

I.D.-OLOGY:
THE FACULTY OF IMAGINATION, THE SINGULARITY OF THE SUBJECT
AND THE TEMPORALITY OF NARRATIVE IN KANT, DERRIDA AND BLANCHOT

by

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(Under the Direction of Thomas J. M. Cerbu)

ABSTRACT

The thesis examines how Kant, Derrida and Blanchot commonly investigate the epistemic limits attributable to the faculty of imagination, the comprehensibility of the notion of subjective singularity and the form necessarily taken by representations of temporality as associated concerns. Kant's understanding of the rational approach to synthetic *a priori* truth as an indefinitely conducted "decomposing synthesis," Derrida's understanding of written truth as inherently soliciting "deconstruction" and Blanchot's understanding of truth in fictive *œuvres* as instigating "*désœuvrement*" are explored as similar approaches to the relations between imagination, identity and narrative. To elucidate this comparison the thesis addresses: 1.) Kant's definition of the epistemological function of the faculty of imagination, 2.) how imagination so defined informs judgments of 'singularity,' 3.) how such judgments "schematize" knowledge as bearing an irreducibly narrative dimension and 4.) how literature and philosophy act as formally divergent yet materially co-implicating means of relating objective truth to subjective insight.

INDEX WORDS: Kant, Decomposing Synthesis, Derrida, Deconstruction, Blanchot, Désœuvrement, Identity, Temporality, Narratology, Ideology, Schematism, Imagination, Singularity, Critique, J. Christian Guerrero, Comparative Literature, M.A. Thesis, The University of Georgia

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DEDICATION

To Green (Paul Julian Strohmeyer) Gartside, an artist and friend without the productive if inadvertent interventions of whom I might never have heard (of) the rhythmic poetics internal to philosophy itself - and to my father, Dr. Juan René Guerrero, without the consistent, quiet, gracious and patient support of whom such listening sessions would never have had any opportunity to occur nor any chance of being acknowledged for the indefinite range of their unexpected echoes and possibilities.

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CHAPTER 1

SUBJECTIVE COGNITION AT THE LIMITS OF OBJECTIVE COMPREHENSION:
ON KANT'S DEFINITION OF "IMAGINATION"

That which should *necessarily be represented* as numerically identical *cannot be thought of as such* through empirical data. **Kant, CPR 232/A107 (italics added)**

In the Critique of Pure Reason, the text which comprises the epistemological basis of Immanuel Kant's three systemically integrated yet independently monumental works of critical philosophy, Kant not only defines the term "imagination" (*Einbildungskraft*) as denoting the *theoretical faculty* and *potential capacity* (*Vermögen*) of the transcendental subject of reason to produce and reproduce cognitive representations of objects in the absence of the availability of such objects to any direct experiential consideration, but also as denoting the *actual capability* and *practical power* (a denotation specifically derived from the use of *-kraft* in *Einbildungskraft* as a gerundial suffix) of the rational subject to freely produce and reproduce such cognitive representations at will and in general.¹ Beyond the passive/active, potential/actual and theoretico-practical ambiguities that such a definition would thus seem to sow against the grain of its clearly situated and contextually informed intent to provide an apodictically delimited and objectively coherent meaning of "imagination," complicating the status of "imagination" in Kant even further is the fact that this cornerstone definition of its place in the epistemic architecture of cognition is not the only one Kant provides to the term throughout his unfurling of the tripartite canon of his critical system, not to mention all of the further possible considerations of the infrequently encountered if almost

¹ See Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. & ed. Paul Guyer & Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998, text referenced above and hereafter as CPR accompanied by edition-specific plus A and/or B edition page numbers), 256/B151, all emphases in original: "**Imagination** [*Einbildungskraft*] is the faculty [*Vermögen*] for representing an object even **without its presence** in intuition."

always provocatively expansive uses of *Einbildungskraft* set forth at various points throughout the full breadth of Kant's pre- and post-critical works.²

Keeping however to the question of how the term demands to be understood as it functions solely within the coherent limits of the system of the critical philosophy, interesting variations of connotative nuance and even more subtle variations in its denotative range exist to be extrapolated from any thorough comparison of the numerous uses, mentions and supplementary specifications the term *Einbildungskraft* is subjected to across the CPR, the Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of the Power of Judgment (*Kritik der Urteilkraft*). Beyond the interesting controversy that has chronically surrounded the question of the most appropriate means of translating the latter title into English (a title which has historically most often been rendered simply as "Critique of Judgment," a translation which quite significantly altogether elides the gerundial notion of 'power' incorporated in the term *Urteilkraft*), the self-evident common relevance of *Urteilkraft* and *Einbildungskraft* alike to the complete range of ethically charged if inherently practical notions of 'power', 'force' or 'strength' that are associable with any use of *-kraft* as a gerundial suffix is a significance appreciable even by those who may come to Kant without the benefit of fluent German.³ That two terms - 'imagination' and 'judgment' - so entirely and unambiguously elemental to the core vocabulary of Kant's critical system across its theoretical, practical and aesthetic phases alike equally refer on this gerundial basis to an essentially practical notion of 'power' indicates that the prospect of understanding the actual balance of theoretical and practical interests at

² As a telegraphic index of the profound speculative instability regarding the meaning ultimately attributable to *Einbildungskraft* as a particular term within the extant vocabulary of Kantian philosophy, consider the widely varying treatments provided of it throughout Kant's Notes and Fragments (ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer & Fredrick Rauscher; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), juxtaposing especially the considerations of imagination on p. 14-15 (in notes surrounding the pre-critical essay "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime" dating from 1764-5) and p. 366 (notes dating from 1790-1 and thus contemporaneous with or immediately following first publication of the third Critique).

³ For an interesting gloss on the history of Kant's own significant variations in intent regarding the title for the third critique, which in its earliest inceptions was slated to be titled "The Limits of Sensibility and Reason" and was referred to by Kant as late as three years prior to its publication as the "Critique of Taste," see the Editor's Introduction to Critique of the Power of Judgment, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000; referenced hereafter as CPJ followed by original section numbers and edition-specific pagination), xiii-xviii, especially Guyer's citations of Kant's February 21, 1772 letter to Marcus Herz (xvii-xviii) and of the December 28-31, 1787 letter to Karl Leonard Reinhold (xiii).

stake in the CPR's founding epistemological definition of *Einbildungskraft* may be far more complicated a matter than it may risk appearing at any first, second or even third mere glance.

The possibility and indeed the underestimated need for a comprehensive analysis of the numerous uses of the term *Einbildungskraft* supplied over the complete range of Kant's extant work is an endeavor that can only lie within the projective scope and prescriptive intent of this thesis. Such a complete analysis is simply beyond the immediate capability and explanatory power (indeed the *Kraft*, so to speak) of the present work, given its formal limitations, to manifest and dispense. For the central and isolated purposes of the current argument it will thus be sufficient to begin by considering and assessing the denotative force and connotative range Kant allocates to the term *Einbildungskraft* in its clearest and strongest CPR definition. This sufficiency is especially valid in light of the appearance of this definition in such evident proximity to the overture of Kant's entire critical endeavor, which implicitly poses it as a referentially focal if perhaps ultimately problematic notion that will have been thematically reprised and invoked on a frequent and necessary basis in explicit and implicit ways alike throughout Kant's progressive development and systematization of the complete architectonic of his critical philosophy.⁴

⁴ For other defining references to "imagination" made in the body of the critical philosophy, see "Of the Typic of Pure Practical Judgment" in *Critique of Practical Reason* (referenced hereafter as CPrR accompanied by edition-specific pagination), compiled in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. & trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 195: "Physical causality, or the condition under which it takes place, belongs amongst concepts of nature, whose schema transcendental imagination [*transzendentele Einbildungskraft*] sketches." Beyond its evident concern with assigning 'physical causality' a place within a logical taxonomy of concepts, this statement's overarching significance more clearly lies in its profound assessment of transcendental imagination as identifiable with the ability of the subject to "sketch" the "schematic" basis upon which all coherent concepts concerning *nature itself* must be rendered. Such a 'serious' if literally *serializing* definition of imagination as the faculty transcendently capable of supplying the entire conceptual basis upon which all forms of physical causality stand to be comprehended is a clear expansion of the connotations of *Einbildungskraft* beyond the range of meanings provided by its core CPR definition. In the CPJ, see §26, 137 (italics added): "The imagination, by itself, without anything hindering it, *advances to infinity* in the composition that is *requisite for the representation of magnitude*." Exactly as relevant to notions of seriality and causality as the CPrR definition above but more specifically concerned with indicating the apparently untrammelled extent of the imagination's enumerative capacity, this CPJ definition of imagination as an active *power* (it "advances") poses the transcendental limitlessness of the imagination as being no less than *vehicular* for the comprehension of *number* itself, and thus also poses a definition of imagination which quite clearly exceeds the basic CPR meaning. See also and most especially CPJ §49, 192 (italic emphases added): "The imagination (as a *productive* cognitive faculty) is, namely, very *powerful* in *creating*, as it were, *another nature*, out of the material which the *real* one gives it. [...] One can call such representations of the imagination **ideas**: on the one hand because they *at least* strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience, and thus seek to *approximate a presentation* of the concepts of reason (of intellectual ideas), which gives them the *appearance* of an objective reality; on the other hand and indeed principally, because *no concept can be fully adequate to them*, as inner intuitions." Whereas the CPrR definition above casts imagination as sketching the

In light of a recognizably persistent fidelity on Kant's part to the denotative parameters assigned to *Einbildungskraft* in its primary CPR definition, parameters always implicitly subject to recollection if not absolutely adhered to throughout his subsequently expansive explorations of the term's connotative range, Kant's application of an extremely atypical yet unquestionably deliberate degree of dual typographical emphasis to the appearance of the term itself in the text of its first CPR definition stands to be taken as an indication (or indeed perhaps as an *illustration*) of direct intent on Kant's part for this formative definition to function in an exemplary manner throughout the context of his entire critical

schematic basis for comprehensible concepts of *nature*, this latter CPJ definition further presents it as always also remaining capable of inventing "another," indeed a *second* nature "out of the material which the *real* one" - i.e. ostensibly that actual "nature" which the imagination *also* remains responsible for schematically sketching - "gives it." Concentrating on these two latter passages from the CPJ alone, Kant thus therein not only charges the faculty of imagination with the dauntingly Zenoic project of calculating the infinitesimal ends implicitly rounded off in any 'composing' of natural numbers *qua representations*, but further charges it with the optimistically Sisyphean task of approximating the *presentation* of "the concepts of reason" or "intellectual ideas" - ideas which nevertheless remain intrinsically beyond any possible conceptual *representation* whatsoever ("no concept can be fully adequate to them"). Although such a hinging of "concepts of reason" to "intellectual ideas" [*intellektuellen Ideen*] directly echoes the connection drawn in the CPR between "*pure* concepts of reason" and "*transcendental* ideas," the drastic formal recursions that must accompany such linkages remain vertigo-inspiring, especially considering that between the CPR, CPRr and CPJ what can at least safely be concluded to be at stake in the 'natural' human activity of imagination is nothing less than the subject's capacity to differentiate between the logical necessities proper to 'first' or 'actual' nature and all of the merely ideational habits and/or habitual ideations of 'second nature.' Considered cumulatively, such an expansive range of meanings attributed to 'imagination' altogether throws the difference between "concepts"/"pure concepts" and "intellectual ideas"/"transcendental ideas" into high relief and potential disarray. How can the bold CPJ claim of an irreducible heterogeneity between ideas and concepts (see above - "no *concept* can ever be adequate to *them* [ideas]") be reconciled with the clearly issued CPR claim that "transcendental ideas" indeed constitute nothing other than "pure concepts of reason," "special concepts *a priori*" which, according to Kant, function no less essentially than to "determine the use of the understanding according to principles in the *whole* of an *entire* experience" (CPR 399/A321/B378, italics added)? That Kant subtly but significantly 'rounds off' his own CPR indication of "pure concepts of reason" and/or "transcendental ideas" by appealing to the *whole* or the *totality* of a *singular* 'experience' comprising the "unity of understanding" (CPR A326/B383/402) indicates that, no matter how its definition may be treated, the faculty of imagination remains closely linked throughout Kant's work to the possibility of comprehending any concept of subjective *identity*, including most intimately the concept of the numerical self-identity potentially attributable to any transcendently self-conscious subject of reason. In sum, this apparently yet unfathomed ambiguity between "ideas" and "concepts" in Kant, one which remains in shifting place throughout Kant's entire treatment of "imagination" and in which nothing less than the 'nature' of the very *numeric identity* objectively attributable to any thinking subject is placed at stake, forms a fault-line of philosophical instability that we wish to follow as it may indicate a continuum of thematic concern shared between Kant's CPR notion of "decomposing synthesis" (see CPR 518/A505/B533), Jacques Derrida's notion of "deconstruction" and Maurice Blanchot's notion of *désœuvrement* or "unworking." For two valuable recent analyses of how Kant clearly fostered this extremely fertile ambiguity in his work, see Clayton Crockett, *A Theology of the Sublime* (London: Routledge, 2001), 86: "Kant attempts to clip the wings of imagination in order to preserve the sovereignty of understanding, but he cannot do away with his awareness of the importance of imagination at crucial locations within his system;" and Tamar Japaridze, *The Kantian Subject: Sensus Communis, Mimesis, Work of Mourning* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 110: "When imagination is confronted with its limits by something that goes beyond it, imagination then leapfrogs over its own limit by representing to itself the inaccessibility of the rational idea, and by making this very inaccessibility something that is present in sensible nature."

enterprise. Furthermore, this redoubled graphic emphasis can be regarded as expressive of an understandable interest on Kant's part in using all of the performative resources possibly available through the auspices of typographical formatting techniques to negotiate the inherently tricky business of narrowing the differences between the orders of 'presentation' and 'representation' as much may perhaps be possible in the inherently 'bold' course of his attempt to define nothing less and nothing other than *imagination itself* in a way that must not only be logically transparent if ever epistemologically comprehensible, but at the same time - and far more problematically - must also achieve this transparency by inherently risking its content as itself being only perhaps imaginatively *definitive* if ever also definitively *imaginable*.⁵

⁵ To read Kant as intentionally employing typographical emphasis as a linguistic resource capable of performatively and/or *formally* 'illustrating' the constative *content* of certain definitions is a possibility especially open to consideration in 'light' of his general tendency consistent with philosophical tradition to use 'blindness' and 'sight' as rhetorical tropes peculiarly capable of such exemplarily illustrative signification, as is done to dramatic effect in the following passage from CPR 211/A78/B103 (italics added): "Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently *see* [*sehen*], the mere *effect* of the *imagination*, of a *blind* [*blinden*] though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom ever conscious." That of which one is *seldom* ever conscious is not something to which one would ever be *absolutely* or 'naturally' blind, but rather something always potentially evident yet of which one is only *predisposed* to remain ignorant, whether by habit, reflex, 'second nature' or any amalgamation of these factors. The indeed *obscurely obscure* "rhetoric of blindness" (*pace* de Man) that Kant establishes in this passage articulates certain necessary relations between imagination and cognition in the theoretical arena of epistemological coherence as certainly as the thematically associable notion of 'enlightenment' similarly articulates certain necessary relations between volition and judgment in the practical domain of ethics. On the basis of this similarity, it would not be surprising to find Kant's teasing out of "synthesis," that "indispensable function of the soul...of which we are seldom ever conscious" as ultimately corresponding to the urgency of insight which catalyzes the subjective 'maturity' Kant later identifies with the notion of 'enlightenment.' (Cf. "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" included in Kant's Political Writings, ed. H.S. Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1991; volume referenced hereafter as PW), 54-60 *passim*.) Although Gilles Deleuze has taken the CPR passage cited above as indicating that "the synthesis of the imagination, taken in itself, is not *at all* self-conscious," one must disagree with Deleuze on this point because the synthesis of imagination, given its involvement in the representational determination of sequentiality and number, remains altogether *open* in Kant's positioning of it to being nothing other than the self-counting cognitive seat of mature self-consciousness 'itself' - and thus as a seat which, when one is concerned with various objects of thought, one would remain ever supported by yet only tend to recall as scarcely as one recalls the 'seat' one sits upon before a stage upon which convincing drama is wrought, or a position recalled as infrequently as one recalls one's immediate spatiotemporal surroundings in the throes of any suspension of disbelief experienced before a text. In this 'view,' the synthesis of the imagination could only become self-conscious by always remaining open to the possibility of conscientiously abandoning itself to a temporary ignorance or suspended awareness of its own still only *problematically* synthetic status. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties, trans. Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1984), 15. On the rhetorical employments of tropes regarding sight to ostensibly logical if philosophical ends, see also Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau" in Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1983), 102-141 *passim*, especially 116 ["The blindness can then be diagnosed as a direct consequence of an ontology of unmediated presence..."] and 124 ["The possibility of making the invisible visible, of giving presence to what can only be imagined, is repeatedly stated as the main function of art..."].

In the course of considering how Kant's application of this literally *notable* extremity of typographical emphasis can be regarded as a performative attempt on his part to minimize the difference between the order of *presentation* and the order of *representation* as much as may perhaps be possible in the process of providing in writing the definition of a key philosopheme, two unrelated yet mutually influencing dynamics should be taken into account: one intrinsically methodological, the other historically circumstantial. From a methodological standpoint, it may be the case that the ineluctable participation of the faculty of imagination throughout the entirety of the cognitive processes attributable to any rational subject somehow renders it *a priori* impossible for the establishment of the ultimate definition of "imagination" *qua* philosopheme to ever be a strictly constative affair or purely logical if entirely *disinterested* enterprise. In this view, to the extent that the faculty of imagination must itself be invoked as an active participant in the determination of any definition, an absolute if impartial or purely logical definition of 'imagination' may intrinsically elude all attempts at objective comprehension. Secondly, one should consider the historical circumstance that the doubly emphatic definition of the notion in question itself appeared for the first time in the body of the CPR only with Kant's 1787 issuance of the second, 'B edition' revisions of that text.

That such a hyper-emphatic definition received its first 'presentation' only with the second 're-presentation' of the text containing it adds yet another layer of silent performative force to Kant's decisive application of the emphases in question, emphases the need for which thus could only have been determined and effected (if not necessarily decided) in the six-year span separating Kant's first presentation of the CPR from its second, profoundly re-edited 're-presentation.' Prior, then, to any consideration of the full semantic range of the strictly constative content of the definition and staying solely in view of the *typographical*, *methodological*, and *historical* circumstances empirically informing its first issuance in the second edition of a given text, the definition reveals itself not only as susceptible to but indeed solicitous of being understood as focusing in at least *three* circumstantial 'dimensions' upon the stark importance of rationally accounting for the indefinite array of complex epistemological relations which synthetically hinge the order of 'presentation' to the order of 'representation' and vice-versa.

With respect to the logical substance of the definition's purely constative content, it thus comes as felicitous that a discernment of the orders of presentation and representation is squarely the terrain it aims to survey. Keeping in mind Kant's persistently expansive treatments beyond the horizon of the CPR of the connotations attributable to *Einbildungskraft*, these typographical, methodological and historical facts clustered around the first appearance of this definition can be regarded as constellating into a primitive if thus usefully and appropriately quasi-protean indication of the extent to which *Einbildungskraft* will have always remained a very problematic and perhaps thereby even a most ineluctably *fascinating* topic for Kant. Just how strangely the performative force evident behind Kant's typographical emphases comes to interact with the hermeneutically presumable constative intent of the definition becomes perfectly evident in considering the definition in full as it appeared for the first time in the 1787 'B' edition of the CPR:

“Imagination [Einbildungskraft] is the faculty [*Vermögen*] for representing an object even without its presence in intuition” (CPR 256/B151).⁶

Constituting a comparatively unorthodox fusion of two forms of emphasis each independently conventional to the Fraktur typesetting of the era, Kant's dual use of letter-spacing (*Sperrdruck*, which employed alone generally served as the most common means of placing emphasis on particular terms) in simultaneity with boldface (*Fettdruck*) to provide an unmistakably *visible* and imaginatively performative rather than purely *legible* and strictly constative mode of comprehensible emphasis (e.g. ‘the definition of

⁶ A note on p. 256 of Guyer and Wood's CPR translation shines additional attention upon Kant's atypically redoubled application of emphasis to this first truly 'definitive' presentation of such a key term: “Here Kant uses both large type [i.e., *Fettdruck*] and spacing [i.e., *Sperrdruck*] for extra emphasis.” See also p. 76 of Guyer and Wood's Translator's Introduction to the CPR for a generous description (if not an exhaustive consideration) of the typographical conventions which historically surrounded the release of both of the two major editions of the CPR. Beyond the necessary substitution of a Times New Roman typeface for Fraktur, the original German of Kant's 1787 CPR “B” edition presentation of the definition runs as follows: “**Einbildungskraft** ist das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen.” (All citations of original CPR German taken from the Philosophische Bibliothek edition, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998). Beyond attention to the doubled emphasis on *Einbildungskraft*, note also how the difference between this doubled emphasis and the singularly emphasized predication of the object of imagination as persisting *ohne dessen Gegenwart* - i.e., without the experiential presence of the object imagined - implies the theoretical involvement in this passage of at least four different levels of emphatic presentations of text to intuition: three evident - standard, *Sperrdruck* and *Sperrdruck* plus *Fettdruck* - and one merely suggested (and suggested quite provocatively given the content of the passage) *by virtue of its absence to experiential presentation: Fettdruck* without *Sperrdruck*. No fewer than four forms of emphatic presentation - three manifest, one implied - are thus all employed in quite an elegant if succinctly complicated and co-implicated way in Kant's very brief yet formally complex phrasing and presentation of such an elemental definition, one the importance of which is itself reflected in the care with which Kant attended to the question of its typographical formatting upon establishing the second edition revisions of the CPR.

the following term is of extreme importance') in this case is as 'literally' as 'self-evident' and indeed as *clearly* intentional (if only by dint of an applied *obscuration* and expansion of a typeface) in this 'self-evidence' as it could possibly be. Such self-evidence 'itself' is only further highlighted in considering how it ultimately comes to interact with the strictly constative content of the definition, in light of which one can understand these emphases as used precisely and indeed somewhat perversely to reinforce the "presence in intuition" of a particular term *in the very course* of Kant's defining that very term as denoting a faculty of rational subjectivity uniquely capable of representing objects in the *absence* of any phenomenal manifestations to sensual intuition at all, no matter whether such manifestations to intuition can be considered merely fleeting, peripheral and serendipitous or, as they most certainly are in this case, whether they happen to be unmistakably intended as emphatic, focal, and solicitous of attention.

Given the truly extraordinary *form* of Kant's textual presentation of the definition, its constative content - which summarily can be restated as a subtractive isolation of the faculty of imagination from any inherent subjection to the incalculably multiplicitous vagaries of sense-experience - stands to be understood as nothing other than a perfect conceptual inversion of how the complex layers of performative emphasis applied to the textual presentation of the term so defined in fact communicatively function. In the very process of providing this definition, Kant therein not only directly challenges his readers to understand its intended constative meaning but also indirectly if undeniably challenges his readers to apply this meaning directly to the practice of reading from out of which it stands to be gleaned. By performatively posing the very term of which it provides the constative meaning as being itself a tacitly emphatic example of the very order of sensual intuition that this constative content claims the faculty of imagination to be uniquely capable of superseding throughout its handling of all cognitive representations, Kant's definition thus almost paradigmatically fulfills Stanley Fish's criteria for recognition as a "self-consuming artifact," since it straightforwardly "signifies most successfully when it fails" and "points away from itself to something its forms cannot capture."⁷

⁷ See Stanley Fish, *Self Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: U California P, 1972), 4.

On the basis of this far more subjectively *apprehensible* than objectively *comprehensible* tension between the performative and constative dimensions of the definition's meaning and in the event that the notion of 'writing' is considered subject to any direct identification with how such employments of performative emphasis precisely reinforce the very "type" of "presence to intuition" which the definition specifically indicates the faculty of imagination as uniquely capable of surpassing and doing without, it may then appear at first glance that the definition risks being considered 'denigrative' of writing in both the literal (or typographical) and the figurative (or evaluative) senses of this term to the extent that the definition employs communicative effects which its constative content expressly denies as potentially relevant to the essential meaning of that which is communicated. In sum, given the mode of its presentation, it can be noted that an element of irrefutably obscure yet absolutely concrete signification remains at work and in play in this definition of imagination which Kant, making a decisive appeal to the undecidable, 1). neither leaves up to the imagination nor in any way reserves *from* it, and simultaneously 2). leaves entirely up to the imagination *and also* directly tries to reserve from it.

