings, the presents and fatigues of which we are composed, are defined on the basis of our contemplations. The rule is that one cannot go faster than one’s own present – or rather, one’s presents” (DR 77). Nevertheless, Deleuze does not think that an eternal living present is possible. “We could no doubt conceive of a perpetual present, a present which is coextensive with time: it would be sufficient to consider contemplation applied to the infinite succession of instants. But such a present is not physically possible” (DR 76). In other words, no contemplation constitutes time as the perpetual living present. No matter how long or how short a contemplation is, it always has to stop contemplating, otherwise eternal living present would have to be possible. In this sense, Deleuze argues, contemplation does not just constitute time as the living present. Instead, contemplation constitutes time as the living present that passes. “Although it is originary, the first synthesis of time is no less intratemporal. It constitutes time as present, but a present which passes” (DR 79). The problem with contemplation, Deleuze argues, is that it does not explain how the living present passes. “By insisting upon the finitude of contraction, we have shown the effect; we have by no means shown why the present passes, or
what prevents it from being coextensive with time” (DR 79). Contemplation cannot both be the constitution of the living present and the passage of the living present. In other words, contemplation cannot go beyond itself. It is a particular duration. For this reason, Deleuze argues, there has to be another time in which the living present passes. “This is the paradox of the present: to constitute time which passing in the time constituted. We cannot avoid the necessary conclusion – that there must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur” (DR 79). What is this other time? This other time is not a time in the same sense in which the living present is a time. The living present is a time in the sense that it designates a way of being. However, this other time refers to the power that makes the living present or a way of being pass to another. Therefore it is a time as becoming. This power, Deleuze argues, exists within the living present or within a way of being itself. It is contemporaneous with it. “It gives us the reason for the passing of the present. Every present passes, in favour of a new present, because the past is contemporaneous with itself as present...Its manner of begin contemporaneous with itself as present is that of being posed as already-there presupposed by the passing present and causing it to pass” (DR 81-2). Deleuze calls this other time the pure past because it is not a past that ever was, but is rather the power of time to turn every ‘it is’ into ‘it was.’ It is the power of time to pass. In this sense, Deleuze argues, the pure past is the synthesis of all time. “The past does not cause one present to pass without calling forth another, but itself neither passes nor comes forth. For this reason the past, far from being a dimension of time, is the synthesis of all time of which the present and the future are only dimensions...It is the in-itself of time as the final ground of the passage of time. In this sense, it forms a pure, general a priori element of all time” (DR 82). Here Deleuze asks an important question. “The question for us, however, is whether or not we can penetrate the passive synthesis of memory; whether we
can in some sense live the being in itself of the past in the same way that we live the passive synthesis of habit” (DR 84). In other words, Deleuze asks, how we can constitute time as pure past in the way we constitute time as the living present in contemplation. “The entire past is conserved in itself, but how can we save it for ourselves, how can we penetrate that in itself without reducing it to the former present that it was, or to the present present in relation to which it is past? How can we save it for ourselves?” (DR 84). It is crucial to remember here that Deleuze does not give one answer to this question, but rather two. These are reminiscence, the second synthesis of time, and the eternal return, the third synthesis of time. Let us look at each of these two syntheses of time in relation to the first syntheses of time.

“Moreover, it seems that the response has long been known: reminiscence. In effect, this designates a passive synthesis, an involuntary memory which differs in kind from any active synthesis associated with voluntary memory” (DR 84-5). Reminiscence is different than active memory to the extent that it is does not reminisce anything that ever actually was. Instead, reminiscence reminisces the pure past or the power of passage of living presents. “Combray reappears, not as it was or as it could be, but in a splendour which was never lived, like a pure past which finally reveals its double irreducibility to the two presents which it telescopes together: the present that it was, but also the present present which it could be” (DR 85). In this sense, if contemplation is one synthesis of the passive self, reminiscence is another. In other words, reminiscence is a different kind of contraction or repetition than contemplation. “If we compare the passive synthesis of habit and the passive synthesis of memory, we see how much the distribution of repetition and contraction changes from one to the other” (DR 82). Contemplation is a contraction or a repetition of independent instants into a living present. However, reminiscence is a contraction or a repetition of the pure past into a living present. “No
doubt, in either case, the present appears to be the result of a contraction, but this relates us to quite different dimensions. In one case, the present is the most contracted state of successive elements or instants which are in themselves independent of one another. In the other case, the present designates the most contracted degree of an entire past, which is like a coexisting totality” (DR 82). However, Deleuze argues that reminiscence betrays the pure time at the same time as it constitutes it. In this regard Deleuze invokes Plato.

“The first synthesis, that of habit, is truly the foundation of time; but we must distinguish the foundation from the ground” (DR 79). If the foundation of time is contemplation, the ground of time is reminiscence. “Habit is the foundation of time, the moving soil occupied by the passing present. The claim of the present is precisely that it passes. However, it is what causes the present to pass, that to which the present and habit belong, which must be considered the ground of time. It is memory that grounds time” (DR 79). It is clear in what sense contemplation founds time as the living present or as a way of being. But how does reminiscence ground time as the pure past that makes one living present or one way of being pass to another? How does reminiscence ground time as becoming? “When Plato expressly opposes reminiscence and innateness, he means that the latter represents only the abstract image of knowledge, whereas the real movement of learning implies a distinction with the soul between a ‘before’ and an ‘after;’ in other words, it implies the introduction of a first time, in which we forget what we knew, since there is a second time in which we recover what we have forgotten” (DR 87). Reminiscence constitutes time as pure past in the form of that which we have forgotten. “Former presents may be represented beyond forgetting by active synthesis, in so far as forgetting is empirically overcome. Here, however, it is within Forgetting, as though immemorial, that Combray reappears. If there is an in-itself of the past, then reminiscence is its noumenon or the thought
with which it is invested” (*DR 85*). But what have we forgotten? Reminiscence constitutes the pure past in the living present in terms of the Platonic Idea. “For the latter [the second synthesis of time], from the height of its pure past, surpassed and dominated the world of representation: it is the ground, the in-itself, noumenon and Form” (*DR 88*). What does this mean? The pure past is the power in the living present or a way of being that makes it pass to another. However, that reminiscence constitutes pure time in the living present in terms of the Platonic Idea means that it invests that power with the Platonic Idea that the living presents resembles. For this reason, the living present or a way of being passes to another only by means of resemblance. “Nevertheless, is it really Kant’s prestigious contribution to have introduced time into thought as such? Platonic reminiscence would seem already to have implied this...But the question: In what form does reminiscence introduce time?” (*DR 87*). Reminiscences constitutes the pure past in the living present as the power of time to return to its forgotten, mythical past. This is how the passive self becomes the Cogito. It acts in terms of the Good. In this sense, reminiscence constitutes time as circle. “The Ideas none the less remain the ground on which the successive presents are organized into the circle of time, so that the pure past which defines them is itself still necessarily expressed in terms of a present, as an ancient *mythical* present” (*DR 88*). In this sense, reminiscence betrays pure time at the same time that it constitutes it. The question that Deleuze asks is: is there a faithful way of constituting the pure past? Is there a faithful way of constituting the power of time that makes the living present or a way of being pass to another? Is there a faithful way of constituting time as becoming? “Unless we have not yet found the last word, unless there is a third synthesis of time...” (*DR 85*).

Reminiscence betrays the pure past in the sense that it hinges it to the Platonic Idea. It is the Platonic Idea that orders the passage of a living present or a way of being to another. “The
joint, *cardo*, is what ensures the subordination of time to those properly cardinal points through which pass the periodic movements which is measures (time, number of the movement, for the soul as much as for the world” (DR 88). On the other hand, to throw time out of joint is to overcome the Platonic Idea as the order of the passage of time. “By contrast, time out of joint means...time presenting itself as an empty and pure form” (DR 88). In fact, to throw time out of joint is to constitute time as the power of passage that has its own order. “Time itself unfolds (that is, apparently ceases to be a circle) instead of things unfolding within it (following the overly simple circular figure). It ceases to be cardinal and becomes ordinal, a pure order of time” (DR 88). Deleuze defines the order of time as passage in simple terms. The passage of time is ordered in terms of change: “time is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change” (DR 89). In this sense, the question that Deleuze really proposes to answer is how there can be the constitution of time as change. His answer to this question is rather technical, but the idea is not. The passive self constitutes time as change to the extent that it itself changes, in other words, to the extent that it demonstrates that change as itself.

Deleuze defines time as change in terms of a totality and a series. “Having abjured its empirical content, having overturned its own ground time is defined not only by a formal and empty order but also by a totality and a series” (DR 89). Time as change is the series of past, present and future. However, we must be careful in interpreting the meaning of this series. Time as change is in the living present or a way of being. “We cannot say that it was. It no longer exists, it does not exist, but it insists, it consists, it *is*. It insists with the former present, it consists with the new present” (DR 82). In other words, time as change is not an empirical time. It is not the past, nor the present nor the future. Instead, it is what makes these empirical times pass. In this sense, the series past, present, and future does not designate empirical times: “past, present
and future are not distributed according to this empirical criterion” (DR 89). On the other hand, to the extent that time as change is in a living present or way of being, the series past, present and future are in a living present or in a way of being. This is how Deleuze describes the serial past. “In effect, there is always a time at which the imagined act is supposed ‘too big for me.’ This defines a priori the past or the before” (DR 89). And this is how Deleuze describes the serial present. “The second time, which relates to the caesura itself, is thus the present of metamorphosis, a becoming equal to the act and a doubling of the self, and the projection of an ideal self in the image of the act...” (DR 89). Finally, this is how Deleuze describes the serial future. “As for the third time in which the future appears, this signifies that the event and the act possess a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces...: what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself” (DR 89). But what are these descriptions? That reminiscence constitutes pure time means that the Platonic Idea takes time as change hostage. In other words, a living present or a way of being passes in terms of the Platonic Idea, in other words, a living present or a way of being does not become. It returns to its mythical past. This is the eternal return of the same or being. On the other hand, Deleuze argues that there is a way in which a living present time or a way of living actually passes, in other words, a way in which a living present or a way of being becomes. Deleuze distinguishes between the serial past, serial present and serial future in order to explain in what sense this actual passing, this becoming is possible. In this sense, the descriptions of the series of past, present and future describe the process that a living present undergoes in actual passing or becoming.