Under such conditions, any attempt to identify Kant's understanding of the faculty of imagination with its constatively stated capability of surpassing all "presence to intuition" (a type of identification we will later seek to demonstrate Heidegger as having very mistakenly if less than perspicaciously insisted upon) to an absolute extent would necessarily constitute a trans-valuation of the imaginative potency of the subject as being itself somehow more ontologically 'authentic' in its own presence (e.g. *qua* "Dasein") than any only metaphysically 'real' if ever empirically 'representable' objects of intuition. A categorical valorization of presence over absence could thus be read as persisting under the terms of such an absolutist reading of the definition in the event that the radical independence of the faculty of imagination from any need for sensorial grounding is interpreted as providing the basis for a total identification of 'presence' and 'reality' with the constative meaning of "imagination" which the definition relays. Under the condition of such a hypothetically fraught if "well-intentioned" reading, not only would the entire content of the definition thereby become perfectly assimilable to and indeed even recapitulative of the Platonic theory of forms, but to read it in such a way would also render all of its

claims - to the extent that these must remain in some regard relevant to the representationally 'self-evident' status of its own textual emphases - entirely analogous in intent to the Socratic condemnations of writing presented in the *Phaedrus*.⁸

⁸ See *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth in *Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961; referenced hereafter as CDP), 521 (275d-e): "You know, Phaedrus, that's the strange thing about writing, which makes it truly analogous to painting. The painter's products stand before us as though they were alive, but if you question them, they maintain a most majestic silence. It is the same with written words; they seem to talk to you as though they were intelligent, but if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you the same thing forever. And once a thing is put in writing, the composition, whatever it may be, drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill-treated and unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its help, being unable to defend or help itself." Plato's consideration in this dialogue of the irreducibly social dimension of writing and the concomitant treatment of the written object as a repository of power potentially instigative of social instability – a dynamic that the unique efficacy of the modernist form of the 'manifesto' has always conscientiously depended upon – is open to consideration in this context as an ancient sketch of the essential thrust behind Wittgenstein's infamous 'private language' argument. The entire force of Plato's condemnation of writing as generative of social dismay however depends upon the assumption that the subject is capable of rationally posing itself to itself as an absolutely comprehensible iota of self-transparency, as an entity perfectly capable of comprehending the limits and meaning of its own systemic unity or objective singularity. Such an absolutely self-unified concept of subjectivity, as we shall explore, is quite simply *antithetical* to Kant's concept of subjectivity, which posits the capacity of the subject to assert its individual particularity only as a provisionally practical hypothesis on the basis of which subjective cognition is conducted as a matter of indefinitely extensible research into the apodictic conditions of possibility for a hypothetically necessary if strictly incomprehensible unity which, after the manner of contemplating 'God' as a figure of absolutely achieved unity, can never be absolutely comprehended as such through any logical regress through any series of representations whatsoever. In Kant's take, the subject can never attain perfectly sufficient conditions of possibility for discussing any notion of pure singularity with absolute assertoric certainty. A formulation made by Wittgenstein in his development of the private language argument - that "the philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness" (see *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953, referenced hereafter as PI) 91, §255) - also however points in the direction of Derrida's famous deconstruction of how such tensions concerning singularity are therapeutically and/or toxically 'treated' by the text of the *Phaedrus*, which, being itself an example of writing *qua* 'pharmakon', must itself also be considered a prescriptively formulaic and thus problematically *repeatable* "'remedy,' 'recipe,' 'poison,' 'drug,' 'philter'" - and also, in the idiom of Blanchot, a *récit*. See "Plato's Pharmacy" in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1981), 71-2, in which Derrida draws an implicit connection between the problem of thinking the singularity of the *pharmakon* 'itself' and the problem of thinking the unity of the subject as commonly irreducible problems of translation (in every possible sense of the latter). Concerning subjectivity, this problem arises in considering how the subject is regularly capable of intra-idiomatically 'translating' its own lack of a logical ground for posing itself *to* itself as an absolute unity into a minimal ideologeme or philosopheme capable of remaining useful as a point of reference throughout the conduct of all of its own strictly practical engagements. Derrida on 'pharmakon', italic emphases added: "It will also be seen to what extent the malleable *unity* of this concept, or rather its rules and the strange logic that *links* it with its *signifier*, has been dispersed, masked, obliterated, and rendered almost unreadable not only by the imprudence or empiricism of the translators, but first and foremost by the redoubtable, irreducible difficulty of its translation. It is a *difficulty inherent in its very principle*, situated less in the passage from one language to another, from one philosophical language to another, than already, as we shall see, in the tradition *between Greek and Greek*; a violent difficulty in the *transference of a non-philosopheme into a philosopheme*. With this problem of translation we will thus be dealing with nothing less than the problem of the very passage into philosophy." For a tentative sketch of how the "violence" diagnosed here by Derrida can be comprehended as irreducibly internal to how the subjective appreciation of temporality requires a schematization of mathematical magnitudes in general, see the assessment of Kant's treatment of "violence" provided in Ch. 3 below.

Identified by Derrida as symptomatic of a complex historical condition he (in)famously came to refer to in sum as “logocentrism,” such denigrations of writing typically seek to repress (or dialectically ‘round off’) the threateningly indefinite range of representational implications associable with written communications (e.g. writings cannot choose their readers) by valorizing concepts of ‘presence’ in view of identifying an absolutely constative form of totalized and ‘transparent’ logical meaning with certain transcendental notions (or, in the parlance of semiotics, “transcendental signifieds”) which such writings may relay but never contain.⁹ Such a clipping of the wingspan of textual meaning is exactly what would take place in any reading of Kant’s definition of imagination that decisively eschews considering what Kant both very clearly *and* very ‘obscurely’ (indeed, precisely by means of combining **obscuration** with *s p a c i n g*) intended to communicate in taking recourse to patently extra-grammatical and thus extra-logical if nonetheless *written* means of signification: those proper to undeniable degrees of emphasis. Under the conditions of logocentrism - which as an ‘ism’ must be considered a species of “ideological abuse” to the extent that its framing the concept of ‘presence’ as exclusively comprehensible on the basis of a tautologically grounded and therefore decisionist subjective authority constitutes a violent limitation of the *sine qua non* freedom of judgment - such transcendental signifieds are supposedly capable of rendering veracities of an absolutely infinite scope perfectly comprehensible and transmissible *through* writing, but never *in* writing.¹⁰ The historical reach of this monumentally seductive if empirically false treatment of the end and goal of writing as entirely comprised of the achievement of an ever merely

⁹ See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974; referenced hereafter as OG), 49 (italics added): “Peirce goes very far in the direction that I have called the deconstruction of the transcendental signified, which, at one time or another, would place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign. *I have identified logocentrism and the metaphysics of presence as the exigent, powerful, systematic and irrepressible desire for such a signified.*”

¹⁰ The notion of “ideological abuse” mentioned here refers to a comment famously made by Roland Barthes in introductory discussing the investigative imperatives and critical parameters which informed his *Mythologies*. Considering Barthes’ allegation that a certain type of narratologically couched verisimilitude (*qua* “*what-goes-without-saying*”) invariably serves to enable and streamline the types of obfuscation he identifies as symptomatic of “ideological abuse,” his formulation of the notion is worth revisiting: “In the account given of our contemporary circumstances, I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there” (Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, ed. & trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 11).

rheterical if always metaphorical form of ‘clarity’ wrung from systematically deployed denials of the ‘opaque’ status of writing as a material practice (a status the obscurity of which ‘reflects’ ontological *différance* as the principle of temporal deferral which indefinitely connects any act of signification to any and all corresponding apprehensions of it thereby signified) falls under the history of logocentrism as its most enduring and essential if forever hastily ‘essentializing’ gesture and capital symptom.¹¹

To regard Kant’s definition of ‘imagination’ as expressive of a ‘logocentric’ tendency is thus only possible on the basis of completely misunderstanding (or assuming an elective ignorance toward) the undeniably subversive subtlety with which Kant conscientiously plies and applies a multiplicity of performative nuances to his textual presentation of this key definition. In attempting the inherently and irreducibly *self-complicating* task of providing a definition of the faculty of imagination potentially capable of remaining both logically stable in itself as well as epistemologically viable in any hypothetical context of employment (a difference analogous to the coherence of a theorem and its persistent coherence across an indefinite range of useful applications), Kant pushes the performative capacities of language as far as he technically can in attempting to *illustrate* how the powerfully ‘crafty’ reach of the faculty of imagination must somehow allusively span every cleft of *différance*, every chaotic gap of temporal disjunction between the presences *and/or* absences of any actual *and/or* potential objects of thought - objects which must be relevant not only to the ambiguously theoretico-practical content of the definition itself, but furthermore also relevant to everything that the faculty of imagination working in concert with the faculty of understanding may ever further *hope* to define.

The point of greatest critical leverage offered by the definition so perversely provided by Kant is thus that the faculty of imagination must remain capable of handling representations absolutely *irrespective* of the relevance of these representations *either* to experiential intuitions grounded in

¹¹ See Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1982; referenced hereafter as MP), 18-19, italic emphases added: “The two apparently different values of *différance* are tied together in Freudian theory: to differ as discernibility, distinction, separation, diastem, spacing; and to defer as detour, relay, reserve, temporization. [...] One is but the other in *différance*, one is the *différance* of the other. This is why every apparently religious and irreducible opposition (for example of the secondary to the primary) comes to be qualified, at one moment or another, as a ‘theoretical fiction.’ [...] Here we are touching upon *the point of greatest obscurity*, on the very enigma of *différance*, on precisely that which divides its very concept by means of a strange cleavage. *We must not hasten to decide.*”

empirical cognition (i.e. intuitions *qua* ‘recognitions’ of ‘present’ objects) *or* to the transcendental cognitions exclusively proper to theoretical insight (i.e. intuitions *qua* pure cognitions, concepts or ideas). Since the pure cognition of concepts or ideas in themselves is *entirely* representational in nature - and here we must recall that the conceptual content of “transcendental ideas” remains immune to any type of directly objective experiential encounter - they problematically cannot be ascribed to any recognizably particular empirical ‘presence’ whatsoever and therefore cannot be regarded either as possibly pertinent to or assimilable under *any* corresponding “metaphysics of presence.”¹² If a thorough repression of the indefinitely representational nature and performative dimension of writing toward the end of valorizing a metaphysics of presence which justifies itself on the basis of subjective claims to self-presence as paradigmatic of normative authority and legitimacy in general (e.g. ‘*cogito, sum*’) constitutes the descriptively central and prescriptively centralizing gesture of ‘logocentrism’ itself (and this is indeed the gesture Derrida consistently subjects to deconstructive intervention), Kant simply cannot, on the basis of his definition of imagination, stand accused of occupying a logocentric viewpoint. If Kant stands open to any speculative accusation on the basis of this definition alone, it can only be that with it and in it he clearly establishes (and to a certain degree even fulfills) the need for a type of ‘deconstruction’ *avant la lettre* of the very concept of ‘imagination’ itself.

To the extent that the definition identifies the theoretical *faculty* [*Vermögen*] of imagination by blurring its difference from the practical *power* [*Kraft*] of the subject to rationally negotiate cognitive representations (including perhaps most exemplarily those of the strange ‘type’ which only attain first presentation upon second ‘re-presentation,’ or those which maintain only in the transcendental domain of representations bearing no objective reference to any kind of ‘presence’ at all), the definition must be read

¹² See CPR 591/A644/B672: “[T]ranscendental ideas are never of constitutive use, so that the concepts of certain objects would thereby be given, and in case one so understands them, they are merely sophistical (dialectical) concepts. On the contrary, however, they have an excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, which, although it is only an idea (*factus imaginarius*) - i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience - nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension.” See again also CPR 195, italics added: “Physical causality, or *the condition under which it takes place*, belongs *amongst* concepts of nature, whose *schema transcendental imagination sketches*.” On “logocentrism” as the core, and indeed ‘centralizing’ ideological modality of any “metaphysics of presence,” see the citation from Derrida’s OG in note 9 above (p. 11).

more as instigative of a critical interrogation of any metaphysics of *representation* than as being capable of bolstering any logocentric metaphysics of *presence*. Because the etiologically unquestionable yet teleologically undecidable significance of the definition's performative dimension renders its content insusceptible to interpretation as either demonstrative or symptomatic of logocentrism, this definition and the critical end toward which Kant articulates it can be regarded as deeply compatible with Derrida's own 'deconstructive' critique of logocentrism as an historically inculcated dialectical, rhetorical and - as noted above - "sophistical" strategy (one must also recall here Aristotle's direct assimilation of rhetoric to dialectics) for 'plausibly denying' the irreducible and persistent involvement of rational aporiae in any and all logically accessible assertions of metaphysical truth.¹³

Through its extensive treatment of these aporiae as "antinomies" articulating the empty substance of the rational gap between the indefinite necessities of analytical truth and the infinite possibilities of dialectical speculation, the critical thrust of Kant's epistemological theory consists in his prescription of a regulative procedural treatment for such aporiae as they inevitably come to be involved throughout (and thus remain necessarily subject to interrogation by) all of the necessarily metaphysical determinations of the 'real' which occur throughout subjectively based cognition. Across the range of its possible and actual practices, the subject remains compelled by its own imaginative capacity as a rational agent to negotiate such antinomies as deontological necessities of cognition despite the radical absence in any given or 'present' instance of any ostensible hope of attaining any perfect logical or analytic resolution to them, in the absence of which dialectical solutions can only ever ring forth as assertable if hollow simulacra of 'truth' only capable of telegraphically 'abridging' the full scope of the irreducible analytic uncertainties which condition subjectivity throughout every last one of its cognitive processes.

What Kant's definition thus makes 'clear' rather than simply bold or italicized yet only *in* and by virtue of such semantically unstable forms of signification is that the representational aspects inherently

¹³ See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 1328 (1355b): "It is clear, then, that rhetoric is not bound up with a single definite class of subjects, but is as universal as dialectic; it is clear, also, that it is useful. It is clear, further, that its function is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow."

involved in any kind of experiential intuition can at best only ornament a foregrounding (but not innate) “manifold” of representations arraigned and mobilized by the faculty of imagination throughout its direct involvements in the apprehension and comprehension alike of any and all objects of thought, be they strictly theoretical and thus primarily imaginable or strictly empirical and thus primarily experiential. The imagination’s contribution of this manifold to the subject’s progressive theoretical determination of all objects of cognitive experience must hold formal, logical and indeed temporal precedence over any attribution of ‘actual’ content to such objects - *even if* the objects in question are exclusively theoretical ‘objects’ of thought - across all of the subject’s self-reflexive organizations of cognition as a rational process. Here we are broaching a key Kantian theme, one famously treated to a curiously provocative mid-20th century recapitulation by physicist Werner Heisenberg: to the extent that objects of cognition become available to discursive ‘re-cognition’ by any rational subject, such objects must conform more to our theoretically based manner of experiencing them than this cognitive procedure itself, inasmuch as it provides the ground for all experiences recognizable as rational, can possibly conform to any contingent necessities imposed upon the subject by any particular objects of consideration, be these objects either exclusively theoretical or materially empirical in ‘nature.’¹⁴

This incessant furnishing of a representational manifold to the logically ratifying auspices of the faculty of understanding by the faculty of imagination (a contribution so insuperably constant that it fails to pause even in the event of *sleep*) provides the widest possible context for the subjective apprehension and comprehension alike of a potentially indefinite number of objects of cognition by any rational subject,

¹⁴ Heisenberg’s most well-known adaptation of this axiomatic principle regarding intuition runs as follows (italics added): “Our actual situation in research work in atomic physics is usually this: we wish to understand a certain phenomenon, we wish to recognize how this phenomenon follows from the general laws of nature. Therefore, that part of matter or radiation which takes part in the phenomenon is the natural ‘object’ in the theoretical treatment and should be separated in this respect from the tools used to study the phenomenon. This again *emphasizes* a subjective element in the *description* of atomic events, since the measuring device has been constructed by the observer, and we have to remember that *what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning.*” For the sake of comparison, see CPR 185/A42/B60 to 187/A45/B62-3 (italics added): “What may be the case with objects in themselves and abstracted from all this receptivity of our sensibility remains entirely unknown to us. We are acquainted with nothing except *our way of perceiving them*, which is peculiar to us, and which therefore does not necessarily pertain to every being, though to be sure it pertains to every human being [...]*We have nothing to do with anything except appearances* anywhere (in the world of sense), *even in the deepest research into its objects.*”

be these objects either only theoretical (e.g., dream images or ‘transcendental ideas’) or mostly empirical in nature (e.g. experiential cognitions of directly present objects).¹⁵ Such a cognitive precedence of imagination over the potentially comprehensible content attributable to any object of contemplation is the factor which grants the subject’s cognitive apparatus its speculatively and theoretically indefinite range of potential application to any and all possible objects of empirical perception and cognitive consideration alike, be they *or be they not* ever presently *recognizable* as such - or even simply *present* as such.

According to Kant, all of the things we come to regard as particular objects of intuitive experience are synthesized by virtue of this continual procedural involvement of the faculty of imagination in every analytic determination made by the faculty of understanding. As a ‘powerful’ faculty, imagination is that which applies various logically coherent “categories” or “pure concepts of the *understanding*” to the diffuse representational manifold also synthesized as such by imagination on the basis of the unformed cognitive materials (i.e. the “thousand natural shocks flesh is heir to”) supplied to cognition through intuitive sensibility. Although this intuitive manifold undeniably receives a certain

¹⁵ On how the extra-voluntary representations arrayed in dreaming can be taken as demonstrative of the ineluctable participation of the faculty of imagination throughout all cognitive activity, see Kant, Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1978, referenced hereafter as APoV), §31, 65-6, italics added: “We play with the imagination frequently and gladly, but (as fantasy) *the imagination just as often plays with us*, sometimes very inconveniently. The play of fantasy in a sleeping person is called a dream, which occurs even in a healthy condition. [...] *When we say that we have had a good sleep without dreaming, we are indeed saying nothing more than that we remember no dreams upon awakening.* In view of the rapid changes of the imagination, *this could happen just as well in waking hours* when we are gazing steadily at a fixed point in a state of distraction. If the person is asked what he is thinking at this moment, the reply will be: ‘I have been thinking nothing at all.’ [...] Dreaming is a wise provision of Nature for exciting vitality through emotions which have been caused by involuntarily invented events, while muscular movements, depending on volition, are in the meantime suspended. But *we must not take the content of dreams to be revelations from an invisible world.*” This point is reinforced yet again at §37 of APoV, which closes with the extraordinary assertion that “[W]e can take it as certain *that there can be no sleep without a dream*, and whoever believes that he has not dreamed, simply cannot recall his dream” (83). The Freudian resonance and relevance of such propositions is evident and remains to be unpacked in terms of how Freud’s opposition of “analysis” to “synthesis” (and, more pointedly yet in the same vein, his presentation of “psycho-analysis” as an enterprise not assimilable to “psychology”) may be taken as a quiet continuation a rather Kantian species of ‘critique’, one which furthermore and for the same reasons also remains compatible with the objectives of “deconstruction” considered as a concrete analytic mode of decoding the historical complexes which undergird various practical and theoretical contingencies of contemporary quotidian encounter. For more of Kant on the topic of dreams in keeping with these later anthropological observations, see also his infamous 1766 redressing of Swedenborg in “Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics,” as well as the brief but extremely significant treatment of dreams provided in his 1794 “Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality,” both collected in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770, trans. & ed. David Walford & Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge, Cambridge UP 1992), p. 263, 314 & 330.

degree of input from empirical intuitions of sensibility, the subject can only ever *actively* ‘make sense’ of any of this input in accordance with certain *a priori* criteria posed as necessities of analytic self-consistency inherent to subjective cognition, criteria which Kant summarily (if somewhat controversially) identifies as the “categories” of the understanding.¹⁶ Strictly objective employment of the categories in subjective cognition is related by Kant as being merely sporadic and “immanent” because such a use of them can only be relevant to experiences potentially *comprehensible* as such, as merely transient empirical sense-experiences, by the *understanding*.¹⁷ On the other hand, the objective employment in cognition of “pure concepts of *reason*” or “transcendental ideas” is considered transcendental precisely because these particular sorts of “concepts” - which at the same time are also quite problematically only “ideas” of the imagination - entirely condition every rationally *apprehensible* form of cognition while remaining immune from any empirical instantiation or experiential demonstration - and thus also as immune as a dream from any form of strictly *comprehensible* encounter. Never possibly “present” in themselves but serving instead as rational conditions for every experience of “presence” comprehended as such - including most subversively all of the subject’s self-centralizing experiences of its theoretically enumerable presence as an individual subject - transcendental ideas, quite unlike categories of the understanding, are always *imminently* rather than *immanently* related to the logically determinate aspects of any given and particular cognitions.

Because they are pure concepts of the faculty of understanding analytically implied as necessarily participant in the comprehension of empirical objects of thought but are only synthetically (yet not quite ‘dialectically’ in the Hegelian sense) applicable to such objects by the faculty of imagination, Kant

¹⁶ See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (London: Routledge, 1990; edition referenced hereafter as WSH), 278 (Act III, Sc. I, Ln. 60-64): “To die - to sleep. / No more; and by a sleep to say we end / The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to: ’tis a consummation / Devoutly to be wished.” In the course of delivering them from over-determination by a context of ideationally suicidal rhetoric, Hamlet’s “thousand shocks” stand to be compared to Kant’s treatment of the notion of “a thousand” as paradigmatic of multiplicity in general at CPR 273/A140/B179, a key passage of the CPR further addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3 below.

¹⁷ Cf. CPR 402/A327/B383, italics added: “[T]he objective use of the pure concepts of *reason* is always **transcendent**, while that of the pure concepts of *understanding* must by its nature always be **immanent**, since it is limited to possible experience.” Note that the boldface emphases reproduced here reflect Guyer and Wood’s mode of presenting terms which received only *Sperrdruck* emphasis in Kant’s original text.

differentiates the categories of the understanding from “pure concepts of *reason*” and/or “transcendental *ideas*” because reason, given its principally inextricable and unlimited bilateral involvement with the entire domain of the imaginary *as well as* the entire domain of the understanding, cannot itself be reduced to or exclusively identified with any of the representational contingencies inherent to empirical sensibility or with any of the limited forms of logical coherence furnished to sensibility and the ideational processes of cognition by the faculty of understanding. As Kant states at CPR 402/A327/B383-4, “By the idea of a necessary concept of reason, I understand one to which no congruent object can be given in the senses. Thus the pure concepts of reason we have just examined are **transcendental ideas**.”

Unlike either understanding or sensibility, then, it is reason - with all of the provocatively indefinite capacities of the faculty of imagination in tow - which bears the subject’s capacity and indeed acts as the seat of the subject’s implicit responsibility to *attempt* to understand and come to sensible terms with any of the many things regularly encountered in human thought and thoughtful experience alike which can only appear under the inauspicious aegis of being incomprehensible or irrational. (To wit: in the process of coming to understand or learn anything, one will always already have been compelled to act to a certain extent as *one’s own psycho-analyst*.) Comprising a formally unlimited if blank repository for handling the indefinitely multiplicitous dimensions and outcomes of the imagination’s determinations of the representational manifold, reason alone allows the subject to ‘powerfully’ or practically apply the full range of its faculties to situations which only come to light as antinomic problems needful of subjective negotiation. These negotiations become recognizable and open to consideration in their own right as regulative applications of reason only by virtue of the transcendental contributions made by the *power* of imagination to cognition itself. Kant’s strict differentiation between the pure concepts of the *understanding* (i.e. ‘categories’) and the pure concepts of *reason* (i.e. ‘transcendental ideas’) can thus be understood as directly reflecting his consideration for the simultaneously *constitutive* and indefinite role played by the faculty of imagination itself in and across every last *regulative* aspect of its inherently ‘empowered’ if whatsoever transcendentially based cognition.

Without such a rigorous differentiation between reason and understanding, it would be impossible to comprehend how the agency attributable to the faculty of understanding could ever find a true foothold in rational subjectivity and thereby remain relevant to the indefinitely unknowable maelstrom of all possible as well as actual subjective experiences. Correlatively, in the absence of the imagination's *a priori* posing of transcendental ideas as informing every regulative use of reason possible, the demonstrable existence of reason itself would have to be absolutely identified with an incomprehensibly transparent reign of the faculty of understanding over every last aspect of thought and cognition. Under such an unthinkable condition, no questions could ever exist or remain to be asked by the subject concerning either the world or itself, and reason itself would thus be as powerful as it also would be at a perfectly paradoxical loss for any genuine exigency to which it could possibly apply. The critical and limited applicability of the subject's rational capacity to gauge and comprehend actual problems of thought thus entirely depends upon the imagination's contribution of *problematically* necessary transcendental ideas to the cognitive process (whence Kant's assessment of transcendental ideas as *regulative* but not *constitutive* for cognition), ideas which act as nothing less than conditions of subjective cognition throughout all of its merely theoretical as well as strictly empirical aspects. Whereas only understanding can constitute enlightenment, imagination regulates the appreciations of discernible if obscure 'shadow' without which reason would forever remain as dazzled as it would be incomprehensibly dazzling, perfectly incapable even of distinguishing the subjective agent who bears its capacity forth into the world from the very world that such a subject must aim its attentions toward and in which it aspires to comprehend itself by allegorically apprehending itself therein as an exemplarily unified magnitude.

In any rationally considerable experience of a given present object - for instance, the experience of a chair - the particular sensual aspects attributed to the object in 'recognizing' it merely ornament a foregrounding cognitive synthesis of the truly vast number of representations required in order for any subjective recognition of the empirical instance of such an object to occur. Without this synthetic primer for experience, each chair experienced would need to be discovered anew in every instance as an entirely novel sort of object (an experience which nevertheless regularly does occur in any spontaneous practical

repurposing *as* a chair of objects clearly not intended to serve as seating). If all of the manifold concepts and ideas funneled into the merest particular intuition of sensibility could ever be based solely upon a total *comprehension* of the limited number of representations forwarded to cognition on the sensual basis of particularly experienced objects, cognition itself would have to become strictly incomprehensible as an enterprise itself intrinsically identifiable with the cognitive and practical freedom of the subject. In order to think, subjects must remain freely capable of flexibly applying categories of understanding to an indefinite number of possible objects of thought, both theoretical and experiential alike. This freedom is always first exemplarily instantiated in subjective experience by the “free play” of ideas with which the imagination is always both voluntarily and involuntarily preoccupied. Without this intrinsic flexibility, imagination would simply not be recognizable as a faculty proper to any kind of ‘subject’ at all.¹⁸

As a strict matter of analytic necessity, which itself remains free from any dependence upon consistent representational demonstrations precisely by virtue of the imagination’s synthetic handling of ideas (it is thanks to the imagination that ‘A=A’ can be understood as remaining true over time even when one is not thinking of it), logic and mathematics would be perfectly unthinkable in themselves were cognition ever in any way contingent upon the formal content of particular sense-perceptions. Nevertheless, just such an incomprehensible notion is raised for productive consideration in the cognitive challenge offered by the question of the discursive meanings that must be attributed to the experience of works of art, as well in the experience of any event which poses disastrously ‘novel’ conditions for the subjective formulation of cognitive judgments in general. Analytic necessity, in other words, remains constantly faced with the task of comprehending the practical dimensions of the incomprehensible antinomies which anchor it to the necessity of the synthetic dimensions of the imagination, antinomies reflected back to the subject as irreducible limits of the subject’s cognitive constitution in the experience of artworks and any subsequent processes of considering how artworks, as incomprehensibly ‘subjective’

¹⁸ Cf. CPJ §9, 102-3, italics added: “This state of a free play of the faculties of cognition with a representation through which an object is given must be able to be universally communicated [note that Kant does not claim that this state *is* yet universally *communicable*, but only prescriptively insists that it ‘*must be able to be universally communicated*’ - JCG], because cognition, as a determination of the object with which given representations (*in whatever subject it may be*) *should* agree, is the only kind of representation that is valid for everyone.”

objects, interact on the deepest levels of cognition with all of the subjective comprehensions of the form one gradually comes to attribute to temporality as a constitutive dimension of cognition itself.

This dynamic is always demonstrated in the experiential case of any event which only stands forth for potential recognition by virtue of its presentation of a strictly *unrecognizable* defining element. The unfamiliar nature of the radically novel content which constitutes the experiential possibility of each passing moment forces the subject to rely more upon the indefinitely *productive* and *transcendental* if problematic powers of the imagination than upon any of the *reproductive* and *empirical* if assertoric powers of understanding throughout its attempts to comprehend the necessary relationships between rational subjectivity and the experience of temporality. Here it suffices to refer to the notion of ‘the sublime’ as exemplary, for whereas judgments of the beautiful easily depend upon clear recognitions of certain determinate aspects of phenomena as communally comprehensible and consensually recognizable (although this communal consensus quietly invokes the mathematically sublime), the order of the sublime problematically haunts human cognition at its most intimate core in soliciting the subject to regard or ‘respect’ its own subjectivity and cognitive processes as phenomenal objects of concern which themselves are only indefinitely approachable through rational experience. Such a subjective confrontation with the sublime remains ineluctably embedded in the asymptotic passage of every experienced moment through its innumerable possibilities, which contextualizes clear understandings of ‘the beautiful’ in chiaroscuro.

The ‘terror’ of the sublime which deeply inhabits each passing instant as a moment in which radically incomprehensible and indeed disastrous forms of novelty may always be presented for negotiation remains an organizing truth of the order of the imaginable, if mercifully not of the order of the comprehensible. The differences between these two helically intertwined orders of knowledge, however, always remain to be rationally assayed, compared and considered as remaining in conversation with one another - a process which most frequently takes place qua ‘event’ in practical subjective attempts to comprehend the meaning attributable to works of art. If scientific knowledge can be defined as necessarily speaking for itself, aesthetic understanding stands in counterpoint to scientific knowledge in that with a similar necessity it compellingly asks of us what it is that we might possibly have to say.

CHAPTER 2

THE SUBJECT AS “STILL LIFE” IN MOTION: ON THE TEMPORALITY OF
DISCURSIVE JUDGMENT AND THE EXIGENCY OF NARRATIVE REPRESENTATION

In truth, if the object of fascination calls for the abdication of our will, it is because that object itself is annihilated by the absence it provokes. This strange power in a way stems from a lack, an insufficiency in the object. Rather than hold our fascination, it allows itself to be transcended in a perspective of the imagination, an obscure dimension. But objects can seem insufficient only in response to an exigency in our gaze, which, awakened to desire by an allusive presence and finding no employment for all its energies in the visible thing, transcends it and loses itself in an empty space, headed for a beyond from which there is no return... To be fascinated is the height of distraction. It is to be prodigiously inattentive to the world as it is. But this inattention in a way rests upon the very objects it neglects.

Jean Starobinski¹⁹

Whatever the level of the interpretive trajectory, it will meet and endlessly traverse the representation as instantaneous, a neutral instant or rather the neutral aspect of an instant, unoccupiable, unthinkable except through its edges, the a-topic place of the cogito of my death.

Louis Marin²⁰

As if death, through him, distracted itself.

Maurice Blanchot²¹

In The Writing of the Disaster, Maurice Blanchot presents the ever potentially disastrous uncertainty at the core of all subjective relations to temporality as a condition necessarily negotiated in the productive challenges of writing, yet also as a condition the disastrous exigency of which only stands to be exacerbated by the intrinsically reproducible and thus indefinitely further temporally complicating nature of written objects. Representational in essence, written works can never entirely capture the cognitive conditions of subjective spontaneity to which they reply, out of which they are formed and in response to which the intended productivity of writing can only ever ‘pre-scribe’ intrinsically repeatable if

¹⁹ Jean Starobinski, The Living Eye, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989), 2.

²⁰ Louis Marin, On Representation, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001), 284.

²¹ Maurice Blanchot, The Step Not Beyond, trans. Lycette Nelson (Albany : SUNY Press, 1992), 133.

inherently representational devices. In Blanchot's view, the devices of writing cannot help but repetitively and therefore divisively amplify, as if in an echo chamber of the 'real', all of the ontological uncertainties congenital to subjective determinations of temporality despite every attempt to render therein its indefinitely undecidable parameters objectively coherent and logically precise. *Chez* Blanchot, writing is an inherently disastrous gesture because its relative temporal permanence cannot help but to deepen the incommensurability between subjects and objects which writing alone can also solely hope to (a)bridge.

This prescriptive conundrum at the basis of written intentionality, which is precisely the problem diagnosed as proper to writing in the *Phaedrus* and schematically exploded by Derrida's deconstructive approach to logocentrism, is addressed as entailing a tension between form and content Blanchot consistently confronts as an auto-diagnostic affair of the subject whose most basic claims to self-identity insurmountably bring with them an outstanding need to assess this claimed identity as perhaps being no more substantial than the indefinitely extensible question concerning how such a subject position *qua* 'transcendental unity of apperception' can ever possibly be available to any objective comprehension as such - and thus deserving of any unquestionably legitimate assertion. Blanchot's insistent concern with this ever deepening problematic relationship between writing, subjective identity and logical necessity is concisely exemplified as thematic to his work in the 'disastrous' prescriptions of the following passage: "Write in order not simply to destroy, in order not simply to conserve, in order not to transmit, write in the thrall of the impossible real, that share of disaster wherein every reality, safe and sound, sinks."²²

Echoing Kant's recourse to the performative resources peculiarly available to *writing* taken in establishing an epistemological definition of 'imagination' of provisional viability as well as his logistical arrangement therein of such resources to work against the signifying grain of the constative dimension of *language*, this "share of disaster wherein every reality...sinks" which Blanchot nominates as an inevitable context for the representational labor of writing solicits comparison not only to the 'accursed' if unfathomably indefinite 'share' held by the broad field of the imaginary manifold throughout all of the

²² Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1986, referenced hereafter as WD), 38.

objectively comprehensible forms of cognition into which, according to Kant, any and every intuition of sensibility must “sink,” but also to the share (*qua* innate ‘interest’) held by the subject with respect to how temporality, as a formal condition of cognition, comes to determine the subjective elaboration of the understanding as a necessarily discursive practice. Approached as discursive elements, every cognitive moment apparent to subjective consideration bears the exigency of a constitutive aspect objectively unknown at present and perhaps forever unknowable, but which nevertheless always calls for regulative inquiry and investigation.²³ Without this radically unknowable aspect internal to any moment ever recognizable as such, time itself would simply cease to ‘occur’ to the subject as possibly being a potentially comprehensible if indefinitely apprehensible formal condition of apperception.

Under such an unimaginably ‘timeless’ condition, the quality of spontaneity inherent to any notion of freedom objectively comprehensible as such would (along with that freedom itself) have to categorically evaporate, since under such conditions the important differences between the merest echoes appreciated by the reproductive imagination, compulsive reiterations of representational understanding and automatic reiterations of analytical-tautological facta would become unthinkable assimilable.

²³ Georges Bataille’s profound economic treatment of this ‘share’ as ‘accursed’ usefully indicates how the discursive aspect proper to subjective apprehensions of temporality must remain procedurally connected to a concomitant subjective appreciation of the theological questions implicitly posed (as Kant readily acknowledged) in any acceptance of “transcendental ideas” as both experientially impossible *and* theoretically necessary. In his attempt to locate and describe the theoretical necessity of logical recursions between the essential form necessarily attributable to ideas of the ‘sacred’ (e.g. “transcendental ideas”) and the corresponding form associated with ideas of the profane (e.g. “empirical ideas”), Bataille comes to regard subjectivity as incomprehensible outside of reference to a problematic concept of “sovereignty.” Bataille’s understanding of sovereignty can be identified as defining the limitations of subjective integrity as necessarily reflecting the notion that any recognition of “freedom” on the part of the subject as a temporally mediated if constitutive quality of its own subjectivity must be coextensive with certain provisional self-attributions of power on the part of the subject, attributions necessarily produced in any approach taken by a subject to the prospect of comprehending the logical coherences which support its identity. The abyssal extent of Bataille’s sympathy with Blanchot’s investigations of the representational limits that render the relations between subjectivity, temporality and cognition only ever problematically comprehensible to individual subjects is made plain in a section of The Accursed Share entitled “The Identity of the Sovereign and the Subject, and Consequently of the Understanding of Sovereignty and Self-Understanding” that can be read as being in virtual dialogue with Blanchot’s later-articulated perspectives on writing exemplarily cited above: “The world is always richer than language, especially if we extract a momentarily recognizable perspective from an immense disorder. Language then impoverishes reality, and it must do so; otherwise we could not glimpse what is not visible to begin with. But I endeavor in this way to describe a common and communicable inner experience, which reaches precisely that sovereign subject which feudal society so clearly failed to reach and that rebellion all too often missed by following the paths that I have traced out. The miraculous openings, through which we are suddenly inundated by light, are always close to these emergent perspectives. At least we can, in the deep darkness (in the darkness of the intelligible), arrange appearances in such a way that they cease to close the wall of objectivity around our vapidty.” Georges Bataille, The Accursed Share, Volume III: Sovereignty, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone, 1991), 255.

Subjectively rendered discursive judgments thus not only *must* risk ‘sinking’ back into the imaginary manifold from out of which they come to be synthesized if they are to attain any degree of suggestive apprehensibility as representations, but furthermore it is only in doing so that acts of judgment can retain any ostensibly rational hope of participating in the ‘flow’ of temporality within which they prescriptively seek to indicate particularly ‘momentous’ moments. Without this limited ability of the subject to spontaneously produce judgments as bearing implicitly prescriptive indications, however imperfect, of the passage of time (the progressive ‘flow’ of which can be identified with the ever ampliative imaginary ‘manifold’ out of which particular judgments are synthesized), time itself would cease to be recognizable as one of the two transcendental forms of apperception (‘space’ being the other) which inherently and ineluctably ‘inform’ all rational cognitions.²⁴

As objects intentionally created (or, as Duchamp’s ‘readymades’ truly *indicate*, objects perhaps even only intentionally *denoted*) to reflect the rationally necessary yet logically unstable nature of the inherent involvement of imagination in the temporal mediation of cognition, artworks function as powerfully ‘material’ indications of how this ineluctable involvement of imagination throughout cognition (even in its most strictly logical functions) expresses the subject’s intrinsically self-subverting experience of temporality in general. Crafted for paradigmatic availability to subjective cognition by virtue of being recognizable as objects peculiarly bearing only a startlingly asymptotic degree of objectively comprehensible significance, artworks amplify the active nature of the subject’s provision of representational models to the experience of time through the rendering of discursive judgments by ‘disastrously’ interrupting and thereby articulating the temporal flow of this experience as it gradually

²⁴ See CPR 165/A37-8/B54 (italic and boldface emphases added): “Time is certainly something real, namely the real form of inner intuition. It therefore has *subjective reality* in regard to *inner experience* [cf. Bataille’s treatment of ‘inner experience’ in the note above - JCG], i.e., I really have the representation of time and of my determinations in it. *It is therefore to be regarded really not as object [Object] but as the way of representing myself as object [Objects]*. But if I or another being could intuit myself *without* this condition of sensibility, then these very determinations, which we now represent to ourselves as alterations, would yield us a cognition in which the representation of time and thus also of alteration *would not occur at all*. Its empirical reality therefore remains as a condition of all of our experiences. *Only absolute reality cannot be granted to it according to what has been adduced above*. It is nothing except the form of our inner intuition. If one removes the special condition of our sensibility from it, then the concept of time also disappears, and it does not adhere to the objects themselves, rather merely to the subject that intuits them.”

comes to be formed in (and informed by) the subject's ongoing differentiations of active cognitions from passive recognitions. Whatever may be said of artworks, an element of their rational content must always remain entirely ulterior to any final interpretation because artworks are created as monuments to moments which, having irrevocably passed (or, as in the case of fiction, perhaps even having been solely imaginary to begin with), must remain as irrecoverable under any determinate form of 'history' as the moments represented were once open to indefinite experiential consideration, attempted 're-presentation' and through such representations, available to prescriptive preservation for further subjective consideration.

This puzzlingly indefinite openness to interpretation proper to works of art - an openness the passive yet intentional *destruction* of which precisely defines objects of 'kitsch' - always at minimum allegorizes how the open-ended nature of the subject's apprehension of temporality as a constitutive form of cognition remains predicated by the fact that any provisionally quantitative appreciation of one's own subject position as 'singular' or 'unified' itself depends upon one's ongoing contemplation of how each passing moment must disastrously lead one toward the only condition theoretically capable of granting a practical and objectively coherent quantitative unity to one's subject-position as a complete or saturated referential context: death.²⁵ Without the idea of death, which can only be subjectively apprehended as a 'disastrous' principle of radical externality (or pure spatiality) and self-objectification because it cannot be comprehended as a cognitive state possibly available to any active and free representation by the subject to whom it occurs, the narrative spontaneously drawn by the subject across the temporal flow of experience (and the thematic repetitions within which serve to contextualize particular experiences) would remain without any hope of as much as even a hypothetically 'unifying' conclusion. Instead of being able to comprehend death as capable of granting an impossibly empirical sense of the 'unity' of self

²⁵ With respect to how the capacity to differentiate 'art' from 'kitsch' expresses the extent of a subject's appreciation of the relation between the ever-pressing need to attempt to comprehend subjective temporality on the one hand and the duty to make objective responses to the unpredictable exigencies presented by radically novel objects of cognitive concern on the other, see Hermann Broch, *Quelques remarques à propos du kitsch*, trans. Albert Kohn (Paris : Allia, 2001, referenced hereafter as QRK), 27-8 : « Qu'il s'agisse de science ou d'art, il importe de créer des vocables nouveaux pour énoncer la réalité. Si ce processus était interrompu, non seulement il n'y aurait plus de science et d'art, mais le caractère d'humanité en soi disparaîtrait aussi, car c'est dans la découverte et la création du neuf que l'homme se distingue de l'animal. Celui qui veut chercher pour l'art de nouveaux domaines esthétiques crée des sensations artistiques mais ne crée pas d'art. L'art naît des pressentiments du réel et c'est eux seulement qui le font s'élever au-dessus du kitsch. »

implicitly hypothesized in and theorized throughout all of one's cognitive processes, the subject is only ever capable of regarding death as an asymptotically approached *telos* absolutely antinomic to all empirical experiences. Qualifying the appreciation of temporality as a formal component of cognition, this indefinite approach toward death renders all subjective mediations of experience *qua* judgments universally appreciable as always already bearing a sublime aspect. If any moment recognizably passes for the subject, it can be said to contain an implicit 'memento mori' at its most centripetal nucleic point.

Qualitatively immune to any active representation as an 'experience' beheld on the part of the subject, death is a theme implicitly approached and assessed throughout every last one of the subject's judgments to the extent that these universally function as subjectively rendered cognitive mediations of temporality. As the event which terminates subjective experience altogether, death cannot be subject to any qualitative representation comprehensible as objectively verifiable truth. For that very reason, however, next to love, death also remains one of the two most preeminently powerful tropes and key thematic topoi of fiction - and indeed of all art.²⁶ The absolute impossibility of representing to others (especially to 'oneself as another') any of the qualitative content proper to the actual end of one's temporally mediated cognitive experience - an end which thus ironically forms the only 'conclusion' theoretically capable of forming a genuine basis for any objective assertion of the 'unity' one is always compelled to attribute to oneself as a necessary hypothesis of cognition - indeed ultimately gives, as Lacan has well noted, the entire structure of subjectively mediated reality the 'character' of a *fiction*.²⁷

²⁶ A treatment of how the impossibility of reporting the experience of one's death paradoxically guarantees one's ability to ascribe a certain reality to subjective experience is taken up by Blanchot in a provocatively fictional and/or autobiographical *récit*, "The Instant of my Death," published in English translation in 1994 with additional analysis and commentary by Derrida. See Blanchot in Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida, respectively, The Instant of My Death / Demeure: Fiction and Testimony, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000), 7-11 (italics added): "There remained, however, at the moment when the shooting was no longer but to come, the feeling of lightness that *I would not know how to translate*: freed from life? the infinite opening up? Neither happiness, nor unhappiness. Nor the absence of fear and perhaps already the step [not] beyond [peut-être déjà le pas au-delà]. *I know, I imagine*, that this *unanalyzable* feeling *changed what there remained for him of existence*. As if the death *outside* of him could only henceforth collide with the death in him. 'I am alive. No, you are dead.' [...] What does it matter. All that remains is the feeling of lightness that is death itself or, to put it more precisely, the instant of my death *henceforth always in abeyance*."

²⁷ To underscore how the subject's self-assessment as a necessarily *fictitious* if always only *hypothetical* 'unity' can be understood within the Kantian framework as reflecting an intrinsic relation between the cognitive dynamics of

Because particular artworks only stand to be identified and recognized as such only on the basis of the unique manner in which they remain problematically solicitous of interpretation, the process of judgment involved in identifying and recognizing artworks engages an evaluative concern analogically parallel to the subject's own similarly open-ended attempt to assess the narratological coherence only ever provisionally and hypothetically ascribable to one's own subjectively experienced unity of apperception. Falling as explicitly prescriptive if profoundly meditative illustrations of this dynamic, René Magritte's

identification or 'recognition' in general, the formation of aesthetic judgments in particular and the overarching necessity of considering transcendental apperception as possibly forming only the basis for an indefinitely researched type of 'unity,' two passages from Lacan will be sequentially cited. The first, from p. 12 of The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), establishes the fictitious as a matter of moral symbology in a manner that is clearly compatible with Kant's CPJ §59 assessment of 'beauty as a symbol of the good' (italics added): "'Fictitious' does not mean illusory or deceptive as such. [...] 'Fictitious' means 'fictif' but [...] in the sense that *every truth has the structure of fiction*. Bentham's effort [In positioning his concept of the 'fictif' Lacan persistently refers to Jeremy Bentham's Theory of Fictions] is located in the dialectic of the relationship of language to the real so as to situate the good [...] on the side of the real. And it is within this opposition between fiction and reality that is to be found the rocking motion of Freudian experience. Once the separation between the fictitious and the real has been effected, *things are no longer situated where one might expect*. In Freud the characteristic of pleasure, as that dimension which binds man, is to be found on the side of the fictitious. The fictitious is not, in effect, in its essence that which deceives, but is precisely what I call the *symbolic*." The second passage from Lacan, in which directly reference to Kant is made, comes from "Of the Subject who is Supposed to Know, of the First Dyad and of the Good" in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), 241-42. This passage not only connects the fictitious nature of the symbolic to Kant's theory of the cognitive process of object identification, but also exhibits how Bataille's determination of the concept of "sovereignty" as irreducibly transgressive is rooted in a question of how the empirical identification of any object by any subject must reflect a previous and implicit identification of one's 'transcendental' capacity of free cognitive agency as something itself quasi-theological in nature. Lacan, italics added: "I almost blush to repeat here such catchphrases as beyond good and evil, which idiots have been playing around with for so long without knowing exactly what they were doing. Nevertheless, we must articulate what occurs at the level of the alienating articulation thus – no evil without there resulting some good from it, and when the good is there, there is no good that holds with evil. That is why, by situating itself purely and simply in the register of pleasure, ethics fails and why, quite legitimately, Kant objects to it that *the sovereign good can in no way be conceived as some small good carried to infinity. For there is no possible law to be given of what might be good in objects*. The sovereign good, if this confusing term must be retained, can be found again only at the level of the law, and in *Kant avec Sade* I showed that this means that, at the level of desire, passivity, narcissism and ambivalence are the characteristics that govern the dialectic of pleasure *at the level of the table on the left* [i.e., at the level of *exemplarity* itself - JCG]. Its term is, strictly speaking, what is called *identification*." It is with respect to how the openness of art to interpretation functions as a primarily available symbol for the subject's most indeterminate relation to the representational conditions concerning its own death or expiration that artworks become paradigmatic of the 'thing' indeterminately invoked in the famous psychoanalytic axiom "Wo es war, soll ich werden" ("Where it/id was, there I/ego shall be" - an axiom which, circumventing the question of 'personality' altogether, can also be considered a fascinating adaptation of the old funereal saw "ashes to ashes, dust to dust."). For the presentation of this axiom in its originating context, see Sigmund Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis," trans. James Strachey, in The Standard Edition of the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXII (London: Hogarth, 1960), 80. In addition to the resonant and relevant irony of the fact that the text of Freud's in question is one of the last to have been written by him before his own death, its full title should not pass without noting that its very titular concept of "New Introductory Lectures" - especially as ones composed near the end of one's living career - directly represent an ambiguity that is almost perfectly identical to the one encountered with Kant's first full 'presentation' of his epistemological definition of "imagination" only in and with his own second edition 're-presentation' of the text of the CPR.



Fig. 1. René Magritte. *La trahison des images*. Oil on canvas, 1928-29.

here for the two absolutely different if conceptually compatible types of 'images' referred to by Dieter Henrich in the thus "detourned" passage below, trenchantly exemplify how the subject's deontological need to engage in the regulative formulation of aesthetic judgments is engaged in the asymptotic pursuit after the apprehension of transcendental ideas (such as, in this exemplary case, the transcendental idea of 'freedom') entirely bound up with all attempted comprehensions of the subjective relation to temporality:²⁸

Both images underscore the experienced continuity between self and world in freedom. But these images and others like them in the history of autonomy are further bound together through the conviction that norms and knowledge of their validity are grounded in a sphere other than the ego. They proceed from an inner form of self-conscious life that extends beyond our sense of self-assurance, to become integrated in a total world-image. We can only incorporate this conviction - that the ground of freedom differs from the self - into those comprehensive images that transcend seriously the agent's self-assertion. This means, among other things, that we must conceive of the finite subject in new ways.²⁹

On the one hand, any subjective *recognition* of specific artworks as artworks is indissociable from an open-ended appreciation of the ever peculiarly manifest capacity of such artworks to render irreducible hermeneutic aporiae evidently open to indefinite subjective negotiation. On the other hand, all



Fig. 2. René Magritte. *Les deux mystères*. Oil on canvas, 1966.

²⁸ Figures from Marcel Paquet, *René Magritte* (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), p. 9 and 68 respectively.

²⁹ See Dieter Henrich, "The Contexts of Autonomy: Some Presuppositions of the Comprehensibility of Human Rights" in *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992), 78.

subjective *cognition* remains analogously indissociable from a similarly open-ended if asymptotic assessment conducted by the subject regarding its *own* ever merely hypothetical singularity or ‘unity’ as a transcendental subject of apperception. The necessary openness of art to interpretation, in other words, mimetically parallels the openness of thinking subjects to the unknowable formal content of death as it alone can objectively determine the narrative telos implied as necessary throughout all of one’s various attempts to comprehend what finally objective (and thus strictly quantitative) meaning can possibly be attributed to the transcendental unity of *one’s own* apperception. By virtue of this analogical situation and prior to any considerations of the particular formal content they contain, any ‘artwork’ recognized or identified as such by the subject thus functions at a minimal level as a paradigmatic reflection of the subject’s indefinitely extended attempt to comprehend itself as a ‘unity’ after the manner of the ‘singular’ capacity of any work of art recognized as such to provoke indefinite interpretation. Over the instantaneously mediated temporal distributions of one’s self-concept as always concurrently having to account (at least on implicit if no less manifest levels) for a wide array of coherent or representable notions concerning how one is, how one has been, how one will be and how one will have been, the singularity attributable to the work of art, resplendent only in the disastrously irreducible multiplicity of interpretive possibilities it identifiably prescribes, forms a provisional space of reflection useful for the subject as a provisional venue for engaging the asymptotic apprehensions of the irreducibly *unheimlich* parameters always proper to one’s own temporally riven ‘unity’ as an individual and particular subject.

Whatever particular concrete or plastic form they may take (literary, musical, plastic, etc.), artworks only stand to be recognized and appreciated as such, rather than merely accepted as simple objects or solely traded as pure commodities, through their curious and ever unique capacity to instigate profound subjective appreciations of how cognitive spontaneity is invoked in and demanded by any approach to the ostensibly particular if always hermeneutically undecidable models of narratological coherence that artworks always definitively if ‘disastrously’ condemn themselves to prescribe. The formal coherence of these narratological models as systematically prescriptive representations of possible approaches to temporality in general is saved from absolute ‘disaster’ (or pure confusion with mere

objects) only to the extent that artworks remain indefinitely capable of functioning as schematizations of “outer sense” that can be accepted as provocatively illustrating or describing how the subject’s capacity to spontaneously assess (or “make sense” of) temporality itself remains an inescapable condition of one’s “inner sense” in general. The coherence that the subject must actively seek to ascribe to the representations of temporality uniquely prescribed in and by particular artworks renders these representations available to the subject as reflective models for possible comprehensions of the hypothetical coherence which the subject can only ever gradually and procedurally attribute to the assessments of temporality that it inevitably makes throughout cognition considered as an engaged enterprise of active and free judgment. Just as the self must identify ‘itself’ with its cognitive processes, artworks must similarly be identified with the indefinitely complex representational stratifications of temporality they prescriptively contain. In “the end,” one can only look to model one’s inescapable need to assess temporality through the production of rational judgments that is inherent to self-consciousness upon the complexities of temporal representation ontologically demonstrated in artworks as constituting a formal property of their own objectively recognizable coherence.