Time as change is not just a series of past, present and future. It is also a totality. “Having abjured its empirical content, having overturned its own ground time is defined not only by a
formal and empty order but also by a totality and a series” (DR 89). That time as change is also a totality means that the series is determined by one of its terms. Deleuze argues that it is the serial future or what he calls the eternal return that determines the series as a whole. “For even though the doctrine of eternal return may be expounded as though it affected the whole series or the totality of time, the past and the present no less than the future, such an exposition remains purely introductory” (DR 90). In what sense, does the eternal return determine the series itself? “Eternal return, in its esoteric truth, concerns – and can concern – only the third time of the series. Only there is it determined. That is why it is properly called a belief of the future, a belief in the future. Eternal return affects only the new, what is produced under the condition of default and by the intermediary of metamorphosis” (DR 90). A living present or a way of being constitutes time as change not by repeating the mythical past that parades for time as change but rather by repeating time as change itself. In Nietzsche and Philosophy Deleuze writes: “the eternal return is thus an answer of passage. And in this sense it must not be interpreted as the return of something that is, that is ‘one’ or the ‘same.’ We misinterpret the expression ‘eternal return’ if we understand it as ‘return of the same.’ It is not being that returns but rather the returning itself that constitutes being in so far as it is affirmed of becoming and of that which passes. It is not some one thing which returns but rather returning itself...” (NP 48). But what does this mean other than that a living present or a way of being constitutes time as change to the extent that it makes itself actually pass or become? In other words, it makes change itself the condition of action and the matter of metamorphosis. The passive self becomes the kind of individual that harnesses the power of difference as its own action. And does not such an attitude demonstrate the ultimate belief of the future, the belief in the future? We only see the action as futile to the extent that we do not see it as an action that is as something that changes. The self
has been fractured, dissolved. But that which fractures or dissolves the self is nothing other than time as change itself. “We produce something new only on condition that we repeat once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis. Moreover, what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return” (DR 90). This is how the self overcomes the constitution of time as reminiscence in favour of the constitution of time as the eternal return. “In this manner, the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return” (DR 91). Deleuze calls such a passive self that returns eternally, the Overman. “In this manner, the I which is fractured according to the order of time and the Self which is divided according to the temporal series correspond and find a common descendant in the man without a name…the already-Overman…” (DR 90).

The Cogito is the beginning of Descartes’ philosophy. It is also the beginning of Kant’s philosophy to the extent that he follows the Copernican Revolution of the Critique of Pure Reason. On the other hand, Deleuze begins with the passive self that he takes over from Kant who initiates the Copernican Counter-Revolution. Deleuze then explains how this passive self is actually the ground of the Cogito to the extent it individuates the Cogito through its own activity. On the other hand, however, Deleuze shows that there is also another kind of individuation. This individuation is the Overman. Philosophy often begins with the Cogito and the identity of the concept. However, rather than beginning or even continuing with the Cogito, Deleuze offers an alternative. Alternative begins with the passive self and then continues with the individual that the passive self becomes through its own activity. This individual is the Overman. So far I have explained how the passive self repeats. This repetition is itself a kind of knowledge. Now I want
to proceed in this direction. In other words, I want to explain how when the passive self becomes the Overman it continues to develop knowledge. The Cogito is in possession of the concept. The Overman develops concepts. Nietzsche often dreams of a philosophy beyond good and evil. It seems that Deleuze writes that philosophy.
The concept

I have distinguished between two kinds of individuation. When the passive self passes from one living present to another in terms of the Platonic Idea, it becomes the Cogito. On the other hand, when the passive self passes from one living present to another in terms of the power of difference, it becomes the Overman. There is an important difference between these two individuals. The passive self becomes the Cogito in terms of the Platonic Idea. However, that means that the Cogito cannot understand the univocal being as the site of its individuation. In other words, the condition of existence of the Cogito is precisely its forgetting its earthly birth. The moment that the passive self recognizes itself as free is the moment that it believes in its extraterrestrial origin. Freedom does not seem to be compatible with earthly birth. On the other hand, Deleuze considers the Cogito to be an illusion. “We must draw up a list of illusions and take their measure…First of all there is the illusion of transcendence, which, perhaps, comes before all others” (WP 49). But the Cogito is not an illusion, because it does not exist. The Cogito very much exists. It is our most familiar reality. Instead, the Cogito is an illusion because its condition of existence is its abstraction from the univocal being. François Zourabichvili recognizes this point in Deleuze: Une philosophie de l’événement. “Ce que montre Deleuze, c’est que le sujet est effet et non cause, résidu et non origine, et que l’illusion commence quand on le tient justement pur une origine – des pensées, des désirs, etc.” (Zourabichvili 111). This abstraction of the Cogito carries over to the concept. That the Cogito forgets its earthly birth means that it disassociates itself from the power that makes the concept in the first place. For this reason, the Cogito cannot but understand the concept as having fallen out of the sky just as it did. This is why the Cogito and the concept present themselves as the philosophical beginning par excellence. “All that [the philosopher] proposes as universally recognised is what is meant by
thinking, being and self - in other words, not a particular this or that but the form of representation or recognition in general. This form, nevertheless, has a matter, but a pure matter or element. This element consists only of the supposition that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty, of the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true…” (DR 131). What can be a better philosophical beginning than the individual whose very existence is characterized by abstract thought? However, Deleuze argues, such a philosophical beginning comes with a price. That the Cogito is characterized by such an abstraction means that it cannot but understand the univocal being as its object, the object that is identical to the concept. However, that the Cogito understands the univocal being as the object that is identical to the concept means that it annuls the power of difference. “Difference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation” (DR 262). This is a problem because the power of difference names precisely its own origin. Deleuze argues that the power of difference as the repetition of the passive self is precisely what produces the individual and the concept. “When difference is subordinated by the thinking subject to the identity of the concept (even where this identity is synthetic), difference in thought disappears. In other words, what disappears is that difference that thinking makes in thought, that genitality of thinking, that profound fracture of the I which leads it to think only in thinking its own passion, and even its own death, in the pure and empty form of time” (DR 266). In Germinal Life Keith Ansell Pearson puts it well: “Deleuze is committed to the seemingly extravagant claim that all phenomenology is epiphenomenology, since, his argument goes, it fails to penetrate the more profound individuations that are implicated in the creative evolution of difference and repetition” (Pearson 87). Deleuze argues that thinking difference is important because it allows us to understand these more profound individuations. “Thought must think
difference, that absolutely different from thought which nevertheless gives it thought, gives to be thought” (DR 227). For this reason, Deleuze argues that “to restore difference in thought is to untie this first knot which consists of representing difference through the identity of the concept and the thinking subject” (DR 266). The Cogito must give way to the Overman in order for its own origin to come to light. Otherwise there is no explanation for the existence of the concept whatsoever.

The passive self moves from one living present to another by means of the power of difference and in that way becomes the Overman. But this means that the condition of existence of the Overman is precisely its conscious rootedness in the univocal being. In other words, if the existence of the Cogito excludes difference, the existence of the Overman includes it. “In consequence, the difference between presents themselves is that between the two repetitions: that of the elementary instants from which difference is subtracted, and that of the levels of the whole in which difference is included” (DR 84). We can put this in other words. The Overman is the kind of individual whose individuation is never quite finished. In this sense the Overman is not free. He cannot be abstracted. In fact just as the condition of the existence of the Cogito is its total individuation to the point of abstraction, the condition of the existence of the Overman is precisely its never ending individuation. In this sense the Overman can stand for the power of individuation itself. “As for the subject of this new discourse (except that there is no longer any subject), it is not man or God, and even less man in the place of God. The subject is this free, anonymous and nomadic singularity which traverses men as well as plants and animals independently of the matter of their individuation and the forms of their personality. ‘Overman’ means nothing other than this—the superior type of everything that is” (LS 107). But what does this mean? The Overman cannot understand itself as in possession of the concept. Nothing
belongs to it because not even its own self really belongs to it. Instead, the Overman understands that the concept is produced precisely to the extent that one remains the passive self even when one becomes an individual. “It is the empty form of time which introduces and constitutes Difference in thought, on the basis of which it thinks…It is this which engenders thought within thought, for thought thinks only by means of difference, around this point of ungrounding” (DR 276). In other words, the Overman understands that the concept is produced in this encounter with the power of difference: “there is only involuntary thought, aroused but not constrained within thought, and the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness of the world…[C]ount upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think” (DR 139). I think that one can understand this encounter in terms of friendship. Friends are often similar to each other. In other words, they share ways of thinking. But it is also the case that friends cannot quite tell who among them is the first to have come up with this particular way of thinking that they all share. It kind of all happens between them. In fact it is through that happening between them that they become friends in the first place. But that is not all. This particular way of thinking constitutes what I call myself. But this thinking is not mine. Nor is it my friend’s. I am not me. Nor is he he. It all happened between us. One example of what Deleuze means by difference is this happening between us. For this reason, we can say that if there is a Cogito in Deleuze thatCogito cannot take the form of an ‘I think;’ instead, it must take the form of an Overman or the Cogito who says ‘we think’ where this ‘we’ does not designate a collection of two individuals but rather a passage of a power of difference. Zourabichivili puts it well. “Une dernière reformulation du cogito pourrait donc être ‘On pense’ ou encore ‘il pense’ au sens où l’on dit qu’il pleut et qu’il y a du vent” (Zourabichivili 111).
We must be careful when we judge the nature of Deleuze’s concepts. Generally speaking, we might think that concepts are either necessary or contingent. However, it is this dualism that the Cogito imposes on us. “What is common to metaphysics and transcendental philosophy is, above all, this alternative which they both impose on us: *either* an undifferentiated ground, a groundlessness, formless nonbeing, or an abyss without differences and without properties, *or* a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalized Form. Without this Being or this Form, you will only have chaos…” (*LS* 105-6). But there is no reason to let oneself be bullied by fear. That Deleuze wants to overcome the Cogito means that he wants to overcome both of these options. Without the Cogito there is no necessity and without necessity there is no contingency. Deleuze’s concepts are neither necessary nor contingent. “The task of modern philosophy is to overcome the alternatives temporal/non-temporal, historical/eternal and particular/universal (*DR* xxii). For his concepts to be necessary they would have to belong to the Cogito. In other words, they would have to come before the univocal of being, in other words, from the perspective of freedom. But they do not. They come within it. In “Deleuze’s Transcendental Empiricism: Notes Towards a Transcendental Materialism” Levi R. Bryant recognizes this point as well. “If transcendental empiricism is a transcendental materialism, then this is because the transcendental field is not something imposed by the mind upon the world, nor something that belongs to the subject like Kant’s forms of intuition and categories of the understanding, but instead belongs to being itself” (Bryant 47). But Deleuze’s concepts are also not contingent precisely because the illusory abstraction no longer counts as the standard of measurement. In other words, his concepts are not arbitrary. The passive self has become something entirely different, namely the Overman. “We have done away with the true world: what world is left over? The apparent one, maybe…But no! *Along with the true world, we have also done away with the apparent!*”
This is why Deleuze likes to talk about the singular. His concepts are the most necessary and the most contingent because they demonstrate the power of difference as repetition and because this power of difference as repetition is precisely what individuates. What is more necessary and more contingent than one’s own singular existence? Thus Deleuze’s concepts are developed in existence. They are existential concepts. “That is why philosophy has often been tempted to oppose notions of a quite different kind to categories, notions which are really open and which betray an empirical and pluralist sense of Ideas: ‘existential’ as against essential, precepts as against concepts, or indeed the list of empirico-ideal notions…” (DR 284).