Thoroughly accounted for in Plato’s unsparing prescriptions for the treatment of poets and poetry in the Republic, the indefinitely complex representational models of temporality consubstantial with any recognizable identity of artworks influence the subjective formatting of the most intimate aspects of the individual’s cognitive approach to temporality to such a sublime extent that exile would indeed seem to constitute the only *infinitely* certain (if logically ‘safe’) objective response to the indefinitely subversive capacity of art to inspire subjective reconsiderations of the ‘nature’ and orientation of one’s temporal schemata.³⁰ Because the capacity of art to hold an such an inestimably deep sway over the formal

³⁰ See book III, sec. 387b-c of Plato’s *Republic* (CDP 632), noting especially the specific relationships established therein between poetic representations and the fear of death, as well as the subtle but important paradox inherent to any consideration of a human subject as “destined to be free” (italics added): “We will beg Homer and the other poets not to be angry if we cancel those and all similar passages [...] because the more poetic they are the less they are suited to the ears of boys and men who are *destined to be free* and to be more afraid of slavery than of death. [...] Then we must further taboo in these matters the entire vocabulary of terror and fear [...] and all other terms of this type, whose *very names* send a shudder through all the hearers *every year*. And they may be excellent for other purposes, but *we are in fear* for our guardians lest the *habit* of such thrills make them more sensitive and soft than we would have them. - And we are so right in fearing. - We *must* remove those things then? - Yes.”

machinations of cognition constitutes nothing less than a defining property of art itself, the ever unique capacity of artworks particularly identifiable as such to provoke subjective meditations as profoundly disorienting as they are indefinitely real on the part of the individual subject regarding one's habitual means of representing the basic subjective need to negotiate temporality remains objectively inseparable from any simple subjective recognition of artworks as artworks. As objects to which a subject can only remain indifferent at its own Pascalian risk, all works of art, in the procedural course of being subjectively recognized as such, always already thereby begin to take the one who recognizes them as such under the influence of the complex representational prescriptions they project to the extent that these prescriptions pertain not to this act of recognition as a particular event but rather to how such aesthetic events define the temporal texture or rhythm of one's cognition in general by placing new cognitive elements in unexpected syncopation with previously established or schematized ones. Artworks constitutively destabilize the regulative schematization of the particular representations chronically employed by the subject to render the incessant apprehension of temporal form as a transcendently necessary aspect of cognition at least provisionally coherent or temporarily apprehensible, if not infinitely comprehensible.

Throughout all cognitive processes, an implicit analogy is constantly drawn by the subject between 1.) the way in which the singularity attributable to artworks recognized as such depends upon a provocative openness to interpretation uniquely assignable to the work in question (i.e., the more open to interpretation the work remains while still retaining particular coherence as a subjective production, the more its identity as an artwork can be recognized as 'singular') and 2.) the way in which the singularity attributable to subjective cognition itself very similarly depends upon the subject's openness to considering the absolutely unknowable if always indefinitely approached experiential nature of the event of its own expiration. This analogy is composed according to the coextensively interrogative necessity concerning self-identity in general that is 'schematized' between the recognition (or aesthetic judgment) of particular artworks as such and the assessment of the transcendental unity of apperception as a similarly self-referential process endemic to all cognition. Because this analogy indefinitely reflects each of these orders of subjective identification back to the other without allowing for any ultimately decidable

logical comprehension of either as being either the major analogized or the minor analogically compared term, this relation can be understood as operant even at the basis of Kant's most famously formulaic treatment of subjectively rendered judgments of beauty as constituting acknowledgments of "purposiveness without purpose."³¹ Such an assessment of purposiveness in the absence of any logically coherent particular purpose is not however strictly native to contemplation of the beautiful, but instead indicates the precise point of möbius-strip recursion necessarily schematized as hinging beauty to sublimity on the indefinitely extensible plane of the subject's capacity for aesthetic judgment.

To the extent that the sublime is ever recognized, assessed or judged as a categorical aspect of any phenomenon, there must be something very *intra*-subjectively 'beautiful' about this sublimity, for such a judgment can only be rendered on the basis of a subject's being compelled by the representational content of the phenomenon judged as sublime to assess the limits of its own *quantitative* singularity - a quantum which must therefore be at least hypothetically comprehensible (i.e., not *yet* comprehended if potentially comprehensible - in other words, 'purposive without purpose') if it is ever to be open to indication as a possible object of subjective concern. The subject is compelled to engage in the pursuit of such a hypothetical logic throughout all of its cognitive assessments of the simultaneously aesthetic and epistemic aspects of cognition *despite* its given incapacity to fully comprehend the representational dimensions proper to death as the most intimate teleological end (or 'purpose') alone capable of objectively rendering such an inhabited locus of subjectivity comprehensively 'singular' if thereby also entirely closed to any and all further representational elaboration. An element of the sublime must thus always be somewhat beautiful to the degree that phenomena judged as sublime compel a quantitative consideration of one's subjective singularity (or "transcendental unity of apperception") as constituting an *intra*-subjective instance of the "purposiveness without purpose" that Kant associates with the beautiful.

Likewise, to the extent that the beautiful is recognized, assessed or judged as apparent, there must similarly be something *inter*-subjectively 'sublime' about it, for recognitions of the beautiful, by implying

³¹ See CPJ §17, 120: "Beauty is the form of the purposiveness of an object, insofar as it is perceived in it without representation of an end." This famous formulation of Kant's concerning beauty directly recalls Blanchot's notion of "passivity beyond passivity" for determinate reasons explored below in greater detail.

the necessity of a *sensus communis*, implicitly (or “subliminally”) indicate the ‘singularity’ of the individual subject as merely representative of a general *species* of equally pensive and cognizant (i.e., ‘transcendental’) subjects. The ‘sampling size’ of this theoretically necessary field of reference (which constitutes an example of what Blanchot has referred to as an “unavowable community”) however remains so indefinitely vast and potentially broad that the very individuality of the individual subject who considers it must always risk ‘drowning by numbers’ therein.³² In rendering judgments of beauty, subjects threaten to reduce themselves to an infinitesimal instance of a transcendental generality. (Given the key role thus played by a concept of ‘species’ in judgments of beauty, it is worth noting that a certain trace of the vicious ferment from whence the *idiotic* bathos of *racism* ever lazily if dependably springs can be diagnosed here as a pathological *wiederholungszwang* of aesthetic judgment which narcissistically attempts to deny the boundaries between the erotic and death drives through an active destruction of all apparent differences between the beautiful and the sublime as problematically co-implicating topoi of aesthetic judgment.³³) As recursively joined yet distinct categories of aesthetic judgment, the beautiful and the sublime cannot be regarded as strictly opposable, but must each be regarded as constituting the matrix, context and condition of differential possibility for the other. The difficulty inherent to the process of cultivating valid aesthetic judgments thus depends upon the extent to which the subject can patiently resist hastily conflating beauty and sublimity, as such conflation can only result in a dialectical morass

³² See “The Principle of Incompleteness” in Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1988), 5-7, especially p. 6 (comments in parentheses and italic emphases Blanchot’s own): “The existence of every being thus summons the other or a plurality of others. (This summoning resembles a chain reaction which needs a certain number of elements to be triggered, though it would risk losing itself in the infinite if that number were not determined, just as the universe composes itself only by unlimiting itself in an infinity of universes.) It therefore summons a community: a finite community, for it in turn has its principle in the *finitude* of the beings which form it and which would not tolerate that it (the community) forget to carry the *finitude* constituting those beings to a higher degree of tension.” As to the extent to which this mathematical sublimity silently haunting the beautiful indicates a basic relation between the process of subjective self-identification and narratology, see also Peter Greenaway, *Fear of Drowning by Numbers: Règles du Jeu* (Paris: Dis-Voir, 1989), 23: “Counting is the most simple and primitive of narratives - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - a tale with a beginning, middle and an end and a sense of progression - arriving at a finish of two digits - a goal attained, a dénouement reached.”

³³ See Jacques Derrida, “Racism’s Last Word,” trans. Peggy Kamuf in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Chicago: U Chicago P, Autumn, 1985), 293 (italics added): “In order to respond to this singularity or, better yet, to fling back an answer, the singularity right here of another event *takes* its measure. [...] Its movement does not *yet* belong to any *given* time or space that might be measured today. Its flight rushes headlong, *it commemorates in anticipation - not its own event* but the one that calls it forth.” Kamuf’s translation of the article is also compiled in Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other - Vol. 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf & Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007).

ultimately indiscernible from a perfect *absence* of aesthetic judgment - an absence itself often abused for the purposes of presenting aesthetic judgments as simulacra of epistemologically objective judgments.

The indefinitely open question of the ever mathematically sublime ‘sampling size’ of the “*sensus communis*” analyzed by Kant as inherently associated and implicitly invoked in any subjectively rendered judgment of ‘the beautiful’ indicates that consideration of a necessary recursion between the aesthetic categories of beauty and sublimity forms a subjective challenge inherent to aesthetic judgment in general, as does the focus upon the objective comprehensibility of unified subjective identity which sublime phenomena invariably demand of their ever ‘singled-out’ audience. In being confronted with the sublime, individual subjects are compelled to consider their intra-subjective uniqueness as being at least possibly comprehensible (whence the purposive ‘beauty’ of ‘sublimity’) yet also asymptotically multiplicitous in its actual dimensions precisely because this singularity must always already be internally divided in terms of the necessary temporal distributions of this concept of identity *qua* subjective singularity between the narratological categories of past, present and future.³⁴ Whereas experiences judged beautiful remind one that the mystery of calculating one’s integral singularity as a subject is a challenge at minimum shared by an actual community of all similarly self-conscious subjects, this community, given its indefinite size and mathematically sublime reach, also by virtue of that inclusion threatens to render such an included identity infinitesimally small. On the other hand, experiences considered sublime expose one to the notion that one’s subjective unity must at least be able to be approached as a potentially comprehensible quantum if only as one always ‘at present’ inherently distributed and fractionalized between all of the apprehensible modalities of the indefinitely multiplicitous forms that can be attributed to the complex nature of temporally mediated representations in general.

To the extent that certain objects may ever possibly be recognized as artworks, such objects must function as objective mirrors (and thus retain a minimally assessable degree of ‘beauty’) for the narratological categories which sublimely shape the subject’s deepest ‘apprehensions’ (placed in ‘scare

³⁴ Cf. Kant’s coextensively exquisite and precarious balancing of intra- and inter-subjective priorities in CPJ §40, “On taste as a kind of *sensus communis*”, 174-76 *passim*.

quotes' to emphasize the connotation of 'apprehension' *qua* anxiety) and corresponding representational framings of its ever independently considerable deontological attempt to understand how the formal properties of temporality can be addressed as potentially comprehensible and thus strictly objective. Because recognition of any 'unity' attributable to particular artworks remains coextensive with a schematization on the part of the subject of an implicit analogy between the specific openness to interpretive judgment attributable to specific artworks on the one hand and the subject's own openness to the indefinite unfolding of its capacity to negotiate representations of its own temporality on the other, artworks as 'objects' provide a subjective window onto the incomprehensibility of death as an event itself beyond all possibly representational experience.³⁵

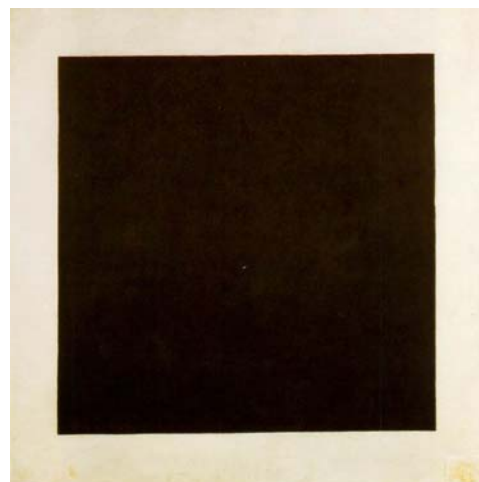


Fig. 3. Kasimir Malevich, *Black Square*.
Oil on canvas, 1915.

Inasmuch as any truly 'unifying' conclusion to the narrative peculiarly assignable to the singularity of one's subject position can only be attained with genuinely objective precision at the extremely disastrous and/or disastrously extreme (in short: *ex-pensive*) cost of nothing less and nothing other than that very subject position as one capable of cognitive agency and transcendental ideation, the meaning of a work of art very similarly can only ever be attained or fixed as an absolutely objective 'fact' at the direct cost of reducing the work in question to an object of kitsch (which also amounts to exclusively treating it as a mere object or pure commodity). Approaching this

³⁵ Even in the course of considering a work as exemplarily (one could even say: "dynamically") static in its content as Kasimir Malevich's notorious 1915 *Black Square* - a work which, quite violently unlike the representational works of Goya, for instance, is provocatively and stubbornly indeterminate with respect to the specific type of pathos possibly attributable to its content - questions of narrative nevertheless remain essential to the consideration of the work inasmuch as the centrally puzzling 'representational' content of such a work becomes a question of the motives attributable to its (non-)depiction as well as a question of the nature of the intentionality that is specifically represented in the production of such a non-image. Malevich's *Square* can thus not only be cited as a 'degree zero' example of how even paintings remain intrinsically subject to narratological consideration, but can also be recognized as a quintessential demonstration of the modernist tendency (and we somewhat eccentrically date the epoch of 'modernism' as dating from Augustine's 'Chapter 11' meditations on time in the *Confessions*) to directly integrate questions of authorial motive and public reception into the representational content and meaning of a work.

same problem from another perspective, the textual form known as ‘autobiography’ can only be defined in accordance with its absolute incapacity to present or represent any verifiably objective experiential report of its author’s death. This ineluctable donation of the representational terms informing the narrative closure attributable to one’s existence over to others is a dynamic of which Blanchot, as we shall soon see, remained very carefully aware to the very end.

In the most extensive of his many interesting treatments of Blanchot’s work (treatments ranging in form from the most normative types of literary criticism to philosophical essays, theological investigations and even strictly poetic productions over which Blanchot’s influence remains perfectly palpable), Kevin Hart carefully and faithfully parses Blanchot’s approach to the notion of art as inherently expressive of this subjective condition by noting that “it is in art that we find ourselves having to admit that the human being is not entirely determined by way of possibility but is turned toward the impossible.”³⁶ Revising Hart’s statement slightly, it may be added that it is with respect to *time* as a formally necessary aspect of cognition that we find ourselves always already engaged in the impossible task of comprehending the ‘unity’ always only hypothetically if transcendently attributable to the uniqueness of one’s subject-position. Considering Kant’s proposal of the subject’s freedom to determine and apply schemata of quantity as a procedure necessarily involved in any subjective attempt to comprehend temporality as a transcendental form indwelling of cognition in general, the differentiation of ‘reproductive’ from ‘productive’ uses of the imagination that is required for the subjective appreciation of temporal form to be possible itself constitutes “a hidden art in the depths of the human soul,” as Kant states in taking up a concern with ‘art’ that is quite atypical for him yet also recognizably similar to the

³⁶ Kevin Hart, *The Dark Gaze: Maurice Blanchot and the Sacred* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2003), 227. For an example of how the wider range of Hart’s work tends to consistently reflect Blanchot’s influence, see also his poem “The Last Day,” collected in *Flame Tree: Selected Poems* (Highgreen: Bloodaxe, 2003) and available on the internet at <http://australia.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw_cms/cms/cms_module/index.php?obj_id=773&x=1>: “On the last day / Our stories will be rewritten / Each from the end [...] And men will look / Into their palms and find them empty; / There will be time / For us to say the right things at last, / To look into our enemy’s face / And see ourselves, / Forgiven now, before the books flower in flames, / The mirrors return our faces, / And everything is stripped from us, / Even our names.”

sense of ‘art’ negotiated by Hart.³⁷ Such an ‘art’ can only ever be composed in view of the fact that the type of ‘unity’ which the subject incessantly and implicitly seeks to attribute to its own subjectivity throughout each ‘one’ of its cognitive processes itself remains entirely informed by and contingent upon ‘one’s’ perfect *incapacity* to objectively represent or communicate to others (and most intimately to *oneself* as another, oneself as a mere member of the ‘community’ invoked in the notion of “sensus communis”) an event of death the phenomenal dimensions of which cannot be experienced as subject to any of the cognitions and recognitions proper to one’s imaginatively temporalizing apprehensions of “inner sense.”

In attempting to ponder the impossible notion of what the personal experience of one’s death could in any sense ‘objectively resemble,’ one is essentially forced to imagine one’s subjectivity caught in a condition of nothing less and nothing other than an absolutely unverifiable because absolutely incommunicable expiration of every actual and potential objective capacity of the powers of imagination and understanding, considered either as theoretical *Vermögen* or actual matters of *Kraft*, alike and in tandem. In other words, to attempt to imagine one’s death is to attempt to imagine oneself in a subjective state beyond all imaginable (let alone comprehensible) capacity for one to render representational judgments - whence the profoundly appealing pathos behind the Christian notion of a savior returning from ‘beyond death’ to pass ‘final’ judgment and thus accomplish that which remains as humanly desired as it is humanly impossible. Given that only death considered as a phenomenal event poses the maximal thematic limit according to which the closest approximation of a truly “absolute unity” can ever be

³⁷ The greater context of this provocatively oblique observation, especially to the degree that Kant indicates an important role for the faculty of imagination in any unearthing of this ‘art’, is worth reproducing here. See CPR 273-4/A141-2/B180-1 (boldface in original, italics added): “*This schematism of our understanding* with regard to appearances and their mere form *is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul*, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes *only with difficulty*. We can say only this much: the image is a product of the empirical faculty of *productive* imagination, the schema of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) is a product and as it were a monogram of pure *a priori* imagination, through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but which must be connected with the concept, to which they are never themselves fully congruent, always only by means of the schema that they designate. The schema of a pure concept of the understanding, on the contrary, is something that can never be brought to an image at all, but is rather only the pure synthesis, in accord with a rule of unity according to concepts in general, which the category expresses, and is a transcendental product of the imagination, which concerns the determination of the inner sense in general, in accordance with the conditions of its form (time) in regard to all representations, insofar as these are to be connected together a priori in one concept in accord with the unity of apperception.”

attributed to the subjectivity of any subject (i.e., as the limit which renders the ‘total’ existence of a given subject at the very least a *historically* determinable quantum), it is important that death – quite like “transcendental ideas” and in fact at work in Kant’s posing of the necessity of imagining immortality as a transcendental idea – cannot be objectively comprehended by the subject under the conditions of any experience precisely because it remains (and in its event, one *only* ‘remains’) entirely exterior to subjectivity itself.³⁸ As precisely the condition under which subjects irrevocably turn into objects (and as a condition thus irreducibly allegorized in the inherently *enslaving* treatment of any subject *including oneself* as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself), death is a state only ‘subject’ to an absolutely exterior and thus *unimaginably* as well as *incomprehensibly objective* validation.³⁹

On such a basis, it is not in any way melodramatic to suggest that the subjective appreciation of temporality as a transcendently formal condition of cognition itself always - in *every* ‘event,’ in every case and at every moment - comes to the subject as ‘a matter of life and death’ itself posable as being and remaining at stake throughout the indefinite extent of the subject’s cognitively mediated experiences. The disastrous ‘experience’ of death to which we must always remain blind if incapable of reporting, an ‘experience’ which cannot be comprehended save for as a radically external phenomenon because its qualitative and quantitative dimensions as an ‘experience’ cannot be reported from any first-person perspective (whence the need to contemplate immortality), quite ironically provides the only narrative parameter *potentially* capable of providing a teleological terminus to the always theoretically

³⁸ On immortality as a necessary transcendental idea of reason, see Kant’s note at CPR 407/B395 (emphases in original): “Metaphysics has as the proper end of its investigation only three ideas: **God, freedom and immortality**; so that the second concept, combined with the first, should lead to the third as a necessary conclusion.”

³⁹ One may also add: from out of the necessary speculative vacillations regarding how this deathly division between subjects and objects comes to take place in time, ‘ghosts’ - as Hamlet indirectly testified - stand to be born(e). Such a posing of death as an idea which like transcendental ideas is ‘not to be met with in experience’ is taken up by Kant in terms of the *a priori* necessity of a strictly *problematic* idea of immortality, a problem “in the solution of which speculative reason could do nothing but commit paralogisms” (CPrR 246). Although the idea of immortality is implied throughout every use of reason, as a transcendental necessity this idea is posed by Kant as being of course empirically and experientially incomprehensible in itself, and thus as simply another one of the many mysteries which motivate the critical application of reason to the subjective formulation of judgments. Kant’s diagnosis of an *a priori* need for a concept or idea of immortality is a direct reflection, in short, of the very incomprehensibility of death to the subject as a possible subjective state. (On the fundamental ambiguity between transcendental ‘concepts’ and transcendental ‘ideas’ in Kant as far as the faculty of imagination is concerned, cf. p. 16-17 of Chapter 1 above.)

apprehensible but never empirically comprehensible ‘unity’ of the subject *qua* “transcendental unity of apperception,” a unity which the subject thus remains compelled to research throughout every instantiated and instantiating aspect of the free exercise of one’s own cognitive agency.

On the other hand, the concept of *life* functions as a generative matrix for the subject’s capacity to prescribe cognitive repetitions – i.e., *recognitions* – to oneself, others and oneself as another throughout the sphere of the practical. Indeed, the concept of ‘life’ which the subject regularly and literally ‘inhabits’ comes to be formed through its prescriptive establishments of fixed ‘schematic’ templates for cognitive repetitions in general, templates which works of art prescriptively organize into systemic apparatuses of representation. Through the repeated application of such schemata of recognition, the subject comes to define and inhabit the particularly identifiable concepts of ‘self’ and of ‘home’ intimately associated with the idiomatic concept of a “form” or “way of life.”⁴⁰ The subjective establishment of such repetitive schemata, however, itself silently depends upon the freedom inherent to the ever potentially spontaneous if temporally conditioned nature of the subject’s cognition. ‘Home’ is thus always just as much the place to which one regularly returns as it is a place that one must always in principle remain absolutely free to abandon on an indefinite basis.

At ‘home’, one readily recognizes things because one is therein free to project throughout space the temporal dimensions one regularly and habitually attributes to one’s selfhood as constituting reflections of one’s schematic apprehensions of temporality in general. The raw possibility of admissible degrees of cognitive alienation from that context, however, also itself forms perhaps the most critically tacit qualifying component of any ‘home’ ever recognizable as such, for if ‘home’ were to remain solely the locus wherein *wiederholungswang* is given an untrammled reign, ‘home’ would quickly become allegorically assimilable to imprisonment.⁴¹ An essential differentiation of the *gemütlich* kitsch of ‘home

⁴⁰ Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein’s famous assertion at PI 8 (§19): “[T]o imagine a language is to imagine a form of life.”

⁴¹ On how habitual forms of life stand in principle against spontaneous and free employments of the imagination, see Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1966), 119-121. The following passage not only defines the automatism according to which the subject establishes the literal ‘economy’ (*oikos* + *nomia*, or household law) of its self-concept, but furthermore does so by illustrating the difference between this establishment

décor' from art as the latter is essentially interruptive of cognitive habits, for instance, can readily be recognized in this context as a dynamic that must remain in play throughout the subject's establishments of any type of 'domestic economy,' especially those types of 'domestic economy' established as expressions of an overarching attempt to circumscribe the subject's ongoing interrogative approach to the ever-as-of-yet unresolved matter of its uniquely identifiable status as an individual agent of reason.

The dynamically compiled relation between free spontaneity and habitually patterned expectation, each respectively corresponding to productive presentational employments of the imaginative faculty on the one hand (e.g., *creating* an artwork) and reproductive representational enjoyments of the imaginative faculty on the other (e.g., *regarding* an artwork), is essentially a relation the incessantly alternating tempo of which gradually comes to define the temporal form and ultimately provide the narratological content attributable to the subject's individually recognizable approach to its indefinite range of actual and potential thoughts and experiences.⁴² Without the cognitive exceeding of merely reproductive uses of the imagination always necessary for any subjective approach to the dynamic

as the expression of a repetition compulsion and the consideration of beauty as "purposiveness without purpose": "It is I who let certain messages count as 'information,' and as such make them influence my action. The mere feedback from sense-organs does not motivate behavior; in other words, sentience and motility alone are not enough for purposive action. The reflex arc embodies in its mechanized pattern the vital purposiveness or concern that went into the making of it. The feedback combination of a receptor-effector system (which an organism indeed is among other things) lends itself to purposive action precisely if and when it is *not* a mere feedback *mechanism* – that is, if the two elements are not coupled directly, but if interposed between them there is will or interest or concern. This amounts precisely to saying that purposive behavior requires the presence of purpose. That statement is no mere tautology, for cybernetics is an attempt to account for a purposive behavior without purpose, just as behaviorism is an attempt at psychology without the 'psyche', and mechanistic biology a description of organic processes without 'life'. [...]

The point is that, however limited and possibly heteronomous the immediate motivation may be, it can become a motivation only on the basis of the concernedness of all life with itself, its performance, its content. Only on this basis can the 'feedback' operate in the control of purposive action. Even the appeal to obedience and the widest use of habit must ultimately draw on this fund of spontaneity and interest." One can also regard the economic concepts of 'home' and 'life' set forth here as amounting to, in the Lacanian idiom, the *points de capiton* which determine the repeatable fixity of any cognitive schema: "We are forced, then to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier [...] *All our experience* runs counter to this linearity, which made me speak once, in my seminars on psychosis, of something more like 'anchoring points' (*points de capiton*) as a *schema* for taking into account the dominance of the letter in the dramatic transformation that *dialogue* can effect in the subject." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 154 (italics added). The 'dialogue' referred to at the end of this passage we assimilate *tout court* to the irreducibly discursive if representational nature of cognition itself.

⁴² Cf. CPR 257/B152: "Now insofar as the imagination is spontaneity, I also occasionally call it the productive imagination, and thereby distinguish it from the reproductive imagination, whose synthesis is subject solely to empirical laws, namely those of association, and that therefore contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of cognition a priori, and on that account belongs not in transcendental philosophy but in psychology."

apprehension of rapidly burgeoning (i.e. radically novel) events to take place, time itself would simply fail to be ‘recognizable’ as a formal condition and property of all cognitive apprehension and comprehension alike. The appreciation of time as a formal dimension inherent to all cognition, in other words, demands that we ‘recognize’ this formal quality as one which primarily serves to grant our capacity to differentiate the *schematizing* processes of *cognition* from the schematic reiterations of *recognition* and vice-versa. The capacity to experience any passage of time depends upon the obscure representational necessity that all things (firstly and foremostly one’s self as a ‘thing’ or being peculiarly capable of treating the particularity of its own identity as an object of contemplation) can never be, in any instance, ‘in themselves’ entirely what they merely *seem* to be: whence Kant’s most infamously obscure determination of noumena or “things in themselves” as transcendently incomprehensible yet necessary, for without such obscurities the critical inquisitiveness and theoretical curiosity intrinsically identifiable with the cognitive extensions of subjectivity would universally fail to attain even so much as potential relevance to any field of potentially ‘objective’ reference.⁴³

Falling more as idiomatic than idiosyncratic expressions of ‘re-cognitive’ habit, exclusively reproductive employments of the faculty of imagination are independently incapable of apprehending new objects of thought (such as those inherently contained at the nucleus of any newly passing moment), functioning instead to facilitate the identification of objects of experience solely by virtue of comparative reference to an established basis of previous cognitions collected and reified as paradigmatic of

⁴³ On noumena as hypothetical loci permitting reflexive and recursive elucidations of both the unity of the subject’s transcendental apperception as well as the unity of conceptually identified and/or ‘recognized’ phenomena, see CPR 348/A250-51/B307 (boldface emphasis in original, italic emphases added): “All our representations are in fact related to some object through the understanding, and, since appearances are nothing but representations, the understanding thus relates them to a **something**, as the object of sensible intuition: but this something [altered in Kant’s copy of the the first edition to “this something as object of an intuition in general”] is to that extent only the transcendental object. This signifies, however a something = X, of which we know nothing at all nor can know anything in general (in accordance with the *current* constitution of our understanding), but is rather something that can serve only as a *correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition*, by means of which the understanding *unifies* that in the concept of an object.” For a more expansive treatment of the question of the key role played by noumena in subjective determinations of temporal form, see also Eva Schaper’s magnificent if all too brief consideration of Kant’s notion of noumena as comprising heuristic devices which uniquely permit provisional apprehension of the temporal schemata appropriate to particular phenomena *qua* narratological constructs in her article “The Kantian Thing-In-Itself as a Philosophical Fiction,” *Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 16, No. 64, July 1966, 233-243.

phenomena in general. At the opposing end of the spectrum of the imaginary faculty, Kant associates its productive spontaneous use with the freedom, volition and critical power without which subjectivity would itself have to remain entirely unthinkable, as it is solely through the interactions of cognition with recognition and never through recognition alone (which, exercised to the detriment of cognitive awareness of objective fact becomes the pathological tendency identifiable as Freudian “repetition compulsion”) that the subject attains its hope of understanding and exerting its interventional capabilities with respect to its unique tangent of temporal approach to the sphere of historical time.⁴⁴ The subject, in brief, is that which must always learn to feel at home precisely in never being able to feel *absolutely* comfortable. Slavoj Žižek has appreciatively recapitulated Kant’s diagnosis of the ineluctable degree of auto-alienation involved in the subject’s cognitive approach to the indefinitely elusive because always allusive prospect of comprehending such temporal conditions of its own subjectivity:

Only Kant fully articulates the inherent paradoxes of self-consciousness. What Kant’s “transcendental turn” renders manifest is the impossibility of locating the subject in the “great chain of being,” into the Whole of the universe – all those notions of the universe as a harmonious Whole in which every element has its own place (today, they abound in ecological ideology). In contrast to it, [the] subject is in the most radical sense “out of joint”; it constitutively lacks its own place, which is why Lacan designates it by the mathem[*e*] \$, the ‘barred’ *S*.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See entry for ‘repetition compulsion’ in J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 78 (*italics added*): “At the level of concrete psychopathology, the compulsion to repeat is an ungovernable process originating in the unconscious. As a result of its action, the subject deliberately places himself in distressing situations, thereby repeating an old experience, but he does not recall this prototype; on the contrary, he has the strong impression that the situation is *fully determined* by the circumstances of the moment.”

⁴⁵ The passage continues on to note in opening a new paragraph that “In Descartes, this ‘out of joint’ state is still concealed.” Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke, 2003), 12. Žižek’s framing of how Kant’s conception of the subject remains tied to the question of the subject’s appreciation of its own capacity to represent temporality is laconically handled here by way of a reference to Shakespeare. As low-key as such a way of referring to the ‘central role’ played by temporality in Kant’s analysis of the structure of subjectivity may be, it also serves in an interesting way to underscore our point (as many of Žižek’s typical references to artworks generally tend to do) that artworks stand to be regarded by the subject as objects the singularity of which can only be contemplated because the indeterminacy of their interpretation most closely mirrors nothing so much as the subject’s own temporal quandary in attempting to comprehend the limits of the magnitude assignable to its particular subjectivity. Cf. WSH, 227-8 (Act I, Sc.V, Ln. 190-198): “Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. So, gentlemen / With all my love I do commend me to you; / And what so poor a man Hamlet is / May do t’express his love and friending to you, / God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together. / And still your fingers on your lips, I pray. / The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right. / Nay, come, let’s go together.”

As that which renders the subject inherently ‘out of joint’ with itself, the need to recognize cognition itself as inherently informed by considerations of temporality is itself as intrinsically related to the imagination’s fundamental synthesis of the manifold of representations as it is also dependent upon the free spontaneity of the application of categories by the faculty of understanding to this imaginatively synthesized manifold. It is in the coextensive and simultaneous development of cognitive schemata and constantly revised application of previously schematized categories to experiential phenomena that transcendental time-determination comes to ‘occur’ to the subject as a differential process of cognizing and recognizing the very substance of that which at ‘present’ is only ever potentially recognizable. Such applications of previously schematized categories simply cannot occur without a primary synthesis of the indefinite representational manifold by the imagination as a spatiotemporally ‘informed’ field. This transcendental synthesis, which has “figurative” and “combinative” (or “intellectual”) aspects (cf. CPR 256/B151) is spontaneously produced by the imagination throughout the cognitive processes which correspond to empirical perceptions and itself composes the matrix of possibility for any reproductive use of the imagination because every act of recognition achieved must take place within a so-synthesized moment of cognitive spontaneity. To deny this irreducible and constitutive involvement of spontaneity in recognition as well as cognition is tantamount to denying that even the most passive types of recognition must at the very least be expressed through an exertion on the part of the subject of the most minimal degrees of cognitive activity. (Freedom, in other words, is nothing if not freedom to *change one’s mind*.)

Such denials, which while absurd in principle remain as phenomenally common as any type of contemptuous negligence inspired by rote familiarity, gradually turn the irrepressible need for the subject to draw connections between syntheses of the representational manifold undertaken by the imagination and syntheses of the unity of apperception effected by the understanding into an automatically repeated procedure according to which the subject’s most basic schematic procedures for comprehending all actual and potential knowledge gradually ossifies into a primitive basis for what has come, through and despite a

definite amount of infelicitous *détournement*, to be called “ideology.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, is the forgetting of this spontaneous and subjectively driven cognitive basis for all possible recognitions which turns the subject’s establishment of a hastily unified schematism for the general application of the categories of understanding to objects of cognitive contemplation into the very first “ism” of ideological allegiance held by the subject. As Blanchot succinctly relates this quandary of denial as it forms an epistemic condition of the subjective approach to the discursive coherence of ontological experience, “Being is yet another word for forgetting.”⁴⁷

Beyond all of the insipid telegraphy associable with either ‘pro’ or ‘con’ attitudes taken toward the conceptual confections of any so-called “political correctness,” the inevitability of forgetting the constant involvement of spontaneity throughout the subject’s indefinitely extended determinations of its

⁴⁶ That the merely provisional unity the subject can attribute to itself through the understanding’s asymptotic assessment of the “transcendental unity of apperception” remains completely inassimilable to any concept of ‘absolute unity’ is made perfectly clear by the end of the following passage from CPR 232-3/A107-8 (boldface emphases in original, italics added), a passage which immediately follows the citation used as an epigram to Chapter 1 above and in which Kant places an extraordinary emphasis on the temporal mood of his language, an emphasis which overarchingly serves to suggest a connection between logical and temporal forms of ‘priority’: “Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that *precedes* all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representations of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness *I will now name transcendental apperception*. That it deserves this name is *already* obvious from this, that even the purest objective unity, namely that of the a priori concepts (space and time) is possible only through the relation of the intuitions to it. The numerical identity of this apperception therefore grounds all concepts *a priori*, just as the manifoldness of space and time grounds the intuitions of sensibility. Just this transcendental unity of apperception, however, makes out of all possible experiences that can ever come together in one experience a connection of all these representations in accordance with laws [whence the understanding of aesthetic judgment as expressive of a regulative deontology - JCG]. For this unity of consciousness would be impossible if in the cognition of the manifold the mind could not become conscious of the identity of the function by means of which this manifold is synthetically combined into one cognition. *Thus the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances in accordance with concepts*, i.e. in accordance with rules that not only make them necessarily reproducible, but also thereby determine an object for their intuition, i.e., the concept of something in which they are necessarily connected; for the mind could not possibly think of the identity of itself in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this *a priori*, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its action, which subjects all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, and first makes possible their connection in accordance with a priori rules. Further, we are now able to determine our concepts of an **object** in general more clearly.” Regarding the cautious couching of the term “ideology” above, to describe this term as having been subjected to an infelicitous seduction refers to the way in which the term to this day stands in desperate need of a resuscitation of the philosophical conditions and underpinnings which initially surrounded its coining. In other words, the term must be restituted to the extremely specific meaning originally provided to it by the neglected philosopher whose work primarily introduced the term to the western lexicon as a philosopheme: Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy. The first complete translation into English of Destutt de Tracy’s magnum opus, *Elements d’Idéologie*, is thus forthcoming (completion expected by 2009) from the author of the present thesis.

⁴⁷ Maurice Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, trans. John Gregg (Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1997) 35.

entire representational field of cognition is that which comes to render practical recognitions of common objects as absolutely defined objects of thought into irreducibly ideological determinations. Such determinations can and should be limited and regulated by the subject, but never eliminated as a matter of policy: that way only Schreber's desperate fate of attempting to re-code the entire metaphysical structure of quotidian reality lies. As Plato confirmed, one simply cannot in any way simply *recognize* an empirical object without implicitly posing the availability to cognition of an ideally totalized paradigmatic instance of the object to which (or simply *which*) such empirically couched examples can only ever insufficiently relate. In the course of such formally based recognitions, which in essence are schematically automated applications of categories of understanding to imaginably representable objects of thought on the part of the subject, the eidetic aspects of objects are sutured to logical definitions of those objects with the thread of an inevitable forgetting of the active and spontaneous nature of free subjectivity itself: whence "ideology" (*eidōs* + *logos*) as the first, most primary and most basic form possible of the Kantian schematism and as the primarily compounded fusion of the eidetic nature of the imagination and the logical nature of the understanding that is first, most repetitively and most habitually applied by the subject to all of its cognitive appreciations of objects as objects of thought. In sum, as Blanchot relates, "thoughts" which "are excessively schematic...need qualifying."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See Blanchot's 1984 article "Intellectuals Under Scrutiny," trans. Michael Holland in *The Blanchot Reader*, ed. Michael Holland (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 206-227. Because the use of Blanchot's statement above is somewhat violently wrested from its original context, a recapitulation of the argumentative flow from which this *en passant* assertion concerning the 'schematic' has been plucked ought to be provided here. Blanchot's issuance of this elegant observation in a text which atypically for him directly addresses questions of political ideology is not however at all infelicitous to the thrust of our argument. From p. 219, italics added: "[B]ecause war is waged against it, from without and from within...the party is obliged to become militarized (prepared as it is already to be an instrument of war), and this in turn requires obedience to a single leader who, thinking and acting for everyone, demands absolute loyalty, without criticism, without doubt and without thought. Let us not forget that it was Trotsky who, in 1919 (vainly at the time as it happened), called for the 'militarization of the entire Soviet economy, that is, the permanent militarization of the entire working population – workers and peasants – under the authority of the man who is to direct the Tcheka, and with a rigorous system of both productivity bonuses and also severe penalties, in cases where stipulated tasks are not carried out.' *These thoughts are schematic and would therefore need qualifying*. They do, however, throw into relief an orientation and a tendency. The importance of the military and industrial complex, which today lies at the heart of the Soviet system, is no more than a refined form of that initial war-like logic." Even given this much broader context of concern, Blanchot's observations remain directly relevant not only to the critical treatment we will later propose concerning the comprehensibility of the contemporary idea of a "war on terror" (not to mention the inextricability of this concept of 'war' from a direct elevation of the military-industrial complex to an agency capable of influencing precisely the *tempo* of the social condition in general), but relevant also to Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of an irrefutable connection between 1.) Hegel's dialectical assertions of the concept of "absolute

Formed in the temporally measuring steps taken by an auto-quantifying subject toward the world which correlates to an imaginatively appreciated representational manifold, such ideologically rooted attributions of objectivity are first based on the subjective application of a schema of *quantity* to the *recognition* of any object of thought which comprises so much as a ‘singular’ instance of the object in question, especially and most immediately in the case of the subject’s consideration of *its own self* as the most centrally ‘singular’ object of one’s incessant if often implicit or tacit rational concern. Assumed as a condition, these quantitative schematizations subsequently tend to be applied to objects of consciousness on the basis of the subject’s forgetting of the constantly pressing if always spontaneously refreshed need to simultaneously apply of schemata of *quality* as well as schemata of quantity to cognitively approached objects of thought and experience.

Readily differentiable from any dependably repetitive and reflexive application of schemata of *quantity* (unity, plurality, totality) to the merely enumerative *recognition* of particular objects, the application of schemata of *quality* (reality, negation, limitation) to the pure *cognition* of objects can be seen as illustrating a necessary relation (‘relation’ itself also constituting a categorical species bearing respective ‘schemata’) between the fundamentally logical formation of quantitative judgments and the essentially aesthetic assessment of qualitative judgments.⁴⁹ As the inherent partisan of a minimally idiomatic strain of self-identifying because auto-enumerating ideology, the subject tends to deny the radical simultaneity of this cognitive need for qualitative as well as quantitative schematizations of

unity” (a concept which chez Kant remains in principle indefinitely transcendental and thus necessarily imaginable if problematically incomprehensible) as a fully comprehensible concept and, 2.) the iconic rendering of notions of potency, power or *Kraft* in totalitarian ideology through the figure of the leader or *Führer* (see note 81 below). In sum, we wish to illustrate that the manifest *danger* of regarding oneself even as one’s own morally prescriptive *Führer* is a prospect inherently negotiated in any subjective approach to the epistemic conditions of possibility for asserting a unity of self-consciousness as capable of defining of the particularity attributable to any given subject. On this basis, Kant’s analysis of “absolute unity” as being both a transcendently necessary idea and an empirically incomprehensible concept can be taken as posing an ethically ‘fail-safe’ condition ‘informing’ the moral constitution of subjective self regard. For Kant, this formation of self-regard can only take place through an active process of research conducted by the subject into how cognition problematically implies such a transcendently imaginable yet empirically indemonstrable unity - a unity which Hegel far too simply if altogether monstrously sees fit to *assume*.

⁴⁹ Kant’s breakdown of the types of categories each associable with respective schemata are listed in the “Table of Categories” at CPR 212/A80/B106, which distributes them as follows: “**1. Of Quantity:** Unity, Plurality, Totality. **2. Of Quality:** Reality, Negation, Limitation. **3. Of Relation:** Of Inherence and Subsistence (*substantia et accidens*), Of Causality and Dependence (cause and effect), Of Community (reciprocity between agent and patient). **4. Of Modality:** Possibility - Impossibility, Existence - Non-existence, Necessity-Contingency.”

objects because the first thing the subject may always assume to be at stake throughout all of its temporal mediations of cognitive apperception is the question of the quantifiable temporal persistence of its own existence as a singular subject (*cogito, sum*). Not only in aesthetic considerations of sublime phenomena external to subjectivity but even in the most basic considerations of the most mere “conceptual ideas” of the imagination - such as the perfectly quantitative idea of “a thousand”, as Kant will show - active engagement with the recursive relation between qualitative and quantitative schemata remains essential to the subjective formulation and assertion of a transcendently oriented, spontaneously elaborated and conceptually complex rather than an empirically oriented and habitually repeated schematism in full (or reified *ideology*) on the part of the subject.

Because it is an exemplarily recognizable type of object, one does not regularly pause to consider a *chair*, for instance, in the same way in which one may (ir)regularly pause to consider the meaning of a work of art. This difference in ‘regulative’ modes of approaching phenomena, however - especially inasmuch as this difference gradually comes to articulate and consolidate the ‘tempo’ of the subject’s shifts between merely

reproductive and freely productive uses of the faculty of imagination - is itself always an artifact symptomatically expressive of the presence of a subjective ideology even (and perhaps especially) when such types of discernment are rendered only on the most minimal levels of subjective judgment. Minimization of this ideological content of cognition - which can *never* be altogether eliminated as participating therein - depends upon the subject’s remaining conscious of how its cognitive schematizations of objects always remains an essentially active and productive endeavor rather than a purely passive and reproductive process. Ideology is exemplarily resisted and reduced to a minimal if cognitively ineluctable form in the course of electing to aesthetically contemplate, for instance, any mere



Fig. 4. Joseph Kosuth. *One and Three Chairs*.

Multi-media Installation, 1965.

200 x 271 x 44 cm.

chair as possibly being work of art (i.e. as an end in itself), whereas ideology is exemplarily succumbed to in the vulgar gesture of subjecting a work of art to casual use as a chair (i.e. as a mere means to the vulgar end of *sitting*). The latter gesture tortuously seeks to turn art into kitsch by attempting to refute by fiat the extant problem of hermeneutic ambiguity which works of art, peculiarly quite like rational human subjects, intrinsically open and only according to which they can be minimally and singularly ‘recognized’ as such, as artworks, by rational subjects. The stakes of ideology as a minimally necessary aspect of cognition are thus drawn throughout all of the subject’s temporal determinations of differences between its habitually normative (i.e. strictly ‘re-cognitive’) assessments and its consistently exceptional (i.e. purely cognitive) curiosities. The latter ‘disastrously’ serve to remind the subject that every last one of its conceptual determinations of unity - beginning with the determination of unity habitually attributed to one’s own identity *qua* subject position - must always in principle remain open to further investigation, just as artworks ever singularly recognized as such remain intrinsically open to further interpretations of their representational content in the subjectively based process of being merely recognized as artworks.

To the degree that one inhabits a subject position the transcendental unity of which one may fallaciously if habitually (yet always with dialectically plausible deniability) become accustomed to regarding as a fully comprehensible unity and objectively intact singularity, one thereby has also far beyond begun to forget the incessant qualitative involvement of spontaneity throughout the subjective determination of the representational manifold that always remains available for subjective consideration by virtue of the productive involvements of the faculty of imagination throughout cognition. In brief, habits of comprehensive recognition always risk attenuating the imaginative freedoms the exercise of which form a constitutive aspect of cognition itself. Habitual attributions of defined particularity to a subject position which implicitly treat the necessary hypothesis concerning the comprehensible unity attributable to any subject position not as an open question but rather as a hard and fast established fact provide no basis upon which any absolute comprehension of a particular subject position can ever legitimately be claimed, understood or communicated as objectively comprehensible and thus unified, complete, total or absolute in the manner so claimed.

This is not to say (and certainly not to repeat the nonsensical claim still misidentified on a frequent basis with “postmodernism”) that absolutes relevant to subjectivity simply do not exist, or even worse to suggest that ‘truth’ itself can whatsoever be coherently claimed as a void category of knowledge. Rather, it is to say that absolutes, being limited in their range of potential application to tautologically determined domains of objective knowledge, are systemically incapable of accurately accounting for the procedural manner in which engaged modalities of subjective identity can approach the notion of subjectivity as possibly constituting an end in itself. As Hegel perhaps best demonstrated, the unrestricted fetishization of absolutes stands to render knowledge itself an agent paralytic to the rational appreciation of subjective freedom in its indefinitely complex entirety. Such abuses of absolutes now occur with a quiet yet persistent cultural regularity that must be decried (and furthermore, deconstructed) in such quantitatively demonstrative and qualitatively monstrous disciplines as “psychology” - a ‘science’ which, it should be noted, ought never to be confused with the qualitatively catalyzed theory and practice of *psycho-analysis* now standing in dire need of rescue from the normative technocratic abuses which produce the pragmatically self-valorizing forms of legitimacy regularly attributed to psychological ends.

The essentially active condition of approach toward unpredictable possibility which under-girds any subjective identity despite the possibility of this approach having fallen into the habitual desuetude of self-objectification through excessive reliance upon passively reproducible schemata can always however be dutifully recalled, for such a ‘recollection’ *qua* deontological cancellation of an error remains linked to the very possibility of subjective freedom itself. This type of ‘recollection’ can be understood as entirely *opposed* to (or as an ethical inversion of) Platonic anamnesis in that it brings only a radical *absence* of knowledge to light (or instigates “enlightenment” in its strictest Kantian sense as a self-organizing emancipation from self-incurred immaturity) instead of posing any particular *presence* of knowledge as a ‘light’ at the end of the speleological tunnel, and always stands to be actively resumed by any subject who seeks to minimize habitually accrued ‘ideological abuses’ of recognition.⁵⁰ Furthermore, this type of

⁵⁰ See again Roland Barthes’ preeminently useful situating of “ideological abuse” covered in note 10 of Chapter 1 above (p. 11). On Kant’s definition of enlightenment, see the discussion of “second nature” in note 5, page 5 of

preeminently self-critical recollection can be understood as shaping nothing less than the ethical contour of the subject's practical responsibility to maintain rational vigilance regarding its inherently free and active role in the production of its habitual processes of cognitive apperception in general, as these processes, embedded throughout the actions and judgments exacted by the subject, cannot help but stand considerable by others as potentially paradigmatic of the human condition in general and thereby inadvertently prescriptive of what this condition may entail. Better than leaving one's representational prescriptions to inevitability is to leave them up to conscious decision and deliberation, and it is for this reason that Kant explicitly couched his concept of "enlightenment" in terms of *public* uses of reason.

With respect to this ongoing responsibility to differentiate processes of cognition from processes of recognition, the subject must, as Paul Ricoeur has held, regard 'oneself as another' in a cognitive gesture assimilable to the assumption of a narratological approach toward the question of how the temporal form necessarily considered in subjective cognition is to be represented in prescriptive gestures of signification. This approach must persist in light of the 'disastrous' fact that one cannot, given the fact of death, ever be 'present' either to consider or render the "inner sense" of the teleological conclusion of this narrative, which (quite like inherently empty 'things in themselves') can only posed as a heuristically necessary fiction which depicts the only hypothetically approachable question of one's particular singularity as a subject. The irremediable aporia internal to any attempt to assay one's subject position as an absolute unity leads this narratological apprehension of temporality as a formal condition of subjective cognition to be a 'work' always 'in progress' and without conclusion throughout the indefinite extent of that cognitive process. Because of its uncontrived, irreducibly spontaneous and open nature, however, this 'work' must also inherently risk losing the basis for its potential recognition as a coherent form of 'work.' Opposed to habit, such an endeavor becomes a matter of 'unworking' - indeed a matter of *désœuvrement*

Chapter one above and PW 54-5 with specific attention to Kant's critical approach to the idea of habit as 'second nature' (italics added): "[I]t is difficult for *each separate individual* to work his way out of the immaturity which has become *almost second nature* to him. He has even grown fond of it and is really incapable *for the time being* of using his own understanding, because he was never allowed to make the attempt. *Dogmas and formulas*, those *mechanical* instruments for rational use (or rather *misuse*) of his natural endowments, are the ball and chain of his *permanent* immaturity."

in Blanchot's terms - because it directly reflects how the "passivity *beyond* passivity" attributable to any spontaneous subjective relation to the "free play" of the imagination occurs as a cognitive inevitability.⁵¹

In Oneself as Another Paul Ricoeur instructively reflects upon a similar 'decomposition' of the differences between narrative form and the form of the philosophical essay ('essay' in the sense of 'attempt', and indeed as a form also bound to *assay* the quantitative singularity only ever *qualitatively* associable with any subject position as its requisite hypothesis) by indicating Musil's The Man Without Qualities and the autobiographical texts of Michel Leiris as 'works' which, by investigating the aporetic nature of the discursive teleology of subjectivity, paradigmatically 'unwork' or deconstruct themselves:

*To the loss of the identity of the character thus corresponds the loss of the configuration of the narrative and, in particular, a crisis of the closure of the narrative. [...] The erosion of paradigms [...] strikes both the configuration of the character and the configuration of the plot. Thus, in the case of Robert Musil, the decomposition of the narrative form paralleling the loss of identity of the character breaks out of the confines of the narrative and draws the literary work into the sphere of the essay. Nor is it by chance that so many contemporary autobiographies, that of Michel Leiris for example, deliberately move away from the narrative form and move into the literary genre with the least configuration – the essay.*⁵²

It is the impossibility of ever completely assaying one's subjective singularity as an absolute unity capable of representing its own narrative closure which silently underwrites the subject's entire rational practice of determining the logical and aesthetic judgments it produces. This condition summarily

⁵¹ For a deconstructive approach to Blanchot's 'un-working' notion of free cognitive spontaneity as engaging a "passivity beyond passivity", see Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," trans. David Wood & Andrew Benjamin, in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), 274: "It must...be made clear that deconstruction is not even an act or an operation. Not only because there would be something 'patient' or 'passive' about it (as Blanchot says, more passive than passivity, than the passivity which is opposed to activity). Not only because it does not return to an individual or collective subject who would take the initiative and apply it to and object, a text, a theme, etc. Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs it-self. It can be deconstructed. [*Ça se déconstruit.*] The 'it' [*ça*] is not here an impersonal thing that is opposed to some egological subjectivity." On the relation between the free play of the imagination and the hypothetical supposition of a merely possible form of intra- and inter-subjective 'unity' as an indeterminate if free 'presupposition' inherent to cognition, see CPJ §20, 122: "Thus only under the presupposition that there is a common sense [*sensus communis*] (by which, however, we do not mean any external sense but rather the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers), only under the presupposition of such a common sense, I say, can the judgment of taste be made."