In other words, it is the Overman who creates these concepts. But who is the Overman? That he is not the Cogito means that he is not a centered individual. He penetrates and is penetrated on all sides. He is in tune with the power of individuation. “Only an empiricist could say: concepts are things, but things in their free and wild state, beyond ‘anthropological predicates.’ I make and remake and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentered center, from an always displaced periphery which repeats and differentiates them” (DR xxi). We can understand the distinction between Kant’s conditions of possibility of experience and Deleuze’s conditions of real experience in this context. In L’Ontologie de Gilles Deleuze Véronique Bergen defines the task of each. “Là où le souci conditionnant vise à régler l’application des catégories aux intuitions, à délimiter le champ d’une connaissance objective, le souci génétique vise à engendre penser dans la pensée” (Bergen 48). Deleuze’s concepts do not condition from an abstract perspective, in other words, they are not external conditions. Instead, they condition from within the univocal being, that is, within difference and repetition which is to say that they are developed. “In fact, the condition must be a condition of real experience, not of possible experience. It forms an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic conditioning. In every respect, truth is a
matter of production, not of adequation. It is a matter of genitality, not of innateness or reminiscence” (DR 154). Deleuze’s concepts are conditions of real experience because they are developed in the experience of the Overman which is real. They can also not be conditions of possible experience. Such conditions condition possible experience precisely because they are abstract. In other words, for such conditions experience is an afterthought, a secondary thing. I want to look closer into these conditions of real experience. In other words, I want to look closer into how the Overman develops these concepts in the univocal being.
The development of faculties

The Cogito is the individual who unifies all of the faculties under the faculty of the understanding. In other words, the concept subsumes representations of all the other faculties. This is why in the Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that intuitions without concepts are blind and the Ideas of reason are transcendental because they cannot be conceptualized. Because the Cogito unifies all the faculties under the faculty of the understanding and subsumes the representations of all the other faculties under concepts it confronts the univocal being as an object. “This is the meaning of the Cogito as a beginning: it expresses the unity of all the faculties in the subject; it thereby expresses the possibility that all the faculties will relate to a form of object which reflects the subjective identity...” (DR 133). This is what I mean when I say that the Cogito exists only to the extent that its existence is abstract. The Cogito can only be the subject. On the other hand, Deleuze argues against the Cogito. We return to the lesson of Deleuze’s early study of Kant in Kant’s Critical Philosophy. When we overcome the Cogito, each faculty operates according to its own logic. “Rather than all the faculties converging and contributing to a common project of recognizing an object, we see divergent projects in which, with regard to what concerns it essentially, each faculty is in the presence of that which is its ‘own’” (DR 141). That each faculty operates according to its own logic means that the faculties no longer answer to the faculty of the understanding, in other words, the concept does not subsume the representations of all the other faculties and for that reason the faculties no longer confront the univocal being as an object. That the faculties are dislodged from the Cogito means that they are no longer abstracted from the univocal being. On the contrary, the faculties that are dislodged from the Cogito fall back into the univocal being. “Each faculty discovers at this point its own unique passion – in other words, its radical difference and its eternal repetition, its
differential and repeating element along with the instantaneous engendering of its action and the eternal replay of its object, its manner of coming into the world already repeating” (*DR* 143). Each faculty within the univocal being has its own relationship with the univocal being.

For Kant knowledge is the unity of the faculties under the sovereignty of the faculty of the understanding. For this reason, knowledge cannot really begin with the manifold nor can it really reach the Ideas of reason. However, Deleuze argues that this inability says more about the limits of Kant’s account of knowledge than it does about the empty character of the sensibility and the illusory character of the Ideas of reason. In other words, rather than questioning the manifold outside the concept as empty and Ideas outside the concept as illusions as Kant does, Deleuze questions Kant’s account of knowledge itself as too limiting. It is only because the faculties are made to answer to the faculty of the understanding that the manifold becomes empty and the Ideas of reason become illusions. But Deleuze’s point is that the faculties need not answer to the faculty of the understanding. When the faculties are dislodged from the Cogito then each faculty comes into the presence of its own. But what is this? In Kant the faculty of the understanding is what makes the use of other faculties immanent rather than transcendent. “We shall entitle the principles whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, *immanent*; and those, on the other hand, which profess to move beyond these limits, *transcendent*” (*CPR* B352/A296). On the other hand, that we dislodge the faculties from the Cogito just means that these faculties now have a transcendent employment. “The transcendental form of a faculty is indistinguishable from its disjointed, superior exercise. Transcendent in no way means that the faculty addresses itself to objects outside the world but, on the contrary, that it grasps that in the world which concerns it exclusively and brings it into the world” (*DR* 143). But what does this mean other than the faculties that are dislodged from the Cogito no longer
confront the univocal as an object, but rather encounter it as an Idea? For Deleuze the task of knowledge is not to confront the univocal being as an object. Instead, it is to encounter it as an Idea. Kerslake acknowledges this point. “However, the Kantian point, emphasized by Deleuze, is not that such thoughts should simply be demoted from their previously significant status but that such problematic thoughts are on the contrary so important that we have to work out the correct way to apprehend them, as the error of previous philosophy lay in trying to make them fit into the confines of empirical cognition (thus leading to transcendental illusion)” (Kerslake 495).

According to Deleuze, when Kant explains the way reason strays away from the domination of the faculty of the understanding in order to encounter its own Idea he is really describing just one instance of a more general tendency. In other words, for Deleuze there are many Ideas. “We could just as well say that there are Ideas which traverse all the faculties, but are the object of none in particular” (DR 146). Boundas recognizes this difference between Kant and Deleuze: “an Idea, for Kant, has no instantiations in the empirical world, yet it must be thought. Deleuze retains this imperative when he thinks of the virtual, but he confounds Kantianism with his decision to multiply Ideas by making them the gerunds of all faculties (the cogitandum, the memorandum, the loquendum, the sentiendum)” (Boundas 9). Thus Deleuze talks about the Ideas of each of the faculties. For example, he talks about the phantasm of the faculty of imagination. “Moreover, when sensibility transmits its constraint to the imagination, when the imagination in turn is raised to the level of transcendent exercise, it is the phantasm, the disparity within the phantasm, which constitutes the phantasteon, which is both that which can only be imagined and the empirically unimaginable” (DR 144). And he talks about the immemorial of the faculty of memory and that which can only be thought of the faculty of thought that which can only be thought. “With regard to memory, it is not similitude in the
reminiscence but, on the contrary, the dissimilar in the pure form of time which constitutes the immemorial of a transcendent memory. Finally, it is an I fractured by this form of time which finds itself constrained to think that which can only be thought” (*DR* 144). Still that each faculty encounters its own Idea does not mean that there is nothing that draws these faculties and these Ideas together. Just because the faculties are dislodged from the Cogito that does not mean that they are not unified at all. If they were not unified at all it would be unclear how knowledge can be possible at all. There is only one knowledge.

Deleuze argues that it is their common ontological condition that unifies the faculties in this instance. Specifically, because each faculty encounters the univocal being from its own perspective, in other words, because each faculty encounters its own Idea that means that in this case we are talking about a kind of discordant unity. “The transcendental operation of the faculties is a properly paradoxical operation, opposed to their exercise under the rule of a common sense. In consequence, the harmony between the faculties can appear only in the form of a discordant harmony, since each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others” (*DR* 146). But how can the fact that each faculty confronts its own Idea unify the faculties? In this regard it is important to note that just because Deleuze argues against the Cogito that does not mean that he argues against the concept of individuality as such. Just because the faculties are dislodged from the Cogito that does not mean that they are dislodged from all individuality. It is not like the faculties do not belong to anyone anymore. The Cogito necessarily subsumes the faculties under the faculty of the understanding precisely because it confuses its identity with the concept, in other words, precisely because its self is freedom. But this is not the case with the Overman. The Overman is the individual who is not characterized by freedom. Instead, he is characterized by
his necessary connection to the univocal being. The Overman is the individual who is never fully individuated. He is the passive self who at the same time has the capacity to say ‘I.’ It is for this reason that the Overman is the perfect individual to unify the faculties while preserving their differences. In other words, he is the perfect individual to be the paradoxical unity of open faculties, that is faculties that encounters their own Ideas.

If the most important faculty for the Cogito is the faculty of the understanding, the most important faculty for the Overman is the sensibility. In other words, the Overman can be the paradoxical unity of faculties precisely because he synthesizes sensibly. For this reason, it ought not to surprise us that the faculty of sensibility becomes the most important faculty for Deleuze. “It is true that on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensibility” (DR 144). Deleuze prioritizes the faculty of sensibility, because sensibility is the faculty that is developed precisely in this encounter such that its form is not different from its matter. “In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility” (DR 144-5). This is what it means to say that repetition repeats the power of difference. “The privilege of sensibility as origin appears in the fact that, in an encounter, what forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing…” (DR 144-5). In this sense, the thing that each faculty encounters from its own perspective is actually what the faculty of sensibility encounters from its own perspective. For this reason, Deleuze can advance the controversial claim against Kant that what sensibility senses just is the Idea. In other words, that the intuitions without concepts are not blind but that they can see also means that the Idea is not transcendent, but is rather immanent. It is what we sense outside the concept. When the faculties are dislodged from the Cogito they fall back into the one and the same univocal being. However, for each of those faculties that one and the same
univocal being takes the form of its own Idea to the extent that each of them has its own relationship with it which is outside of the concept. We can put this in other words. While it is the case that each faculty encounters its own Idea, all of those Ideas are but perspectives on the Idea that the faculty of sensibility encounters. And this just is difference. “This harmonious Discord seemed to us to correspond to that Difference which by itself articulates or draws together. There is thus a point at which thinking, speaking, imagining, feeling, etc., are one and the same thing, but that thing affirms only the divergence of the faculties in their transcendent exercise” (DR 194). This difference is intensity.

When the faculty of sensibility is subordinated to the faculty of the understanding then that faculty as part of the Cogito encounters only the sensible being of an object that is known by means of all the other faculties under the sovereignty of the faculty of the understanding. “In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined or conceived. The sensible is referred to an object which may not only be experienced other than by sense, but may itself be attained by other faculties. It therefore presupposes the exercise of the senses and the exercise of the other faculties in a common sense” (DR 139). The faculty of sensibility does not encounter its Idea. It merely encounters the sensible part of the object that is recognized by means of all the faculties under the sovereignty of the faculty of the understanding. That the Cogito subordinates the representations of all the other faculties under concepts means that it abstracts itself from the univocal being. On the other hand, when we do away with Cogito we may say that the faculty of sensibility falls back into this univocal being. In other words, the Overman takes over this faculty. But what does this mean other than the faculty of sensibility that is dislodged from the faculty of the understanding encounters not just the sensible being but the very being of the
sensible. (This is why Deleuze talks about the sensible and organic syntheses that precede the conceptual synthesis). Deleuze calls this being of the sensible the sign. “The object of encounter, on the other hand, really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense. It is not an aistheton but an aistheteon. It is not a quality but a sign. It is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible” (DR 139-40). What exactly is this sign? For Kant the sensible being is what is given in the manifold. However, Deleuze argues, the being of the sensible is what gives sensible being. “It is not the given but that by which the given is given” (DR 140). Deleuze argues that the sign is intensity. In “Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual” Boundas writes: “what is it that our sense ought to sense that they cannot (empirically) sense? Well, as Kant would have said, the manifold is given; but, for Deleuze, that by means of which the manifold is given is intensity” (Boundas 89). Deleuze often argues that to the extent that the Cogito is in charge of the faculty of sensibility, the human being cannot sense intensity.

The faculty of sensibility that is dominated by the faculty of the understanding cannot sense intensity. “It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible [insensible]. It is imperceptible precisely from the point of view of recognition - in other words, from the point of view of an empirical exercise of the senses in which sensibility grasps only that which also could be grasped by other faculties, and is related within the context of a common sense to an object which also must be apprehended by other faculties” (DR 140). Specifically, to the extent that the faculty of sensibility is dominated by the faculty of the understanding it can only sense intensity as extensity. This is why Kant claims that intuitions without concepts are blind. Daniel W. Smith makes this point in “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality.” “In empirical experience, to be sure, we know only intensities or forms of energy that are already localized and distributed in extended space: intensity is inseparable from a process of extension
that relates it to extended space and subordinates it to the qualities that fill space” (Smith 1996 36). Smith frames his point in terms of conscious perception. “A ‘sign’…is an intensity produced by the asymmetry of the differential relations, whereas a ‘quality’ appears when an intensity reaches a given order or magnitude and these relations are organized in consciousness” (Smith 1996 36). This way of framing the issue is helpful. When the sensible being such as a sound comes to consciousness it means that it has been conceptualized. In other words, the passive self has become the Cogito. “This notion of the differential Idea finds its complement in the concept of intensity: these elements and relations are necessarily actualized in intensive magnitudes” (Smith 1996 36). But everything changes when the passive self becomes the Overman, in other words, when the faculty of sensibility is dislodged from the faculty of the understanding. In this case the faculty of sensibility really does encounter its own Idea, that is, it really does encounter intensity. “This element is intensity, understood as pure difference in itself, as that which is at once both imperceptible for empirical sensibility which grasps intensity only already covered or mediated by the quality to which it gives rise, and at the same time that which can be perceived only from the point of view of a transcendental sensibility which apprehends it immediately in the encounter” (DR 144). Deleuze argues that the Idea of the faculty of sensibility, namely intensity is what produces the faculty of sensibility such that it can then come under the faculty of the understanding. “Sensibility, in the present of that which can only be sensed (and is at the same time imperceptible) finds itself before its own limit, the sign, and raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise: to the ‘nth’ power” (DR 140). We can say that it is only when we hear unconsciously that we can hear consciously. We can say that we consciously hear this or that noise, precisely because we unconsciously hear the white noise that produces all the other consciously heard noises (Smith 1996 36).
For Cogito knowledge is the unity of faculties under the faculty of the understanding such that the representations of all the faculties answer to concepts. However, since concepts are abstract and come out of nowhere that means that knowledge is an exercise of an imposition of concepts that are god given. Everything changes with the Overman. Because for the Overman the faculties are only unified by their relationship to the Ideas that means that knowledge cannot be the imposition of concepts. There are no concepts to impose before there is the relationship to the Idea. However, this relationship requires a kind of radical openness of the Overman. In other words, the Overman can unify the faculties and their Ideas only because he synthesis sensibly outside the concept. In this sense, for Overman knowledge must be the exercise of apprenticeship and learning. “The paradoxical functioning of the faculties - including, in the first instance, sensibility with respect to signs - thus refers to the Ideas which run throughout all the faculties and awaken them each in turn....The exploration of Ideas and the elevation of each faculty to its transcendent exercise amounts to the same thing. These are two aspects of an essential apprenticeship or process of learning” (DR 164). In this sense, for Deleuze knowledge is a messy thing. In order to know, one must get one’s hands dirty. In other words, one must try and synthesize sensibly oneself. “That is why it is so difficult to say how someone learns: there is an innate or acquired practical familiarity with signs, which means that there is something amorous - but also something fatal - about all education. We learn nothing from those who say: ‘Do as I do’. Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me’, and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce. In other words, there is no ideo-motivity, only sensory-motivity” (DR 23). This is the difference between Kant and Deleuze. If knowledge is the development of faculties through the faculty of sensibility, in other words, through repetition that means that the Overman actually grounds the Cogito. Boundas
argues “that the similarity between transcendental empiricism and the Kantian transcendental idealism is misleading. For both Kant and Deleuze, the actual with its de facto existence, is governed by conditions that exist de jure. But the Kantian de jure is not like the Deleuzian in virtu. What is de jure is not characterized by a dynamic thrust toward its own actualization” (Boundas 9). Faculties must be produced in the Overman before they can even be lodged to the Cogito. Repetition comes before recognition. Difference comes before the object.

I want to conclude this chapter with an important point. This is how Deleuze frames the task of Difference and Repetition. “We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative” (DR 19). But why is difference so important that it needs to be thought? Why not recognition of object rather than repetition? The answer to this question seems clear. Difference grounds identity. But this statement is actually more complicated than it seems to be. When Deleuze argues that difference grounds identity he is not in the first instance making an ontological point. Todd May recognizes this point in Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction. “Deleuze may seem to be moving back into representational thought. It could look like as though he were merely substituting one concept for another. It’s not identity that captures what things are; it’s difference that does it. To read him that way would be to keep his thought circulating within the dogmatic image” (May 81-2). In this sense, repetition is not better because it knows what recognition does not know. If this were the case then Deleuze would be stuck in the same image of thought that he is seeking to overcome. Still, this does not mean that Deleuze is interested in telling fictions. Instead, Deleuze moves to a place beyond truth and fiction. And this place is the priority of practice. That practice is prior means that it is not practice in accordance with either some truth or some fiction. It is
prior to theory altogether. Deleuze criticizes the Cogito. But he does not criticize the Cogito because the Cogito cannot think what there really is. Instead, Deleuze criticizes the Cogito simply because it thinks badly. But what does ‘badly’ refer to in the previous sentence if not to its inability to think what there really is? “When Nietzsche questions the most general presuppositions of philosophy, he says that these are essentially moral, since Morality alone is capable of persuading us that thought has a good nature and the thinker a good will, and that only the good can ground the supposed affinity between thought and the True. Who else, in effect, but Morality, and this Good which gives thought to the true, and the true to thought?” (DR 132). Deleuze criticizes the Cogito because its thinking demonstrates an ethical badness. What does it mean for a way of thinking to be ethically bad?

In what follows I develop Deleuze’s ethics. I argue that his ethics are fundamentally Nietzschean in nature. For this reason, I begin by discussing Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche in Nietzsche and Philosophy. I will argue that the ethical difference between good and bad is the difference between those lives that affirm their own difference and those that deny their own difference, in other words, the ethical difference between good and bad is the difference between becoming and being. I hope that this statement conveys something important to the reader. If the Cogito thinks badly in the sense that he does not affirm his own difference and is rather than becomes, then the Overman does think well in the sense that he does affirm his own difference and becomes. This is precisely what it means for knowledge to be apprenticeship and learning. This insight allows me to make the most important point of this thesis. Deleuze argues in favour of the Overman and against the Cogito not because the Overman thinks what there really is whereas the Cogito does not. Instead, it is because the practical activity of the Overman, namely repetition, is the demonstration of an ethically good life whereas the practical
activity of the Cogito, namely recognition, is the demonstration of an ethically bad life. In this sense, difference is not primarily an ontological concept. Instead, it is an ethical concept. This is why, Deleuze argues, difference must be thought. Thinking difference is repeating and repeating is living well ethically speaking. I now turn to the discussion of Nietzsche. This discussion will allow me to make one final point about Kant.
Chapter 7: The ethics of becoming

The will to power

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze gives an interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept of force. “Nietzsche emphasizes the fact that force has another force as its object. But it is important to see that forces enter into relations with other forces” (*NP* 8). Deleuze does not think that forces exist on their own. Instead, he argues that forces exist only in relation to bodies. Specifically, Deleuze argues that the body is actually nothing other than the relationship of forces. “What is the body? We do not define it by saying that it is a field of forces, a nutrient medium fought over by a plurality of forces. For in fact there is ‘medium,’ no field of forces or battle. There is no quantity of reality, all reality is already quantity of force. There are nothing but quantities of force in mutual ‘relations of tension’” (*NP* 39-40). In this sense, just as there are no forces on their own, there are also no bodies on their own. Instead, all bodies are always already relationships of forces. In other words, the relationships of forces just are how bodies exist. “Up to now we have presented things as if different forces struggled over and took possession of an almost inert object. But the object itself is force, expression of a force. This is why more or less affinity between the object and the force which takes possession of it. There is no object (phenomenon) which is not already possessed since in itself it is not an appearance but the apparition of force” (*NP* 6). However, it is not enough to say that the body is the relationship of forces. Deleuze argues that the body is the relationship of forces that have determinate natures. Specifically, Deleuze claims that the body is the relationship of forces where some forces are dominant and other forces are dominated. “Every force is related to others and it either obeys or commands. What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body – whether it is chemical, biological, social or political” (*NP* 40). In a
body Deleuze calls the dominant forces active forces and the dominated forces the reactive forces. “In a body the superior or dominant forces are known as active and the inferior or dominating forces are known as reactive” (NP 40). What is it that determines the active and the reactive natures of forces in a body? In other words, if the body is nothing other than the relationship of the active and reactive forces what it is that determines its nature?

Forces do not enter into a relationship with other forces in the body as already determined. If that were the case then forces would in fact exist on their own, that is, apart from the body. But they do not. For this reason, it is not the case that the nature of forces is determined prior to the existence of the bodies. Instead, the nature of forces is determined in the bodies. But to the extent that the body is the relationship of forces means that the nature of forces is determined in their relationship with other forces. In this sense, force is actually always already a multiplicity. In other words, not only is it the case that there are no forces prior to bodies. For this reason, it is also the case that there is no force before there is another force. Thus Deleuze’s point is that the body is the relationship of the active and reactive forces and that the active and reactive natures of forces are determined precisely in that relationship. What is it about this relationship that determines some forces as active and other forces as reactive? This point is fundamental. In order to explain the determination of the nature of forces in the body, Deleuze gives an interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept of the will to power. Specifically, Deleuze argues that it is the will to power that determines the relationship of forces within the body. “The will to power is the genetic element of force, that is to say the element that produces the quality due to each force in this relation” (NP 53). The will to power relates forces to each other, synthesizes them, and determines their nature. “We should not be surprised by the word ‘will’; which one apart from the will is capable of serving as the principle of a synthesis of forces by determining
the relation of force with forces? But how should the term ‘principle’ be understood?” (NP 50).

In order to understand in what sense the will to power determines the relationship of forces within the body and thus determines their active and reactive natures, we must understand what kind of principle the will to power actually is.