⁵² Paul Ricoeur, Oneself as Another, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1992; referenced hereafter as OA), 149. Italic emphases added.

turns all such determinant judgments into instantiating moments in an implicitly overarching production of a narrative discourse of the self. To the extent that this production must persistently remain attuned to the role played by spontaneity in all subjective apprehensions of temporality, the ‘work’ of formulating discursive judgments thus must also constitute a *désœuvrement* of the subjective stability *qua* coherence of narrative toward which the work of judgment must always teleologically address itself, as this persistence can only be maintained through the subject’s *desisting* from ever posing the parameters of its subjectivity as comprising any absolutely comprehensible, perfectly complete and totally objective unity.

Reaching further than Ricoeur in the practical search after “the literary genre with the least configuration,” Blanchot comes to regard the surrealist practice of ‘automatic writing’ as coming as close as possible to fulfilling that very role. In Blanchot’s view, automatic writing poses the notion of its potential recognition as a ‘work’ as a matter which can only be posited in a direct confrontation of the innermost fragility of everything that such an identification must imply. In its minimally calculated naïveté, automatic writing – perhaps better called ‘spontaneous writing,’ but also genuinely ‘automatic’ to the extent that it tends to reveal only the most habitually ‘automated’ differentiations of active cognitions from passive recognitions operant in the writing subject’s general schematization of objects of thought - can be taken as capable of illustrating the irreducible level of the participation of ideology as a schematic inevitability in the subjective rendering of logical and aesthetic judgments, especially as this rendering must take place in the most basic propositional and verbal structures of language itself. In the form of automatic writing, Blanchot clearly discovers symptomatic expressions of an unavoidable cognitive concern with the aporia concerning the parameters attributable to any individuated subjectivity:

Automatic writing: a writing without anyone writing, passive: that is to say, a writing of pure passion, indifferent because bearing in itself every difference: thought writing (not thought written), and over which there can be no master since it excludes mastery, just as it refuses any possibility of being brought into play other than as a disinterested play of thought; thought representing nothing, a fortuitous presence that plays and permits play.⁵³

⁵³Maurice Blanchot, “Tomorrow at Stake”, in The Infinite Conversation, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993; referenced hereafter as IC) 412.

The “disinterested *play* of thought” Blanchot reveals as descriptive of the spontaneous aesthetic productivity mobilized in automatic writing could not be more readily identifiable with the disinterest ascribed by Kant as essential to the rendering of honest and candid aesthetic judgments, not to mention further identifiable with the “free play” of the imagination itself as a type of “workless” activity the “freedom” of which allows the subject to remain disinterested and spontaneous in its rendering of judgments. It bears repeating other than automatically here that artworks can only be recognized as artworks on the condition that their susceptibility to quantitative assessment as such, as singular ‘works’, remains precisely that which the qualitative content of the work itself deeply unsettles and places directly at stake as an object of representational ‘play.’ For an object to be definable as an artwork, it must ‘work’ to ‘unwork’ itself. Artworks are recognizable as such by subjects precisely because their tendency to motivate playfully spontaneous cognitive reactions (ones which ‘do not work’ in any established ideological terms but are only further generative of ideological innovations) on the part of rational subjects renders them unrecognizable as mere - i.e. readily *quantifiable* - objects. Artworks ‘work’ only to hinder the possibility that determinate degrees of purely objective and quantitative interest may be derived of them on a reliably repeatable basis by subjects in their cognitive attempts to comprehend the status of artworks as a paradigmatic objects of free productive contemplation.

Moreover, that the inalienable freedom of the subject forms a condition of possibility for subjective disinterest and thus for the appreciation of objective analytical-tautological (or *rhythmic*) fact is primarily attributable to the praxeological situation that no matter how much the subject wishes to base a fixed determination of the singularity of its particular cognitions on a more or less narcissistic search after reflective confirmations of its own inscrutable unity, this unity itself remains, just like the noumenon at the transcendental core of objects, at best only a necessary *fiction*. Much in the manner of the truth of the ethical axioms at the core of parables, the fiction of a hypothetically comprehensible singularity that the subject must always provisionally attribute to itself in researching the actual parameters of its identity is no less ‘true’ for its nature as a heuristic confabulation. Because the subject dynamically assesses itself as

such a hypothetical unity through the assimilation of its production of judgments to the experience of particular moments in its establishment of a narratological schema according to which apprehensions of the temporality of its cognitive agency ‘take place,’ even in its most intimate instances of self-identification the subject thereby already poses itself to itself as an ‘other,’ as just another fictional or fabulous “character” - and one which furthermore only remains capable of theorizing the possible epistemological coherence of the overarching narrative of its individual experiences and thus also its hypothesized identity as a unique subject on the basis of, in Ricoeur’s faithfully Kantian estimation - “keeping one’s word.”⁵⁴

Given the relative stability of their inscribed fixity as well their teleological presentations of content (e.g. “plot”), novels, as it is said, can be relied upon to never change their minds but instead always perhaps to change ours. The same can also be said of any artwork irrespective of its particular form to the degree that as an object of intentional production or presentation it enduringly engenders subjective fascination. Artworks are preserved because their problematic resistance to comprehension consistently invites meditation upon the conditions of possibility for objective knowledge in general by prescriptively suggesting that all subjective determinations of objectivity remain somehow tied to the subject’s active exercising of productive imagination. ‘Unworking’ themselves by staying passively provocative in the face of every complex interpretation they may playfully solicit, artworks are paradoxically treasured for their persistent capability to remain objectively *invaluable* and thereby ever further solicitous of conscious, critical and active approaches on the part of the subject toward the rendering of evaluative judgments in general. As objective models of subjective persistence, we rely on artworks ‘never changing their minds’ and always ‘keeping their word’ to consistently demand of us that we expose ourselves to ever further unimagined hermeneutic situations. By staying open to interpretation

⁵⁴ See OA, 118: “When we speak of ourselves, we in fact have available to us two models of permanence in time which can be summed up in two expressions that are at once descriptive and emblematic: character and keeping one’s word. In both of these, we easily recognize a permanence which we say belongs to us. [...] The polarity I am going to examine suggests an intervention of narrative identity in the conceptual constitution of personal identity in the manner of a specific mediator between the pole of character, where idem and ipse tend to coincide, and the pole of self-maintenance, where selfhood frees itself from sameness.”

on an indefinitely extensible basis, artworks demand that subjects, in the course of considering them as objects strangely capable of eclipsing objectivity itself, remain similarly open to reconsidering how the cognitive necessity of enacting any “regress in the series of appearances” itself remains an regulative duty of the subject throughout the active contemplation of all objects in general.

By ‘keeping their word’ so rigorously - and indeed all forms of ‘artwork’ can be considered ‘written’ in the strictly temporal if expansively deconstructed sense of *écriture* - artworks function as heuristic models for understanding how the subject remains responsible for maintaining the possibility of refining judgments of objective phenomena (or ‘change one’s mind’) while nevertheless also striving to keep its *own* word in much the same manner that artworks prescriptively do. This striving takes place in the subject’s constantly renewed attempts to maintain a minimal level of objective coherence reliably attributable to the narrative it constantly constructs concerning the basis for appreciating the hypothetical unity of subjective identity, a narrative which cannot lose reference to a general principle of objective rigor if the hypotheses it contains are to retain any hope of coherent communicability. As a transcendental object of thought, this hypothetical unity can never be fully comprehended but only gradually rendered more potentially comprehensible through the subject’s appreciation of how its schematizations of the representational manifold of time are shaped by the cognitive activity of the productive imagination and only preserved in the recognitions of reproductive imagination. In brief and in sum, the recognizable existence of artworks always demonstrates that the optimally productive way to keep one’s word as well as change one’s mind is to precisely do either one only by means of the other.

The subject’s word – its promise – must remain a minimal index of repeatability which, manifested on the border between radical spontaneity and inevitable expectation in exactly the same manner as any statement of ‘automatic writing,’ similarly seeks to balance on a line between ‘working’ and ‘unworking,’ functioning and failing, constructing and deconstructing, and – in Kant’s condensed version of these alternatives - “decomposing” *and* “synthesizing” at the very same time, indeed in every passing instant which can only be singularly recognized as such, as an instant, in being accepted as forming a ‘novel’ because irreversible part of the subject’s ongoing cognitive apprehensions of the

temporal manifold.⁵⁵ The subject's word, in short, is maintained throughout its cognitive applications of the spontaneity of the imagination to the power of the understanding in order to achieve reliable recognitions which, despite this reliability, also cannot ever be abusively 'taken for granted' as such. The subject's word, "in other words" – as a word which must always 'translate' itself over the temporal border of presently contingent intuitions into the language only ever born in and of the next unpredictable moment – is something which, in the regulative manner of a law, only retains its value in being actively applied to contexts which must risk subjecting the dimensions and configuration of this regulative concern to an ever presently uncertain type of potentially necessary modification. To keep one's word means nothing, in short, if one's word is not *risked*.⁵⁶

That the "disinterested play of thought" required for the rendering of aesthetic judgments is a subjective version of the 'free' disinterest objectively involved in epistemological judgments of cognitive states of affairs in general is made clear by Kant in the (in)famous 59th section of the CPJ. In this section, Kant provocatively poses the power of the 'disinterested play' of aesthetic judgment as providing as solid a basis as is reasonably conceivable for understanding how the subjective process of forming practical judgments is inextricable from the process of forming theoretical judgments, a combination which recalls nothing in the critical system so as much as the earlier CPR combination of the faculties of imagination and understanding in the establishment of the "transcendental schematism." Kant sets all of this forth not only by calling a startling amount of attention to the temporal mood of his own assertions as they again performatively constitute a particularly 'novel' moment in the text, but also by advancing an extremely subtle argument therein concerning the coherence possibly attributable to self-consciousness. Taking recourse to the performative dimensions of language in a manner previously encountered and examined in his work, Kant's unambiguous calling of attention to his authorial role (one in which Kant performatively

⁵⁵ See CPR 518/A505/B533 (italics added): "[T]he multiplicity of parts in a given appearance is in itself neither finite nor infinite, because appearance is nothing existing in itself, and the parts are given *for the very first time through the regress of decomposing synthesis* [*dekomponierende Synthesis*], and in this regress, *which is never given absolutely wholly* either as finite or infinite."

⁵⁶ This notion of one's "word" as constantly requiring auto-translation over an indefinitely self-renewing temporal threshold is entirely assimilable to the testimonial effect of signatures as analyzed by Derrida in the essay "Signature Event Context," included in MP, 309-330 (cf. *passim*).

‘gives the law to himself’) through a direct underscoring of the temporality of his assertions poses this moment of the CPJ as indefinitely and productively alarming if at all ‘novel’ (italic emphases added):

*Now I say that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and also that only in this respect (that of a relation [...] natural to everyone, and [...] expected of everyone else as a duty) does it please with a claim to the assent of everyone else, in which the mind is at the same time aware of a certain ennoblement and elevation above the mere receptivity for a pleasure from sensible impressions, and also esteems the value of others in accordance with a similar maxim of their power of judgment. That is the **intelligible**, toward which [...] taste looks, with which, namely, even our higher faculties of cognition agree, and without which glaring contradictions would emerge between their nature and the claims that taste makes. In this faculty the power of judgment does not see itself, as is otherwise the case in empirical judging, as subjected to a heteronomy of the laws of experience; in regard to the objects of such a pure satisfaction it gives the law to itself, just as reason does with regard to the faculty of desire; and it sees itself, both on account of this inner possibility in the subject as well on account of the outer possibility of a nature that corresponds to it, as related to something in the subject itself and outside of it, which is neither nature nor freedom, but which is connected with the ground of the latter, namely the supersensible, in which the theoretical faculty is combined with the practical, in a mutual and unknown way [cf. Kant’s CPR description of the schematism as a “hidden art”- JCG], to form a unity (CPJ 227).*

It is almost ironically only in a state of temporary blindness to the ‘heteronomy of the laws of experience’ (in other words, in ignorance of the aporetic incommensurability between the faculties of sensibility and understanding) concurrent with spontaneously rendered judgments of beauty that the subject can experience the sense it needs of at least a hypothetically viable if never fully explicable logical connection between the orders of subjectivity and objectivity. Experiences of beauty as symbolic of moral good do more than simply provide an elusive opportunity for the subject to feel “at home” in the world outside of any necessary reference to given cultural or economic situations – i.e., with reference only to the limits of its own preeminently portable cognitive powers. Such experiences, given their especially symbolic import, moreover provide paradigms for the subjective pursuit of a possible “figurative synthesis” (*synthesis speciosa*) of the *theoretical* nature of temporality qua “inner sense” of

understanding as well as the *practical* nature of spatiality qua “outer sense” of sensibility.⁵⁷ This synthesis, which is “figurative” to the extent that it donates a symbolic value to cognition through spontaneous productions of the imagination rather than through any mere reproduction of expected intuitions, marks all moments of time experienced by the subject as inherently capable of illustrating the viability of at least pursuing an objective representational basis upon which the subject can at least begin bring to light (or ‘enlighten,’ if never fully illuminate) the potential validity of its nevertheless hypothetical assertions of its possible unity. Where beauty does not exist, its possibility does ever more.

Even if its end remains indefinitely aporetic (and thus subsequently subject to a “decomposing synthesis” in the regress of appearances), *synthesis speciosa* provides the subject’s hypothesis of its unity with only an ethically ‘fighting’ chance to be available to theoretical consideration. As Béatrice Longuenesse has framed the imaginatively productive nature of this ‘active duty’ situation,

[I]n order to understand why, for example, “succession of the manifold, insofar as it is subjected to a rule,” allows appearances to be subsumed under the category of causality, one must understand how this succession according to a rule is apprehended: it is apprehended in an act of sensible synthesis (synthesis speciosa) performed *with a view to subsuming appearances under concepts according to the discursive form of hypothetical judgment* (synthesis intellectualis). *A similar analysis can be provided for all the schemata.* In each case, the rule of synthesis that will allow the subsumption of appearances under pure concepts of the understanding is first generated by the “blind” syntheses of imagination in view of reflecting appearances under (empirical) concepts according to the logical functions of judgment. [...]*Only synthesis speciosa, figurative synthesis, is able to account for the schematism as a production (the “determination of inner sense by the understanding”), not merely as a result (the correspondence between the schemata and the categories).*⁵⁸

The thrust of Longuenesse’s argument is that an active approach taken by the subject with respect to the ‘capacity to judge’ freely exercised composing figurative syntheses (in other words, an approach to the ‘capacity to judge’ *qua* theoretical faculty as being consubstantial with a ‘capability to judge’ *qua*

⁵⁷ See CPR 163/A33/B50: “Time is nothing other than the form of inner sense, i.e. of the intuition of our self and of our inner state,” and 159/A26/B42: “Space is nothing other than merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e. the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us.”

⁵⁸ Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998) 246, italics added. Text referenced hereafter as KCJ.

practical power) alone can regulate the relations between imagination and understanding necessarily drawn in the subject's necessary formation of an ideological schematism as merely minimal expressions of the raw need for basic schematic connections to be subjectively established between ideas of the imagination (*eidos*) and logical concepts of the understanding (*logos*). As an active 'determination of inner sense [i.e. as an apprehension of the imaginative grasp of temporality] by the understanding,' *synthesis speciosa* assists in keeping ideology minimal as a nevertheless necessary and inevitable expression of the schematization of knowledge. The schematic suturing of ideas to concepts must remain as spontaneous as possible if the subject is to preserve a rational basis for asserting its freedom as a logically demonstrable ideological necessity without self-contradiction, and this spontaneity is underwritten by figurative synthesis considered as a mode of approach toward the narratological stratifications and systematizations of temporality prescriptively offered to subjects by objects intentionally produced to induce indefinite degrees of aesthetic contemplation. When the schematism falls into desuetude as a passive and dogmatically assumed "result" of "correspondence between the schemata and the categories" and is not taken up as an actively figurative synthetic "production" which determines the hypothetical reach of the "inner sense" of temporality "by the understanding" on the part of the subject, the necessary lashings of ideas to concepts and vice-versa which take place in the formation of coherent schemata and ultimately result in a 'schematism' of narratologically coherent allegiance itself falls 'subject' to consideration as more of a purely passive and derivative (rather than actively disinterested) expression of a particularly toxic if politically oriented rather than personally resonant form of ideology. It is such automatisms of ideology and not anything native to ideology itself which turns ideology from being a naïve and native product of the subject's comprehension of the necessarily hypothetical relations between imagination and understanding into a dogmatically repeated and thus more political than insightful element of human praxis. Expressive only of a repetitive application of a predetermined (rather than imaginatively prescribed) schematism to cognition, the form of political ideology directly contradicts the form of the experience of moral beauty which informs the value of the

schematism as an actively evaluative modality of experience engaged in by the subject throughout all of its time-synthesizing cognitive apprehensions of its own cognition as belonging to a transcendental unity.

Keeping in mind Lacan's key dictum that "'fictitious' does not mean illusory or deceptive as such," it is worth revisiting at this juncture another definition of imagination provided by Kant. Taken from his post-critical Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, this definition sheds further light on how the subject's comprehension of temporality is placed at stake in its establishment and inhabitation of a schematism which can be on one end of the spectrum a minimally ideological deployment of schemata as spontaneously *active* (in the sense of a "passivity *beyond* passivity") and *reflective* productions of figurative syntheses of cognition or, on the other end of the spectrum, a politically ideological and *strictly* passive because automatically *reflexive* grouping of previously synthesized intellectual schemata. Considering the following definition of imagination as forming a context for Longuenesse's reflections, it should be readily noticeable that in her search for the seat of the subject's involvement in the composition of schemata and subsequent establishment of any schematism that the minimal ideological forms prescribed in spontaneous cognitions of figurative synthesis correspond to what Kant here calls *exhibitio originaria*, whereas the politically ideological mapping of the world dictated in repeated recognitions of established intellectual syntheses respectively corresponds to *exhibitio derivativa*.

The imagination (*facultas imaginandi*), as a faculty of perception without the presence of the object [here is a clear instance of Kant repeating the essential constative meaning of his original CPR definition of 'imagination' - JCG], is either *productive*, that is, a faculty of the original representation of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which consequently precedes experience, or it is *reproductive*, that is, a faculty of the derived representation (*exhibitio derivativa*), which calls to mind a previous empirical perception. *Pure perception of space and time belongs to the productive faculty*; all of the others presuppose empirical perception which, if it is linked with the concept of the object, thus becoming empirical cognition, is called experience. [...] Imagination is, in other words, either *poetical* (productive) or merely *recollective* (reproductive). The productive faculty, however, is nevertheless *not creative*, because it does not have the power to produce a sense impression which has never before occurred to our senses (APoV, §28, 56, italic emphases added).

Taking Kant's emphasis upon the notion that the "productive faculty...is nevertheless *not creative*" as obscurely yet truly analogous to Lacan's observation regarding the essentially *non-illusory*

status of the fictive (fiction must discuss the ostensibly real, hypothetically possible and potentially true in order to be assessable as fiction), the gravity of the caution specifically offered by Kant at the end of the passage above can be regarded in the context of our argument as a reminder that the specter of political ideology haunts all instances of cognition, especially to the extent that these instances are ever recognized as such, as a matter which remains ever *yet* to be negotiated by the subject. It is when the subject reflexively and automatically inhabits a worldview pre-determined (rather than aesthetically pre-scribed) by a schematism entirely based more upon passive recognition than upon spontaneous cognition that its own status as a subject risks reducing itself to being a mere exponent of political ideology. The inherent dependency of all strictly comprehensible thought upon recognition, however, demands that this threat always be confronted by the subject, whose simple capacity to recognize itself as a provisionally unified subject always remains entirely bound up with its negotiation of this irrepressible need for repetition.

It can be axiomatically stated: there can be no cognition on the part of the subject without at least a recognition of cognition as cognition. What the figurative synthesis of the imagination allows then is a critique internal to the subject of the extent of its own reliance in positing its self-recognition upon either automatically repeated and thus ethically heteronomous recognitions of habitual experience or upon spontaneous and truly autonomous cognitions of new experience. Only the latter procedural approach to cognition legitimately ‘reflects’ how all of the subject’s donations of form to cognition remain coextensive expressions of its capacity to engage in the ever active if always occurring apprehensions of time-synthesis. Identifiable with nothing less than the subject’s most basic consideration of its own raw capacity to experience the passage of time itself, this critical agency forms the nature of the “morality” apprehended in the ever spontaneous experience of beauty as a symbol of the good. What is known as ‘conscience’ can in this way be understood as a spontaneous and necessary acknowledgment on the part of the subject of how its capacity to understand experience as temporally mediated entirely depends on its freedom to comparatively discern between how experience is defined both according to the free appreciation of spontaneous cognitions on the individual end of the ideological spectrum and by the complete subsumption of experiences under merely intellectual (or more ‘rationalized’ than reasoned)

repetitions on the political end of the ideological spectrum. The difference drawn here is a thus difference between figuratively minimal and intellectually baroque forms of ideology – i.e. between individually personal, active (in the sense of a “passivity beyond passivity”) and poetically prescriptive forms of ideology versus politically impersonal, strictly passive and schematically compulsive forms of ideology.

By coercively replacing the subject’s role in spontaneously producing its own narrative temporality with the role subjectivity may assume in the rote reproduction of a predictable narrative historicity, political ideology inverts and neutralizes the order of the dynamic relation between the subjective capacity for judgment and any potentially objective judgment of instances of beauty as presenting symbols of moral (inter-subjective) good. Proceeding from an unabashed reproduction of discursive indication of certain objects as exemplarily ‘beautiful’ (e.g. flags, or, as was hideously evident in the case of the Third Reich, ethnocentrically determined paradigms of human physical ‘beauty’), political ideology attempts to infinitely negate the indefinite spontaneity of the subjective judgment upon which the evaluation of beauty as a symbol prescriptive of moral good must always be based.⁵⁹ To the extent that ideology in itself simply reflects the necessary connection of *eidos* with *logos* that must take place in the schematic production of any coherent discursive judgment, ideology is an unavoidable result of the minimal degree of narrative form which accumulates around the systemic coherence the subject must come to attribute to the temporal form minimally exhibited throughout its own cognitively rendered discursive judgments.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Again see Broch, QRK 35: « Ce n’est pas par hasard que Hitler (comme son prédécesseur Guillaume II) a été un partisan absolu du kitsch. Il vivait le kitsch sanglant et il aimait le kitsch des pièces montées. Il les trouvaient ‘beaux’ tous les deux. Néron, lui aussi, était pareillement un amateur de beauté empressée et ses dons artistiques étaient peut-être même supérieurs à ceux de Hitler. Le feu d’artifice de Rome en flammes et des chrétiens transformés en torches vivantes placées dans les jardins impériaux, avait assurément certaines tonalités artistiques, si l’on pouvait, par le pouvoir de l’esthétisme, être sourd aux cris de douleur des victimes ou même leur donner la valeur d’un musique d’accompagnement esthétique. »

⁶⁰ On Destutt de Tracy’s foundational attempts to establish ‘ideology’ as an expressly non-psychological (but perhaps *avant la lettre* plausibly *psycho-analytic*) mode of scientifically informed philosophical inquiry, see Brian William Head, *Ideology and Social Science: Destutt de Tracy and French Liberalism* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 32-40: “Tracy argued that psychology literally meant ‘science of the soul’; it would not only be presumptuous to claim a knowledge of such an entity, but it would give the false impression that the savants [...] were investigating first causes. [...] Tracy recommended his own neologism: ‘idéologie, ou la science des idées’. Idéologie, he said, had a very clear etymological meaning, based on the Greek *eidos* and *logos*, and it made no

Political ideology, however, violently aims to replace the subject's spontaneous productions of narrative form through discursive judgments which reflect an indefinitely pursued regress in the series of temporal appearances with a habitually predictable and automatically reproducible form of predetermined (rather than merely prescribed or recommended) historical necessity. The political imperative of this latter form - one which takes the hypothetical constituency of a Kantian *sensus communis* as a calculable figure to be quantitatively determined rather than qualitatively discovered - seeks to turn the subject's indefinite and spontaneously informed pursuit of a regress in the series of conditions for its discursive judgments as teleological mediations of temporality into a rhetorically totalized infinite regress which does no more than facilitate the social treatment of futurity itself as bearing a historically predetermined content. This infinite regress is seductively posed as paradoxically capable of guaranteeing a particular basis and platform for an impossibly achieved phenomenal knowledge on the part of the subject of its own absolute unity as an agent of transcendental apperception, but is, in short, only a dialectical move expressed *par excellence* in the Hegelian positioning of subjectivity as the eschatological remainder of an "absolute spirit" of "absolute knowing" bent on not keeping its word through considerations of temporality in public uses of reason, but instead only concretely interested in proclaiming the end of history itself.⁶¹

presuppositions about causes. Hence it was a suitable word to express 'the science of ideas which treats ideas or perceptions, and the faculty of thinking or perceiving'. [...] Tracy's reasoning seems to be as follows. All knowledge, regardless of subject matter, consists of ideas, and their accuracy depends upon our capacity for making a series of precise judgments. Knowledge of the processes by which errors arise and by which correct judgments may be formed, is the only basis available for ensuring the reliability of knowledge. The primacy of *idéologie* over the other sciences arises from the fact that in explaining the general operations of our intellectual faculties, it points out the methods for attaining certainty and avoiding error. Or, as Tracy succinctly wrote, 'it is necessary to know our intellectual faculties in order to be sure that we are using them well.' [...] The logical priority of *idéologie* over the positive sciences of man and nature depended on a view of language as a conventionalized set of signs which express our ideas [...] Tracy focused his attention on behavioral effects or operations of the mind, and especially upon the connections between thought and language, ideas and words, the signifier and the sign. [...] *Idéologie* was seen to provide a grammar and a syntax of nature, and a set of procedural rules for finding the basic elements (signs, concepts) of any language." In such a light, one can perhaps see how comparisons are ripe to be drawn between Derrida's presentation of "grammatology" as a science of writing and Tracy's presentation of ideology as a science of discursive judgment.