There is no force without another force, in other words, there is no force outside of the relationship of forces. In this sense, there is no force outside of the body. We are now trying to understand how the relationship among these forces is determined, in other words, we are trying to understand how the nature of the body is determined. Just as Deleuze argues that force is not something external to the body, he also argues that the will to power is not something external to force. In other words, there is no will to power before there is force. In this sense, the will to power is not an external principle of forces. “Nietzsche always attacks principles for being too general in relation to what they condition, for always having to broad a mesh in relation to what they claim to capture or regulate” (NP 50). Instead, Deleuze argues, the will to power is the internal principle of forces. “If, on the contrary, the will to power is a good principle, if it constitutes a superior empiricism, this is because it is an essentially plastic principle that is no wider than what it conditions, that changes itself with the conditioned and determines itself in each case along with what it determines” (NP 50). This is typical Deleuzian logic that we have seen operate in his interpretation of Kant’s critical philosophy. The determining principle must be within that which it determines without however being confused with it. In this sense, the will to power must be a matter of genesis. “The will to power cannot be separated from force without falling into a metaphysical abstraction. But to confuse force and will is even more risky. Force is no longer understood as force and one falls back into mechanism-forgetting the difference between forces which constitutes their being and remaining ignorant of the element from which
their reciprocal genesis derives” (NP 50). Therefore just as Deleuze argues that force is within the body, he also claims that the will to power is within force. “The victorious concept ‘force,’ by means of which our physicists have created God and the world, still needs to be completed: an inner will must be ascribed to it, which I designate as ‘will to power’” (quoted in NP 49). In other words, just as it is as the body that the force relates to another force, it is as force that the will to power is generated. But what does this mean other than it is also as the body that the will to power is generated?

In The Will to Power Nietzsche argues: “This world is the will to power is the will to power—and nothing besides. And you yourselves are this will to power—and nothing besides” (Nietzsche 550). There is no force without another force. However, the relationship between forces just is the body. For that reason, to say that the will to power is internal to force is also to say that the will to power is internal to the body. But what does this mean? One thing that is true of every body is that it is a living body. “The birth of a living body is not therefore surprising since every body is living, being the ‘arbitrary’ product of the forces of which it is composed” (NP 40). Thus we arrive at this point. The will to power is actually nothing other than life. But what is life? No definition of life can be divorced from the actual practice of living. In other words, we can understand what life is if we consider what the will to power actually does. “The question which Nietzsche constantly repeats, ‘what does a will want, what does this one or that one want?’, must not be understood as the search for a goal, a motive or an object for this will. What a will wants is to affirm its difference. In its essential relation with the ‘other’ a will makes its difference an object of affirmation” (NP 9). Life is the affirmation of difference, in other words, it is the process of becoming. Moreover, if life is to actually be the internal determining principle of forces and bodies, it must be singular in each instance. In “Six Notes on the Percept”
Zourabichvili argues that “there is no identity to Life, nor is there Life in general, there are only differentiated ways of living (and ways of thinking that envelop living). Life exists only in being differentiated, in its internal difference, or that which affirms itself only in differing from itself, ceaselessly repeating itself at various levels” (Zourabichvili 195). Thus it is the singular life that is the determining principle of forces and bodies. Deleuze argues that there are two qualities of the will to power. In other words, there are two ways in which the singular life is the determining principle of forces and bodies. “It is therefore essential to insist on the terms used by Nietzsche; active and reactive designate the original qualities of force but affirmative and negative designate the primordial qualities of the will to power” (NP 54). Deleuze distinguishes between active and reactive forces by means of the affirmative and negative will to power.

A force is active to the extent that it affirms its own difference. In other words, a force is active to the extent that it affirms itself as different, that is, acts on that which is different and makes itself different. “‘What is active? – reaching out for power.’ Appropriating, possessing, subjugating, dominating – these are the characteristics of active force. To appropriate means to impose forms, to create forms by exploiting circumstances” (NP 42). In this way, the force is active to the extent that it becomes. “For Nietzsche, as for energetic, energy which is capable of transforming itself is called ‘noble.’ The power of transformation, the Dionysian power, is the primary definition of activity” (NP 42). On the other hand, the opposite is true of reactive force. The reactive force “is an exhausted force which does not have the strength to affirm its difference, a force which no longer acts but rather reacts to the forces which dominate it – only such a force brings to the foreground the negative element in its relation to the other. Such a force denies all that it is not and makes this negation its own essence and the principle of existence” (NP 9). Thus the reactive force does not seem to become. In the *Time-Image* Deleuze
argues that “according to physicists, noble energy is the kind which is capable of transforming itself, while the base kind can no longer do so” (TI 141). However, that the reactive force denies its difference and does not seem to become does not mean that the will to power is not its determining principle. The singular life is the determining principle even of the force that denies its own difference and does not become. “Force is what can, will to power is what wills” (NP 50). And even the reactive force can. But what can the reactive force? What is the least bit of difference that one must afford even when one denies it? What is the least bit of becoming that one must cover even when one does not seem to? “According to physicists, noble energy is the kind which is capable of transforming itself, while the base kind can no longer do so. There is will to power on both sides, but the latter is nothing more than a will-to-dominate in the exhausted becoming of life, while the former is artistic will or ‘virtue which gives,’ the creation of new possibilities, in the outpouring of becoming” (TI 141). The reactive force denies its own difference but even in that way unwittingly makes itself different. For example, it makes itself rigid and stale. It slows down its own becoming to its lowest possible speed in order to try to make life uniform. Is this not how those who are afraid of living live? In Essays Critical and Clinical Deleuze writes: “the will to power certainly appears in an infinitely more exact manner in a baby than in a man of war” (CC 133). The man of war encounters only himself, but a baby always encounters only others. In one case there is contagion, pollution, oppression. In the other, there is invention, discovery, excitement.

Perhaps we can put Deleuze’s point in less technical terms. What determines the nature of forces and bodies is will to power. But there are two qualities of will to power. One is about affirming one’s own difference. The other is about denying it. The will to power is life. In fact it is the most singular life. Thus we come to this conclusion. What determines the nature of forces
and bodies is the singular life, in other words, singular existence itself. “That is why philosophy has often been tempted to oppose notions of a quite different kind to categories, notions which are really open and which betray an empirical and pluralist sense of Ideas: ‘existential’ as against essential, precepts as against concepts, or indeed the list of empirico-ideal notions…” (DR 284).

Deleuze abstracts terms such as force, body, and will to power in order to talk about singular lives. In other words, Deleuze makes a qualitative distinction between those lives that affirm their own differences and those lives that deny them. He makes a qualitative distinction between those lives that become and those that attempt not, those that attempt to be. I hope that at this point the reader will recognize the connection that I am attempting to establish. It is wrong to claim that Deleuze has no appreciation for the concept of the individual. In fact, he is interested in developing a positive philosophy of the individual. The individual is always individuated in the Idea. “It is Ideas which lead us from the fractured I to the dissolved Self…These Ideas, however, are expressed in individuating factors, in the implicated world of intensive quantities which constitute the universal concrete individuality of the thinker or the system of the dissolved Self (DR 259). In this sense, Deleuze attempts to understand the individual in its full complexity. “Beyond the self and the I we find not the impersonal but the individual and its factors, individuation and its fields, individuality and its pre-individual singularities. For the pre-individual is still singular, just as the ante-self and the ante-I are still individual - or, rather than simply ‘still’, we should say ‘finally’” (DR 258). Above I have argued that the difference between the Overman and the Cogito is in their different relationships to their own individuality. The Overman exists his individuality as the process of individuation, whereas the Cogito attempts to abstract his individuality from this process. Deleuze’s distinction between the two singular lives, namely the difference between those who affirms their own differences (the reality
of becoming) and those who deny them (the illusion of being), just is the difference between the
Overman and the Cogito.

I have already argued that the univocal being is the beginning of critical philosophy. In
other words, the critical philosophy begins with difference and repetition. “The will to power is
the flashing world of metamorphoses, of communicating intensities, differences of differences,
of breaths, insinuations and exhalations: a world of intensive intentionalities, a world of
simulacra or ‘mysteries’. Eternal return is the being of this world, the only Same which is said of
this world and excludes any prior identity therein” (DR 243). Thus difference and repetition or
the will to power and the eternal return belong together. “This is the fundamental connection
between the eternal return and the will to power. The one does not hold without the other” (DR
243). Deleuze explains the Overman in relation to the will to power and the eternal return. We
have seen that the passage from the Overman is the kind of individual who never fully
individuates. In other words, he is always also the passive self. He remains fully grounded on the
earth. But what does this mean other than the Overman is the kind of individual who becomes
the intersection of difference and repetition. In other words, the Overman operates power of
difference. Because the will to power is singular, the Overman is the singular operator of the will
to power. “It is a question of attaining this will that the event creates in us; of becoming the
quasi-cause of what is produced within us, the Operator…beyond the general and the particular,
the collective and the private. It is a question of becoming the citizen of the world” (LS 148). It
must be clear what this operation consist it. The Overman operates the will to power as the
eternal return. In other words, that the Overman is capable of repeating just means that he
harnesses the power of difference. “And when Nietzsche presents the eternal return as the
immediate expression of the will to power, will to power does not at all mean ‘to want power’
but, on the contrary: whatever you will, carry it to the ‘nth’ power - in other words, separate out the superior form by virtue of the selective operation of thought in the eternal return, by virtue of the singularity of repetition in the eternal return itself. Here, in the superior form of everything that is, we find the immediate identity of the eternal return and the Overman (DR 8). We have seen that this operation of the will to power as repetition takes the form of sensibility. In other words, repeating is in the first instance a sensing, a sensing that develops concepts. “Difference in the will to power is the highest object of sensibility, the hohe Stimmung, sensed against the laws of nature (remember that the will to power was first presented as a feeling, a feeling of distance). A thought contrary to the laws of nature, repetition in the eternal return is the highest thought, the gross Gedanke.” (DR 243). We arrive at this point. The Overman is the kind of individual who repeats the power of difference. However, this means that the Overman is the kind of individual who affirms his own difference. He is the kind of individual who becomes. “That is why the Overman is defined as the superior form of everything that ‘is’. We must discover what Nietzsche means by noble: he borrows the language of energy physics and calls noble that energy which is capable of transforming itself” (DR 41). This is the connection between chapters five and six and chapter seven. The difference and repetition that Deleuze talks about is the operation of the Overman.

In order for the individual to repeat, that is, to harness the power of difference that individual must not be the spontaneous individual. “Repetition in the eternal return never means continuation, perpetuation or prolongation, nor even the discontinuous return of something which would at least be able to be prolonged in a partial cycle (an identity, an I, a Self) but, on the contrary, the reprise of pre-individual singularities which, in order that it can be grasped as repetition, presupposes the dissolution of all prior identities” (DR 201-202). In other words, in
order for the individual to repeat, he must prioritize the faculty of sensibility at the expense of the identity of the concept. But the Cogito does the exact opposite. The Cogito prioritizes the identity of the concept at the expense of the faculty of sensibility. For this reason, the Cogito does not encounter the Idea, or, he only recognizes the Idea as an object, in other words, he only recognizes intensity as extensity. For this reason, the Cogito does not repeat. “What does not return is that which denies eternal return, that which does not pass the test. It is quality and extensity which do not return, in so far as within them difference, the condition of eternal return, is cancelled” (DR 243). That the Cogito does not repeat means that he comes around only once and that one time is an illusion and an abstraction. “So too the negative [does not return], in so far as difference is thereby inverted and cancelled. So too the identical, the similar and the equal, in so far as these constitute the forms of indifference. So too God, along with the self as the form and guarantee of identity: everything which appears only under the law of ‘once and for all’, including repetition when it is subject to the condition of the identity of a same quality, a same extended body, a same self (as in the ‘resurrection’)” (DR 243-4). This is the connection. The Cogito tries not to become. He tries to be. He denies his own difference. Is this not precisely the point of freedom? But you should be careful what you wish for. To try and not become, to deny your own difference is to try and not be alive. And is not nihilism characterized precisely by such an attempt? Is it not the case that contemporary sensibility is the strange and intricate union of abstract and illusory freedom and concrete meaninglessness?