⁶¹ The following passage from Hegel's *Science of Logic* (trans. William Wallace (London: Oxford UP, 1972), §171, p. 302-304) throws into high relief the irreconcilable differences between Kant's conception of subjectivity as a temporally distributed multiplicity deontologically compelled to research the empirical ramifications of the transcendental unity of apperception and Hegel's conception of subjectivity as always already capable of assuming its own absolute unity as a given magnitude: "At first, subject, predicate and the specific content or the identity are, even in their relation, still put in the judgment as different and divergent. By implication, however, that is, in their

Political ideology, in short, inherently seeks to neutralize and aesthetically ‘denature’ the free spontaneity of the subject with respect to its capacities of judgment, and does so by seductively and/or coercively offering the subject an essentially rhetorical and dialectical basis for asserting its subjective identity as a empirically genuine absolute unity. This phenomenon can specifically be understood as falling under the rubric of ‘party allegiance,’ and nowhere perhaps is the relation between the simple structure of such a function and the abuse of symbols as ‘infinitely’ repeatable examples of an absolutely determined logical content made more evident than in absolute assertoric promises of ‘eternal life’ made to those who stand convinced by any species of rhetoric into ‘taking signs for things.’ (Such reifications of the necessary transcendental concept of immortality are, in short, assertively obscene where they ought

notion, they are identical. For the subject is a concrete totality, - which means not any indefinite multiplicity, but individuality alone, the particular and the universal in an identity: and the predicate too is the very same unity.” From here, as we reproduce below, Hegel proceeds to simply assert that subjective involvement in the determination of the schematism of the categories of understanding cannot be a matter of spontaneous action taken up by the subject in the expression of discursive judgments, but rather only remains a matter that should altogether be discarded as bearing any kind of subjective concern. Hegel here makes the prescriptive nature of his understanding of subjectivity perfectly clear by posing the encounter with art as an experience to be passively compared to notionally pre-established moral predicates, and not as an experience which dynamically demands ethical prescriptions to be actively considered: “The various kinds of judgment are no empirical aggregate. They are a kind of systematic whole based on a principle; and it was one of Kant’s great merits to have first emphasized the necessity of showing this. His proposed division, according to the headings in his table of categories, into judgments of quality, quantity, relation and modality, can not be called satisfactory, partly from the merely formal application of this categorical rubric, partly on account of their content. Still it rests upon a true perception of the fact that the different species of judgment derive their features from the universal forms of the logical idea itself. [...] To pronounce a work of art to be beautiful, or an action to be good, requires on the contrary a comparison of the objects with what they ought to be, i.e. with their notion.” Alain Badiou has notably countered such an unconscionably simplistic funneling of subjectivity into a purely notional principle of absolute unity by underscoring how, in Kant’s analysis, the appreciation of multiplicity must remain a constitutively procedural necessity of subjective self-regard as a temporally mediating agent: “[I]n the register of knowledge, Kant’s powerful ontological intuitions remain tethered to a starting point restricted to the form of judgment (which, it must be said, is the lowest degree of thinking), while in the order of localization, they remain tied to a conception of the subject which makes the latter a protocol of constitution, whereas it can, at best, only be a result. In spite of this, we can hold on to the notion that the question of the subject is that of identity, and hence of the one, with the proviso that the subject be understood, not as the empty centre of a transcendental realm but rather as the operational [e.g., practically hypothetical – JCG] unity of a multiplicity of effectuations of identity. Or as the *multiple ways of being self-identical*.” Alain Badiou, “Kant’s Subtractive Ontology,” in *Theoretical Writings*, trans. Ray Brassier & Alberto Toscano (London: Continuum, 2004, referenced hereafter as TW), 142. The politically coercive nature of Hegelian ideology and the violent relation of this ideology to the establishment of a logocentric and ethnocentric basis for positing subjectivity as impossibly absolute is also made irrefutably clear throughout the *Philosophy of Mind* (*Philosophie des Geistes*), trans. William Wallace (London: Oxford, 1971). On p. 19 (§ 384 of the *Encyclopedia*), Hegel with evident arrogance and oversimplification positions subjectivity qua self-conscious ‘spirit’ as follows (italics added): “The highest definition of the Absolute is that it is not merely mind [spirit] in general but that it is mind which is *absolutely manifest to itself, self-conscious, infinitely creative mind*, which we have just characterized as the third form of its manifestation.” Further on, Hegel proceeds to directly apply this claim to the sadly absurd assertion that “It is the in the Caucasian race that mind [spirit] first attains to absolute unity with itself” (44, §393).

to be rigorously contemplative.) Falsely extended as actual necessities of logically demonstrable truth, such promises only ever serve to put religion and theology at incomprehensible cross-purposes. It is with such a distinction in mind that Kant presented the concept of immortality not as an assertoric certainty capable of being logically proven through pure reason, but rather as a problematically apodictic necessity taken up as a necessary postulate for the subject's volitionally guided ethical extension of practical reason as bearing an inherently critical agency.⁶²

The unthinkableably concrete 'absolutes' proffered by political ideologies as guarantors of stability for all subjective approaches to the temporal can only in the last analysis be matters of dialectical and rhetorical hyperbole predicated upon abuses of symbols as being not simply prescriptive representational modalities, but as instead presentations of 'objects' bearing an unthinkableably infinite logical, moral and aesthetic degrees of representational necessity. As hypotypes subject to rational consideration by the subject through its capacity for figurative synthesis, symbols do however stand, as Kant has shown, to be considered as offering true opportunities for ethical insight. Political ideology must thus not be demonized to any *absolute* extent, as to do so only serves to reproduce its own errors on a more concealed plateau. Any presentation of political ideology as symbolically equivalent to an absolute exemplification of the reality of evil cannot be justified. Opportunities for moral insight are indeed offered even by the symbols falsely mobilized as absolutely comprehensible objects of concern by discourses of political ideology, but these opportunities ultimately tend more to dissolve the particular and specific structures of the political ideologies which host and foment these symbols than they tend toward any legitimization of those structures. Once one understands how the coercive presentation of symbols as concrete examples of infinite logical necessity is predicated upon an ideological limitation of the individual subjective freedom of the imagination and understanding with respect to their productive roles as faculties in the spontaneous assessment of discursive judgments, one can begin to regard such symbols as merely being *symbols*.

Given the persistently aporetic and indefinitely challenging nature of the subject's attempt to comprehend how the meaning of its potential singularity as a subject remains necessarily implied

⁶² See "On the postulates of pure practical reason," CPrR, 246-7.

throughout all of its cognitions, the offers of a ready-made basis for absolute comprehension of one's identity proffered by discourses of political ideology understandably tend to present a prospect of relief to the subject (often in the form of an insipid notion of 'home' *qua* 'homeland'). Despite all of the falsely relieving 'plausible deniability' provided to the subject on the basis of ideological affiliations, the active challenge of determining one's own inherently narrative approach to temporality nevertheless persists for the subject as an animating aspect of the very structure of cognitive awareness. This is why matters of political affiliation remain so volatile, as they are indeed more 'subject' to change than any subject who, having affiliated with a particular political ideology, also thereby categorically denies a certain degree of free access to the inherent subjective capability to engage in spontaneous yet informed forms of judgment.

CHAPTER 3

ON THE SCHEMATISM AS FIRST, BLANK AND NECESSARY IDEOLOGY

*[W]hen we ask the question: 'Who has been the subject of this experience?' this question is perhaps already an answer, if, for the one who introduced it, it was affirmed through him in this interrogative form, substituting for the closed and unique 'I' the openness of a 'Who?' without answer. Not that this means that he simply had to ask himself: 'What is this me who I am?' but much more radically he had to seize hold of himself and not let go, no longer as an 'I' but as a 'Who?', the unknown and sliding being of an indefinite 'Who?'. **Maurice Blanchot** ⁶³*

Up until now: up until now, in sum, and just a second ago, we were speaking of life's brevity. [...] The profound height, the altitude of the moral law of which fraternal friendship would be exemplary – schematic or symbolic, to use Kant's technical language, according to whether the figure, the presentation or the hypotyposis of the brother would be related to the understanding or to reason. This narrative can be told as the history of humanity. [...] Hence the categorical imperative: not to betray humanity. [...] As we were suggesting a moment ago, it is indeed a matter of anthropology, and of Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View. [...] It is indeed a matter of a history of truth. A matter, more precisely, of a trial of verification, qua the history of a becoming-true of illusion. A history which is made qua the story one tells to oneself and to others: history is made while the story is being told, it is made in being related. [...] Does not my relation to the singularity of the other qua other, in effect, involve the law? [...] The singularity / universality divide has always divided the experience, the concept and the interpretation of friendship. It has determined other oppositions within friendship. Schematically: on the one hand, the secret-private-invisible-illegible-apolitical, ultimately without concept; on the other, the manifest-public-testimonial-political, homogenous to the concept. Between the two terms of the opposition, the schema or the familial symbol (we will henceforth understand the terms 'symbol' and 'schema' in the Kantian sense: between the sensible singularity of intuition and the generality of the concept or Idea). **Jacques Derrida** ⁶⁴

In its extension of Kant's pursuit after the nature of the operant relationship between the implicitly practical power attributable to the theoretical faculty of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) and the implicitly practical power attributable the theoretical faculty of judgment (*Urteilkraft*), Kant's third Critique leads

⁶³ Maurice Blanchot, *L'amitie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) 328, cited by Jacques Derrida in "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida", trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell, in Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor & Jean-Luc Nancy, eds., Who Comes After The Subject? (London: Routledge, 1991) 110.

⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), 271-77.

one back to the presentation in the first Critique of the schematism of the pure concepts of understanding. In the CPR and CPJ alike, Kant presents the schematism as inherently operant at the basis of the subject's relations to its own power or faculty of judgment.⁶⁵ Indeed, the full title of the section of the CPR devoted to the schematism hinted at this future development of it by Kant in naming the schematism as the first involvement of any transcendental doctrine of the power of judgment according to an analytic of principles.⁶⁶ Although in the CPJ *Urteilkraft* most frequently indicates an *actual capability* and *practical power* of the subject - and thus a power closely related if not architectonically assimilable *tout court* to the ethical engagements of practical reason, whence Kant's readiness to assess beauty as capable of symbolizing moral good - it is, with a conceptual flexibility we have encountered before, also quite clearly presented in the CPJ as a *theoretical faculty* and *potential capacity* of the subject.

As we shall shortly see, Kant's more ambidextrous than ambiguous treatment of the 'power' of judgment in the CPJ as comprising a theoretical faculty or capacity [*Vermögen*] as well as an actual power or capability [*Kraft*] is presented in language bearing undeniable phrasal similarity to the CPR presentation of the definition of *Einbildungskraft*. Furthermore, it is clear from Kant's consideration of the power of judgment as such an ambiguously oriented attribute of subjectivity that even its strictly 'aesthetic' or 'taste-oriented' involvements must remain involved in and influential over the cognitive process by which the subject must attempt to comprehend any and all matters of objective particularity –

⁶⁵ See CPJ 16: "With regard to the general concepts of nature, under which a concept of experience (without specific empirical determination) is first possible at all, reflection already has its directions in the concept of a nature in general, i.e. in the understanding, and the power of judgment requires no special principle of reflection, but rather schematizes this a priori and applies these schemata to every empirical synthesis, without which no judgment of experience [Guyer and Wood note that this phrase "replaces 'perception of an object' in the fair copy" - JCG] would be possible at all. See also CPJ 103-4: "If the given representation, which occasions the judgment of taste, were a concept, which united understanding and imagination in the judging of the object into a cognition of the object, then the consciousness of this relationship would be intellectual (as in the objective schematism of the power of judgment, which was dealt with in the critique). But in that case the judgment would not be made with reference to pleasure and displeasure, and would not be a judgment of taste. Now the judgment of taste, however, determines the object, independently of concepts, with regard to satisfaction and the predicate of beauty. Thus that subjective unity of the relation can make itself known only through sensation.

⁶⁶ Cf. CPR 271/A137/B176: "The Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment (or Analytic of Principles), First Chapter: On the schematism of the pure concepts of understanding." In reference to this title, Guyer and Wood note that "Kant's copy of the first edition adds this note [at "schematism"]: 'The synthesis of the understanding is called thus if it determines the inner sense in accordance with the unity of apperception.'"

and thus, any matters particularly pertaining to the comprehensibility of any form of ‘singularity’ or unity in general, but especially that which the subject seeks to assign coherently to its own ‘transcendental unity of apperception.’ To this effect, Kant states with exquisite simplicity in the introduction to the second edition of the CPJ that “The power of judgment in general is the faculty [*Vermögen*] for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal.”⁶⁷ Not only does Kant’s phrasing of this definition of *Urteilkraft* clearly echo the syntax of his CPR definition of *Einbildungskraft* (a similarity which comparisons of the original German only ratifies), but the circumstances of its presentation are also similar in that both are owed to the benefits of second-edition revisions.⁶⁸

According to this definition of judgment, it appears that as a theoretical faculty it must play a key role throughout the subject’s ongoing attempts to fathom the ‘particular’ nature of one’s transcendental unity as a perceiving subject by means of a perhaps asymptotically augmented if ever incomplete attempt to comprehend the transcendently non-experiential yet hypothetically necessary idea of an absolute and indeed ‘universal’ type of unity. Although in producing aesthetic judgments the subject does not directly therein ‘see itself’ or its faculty of judgment as inherently subjected to any heteronomous relation between the orders of intuition and understanding, the temporary (and indeed temporalizing) bedazzlement by sensibility inherently negotiated in the express concern of aesthetic judgment with the pleasurable and the displeasing does not obviate the persistent involvement of this irremediable heteronomy throughout all of the theoretical developments of insight - including those of aesthetic judgment - which cognitive activity expresses. The challenge arraigned in aesthetic judgment, if the latter is considered as intrinsically expressive of the subject’s ongoing investigation of the most accurate limits possibly attributable to of its own transcendental unity, thus precisely concerns the possibility of understanding and acting upon how this theoretical investigation is an enterprise as ethically charged and

⁶⁷ CPJ 66. All references to CPJ German are cited from the Universal-Bibliothek edition (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1963).

⁶⁸ It should briefly be mentioned that although the CPJ “Introduction” containing this definition of judgment cannot technically be considered as owed to a “second edition,” it is nevertheless a “second edition” to the extent that a first prior version of this “Introduction” was written and intentionally circulated by Kant but not published in the first edition of the CPJ due to Kant’s concerns that this first version was too long. See Paul Guyer’s “Editor’s Introduction” to the CPJ, xlii.

epistemologically informed as it is aesthetically mediated and, in sum, also subjectively unavoidable. At the core of this challenge is a conflictual condition of reason: an *a priori* concern of the subject with the empirical stakes of an extant and irremediable need to comprehend the parameters of the transcendental unity of apperception in general.

It is in the chapter of the CPR which addresses how pure concepts of the understanding schematically apply to subjective experience (a chapter the brevity of which does not reflect its astounding importance) that Kant treats this heteronomy between experiential intuition and theoretical understanding to its most thorough negotiation. This negotiation must be exacted in order for Kant to explain the logic according to which the subject can become aware of the temporal basis for its capacity to render any judgments at all, be they either freely spontaneous and productive in nature or merely repetitive and reproductive expressions of “second nature.” It is only because this heteronomy persists as a condition of the subject’s most basic approach to the world (as well as its place within that world) that the ‘blindness’ to it inspired by intuitive confrontations with the aesthetic dimensions of empirical phenomena can be regarded as useful and indeed imaginatively ‘eventful’ for the subject’s progressive self-apprehension as a particular (and particularly temporalizing) agent of reason. Béatrice Longuenesse indicates this by relating that in the course of the subject’s progressive establishment of a schematism for knowledge, “the rule of synthesis that will allow the subsumption of appearances under pure concepts of the understanding” in accordance with the subsumption of particulars under universals that Kant identified with judgment “is first generated by the ‘blind’ syntheses of imagination.”⁶⁹ This ‘blindness’ in

⁶⁹ See Longuenesse, KCJ 246. The passage cited above in piecemeal is worth reproducing here a bit more expansively (italics in original): “[T]he rule of synthesis that will allow the subsumption of appearances under pure concepts of the understanding is first generated by the ‘blind’ syntheses of imagination in view of reflecting appearances under (empirical) concepts according to the logical functions of judgment. If we content ourselves with Kant’s enumeration of the schemata corresponding to each of the categories, we learn nothing about how these schemata are produced, nor do we obtain any justification of their mediating role in subsuming appearances under the categories. By contrast, if we bring together the teachings of the [Transcendental] Deduction [of the Categories] and the Schematism, and examine the schemata in light of the relation, elaborated in the Deduction, between *synthesis intellectualis* and *synthesis speciosa* [figurative synthesis], we can give life to Kant’s conception of the activity of discursive thought and gain crucial insight into the role he assigns to transcendental imagination.” Shortly hereafter Longuenesse continues on to treat the production of schemata and their unification in a schematism as an expression of the role of transcendental imagination in the rendering of discursive judgments in general, a consideration addressed in greater detail in chapter 2 above. What Longuenesse clearly approaches here but however

other words provides a way for the subject to provisionally regard itself as a hypothetically valid unity despite the transcendently non-experiential character of the notion of absolute unity which grounds all apodictically necessary transcendental ideas.

In the free and productive elaboration of the transcendental schematism as the most primary and blank form of ‘ideology’ considerable *stricto sensu* as naming the most basic interactions between eidetic possibility and logical necessity, the subject first becomes capable of turning a ‘blind eye’ to the empirically aporetic nature of the transcendental unity that it must always provisionally if hypothetically attribute to its own subjectivity throughout all of its temporal mediations of cognition. The full structure of the transcendental schematism as it is presented in the CPR can roughly be disassembled into three essential parts, the first being the starkly singular and paradigmatically unified “transcendental schema” itself. In order for any appearance of sensibility to be comprehensible according to categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality (none of which exist independently to be experienced as an object of pure intuition but which can only be considered as *a priori* formal necessities of the understanding with respect to its handling of cognition in general) some subjective faculty must permit the application of these categories to intuitions of sensibility. This faculty is the faculty of judgment. The systemic application of logical categories to intuitions in judgments, an application which must implicitly negotiate the essential heteronomy between the orders of sensibility and understanding, collectively comes to constitute the “transcendental schema.” As a logically primary expression of how the faculty of judgment is involved in cognition itself, the transcendental schema is the “third thing” between sensibility and understanding, a thing which, according to an imperative of Kant’s, “must stand in homogeneity with the category [of

does not consider is the fact that to the degree that any application of schemata to experience as reflective of categories of understanding invokes figurative synthesis and to the even greater extent that this application must constitute a *regulative* expression of the freedom of the subject as a self-conscious agent of reason, the production of schemata and their unification in a schematism that can be identified with an ‘ideology’ of individual identity (or “i.d.-ology”) is itself a methodological outcome of the need to engage a *decomposing synthesis* [*dekomponierenden synthesis*] (i.e. also ‘deconstruction’ and/or ‘désœuvrement’) of all imaginative constructs assessed by the subject in the etiological regressive consideration of any series of appearances, especially those which constantly pertain to the subject’s self-assessment as a “transcendental unity of apperception” within the boundaries of a cosmological horizon. See CPR 518/A505/B533 for Kant’s discussion of the decomposing synthesis and CPR 524-34/A516-35/B544-563 for Kant’s determination of the negotiation of indefinite regresses in any series of appearances undertaken in ‘decomposing synthesis’ as the most elementally “empirical use of the regulative principle of reason.”

understanding] on the one hand and the appearance [of sensibility] on the other” (CPR 272/A138/B177). Such a capacity to stand as a mediating agent between these essentially heteronomous orders is no mean feat, and the difficulty of this negotiation, the difficulty of forming a transcendental schema is precisely that which makes the rendering of judgments challenging for the subject and a matter which chronically necessitates the use of the productive imagination rather than any mere automatic recapitulation of the reproductive tendencies of the imagination if the notion of subjective identity qua “transcendental unity of apperception” is ever to be approached by the subject as its most intimate and urgently constant domain of cognitive concern.

As Longuenesse again has indicated, the formation of a schematism by the subject must indeed be a “productive” expression of the spontaneity of the subject, and not a mere “result” of rational necessity. The formation of the transcendental schema by the subject through the faculty of judgment is, in short, *an art* - one which employs categories of understanding as the medium in which every object considerable as such, as an object, the subject can depict to itself through a time-synthesizing gesture that renders such objects available not only to infantile and preeminently forgettable forms of enjoyment (forms which do not correspond to the discursive rigors of judgment production), but ever toward more complex understandings and more profound degrees of appreciation. It is in this productive establishment of a transcendental schematism that the subject engages a regulative principle of reason, and begins to imaginatively treat appearances as always subject to an indefinite regress that can only be conducted by means of a *decomposing* synthesis, deconstruction or *désœuvrement*. With respect to this ever outstanding need for a spontaneous *production* of the transcendental schematism by the subject, Kant writes:

This schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a *hidden art in the depths of the human soul*, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes *only with difficulty*. We can only say this much: the image is a product of the *empirical* faculty of productive imagination, *the schema* of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) *is a product and as it were a monogram of pure a priori imagination*, through which and in accordance with which the images first become *possible*, but which must be connected with the concept, to which they are themselves *never fully congruent*, *always only by means of the schema that they designate* (CPR 273-4/A141-2/B181, italics added).

The transcendental schema is thus a “mediating representation” which is pure, i.e. altogether logically rather than empirically based, yet which is also “intellectual on the one hand and sensible on the other” (CPR 272/A138/B177). On this basis one can perhaps imagine (as it were) that the transcendental schema, although necessarily created by the subject in its approach to cognition, is thus not *easily* created. This difficulty serves to indicate why the transcendental schematism, as a first and blank ‘ideological’ synthesis of eidetic form and logical content which aims only toward decomposing the regress of appearances that constitutes temporal seriality and thus the imaginable persistence of objects of cognitive concern, is so obscure an art. The difficulty of considering one’s productive responsibility for fashioning the transcendental schema (a responsibility which, as examined in chapter 2 above, is tantamount to remaining vigilant for the creative role always irreducibly played by the subject with respect to its own temporally mediating processes of self-conscious acknowledgment) explains the subjective tendency to hasten to alleviate the effort of this necessarily spontaneous elaboration by taking recourse to the many opportunities for dialectical (or simply rhetorical) illusion coercively available for regarding the schema as the merely reflexive “result” of a given array of logical conditions rather than as a regulative procedure that can only be spontaneously produced in the subjective rendering and extension of judgments.

Radically opposed to the minimal form of basic and blank ideology (or as Destutt de Tracy assesses it, “idéologie proprement dite”) formed in the subject’s intellectually alert and sensibly engaged elaboration of the transcendental schema as a concrete expression of the temporally generative aspect of researching the potential comprehensibility of one’s irreducible subjective unity, political ideology, which can be understood especially in this context as a consideration of *sensus communis* which actively blinds itself to the always mathematically sublime if indefinitely infinitesimal role of the individual subject within it, serves to provide a dialectical excuse for ‘opting out’ of the creative rigors of independently fashioning a transcendental schema on one’s own. By proposing historically pre-established judgments as not simply as symbolic equivalents but as semantic replacements for any judgments the subject might be capable of making on its own through the auspices of an ever further self-enlightening free reason, political ideology disingenuously seeks to relieve the subject’s very literally *chronic* need to consider its

own transcendental and indeed ethical responsibility to formulate a cognitive schema solely on the basis of its own power of judgment.