The difference between the Overman and the Cogito is the difference in the quality of the will to power. In other words, it is the will to power that makes an individual be the Overman or the Cogito. But the will to power is not a metaphysical principle. It is the concrete singular life. In other words, it is nothing other than a particular kind of living. In this sense, it is actually the
concrete, singular living that makes one be either the Overman or the Cogito. “Willing is not an act like any other. Willing is the critical and genetic instance of all our actions, feelings and thoughts… What a will wants, depending on its quality, is to affirm or to deny what differs. Only qualities are ever willed: the heavy, the light…What a will wants is always its own quality and the quality of the corresponding forces” (NP 78). By making this distinction between these two concrete, singular lives Deleuze hopes to develop an ethics. Deleuze does not just say that the Overman affirms his own difference and becomes whereas the Cogito denies his own difference and attempts to be. Deleuze also wants to say that the Overman is ethically better than the Cogito. In other words, Deleuze also wants to say affirming your own difference and becoming is ethically better than denying your own difference and being. What allows Deleuze to make this further argument? In other words, in what does Deleuze’s Nietzschean ethics consist?
Deleuze’s Nietzschean ethics

Deleuze argues that Nietzsche’s will is power is not just becoming. Instead, the will to power is also a feeling. “Before treating power as a matter of the will he treated it as a matter of feeling and sensibility. But when he had elaborated the concept of the will to power this first characteristic did not disappear – it became the manifestation of power” (NP 62). What does this mean? We are not talking about the will to power as becoming and then the will to power also as feeling. Instead, becoming is inseparable from feeling (NP 64). This is what it means to say that feeling is the manifestation of the will to power. In other words, there is a feeling associated with, internal to becoming. It feels a certain way to become. However, that such a feeling is internal to becoming also means that it is not a ‘mere feeling.’ Becoming is the very life of the body. And that feeling is internal to becoming means that it too is that life. There are days when I feel sad or angry. There are days when I feel happy. But there is also such a thing as the feeling of being me, the tenor of my existence. ‘He loves life.’ ‘He hates life.’ This is the will to power as feeling. For this reason, Deleuze calls the will to power as feeling affect or feeling of power. “Similarly, for Nietzsche, the capacity for being affected is not necessarily a passivity but an affectivity, a sensibility, a sensation. It is in this sense that Nietzsche even before elaborating the concept of the will to power and giving its full significance, was already speaking of a feeling of power” (NP 62). Deleuze argues that the will to power creates values. “The value of a value consists in the quality of the will to power expressed in the corresponding thing; is the will to power affirmative or negative and of what nuance?” (NP 55). We must understand this claim in relation to the will to power as becoming and as feeling. In other words, that the will to power is not just becoming but is also a feeling means that it can be the basis of the creation of values. It is in this sense that the will to power creates values.
What creates values is not so much the extent to which I affirm my own difference but rather the extent to which affirming my own difference also names the extent to which I am affected. “Evaluations, in essence, are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles or the values on the basis of which they judge…This is the crucial point; high and low, noble and base, are not values but represent the differential element from which the value of values themselves derives” (NP 1-2). To affirm one’s own difference, to become, just means to be well affected, in other words, it means to feel good. To deny one’s own difference, not to become, just means to be badly affected, in other words, it means to feel bad. The will to power creates values as affect. In other words, the good and the bad are values that originate in the will to power as affect. In “Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence” Daniel W. Smith writes that “for Deleuze, ethics is ontology because it is derived from the immanent relation of beings to Being at the level of their existence (and hence privileges concepts such as puissance (power or capacity) and affectivity)” (Smith 2003 63). Deleuze argues that the will to power is singular. “We should not ask whether, in the final analysis, the will to power is unitary or multiple – this would show a general misunderstanding of Nietzsche’s philosophy. The will to power is plastic, inseparable from each case in which it is determined” (NP 85). For this reason, the will to power as affect actually creates the values of good and bad that are always singular. We must be clear on this point. The will to power does not create values arbitrarily. It is not the case that we simply say that affirming one’s own difference is good and denying one’s own difference is bad. We also give a reason for this distinction. However, this reason is not external to the singular will to power itself. Rather, it is internal to it. Therefore, affirming one’s own difference is good because it feels good. And denying one’s own difference is bad because it feels bad. Again, this feeling is
not a ‘mere feeling.’ It is a feeling of life itself. ‘How are you?’ ‘How do you feel?’ these questions mean the exact same thing. Zourabichivili describes this ethics in terms of health. “What is health? We see that it is ambiguous by nature, an overflowing, excess, in other words, violence, but a creative violence, or more precisely, a violence concomitant with creation rather than destruction. Such violence shatters because it carries the subject into an a-subjective, that is, a singular and impersonal becoming-other, rather than shattering by a will-to-shatter or to impose a new, already envisaged, figure of subjectivity” (Zourabichvili 198). Deleuze develops such an ethics as health in his philosophy.

For example, Deleuze and Guattari develop such an ethics in Capitalism and Schizophrenia. In other words, they explain the various ways in which a living body becomes by affirming its own difference. In this regard they talk about a body without organs. Why a body without organs? We tend to understand the functions of organs in terms of the organism. In other words, we subordinate the functions of organs to the organism. Is this not why they take the appendix out? Apparently it does not do anything for the organism. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between two kinds of systems. On the one hand, there are systems that are organized top to bottom, that is, by means of one center or even by means of several centers. “Arborescent systems are hierarchical systems with centers of significance and subjectification, central automata like organized memories. In the corresponding models, an element only receives information from a higher unit, and only receives a subjective affection along preestablished paths” (TP 16). The question is of course where this higher unit itself gets its information. Where does the organism itself get its functions? On the other hand, there are systems that organize themselves, in other words, where no one unit is higher precisely because each only becomes a unit in relation to others. In other words, there are systems that develop themselves to the extent
that units develop themselves through relations. “In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states” (*TP* 21). In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari argue for the body without organs not so much to claim that a living body ought to be disorganized. (The title of the sixth plateau is “How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs”). Instead, they argue that a living body not be organized organically. “We come to the gradual realization that the BwO is not at all opposite of the organs. The organs are not its enemies. The enemy is the organism…The BwO is not opposed to the organs; rather, the BwO and its ‘true organs,’ which must be composed and positioned are opposed to the organism, the organic organization of the organs” (*TP* 158). Thus, Deleuze and Guattari argue that a living body be organized rhizomatically. But what does this mean other than they argue that the living body become? “The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest capture, offshoots...What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality—but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial—that is totally different from the arborescent relation; all manner of ‘becomings’” (*TP* 21). The living body is not. Or ought not to be. Instead, the living body becomes. It ought to become. “The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the very ‘to be,’ but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and...and...and...’ This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the very ‘to be’” (*TP* 25). But why ought it? In “Deleuze’s Practical Philosophy” Paul Patton argues “Deleuze and Guattari do not provide any explicit defense or justification of normative principles. Rather, the elaboration of their ontology of assemblages provides a demonstration of such principles (in the sense of presenting or showing rather than deducing
these principles)” (Patton 288). In other words, becoming is inseparable from an affect. “For the affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel” (TP 240). Morality, specifically psychoanalysis, wants to stop the becoming of the living body. “The BwO howls: ‘They’ve made me an organism! They’ve wrongfully folded me! They’ve stolen my body!’ The judgment of God uproots it from its immanence and makes it an organism, a signification, a subject” (TP 159). On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari argue, in favour of the becoming of the living body. “Where psychoanalysis says, ‘Stop, find yourself again,’ we should say instead, ‘Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled our self’...Find your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It’s a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy” (TP 151). It is in this sense that Capitalism and Schizophrenia is an ethical project. In the preface to Anti-Oedipus Foucault writes: “I would say that Anti-Oedipus (may its authors forgive me) is a book of ethics, the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time” (AO xiii). This is an ethics of becoming. “He does not live nature as nature, but as a process of production. There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever” (AO 2). Perhaps in The Logic of Sense Deleuze describes the most extreme example of becoming.

In The Logic of Sense Deleuze makes several ontological distinctions. In the first instance, he talks about bodies. The relationship among bodies is causality. “There are no causes and effects among bodies. Rather, all bodies are causes—causes in relation to each other” (LS 4). When bodies cause each other they mix and produce certain states of affairs. “First, there are
bodies with their tensions, physical qualities, actions and passions, and the corresponding ‘states of affairs.’ These states of affairs, actions and passions, are determined by the mixture of bodies” (LS 4). However, when bodies cause each other, they also produce something other than states of affairs. “Second, all bodies are causes in relation to each other, and causes for each other—but causes of what? They are causes of certain things of an entirely different nature. These effects are not bodies, but, properly speaking, ‘incorporeal entities’ (LS 4). Deleuze calls these incorporeal entities events. “They are not things or facts, but events. We cannot say that they exist, but rather that they subsist or inhere (having this minimum of being which is appropriate to that which is not a thing, a non-existing entity)” (LS 5). Thus when bodies cause each other they also actualize events. “Mixtures in general determine the quantitative and qualitative states of affairs: the dimensions of an ensemble—the red of iron, the green of a tree. But what do we mean by ‘to grow,’ ‘to diminish,’ ‘to cut,’ and ‘to be cut,’ etc., is something entirely different. These are no longer states of affairs—mixtures deep inside bodies—but incorporeal events at the surface which are the results of these mixtures” (LS 6). That the bodies actualize events means that events are impassive. “They [events] are neither agents not patients, but results of actions and passions. They are ‘impassive’ entities—impassive results” (LS 5). Deleuze spends most of The Logic of Sense attempting to understand in what sense events need not be just impassive but can also be productive. In other words, Deleuze spends of most of The Logic of Sense attempting to understand in what sense there can be a counter-actualization. But in what kind of project does such an attempt culminate? We will misunderstand The Logic of Sense unless we understand its limits. Deleuze does not argue that events cause other events to resonate with each other and produce other states of affairs. The fact is that events can only quasi-cause other events. “Incorporeal effects are never themselves causes in relation to each other; rather, they are only
‘quasi-causes’ following laws which perhaps express in each case the relative unity or mixture of bodies on which they depend for their real causes” (LS 6). For this reason, counter-actualization culminates in an ethical project. In other words, it is only in ethics that we can counter-actualize events.

But what does it mean to counter-actualize an event? In this regard Deleuze talks about the wound. When bodies such as guns, humans, and political ideologies enter into a relationship of causality, in other words, when they mix they produce certain states of affairs such as my wound. However, my wound is not the only thing that the causality of bodies produces. Instead, it also actualizes an event. This event is not my wound. Deleuze often argues that events have always already happened and are always about to happen, but are never actually happening: “only the past and future inhere in time and divide each present infinitely” (LS 5). In this sense, the event is actually ‘to wound.’ Deleuze insists that counter-actualization is not about willing the states of affairs. In other words, it is not about accepting your wound. “What then does it mean to will the event? Is it to accept war, wounds, and death when they occur? It is highly probable that resignation is only one more figure of ressentiment, since ressentiment has many figures” (LS 149). Instead, it is about willing ‘to wound.’ Deleuze often talks about acting or miming the event. “The actor or actress represents, but what he or she represents is always still in the future and already in the past, whereas his or her representation is impassible and divided...neither acting nor being acted upon” (LS 150). In “the Ethics of the Event” Levi R. Bryant explains that “the mime is one who liberates the pure essence of an event from its specific spatio-temporal actualization in the world or specific circumstances, capturing the sense of that event independent of any context or circumstances” (Bryant 35). Bryant gives an interesting example in this regard. “For example, the mime simulates trying to control one’s umbrella while
being buffeted by the wind in a rainstorm despite the fact that no umbrella, wind, or rainstorm is present. In short, the mime is able to *preserve* the event independent of its spatio-temporal actualization in a state of affairs” (Bryant 35). Joe Bousquet has been wounded. But what does he do? He makes his wound the source of experimentation. In other words, he experiments with his wound. But does Bousquet not thereby also demonstrate a will of indifference towards his wound, in other words, that he does not take it personally anymore, that he has reached ‘to wound”? When I grasp my wound as ‘to wound’ I return it to the world in its pure state. In other words, I demonstrate that I am capable of taking it on. It is in this sense that I live my wound differently, that I counter-actualize my wound. “The actor thus actualizes the event, but in a way which is entirely from the actualization of the event in the depth of things. Or rather, the actors redoubles his cosmic, or physical actualization, in his own way...and keeps from the event only its contour and its splendour becoming thereby the actor of one’s own events—a *counter-actualization*” (*LS* 150). If becoming is a connecting that births the self, perhaps the most difficult, the most rewarding becoming is becoming precisely yourself, in other words, birthing yourself by connecting to your own events. “Nothing more can be said and no more has ever been said: to become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one’s own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth...” (*LS* 149). In this sense what changes is not the actual wound. That wound is still very much around and always will be. Instead, what changes is your relationship to the wound. The wound is no longer you because you have become another by means of it, in other words, by means of the wound you have connected to ‘to wound’ and thereby to the creative power of life itself. You have individuated yourself.

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I have talked about ethics in terms of affirming and denying one’s own difference, that is, in terms of becoming and being. But in what sense can this be called an ethics at all? Deleuze does away with judgment. However, he thinks that such doing away with judgment is not the same as relativism. “What disturbed us was that in renouncing judgment we had the impression of depriving ourselves of any means of distinguishing between existing beings, between modes of existence, as if everything were now of equal value” (CC 134-5). Relativism does not do away with judgment. In fact, it is firmly rooted in judgment to the extent that it is committed to the same universal standard as morality is. The only difference between morality and relativism is that morality affirms the existence of this universal standard, whereas relativism denies it. But it is not enough to deny something in order to do away with it. Relativism draws its raison d’être from this denial. In other words, standards can be relative only to the extent that one experiences the universal standard as a lack. It is in this sense, that relativism is still very much inspired by the logic of judgment. But what would it mean to move beyond morality and relativism altogether? This is what Deleuze is attempting to do when he talks about doing away with judgment altogether. This then is the value of Nietzsche’s philosophy. “Nietzsche did not hesitate: there exists a justice that is opposed to all judgment…” (CC 127). There is justice beyond good and evil. “Nietzsche, who had already substituted affect for judgment, warned his readers: beyond good and evil does not in the least mean beyond good and bad” (TI 141). I hope that it is clear what these good and bad are. The good and bad are not values that are imposed on life that are external to it. In that case, they would once again be the new universal standard. Instead, good and bad are values that are created from within life and by life itself. To the extent that life is the will to power that is both becoming and affect it is this life itself that speaks these values. Life that becomes feels good. Life that does not feels bad. In this sense, to begin with will
to power, with becoming is to escape judgment altogether. “The way to escape judgment is to make yourself a body without organs, to find your body without organs. This had already been Nietzsche’s project: to define the body in its becoming, in its intensity, as the power to affect or to be affected, that is, as *Will to Power*” (*CC* 131). Beyond good and evil means beyond both morality and relativism. This is the ethics of good and bad. Deleuze’s Nietzschean ethics of good and bad is not about subjectivism. The feeling that creates values is not the feeling of this or that subject. It is the feeling that belongs to life itself. It is the feeling that constitutes the subject in the first place. “This is not subjectivism, since to pose the problem in terms of force, and not in other terms, already surpasses all subjectivity” (*CC* 135). Thus it is not the point of saying that different things feel differently for different people. In fact, there is a sense in which the ethics of good and bad is a universal ethics but in a different way. It is a universal ethics in the sense that it is an ethics for all life.

Just because the will to power is singular in each case that is just because it is inseparable from my life and your life does not mean that good and bad are themselves particular in each case. Affirming one’s own difference is always affected well, in other words, it always feels good, and negating one’s own difference is always affectedly badly, in other words, it always feels bad. “This bad is exhausted and degenerating life, all the more terrible, and apt to multiply itself [contagion]. But the good is outpouring, ascending life, the kind which knows how to transform itself, to metamorphose itself according to the forces it encounters, and which forms a constantly larger force with them, always increasing the power to live, always opening the new ‘possibilities’” (*NP* 141). In this sense, Deleuze argues, Nietzschean ethics is an ethics of all life even though it does not allow a universal standard by means of which we can judge others. In fact that is precisely why Nietzschean ethics is an ethics of all life. “Judgment prevents the
emergence of any new mode of existence. For the latter creates itself through its own forces, that is, through the forces it is able to harness, and is valid in and of itself inasmuch as it brings the new combination into existence. Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring into existence and not to judge. If it is so disgusting to judge, it is not because everything is of equal value, but on the contrary because what has value can be made or distinguished only by defying judgment” (CC 135). ‘To become or not to become?’ that is the ethical question. Everything else is judgment, in other words, the morality and the relativism of good and evil. No one has done more to explain in what sense such an ethics is simultaneously singular and an ethics of all life than Rosi Braidotti. In “Affirmation versus Vulnerability” Braidotti writes: “thus an ethically empowering option increases one’s potentia and creates joyful energy in the process. The conditions that can encourage such a quest are not only historical; they concern processes of transformation or self-fashioning in the direction of affirming positivity. Because all subjects share in this common nature, there is a common ground to negotiate the interests and the eventual conflicts” (Braidotti 238). It is in this context that we are to understand the point that Deleuze never tires of making. In What is Philosophy? Deleuze and Guattari argue that “there is not the slightest reason for thinking that modes of existence need transcendent values by which they could be compared, selected, and judged relative to one another. On the contrary, there are only immanent criteria…A mode of existence is good or bad, noble or vulgar, complete or empty, independently of Good and Evil or any transcendent value: there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life” (WP 74). The most singular is both the most particular and the most universal. “The task of modern philosophy is to overcome the alternatives temporal/non-temporal, historical/eternal and particular/universal (DR xxi).
I would like to close this thesis on a controversial note. I have just developed Deleuze’s Nietzschean ethics. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze uses this Nietzschean ethics to criticize Kant’s critical philosophy. Deleuze’s argument is that Kant’s thought is the expression of the negative will to power. In this sense, Kant’s thought is bad. Deleuze gives a reason for this argument. He argues that Kant’s thought demonstrates a fundamental commitment to truth understood as the Platonic Idea. This interpretation is surprising given that Deleuze does think that Kant’s critical philosophy is not just characterized by its commitment to the Cogito but also by its overcoming of the Cogito. Still, Deleuze argues that this commitment to truth in the form of the Platonic Idea demonstrates a fundamental desire to be rather than to become. In what follows I present Deleuze’s criticism of Kant’s thought in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in terms of Nietzschean ethics. However, I would like the reader to be aware of my position here. I take Deleuze’s criticism of Kant’s thought in terms of Nietzschean ethics to be fundamentally ironic. I do not just do so because Deleuze is himself aware that Kant’s thought has all the tools to overcome and actually does overcome the Cogito. “Kant is less a prisoner of the categories of subject and object than he is believed to be, since his idea of Copernican revolution puts thought into a direction relationship with the earth” (WP 86). Instead, I take Deleuze’s criticism to be fundamentally ironic because of what such an overcoming of the Cogito in Kant’s thought actually implies. That Kant’s thought overcomes the Cogito just means that it is the example *par excellence* of the very Nietzschean ethics that Deleuze uses to criticize it. To the extent that Kant’s thought overcomes the Cogito it is actually the thought of the Overman. The Overman is the individual who is at the same time the passive self. For this reason, the Overman is the embodiment of difference and repetition. But what does this mean? We have seen that for Deleuze critical philosophy begins with difference and repetition. But what does this mean other
than that critical philosophy begins with the Overman as the embodiment of difference and repetition? But this point entails a further one. This is the most important point. That philosophy begins with the Overman as the embodiment of difference and repetition means that difference and repetition must be ethical concepts before they can be ontological concepts. I must first become in order for there to be becoming. But have I not made the same argument in the first part of the essay in relation to Kant’s critical philosophy? For Kant I know the thing in itself to the extent that I actualize it. Practical philosophy precedes and establishes theoretical philosophy. I leave the reader with these insights as she reads through Deleuze’s fundamentally ironic criticism of Kant’s thought in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in terms of Nietzschean ethics.
Nietzsche against Kant?

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is a project of an immanent critique. In other words, Kant does not criticize reason from the point of view of feeling or something else, nor does he criticize feeling or something else from the point of view of reason. Instead, Kant criticizes reason from the point of view of reason. “Is this not the Kantian contradiction, making reason both the tribunal and the accused; constituting it as judge and plaintiff, judging and judged” (*NP* 91). It is not the case that reason can criticize reason if at the same time reason was not committed to something other than itself. In other words, critique of reason is the critique in the name of truth. “Kant merely pushed a very old conception of critique to the limit, a conception which saw critique as a force which should be brought to bear on all claims to knowledge and truth, but not on knowledge and truth themselves” (*NP* 89). Reason criticizes reason in the name of truth. But what kind of truth is this? In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze argues that “with representation, concepts are like possibilities, but the subject of representation still determines the objects as really conforming to the concepts, as an essence. That is why representation as a whole is the element of knowledge which is realized by the recollection of the thought object and its recognition by a thinking subject” (*DR* 191). Reason criticizes reason in the names of truth understood as the Platonic Idea. “The most curious thing about this image of thought is the way in which it conceives of truth as an abstract universal” (*NP* 103). In *Kant’s Critical Philosophy* Deleuze argues that reason determines different faculties to harmonize other faculties and legislate over objects that are subject to them for the interest of reason. On the one hand, the understanding harmonizes the imagination and reason and legislates over phenomena for the speculative interest of reason. On the other hand, reason harmonizes the imagination and the understanding and legislates over the thing in itself for the practical interest of reason. However, Deleuze argues, that reason criticizes
itself in the name of truth means that it does not determine the faculties to harmonize other faculties and legislate over objects that are subject to them in its own name, but rather in the name of another. “For Kant what legislates (in a domain) is always one of our faculties: understanding, reason. We are legislators ourselves only insofar as we make proper use of this faculty and allot our other faculties tasks which conform to it. We are legislators only insofar as we submit to one of our faculties, as if it were the whole of ourselves. But to what do we submit in such a faculty, to what forces?” (NP 92). In other words, Kant submits knowledge, morality to truth, to nothing but the truth. “Kant’s ‘proper usage of the faculties’ mysteriously coincides with these established values: true knowledge, true morality…” (NP 93). In this sense Kant is committed to the image of thought. “According to this image, thought has the affinity with the true; it formally possesses the true…” (DR 131). In other words, “we are told that the thinker as thinker wants and loves truth (truthfulness of the tinker); that thought as thought possesses or formally contain truth (innateness of the idea, a priori nature of concepts); that thinking is the natural exercise of a faculty, that it is therefore sufficient to think ‘truly’ or ‘really’ in order to think with truth (sincere nature of truth, universally shared good sense)” (NP 103).

Deleuze argues that Kant’s critical project takes the form the reversal of the jubere (to command) and parere (to obey). “Jubere instead of parere: is this not the essence of the Copernican revolution and the way in which critique is opposed to the old wisdom, to dogmatic and theological subjection?” (NP 92). However, that reason submits to truth means that the critical project fails. In other words, when it comes to truth the critical project remains dogmatic. “‘Truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal…The will to truth requires a critique – let us thus define our own task – the value of truth must for once be experimentally called into question.’ It is at this point that Kant is the last of the classical philosophers: he never
questions the value of truth of the reasons for our subjection to it. In this respect he is as
dogmatic as anyone else” (NP 94). But in what sense is reason’s commitment to truth
dogmatism? Deleuze argues that Nietzsche completes Kant’s critical project. “Nietzsche seems
to have sought…a radical transformation of Kantianism, a re-invention of the critique which
Kant betrayed at the same time as he conceived it, a resumption of the critical project on a new
basis and with the new concepts” (NP 52). Deleuze often returns to the point that fascinates him
about Kant. “Transcendental philosophy discovers conditions which still remain external to the
conditioned. Transcendental principles are principles of conditioning and not of internal genesis”
(NP 91). Nietzsche does not so much complete Kant’s critical project because he criticizes
reason by means of reason but this time around without committing himself to truth. Instead,
Nietzsche takes a different approach. Nietzsche criticizes that which is within reason, in other
words, that which generates reason as submitted to truth. In other words, Nietzsche completes
Kant’s critical project in the sense that he criticizes the quality of the will to power that generates
reason as submitted to truth. “Nevertheless, in Nietzsche, principles are never transcendental; it
is these very principles which are replaced by genealogy. Only the will to power as genetic and
genealogical principle, as legislative principle, is capable of realizing internal critique” (NP 91).
It is in this sense that Deleuze argues that “one of the principal motifs of Nietzsche’s work is that
Kant had not carried out a true critique because he was not able to pose the problem of critique in
terms of values” (NP 1). Kant’s critical project is dogmatic not just because it has no critical
justification for its commitment to truth, but because it did not recognize that the commitment to
truth is dogmatic from the point of view of values. It is ethically bad.

Deleuze argues that submission to truth is a symptom of a type of will to power. “None of
them ask: who is seeking truth? In other words: what does the one who seeks the truth want?
What is his type, his will to power?” (NP 94-5). The type that wills the truth is not the type that takes this life to be already true. “Who is the truthful man, what does he want? First hypothesis: he wants not to be deceived, because it is ‘harmful, dangerous and inauspicious to be deceived.’ But this hypothesis presupposes the truthfulness of the world itself. For, in a radically false world it is the will to not let oneself be deceived that becomes inauspicious, dangerous and harmful” (NP 95). For this reason, Deleuze argues, the opposite is the case. The type that wills the truth is the type that takes this life to be something false, an error. “If someone wills the truth it is not in the name of what the world is but in the name of what the world is not. It is understood that ‘life aims to mislead, to dupe, to dissimilate, to dazzle, to blind” (NP 96). But why does this type take this world to be something false, an error? Could it be the case that this life is just that? Could it be the case that that is the truth? It is unclear what that would even mean. Life is becoming. However, I hope that by now it is clear that this is not an ontological statement if it is not at the same time an ethical statement. In fact, it must be an ethical statement for it to be an ontological statement. Becoming is not subject to truth. It is the truth that is subject to becoming. That life is becoming means that I am becoming as an Overman. But the reactive, negative type does not become. But what does this mean other than that the reactive, negative type denies life, specifically, that it demands that becoming submit to being? The power of contagion, pollution, oppression. “The attempt to deny differences is a part of the more general enterprise of denying life, depreciating existence and promising it a death (‘heat’ or otherwise) where the universe sinks into the undifferentiated” (NP 45). This is the sufficient reason for the submission to truth: the reactive, negative type submits to truth because he cannot live this life right here, right now. The Cogito cannot get himself to become. It is for this reason that truth, in other words, that knowledge becomes opposed to life in the first place. “Knowledge is opposed to life, but because
it expresses a life which contradicts life, a reactive life which finds in knowledge a means of preserving and glorifying its type” (NP 100). Life without knowledge that depends on the concept that imposes on being is precisely the activity of the Overman. Deleuze asks after the genesis of Kant’s thought. “Kant lacked a method which permitted reason to be judged from the inside without giving it the task of being its own judge…We require a genesis of reason itself, and also a genesis of the understanding and its categories: what are the forces of reason and of the understanding? What is the will which hides and expresses itself in reason? What stands behind reason in reason itself?” (NP 91). The answer is clear. What generates reason, what hides and expresses, what stands behind reason is the reactive, negative type nihilism: “We cannot even say that nihilism and its forms are categories of thought, for the categories of thought the categories of thought, of reasonable thought – identity, causality, finality – themselves presuppose an interpretation of force which is that of ressentiment…The spirit of revenge is the genealogical element of our thought, the transcendental principle of our way of thinking” (NP 34-5). For this reason, Deleuze argues, it is not so much the question of criticizing false claims to knowledge. Instead, it is the question of criticizing the element by means of which we criticize certain claims for knowledge as false. In other words, the question is of criticizing true knowledge itself. “We may criticize pretenders, we may condemn those who trespass on domains, but we regard the domains themselves as sacred. Similarly for knowledge: a critique worthy of the name must not bear on the pseudo-knowledge of the unknowable, but primarily on the true knowledge of what can be known” (NP 90). In other words, the question is of criticizing the truth itself. “Critique does nothing insofar as it has not been brought to bear on truth itself…” (NP 90). The question is of criticizing the type of will to power. How is such a critique executed?
“Nietzsche presents the aim of his philosophy as the freeing of thought from nihilism and its various forms. Now, this implies a new way of thinking, an overthrow of the principle on which thought depends, a straightening out of the genealogical principle itself, a ‘transmutation.’” (NP 35). A transmutation is not just about feeling differently. It is not a question of ‘mere feelings.’ A type is a concrete slice of becoming, a concrete affect, a concrete existence. In this sense a transmutation is about a different relationship of forces, about a different will, about an altogether different existence. “We want another ideal in another place, another way of knowing, another concept of truth, that is to say a truth which is not presupposed in a will to truth but which presupposes a completely different will” (NP 99). What type is this? “A man who would not accuse or depreciate existence – would he still be a man, would he think like a man? Would he not already be something other than a man, almost the Overman?” (NP 35). To the extent that the reactive, negative type cannot become, he takes this life for something unjust, something that needs to be justified by another life, by the truth. On the other hand, the active, affirmative type does become. The active, affirmative type plays a different kind of game. “Nietzsche means that we have managed to discover another game, another way of playing: we have discovered the Overman beyond the human-all-too-human ways of existing; we have managed to make chaos an object of affirmation instead of positing it as something to be denied” (NP 37). It is a game of difference and repetition. Therefore for the active or affirmative type it is not a question of justifying life. Existence is neither just not unjust. It is altogether innocent. “In fact the question is not: is blameworthy existence responsible or not? But is existence blameworthy...or innocent? At this point Dionysus has found his multiple truth: innocence, the innocence of plurality, the innocence of becoming and of all that is” (NP 22). But what does this mean? “We have the truths that we deserve depending on the place we are carrying our existence
to, the hour we watch over and the element that we frequent. There is nothing more false than the idea of ‘founts’ of truth. We only find truths where they are, at their time and in their element. Every truth is truth of an element, of a time and a place” (NP 110). In other words, the active, affirmative type has no room for the truth that inspires knowledge in opposition to life. “A new image of thought means primarily that truth is not the element of thought” (NP 104). Instead, the active, affirmative truth creates his own truth, his own knowledge, his own thought.

The active, affirmative type is not inspired by the Copernican Revolution. The active, affirmative type does not create what is his own in opposition to life. “Clearly thought cannot think by itself, any more than it can find truth by itself” (NP 104). Nor is it the case that life creates what is his own. “Thinking is never the natural exercise of a faculty. Thought never thinks alone and by itself; moreover it is never simply disturbed by forces which remain external to it” (NP 108). Instead, the active, affirmative type is inspired by the Copernican Counter-Revolution. Thought is itself life. The active, affirmative type creates his own thought in the sense that it affirms life as its own difference, the differential of thought which makes it become. “Thinking, like activity, is always a second power of thought, not the natural exercise of a faculty, but an extraordinary even in thought itself, for thought itself. Thinking is the n-th power of thought. It is still necessary for it to become ‘light,’ ‘affirmative,’ ‘dancing.’ But it will never attain this power if forces do not do violence to it. Violence must be done to it as thought, a power, the force of thinking, must throw it into a becoming-active” (NP 108). In this sense, thought is not given before we live. It has not fallen out of the sky. Instead, thought is generated within life itself. Here on earth. The active, affirmative thought is apprenticeship, learning. “In Nietzsche, ‘we the seekers after knowledge or truth’ = ‘we the inventors of new possibilities of life’” (NP 103).
To think is to learn. To learn is to repeat. To repeat is to be ethically good. And ethical goodness just is the demonstration of the power of difference, the power of life. But none of this can be true of Nietzsche if at the same time it is not true of Kant. It is actually Kant who teaches the lesson that ethics precedes ontology, that freedom is the actualization of the thing in itself. In fact, the seeds of this thought are already in the Cogito itself. The remarkable power of the Cogito is that it is not so much an argument as it is a demonstration, a demonstration of the priority of practice. One must actually first think for the argument to then work. But as soon as one thinks one establishes what there is. An ‘I.’ Kant’s originality consists in his injection of time into the Cogito, in other words, Kant’s originality consist in his transmutation of the Cogito into the Overman. I hope to have shown that this injection, this transmutation carries important consequences for philosophy. Once the Cogito is made to return to its origins in the world, it can only be reborn as the Overman. And it is this Overman that we can call the autonomous and free individual. It is no longer the case that ‘I think, I am.’ It is now we who think and are, where the ‘we’ designates the precise interjection where I confuse myself with life or where life confuses itself with me.
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