Political ideology subsists, in other words, on the basis of coercive because fallacious appeals to the authority of an empirically exemplary leader's authoritative judgments concerning purely theoretical issues. This authority is not only presented as symbolic of a demonstrated and further promised level of temporal persistence offered to the subject in alleviating its need to consider the aporia of its own deathly inevitability but is furthermore capable of convincing subjects on this basis to abandon independent practical expressions of deontological involvement in the empirical use of the regulative principle of pure reason. Also falling directly under the rubric of political ideology so defined but prior to its manifestation as an expressly social phenomenon, the subject, through habitually reproductive appeals to the historical demonstrable and thus entirely empirical dimensions associable with its subjective identity, thus also always risks becoming its own *Führer* in such a way by turning the necessary formation of a transcendental schema into a more passively reproductive and historically conformist "second nature" industry (in short, a form of "time-killing") than actively productive, historically informed and naturally spontaneous procedure - a dutiful yet free procedure in which, as Kant explains, one does nothing less than *generate time itself*: "[N]umber [such as, for instance the *singularity* invoked in the notion of the 'transcendental *unity* of apperception' without which the mere idea of subjective self-identity would remain altogether unimaginable] is nothing other than the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogenous intuition in general, because *I generate time itself in the apprehension of the intuition.*"⁷⁰

Nimble and consistently renovated resistance to this subtly coercive if nevertheless definitively private threat of passively assuming a megalomaniacal approach to the empirical dimensions attributable to one's 'power' of judgment and 'power' of imagination precisely forms the 'hidden art' of the schematism, an art which expresses how a fundamentally ethical responsibility of the subject to itself in fathoming its own persistence over time toward an nevertheless aporetic end (as well as from out of the inscrutable origin of the "series of appearances" upon which memory itself is based) remains an internally

⁷⁰ See CPR 274/A143/B182. Italics added.

defining “characteristic” of the cognitive process itself. As Ricoeur has noted, this “characteristic” is the ethical relationship which one, being always already ‘other’ to oneself to the extent that one’s identity in any and every instance can only be considered a hypothetical unity because its predicating retentions of memory and projections of hope render it empirically multiplicitous at minimum, remains compelled by the basic terms of a sought self-consistency to maintain with respect to “oneself *as* another.” Staying in light of Ricoeur’s approach to these questions, it can be added that in order to plausibly ‘keep’ one’s own word to others, one must always begin by attempting to keep (or temporally ‘maintain’) one’s own word to oneself - *as* another.

The *problematically* synthetic nature of the transcendental schema in its simultaneous (yet thereby time-generative) negotiation of the eidetic character of sensibility as well as the logical character of the understanding is what renders it the principle according to which the subject can not only actively propose judgments, but must also remain regulated by the knowledge that doing so requires a decomposition of the series of appearances which underlie and spill forth from all of the objects to which such judgments refer on implicit and explicit levels alike. It is the active formation of a transcendental schema which in sum allows the subject to differentiate between cognitions and recognitions in the field of intuition as well as between produced and reproduced forms of strictly imaginary content, and it is actually only on the basis of the determination of temporality rendered in the compilation of a complete procedural schematism (or ‘first ideology’) that this transcendental schema and its corresponding schemata can serve as models for a possibly rational negotiation of the disjunctive heteronomy between sensibility, which is constantly busy confronting new configurations and modalities of sensibility, and the understanding, which is incessantly (if deniably) tasked with comparatively compiling the limitations of ascertainable knowledge. In the formation of the transcendental schema, this heteronomous disjunction between sensibility and understanding is treated as analogous to the disjunctions between an indefinite plurality of different temporal magnitudes (e.g. ‘past’ and ‘future’ at minimum) assessed and assayed by the subject as magnitudes only homogenous to the extent that they all bear reference to temporal form. Just as the transcendental schematism thus ‘artfully’ comes to be posed by the subject as homogeneously

capable of negotiating the incommensurable cognitive heterogeneity between generally comprehensible categories and specifically imaginable appearances,

transcendental time-determination is homogenous with the **category** (which constitutes its unity) insofar as it is **universal** and rests on a rule a priori. But it is on the other hand homogenous with the **appearance** insofar as **time** is contained in every empirical manifestation of the manifold. Hence an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental time-determination which, *as the schema* of the concept of the understanding, *mediates the subsumption of the latter under the former* (CPR 272/A138-9/B177-8, italics added).

To parse Kant's language above, transcendental time-determination by the subject - in other words, the subject's engaged mode of apprehending how time remains an incessantly predicating form of all cognitions, be they actively imaginative and transcendentially theoretical or passively experiential and empirically intuitive - to the extent that it mediates and renders possible the subsumption of empirical appearances under categories of understanding, itself thereby becomes comprehensible to the subject as the schema according to which not only the imaginative appreciation of ideas is entertained in cognition, but also according to which the understanding must approach the conceptual content of cognition. Nothing less than the very form of temporality inhabited by the subject is thus actively (in the case of ideology "proprement dite") or passively (in the case of political ideology) synthesized by the subject in the regressive application of a transcendental schema to cognitive processes. As that which guides any comprehensive undertaking of a regulative regress with regard to any series of appearances, the transcendental schematism artfully orchestrates the subsumption of imaginatively synthesized eidetic forms or figures (products of figurative synthesis, *synthesis speciosa*) under also imaginatively synthesized logical forms (products of *synthesis intellectualis*) as complex yet coherent combinations of the many categories of the understanding. The direct relevance of the schematism to the general subsumption of particulars under universals addressed by the faculty of judgment is thus manifest.

Indeed, the creation of a basic transcendental schema, further assessment of various transcendental schemata and ultimately the prescriptive formulation of a transcendental schematism by the subject is, as Kant has indicated in the title of the section, an expression of how a concern for the

faculty of judgment is nothing less than a doctrinal necessity of the subject's approach to any matter in which principles in general are analytically involved. The transcendental singularity of the schema considered as a whole is furthermore entirely analogous to and associable with the transcendental unity of the subject's apperception, as it is only through the subject's manifestation of time-synthesis through the creation of such a schema that the transcendental unity of apperception becomes relevant to experiences, and chiefly to the subject's assessment of itself as both an internally experiencing and externally evident being. Whether one is living or dying, one is certainly spending one's time more or less 'decomposing,' and yet doing so in a way which in either case is capable of synthesizing understanding out of cognition.⁷¹

Beyond this basic determination of the originating transcendental schema, which is "in itself *always only a product of the imagination*" (CPR 273/A140/B179, italics added) and is so because of the mutual involvement of the faculty of imagination in sensibility and understanding alike, the second major component of the "schematism" considered as an ideological totality is actually a set of components: the multiplicitous distribution of the primary, transcendently unified schema across a plurality of category-dependent and specific "schemata." Schemata are distinguished by Kant from images of imagination in that they are ideas carried by the imagination yet which cannot be considered as bearing a content subject to formal depiction. Quite like transcendental ideas and/or pure concepts of reason, schemata are non-image based yet representational notions beheld in the imaginary and simultaneously considerable both as ideas and also as concepts. Kant uses the capacity to imagine large enumerative quantities as exemplary of the determination of individual schemata in general, in this case as being specifically exemplary of what occurs in the determination of the particular schema relevant to categories of quantity:

If I place five points in row, ●●●●●, this is an image of the number five. On the contrary, if I only think a number in general, which could be five or a hundred, this thinking is more the representation of a method for representing a multitude (e.g., a thousand) in accordance with a certain concept than the image itself, which in this case I could survey and compare only with difficulty (CPR 273/A140/B179).

⁷¹ This sense of "decomposing synthesis" of course has nothing directly to do with Kant's positioning of the notion in his solution to the cosmological antinomy, but is, with apologies, nevertheless relevant to and resonant with the treatment of death as an incomprehensible parameter of representational possibility provided in chapter 2 above.

As the procedural order of schemata ‘flow forth’ on the basis of the time-determination that is indistinguishable from a determination of the primary transcendental schema of the understanding in general and thereby first establishes the transcendental unity of the subject as a hypothetically comprehensible magnitude, it can thus be understood that all subsequent schemata (Kant lists them in correspondence with the table of categories as pertaining to magnitude (quantity), quality, relation and modality) are exemplarily formulated as following from the example of how the subject’s basic formation of the transcendental schema of understanding expresses the need to produce cognitive judgments as all being implicitly involved with the aesthetic encounter with the mathematical sublime that occurs in every attempt of the subject to comprehend its ‘beautiful’ uniqueness as an individual agent in the sublime context of reason’s capability to contemplate ‘the starry heavens above me’ as well as its dynamically ‘sublime’ infinitesimal generality in the beautiful context of how *sensus communis* must reflect ‘the the moral law within me.’⁷²

Kant’s differentiation of two notions of ‘unity’ in the CPJ treatment of the mathematical sublime as an absolute greatness beyond compare reflects this difference of cognitive approaches toward the subjective necessity of schematically contemplating the dimensions of singularity throughout cognition. The first notion of unity Kant presents corresponds to a concept of ‘magnitude’ [*magnitudo*, *Groß-sein*] which transcendently culminates in universal singularity, and the second corresponds to a concept of ‘quantity’ [*quantitas*, *eine Groß-sein*] empirically dispersed amongst indefinite degrees of enumerable multiplicity or plurality.⁷³ In an ascending order of scale gradually ‘approaching’ the incomparable, the

⁷² See Kant’s “Conclusion” to the CPrR, 269, with particular attention to Kant’s unambiguously thematic treatment of how the negotiation of temporal progression forms an endemic aspect of the most basic appreciations of self-consciousness (boldface emphases added, italics in original): “Two things fill the mind with **ever new** and increasing admiration, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*. I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; **I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.**”

⁷³ See CPJ 131-32 (all emphases in original): “We call **sublime** that which is **absolutely great**. However, to be great [*Groß-sein*] and to be a magnitude [*eine Groß-sein*] are quite different concepts (*magnitudo* and *quantitas*). Likewise, **simply** (*simpliciter*) **to say** that something is great is also something entirely different from saying that it is **absolutely great** (*absolute, non comparative magnum*). The latter is that **which is great beyond all comparison.**”

notion of unity qua ‘magnitude’ can be thus addressed in three ways: 1.) with respect to the transcendental unity that the subject must hypothetically attribute to its own capacity for apperception, 2.) with respect to the transcendental unity of the series of appearances available in any cosmological approach to the notion of a ‘universe’, and 3.) with respect to the transcendental unity theologically attributable to the notion of a *summum bonum*. All of these forms of transcendental unity share the quality of being empirically indemonstrable yet theoretically necessary for the coherence of reason, as well as the quality of requiring consideration as relatively autochthonic forms of unity to the extent that they must comprise magnitudes ‘equal only to themselves.’ Sublime to the extent that they elude any substitutive degree of comparison and thereby only minimally describing an asymptotic approach of cognition to a threshold beyond which its content must risk becoming incommunicable, each of these transcendental types of unity thus can be regarded as “keeping their word” in a very strict sense of the Ricoeurian notion which, taken as surprising recapitulation of Wittgenstein’s infamous concluding axiom of the *Tractatus* - “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” - is thus open to being understood as ambiguously bearing both ‘loyal’ and *taciturn* dimensions, each of which problematically implies the necessity of the ‘other’ as a limit.⁷⁴

The need to render judgments of the mathematical sublime, however, poses these three types of unity *qua* magnitude as failing to meet the criteria for ‘absolute’ or ineffable ‘greatness’ at the very least to the extent that they are indeed available to being discursively named and categorized in Kant’s primarily enumerative distribution of the concept of ‘unity.’ Because Kant can discursively address the difference between magnitudinous and quantitative types of unity and subsequently discuss absolute unity as broaching the limits of the representational capacities associated with these types, transcendental unities can indeed be referenced in enumerative schemata, yet not compared, as Kant takes pains to keep clear. Although it would seem that Kant is attempting to speak to us about the unspeakable or write about the incommunicable, this does not as it may seem indicate any kind of contradiction in the Kantian text, but rather underscores the admirable extent of Kant’s coherence in presenting the subject’s necessary

⁷⁴ On Ricoeur’s notion of “keeping one’s word,” see note 54 in chapter 2 above. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden (London: Routledge, 1955), 189.

considerations of the mathematical sublime as necessarily perpetrating a kind of discursive violence upon the “inner sense” of subjectively generated temporality. Kant’s analysis of this violence to the “inner sense” as dynamically wrought by the subjective need to contemplate mathematical sublimity is taken as far as it can without Kant’s succumbing to any treatment of the involvement of this violence in the determination of “inner sense” as possibly being assessable as any mere after-effect or symptom of the subject’s ostensibly objective historical and/or empirical involvements. To do so would indeed set Kant at odds with himself, as such a reliance on the historical as potentially providing comparisons for the transcendental objectives of subjective cognition - a reliance which Hegel is exemplarily comfortable with - would precisely place cognition at odds with the free capacity for spontaneity which animates it.

Kant’s summary explanation of the sublime expressly names it as demonstrative of the incessant role played by imagination (insofar as imagination is “a faculty of the mind that surpasses every measure of the senses”) in cognition as an active and/or passive faculty that one can only passively regard as sufficient to reason at one’s own risk. The sublime precisely stimulates the imagination into activity, wakes it from its ‘dogmatic slumber’ and does so primarily by exhibiting how a transcendental schematism left static and unrevised by continual theoretical reconsideration is insufficient as a means toward the progressive (and indeed time-synthesizing) end of the subject’s engagement of a duty to exploring the meaning attributable to of one’s subjective identity as an agent of reason. The contemplative necessity offered by the sublime can be considered as revealing an opportunity for the subject to engage in a free, productive engagement of the imagination (one which exhibits “free play” as “*désœuvrement*”) in the active formation of a schematism capable of serving discursively as a principle of logical connection between the mathematical sublime and Kant’s corresponding notion of a *dynamical* sublime. In both its mathematical and dynamic aspects, the sublime in sum “is therefore not to be *sought* in the things of nature but only in our ideas,” ideas which comprise not nature itself, but as Heisenberg reiterated, nature exposed to our *discursive* and judgment-producing method of questioning - indeed, ‘nature’ exposed to the way in which the transcendental schematism as an actively determined expression of the subject’s capacity for reason comes, with a certain amount of irrepressible artifice, to ‘sketch’ it in

a free, active and indeed somewhat violent expansion of the limits of the subjective imagination's possible applicability to experiential and logical necessities alike.⁷⁵

Stemming from the ineluctable need to negotiate the mathematical sublime in a discursive manner, the dynamical sublime exhibits how judgment is the 'second nature' of thought by bringing the mathematical sublime to discursive representations which exhibit how the violation of the schematically established parameters of the imagination by absolute magnitudes illuminates the indefinite temporal progression of the conditions under which the subject can possibly attempt to address these magnitudes. The dynamical sublime is thus a consideration of nature "as a power" which inspires fear yet "has no dominion over us" (CPJ 143) precisely because its "schema" is "sketched" by the subject throughout the representational negotiations of the transcendental capacities of the imagination which result in the production of a coherent schematism *qua* minimal ideology.⁷⁶ Accruing precisely at the schematizing moment in the cognitive process in which categories of understanding are judiciously applied to ideas of the imagination, this representational necessity falls as a type of violence because it can only fail to perfectly represent the incomparable ideas in question. Because it is a failing type of violence, however, it is a type of violence which cannot be regarded as simply *destructive* but instead is actively solicitous of being apprehended as therapeutically *deconstructive* because the subject's active negotiation of such tricky judgments as those which concern anything associable with the mathematical sublime is in fact "purposive for the whole vocation of the mind" (CPJ 142). Like the violence of birth, the violence of the subject's renewal of its schematic modes for approaching experience can be purposive in with respect to cognition because, considered as a necessary aspect of the rendering of judgment which in sum is 'the

⁷⁵ See CPJ 134 (boldface emphasis in original): "[T]he sublime is therefore not to be sought in the things of nature but only in our ideas [...] [J]ust because there is in our imagination a striving to advance to the infinite, while in our reason there lies a claim to absolute totality, as to a real idea, the very inadequacy of our faculty for estimating the magnitude of the things of the sensible world awakens the feeling of a supersensible faculty in us; and the use that the power of judgment naturally makes in behalf of the latter (feeling), though not the object of the senses, is absolutely great, which in contrast to it any other use is small. Hence it is the disposition of the mind resulting from a certain representation occupying the reflective judgment, but not the object, which is to be called sublime. [...] **That is sublime which even to be able to think of demonstrates a faculty of the mind** [e.g., *the faculty of imagination* - JCG] **that surpasses every measure of the senses.**"

⁷⁶ See again CPR 195: "Physical causality, or the condition under which it takes place, belongs amongst concepts of nature, whose schema transcendental imagination [*transzendente Einbildungskraft*] sketches."

vocation of the mind', this violence remains entirely indistinguishable from how the subject's determination of the schema of magnitude must always implicitly begin by posing the subject's own disastrous if ever novel sense of temporality as that which indefinitely limits the subjective comprehension of one's own existence.

Because it expresses the indefinitely regulative procedure of applying a decomposing synthesis to the series of appearances which collectively constitute the representational basis of the subject's theoretical apprehension of its own transcendental unity, this necessary violence can also thus be considered not only an expression of subjective freedom but also - in the manner of the simultaneously "loyal" and "taciturn" meanings of "keeping one's word" - as a matter of the subject's reining in of its own freedom in order to fulfill its moral duties. Here we can see again how the "work" of producing a narrative of self must implicitly "unwork" itself and how the construction of any narrative of self or of identity must continually deconstruct the very principles upon which it, as an appreciation of the subject's own approach to temporality, may risk becoming repetitive, reified and morally shallow rather than spontaneous, productive and ethically capacious.

In its multiplicative relaying of the transcendental schema into a plurality of schemata that begins with and from the auto-deconstructing and temporally synthesizing formation of a primary schema of magnitude, the subject must always first regulate the spontaneity of its judgments by limiting the inherent "violence" to inner sense that this relaying must perpetrate, as this relaying itself is "a subjective movement of the imagination, by which it does violence to the inner sense, which must be all the more marked" – i.e., 'marked' in the sense of *écriture* – "the greater the quantum is which the imagination comprehends in one intuition" (CPJ 142). One pithy yet rhetorically accessible way of addressing how the subjective determination of a schemata of magnitude directly relays into the determination of schemata of quality, for instance, in the cognitive confrontation with the mathematically sublime dimensions of the subject's transcendental unity of apprehension is to note that the older one gets, and thus the "greater the quantum" attributable to one's lived experience becomes, the more vigilance one must exert with respect to ascertaining whether one's judgments are indeed issued spontaneously or instead merely serve to

consolidate established ideological maxims in accordance with repetitively over-determined reflexes of schematizing habits of the imagination.

Returning to the CPR, Kant differentiates the “schema of sensible concepts” as a “monogram of pure a priori imagination” from the pure “schematism of understanding” by way of the subject’s progress in determining the full slate of categorically correspondent schemata. On the basis of the transcendental schema of the understanding, further singular schemata are respectively associated with each of the divisions of the categories or pure concepts of the understanding: quantity, quality, relation and modality. The pure schema of magnitude, which relates the primarily engaged capacity of the imagination to produce representations pertinent to quantity, “is number, which is a representation that summarizes the successive addition of one (homogenous) unit to another. Thus number is nothing other than the unity of the synthesis of the manifold.”⁷⁷ Based upon the unity transcendently attributed to apperception by the imagination’s synthesis of the manifold, the schema of magnitude is thus determined in the subject’s most basic representational discernments of the hypothetical unity of its own subjectivity as an object of thought associable with this synthesis of the purely imaginary manifold of its representations. It is thus in the subjective establishment of the schema of magnitude that the transcendental unity of apperception becomes open to representation as potentially associable with an *enumerable* self.

As first of the schemata which collectively comprise in their complete application to judgment the procedural entirety of the transcendental schematism as first ideology, the schema of magnitude is placed at the head of the list of schemata because it is most intimately associated with not only the subject’s apperception of time as a formal condition of all representations, but with the attribution of the unity of self which it must ponder as an only aporetic ‘absolute’ throughout all of its cognitive endeavors. Falling as a recognition that the logical parameters shared by the transcendental unity of apperception and the imagination’s synthesis of the manifold are homogenous (and in fact either can be seen as the ‘successive addition of a homogenous unit’ to the other), the schema of magnitude subsumes number as a category of the understanding under the idea of the unity of self which the imagination, in synthesizing the manifold,

⁷⁷ CPR 274/A142/B182.

attributes to apperception in general. Such is what leads Kant to make the ingenious and as of yet historically under-considered claim that “number is nothing other than the unity of the synthesis of the manifold and of a homogenous intuition in general, **because** *I synthesize time itself in the apprehension of the intuition*” (ibid, italics and boldface added).

In accordance with his originally tabular presentation of the categories of understanding, Kant continues on to close the chapter on the schematism by listing and providing staggered explanations of the schemata of reality, substance, cause, community, possibility, actuality, and necessity. All of these schemata remain, however, bound up with the subject’s primary involvement in rendering schematic determinations of magnitude as it is these determinations which provide the subject’s cognitive processes with a discrete temporal form. Without a schematic appreciation of number, cognition would perhaps be possible (as has perhaps been shown in various empirically demonstrated cases of cognitive impairment) but would be completely *uneventful* because incapable of representing the subject’s generative relation to time itself. Due to this predication of all further schemata by the primary schema of number, all of the various schemata throughout all of their various applications of categories of understanding to experience can universally be grasped in the collectivity of the transcendental schematism as

nothing but *a priori* time-determinations in accordance with rules, and these concern, according to the order of the categories, the time-series [schemata of quantity or magnitude], the content of time [schemata of quality], the order of time [schemata of relation], and finally the sum total of time [schemata of modality] in regard to all possible objects (CPR 276/A145/B184-5).

It is on this basis of this common involvement of all of the schemata in the determination of the temporality of the subject that they collectively articulate the subject’s progressive application of the unity of the manifold synthesized by the faculty of imagination to the contents of sensibility and understanding. Assembling in this application of imagination to experience and understanding into the transcendental schematism, the schemata render a basis for a provisional apprehension of and hypothetical interest in the unity of apperception the subject must attribute to itself as its most intimately if incessantly considered magnitude. While the unity of the subject remains transcendently incomprehensible as an absolute

magnitude, the gradual subjective exploration of the hypothetical necessity of this unity through its dynamically sublime reflections in procedurally relative if schematically enumerable totalities is an engagement that must be maintained if the subject is to remain capable of considering any enumerable and thus discernable object of thought at all as being open to potential comprehension. The subject cannot give up its asymptotic search for a basis upon which it can begin to understand the solely imaginable parameters of its own absolute unity, as it is the pursuit after this aporetic ideal which precisely serves to establish the subject's agency as proponent of reason. The subject must ever remain dutifully open to engaging this pursuit on an indefinite basis for no less a reason than the fact that its temporally mediating procedures are ultimately indistinguishable from an inhabitation of the logical necessities proper to any self-conscious cognition.

It is thus only 'natural' that the third and final part of the chapter on the transcendental schematism treats the application of schemata to cognition as a temporally mediating action negotiated on the part of the subject with respect to its direct role in producing judgments as representational constructs (propositions, syllogisms, axioms, enthymemes and so forth). As Kant writes in closing the chapter: "Without schemata, therefore, the categories are only functions of the understanding for concepts, but do not represent any object. This significance comes to them from sensibility, which realizes the understanding at the same time as it restricts it" (CPR 277). In the active connection of ideas of the imagination to pure concepts of the understanding through the manifestation of judgments, logical and aesthetic alike (aesthetic judgments being unthinkable without logical judgments and vice-versa), the subject ultimately takes the transcendental schematism which it produces as the first, most blank and absolutely ineluctable as well as irreducible "ism" of its ideological allegiance. Because the schematism is established in the subjective determination of relatively reliable principles for the relating of eidetic forms (*eidos*) to logical categories (*logos*), it forms, in short, the very basis of ideology. The spontaneous application of this ideology to the entire representational manifold of the imaginary, the entire intuitive content of sensibility and the entire comprehensible content of the understanding occurs throughout the subject's ongoing assessment of all of its indefinitely varied cognitions as temporally mediated events.

CHAPTER 4

“THE IDEALITY OF THE LITERARY OBJECT”:

AT THE LIMITS OF THE REALITY ATTRIBUTABLE TO SUBJECTIVE COGNITION

I have to remind you, somewhat bluntly and simply, that my most constant interest, coming even before my philosophical interest, I would say, if this is possible, was directed toward literature, toward that writing that is called literary. What is literature? And first of all, what is it to write? How is it that writing can disturb the very question “what is?” and even “what does it mean?”? To say this in other words - and here is the saying otherwise that was of importance to me – when and how does an inscription become literature and what takes place when it does? To what and to whom is this due? What takes place between philosophy and literature, theology and literature, psycho-analysis and literature? It was here, in the abstractness of its title, that lay the most pressing question. This question was no doubt inspired in me by a desire that was related also to a certain uneasiness: why finally does the inscription so fascinate me, preoccupy me, precede me? Why am I so fascinated by the literary ruse of inscription and the whole ungraspable paradox of a trace that manages only to carry itself away, to erase itself in re-marking itself, itself and its own idiom, which in order to take actual form [arriver à son événement] must erase itself and produce itself at the price of this self-erasure.

Jacques Derrida⁷⁸

So far as sublimity or beauty exceeds the known average, one tends to call it fictitious.

Immanuel Kant⁷⁹

Returning to consider the subject’s capacity to judge the beautiful as *symbolically* – rather than simply *schematically* – representative of moral good, such judgments of beauty, as figurative as they may be in essence, nevertheless involve aspects of schematization to the extent that they must retain a component adducible by the subject as temporally mediate in nature. In these judgments, the spontaneous productivity of the imagination is not laborious or contrived, but precisely most playful and “unworking”.

⁷⁸ “Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis,” trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, in Jacques Derrida, Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2 (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004), 116. The first part of the title of this section cites a once-intended title for a thesis of Derrida’s own, one ultimately submitted for defense twenty-five years after its initial proposal toward fulfillment of the requirements for the *doctorat d’état* in June of 1980. See 115: “Around 1957, then, I had *registered*, as the saying goes, my first thesis topic. I had entitled it *The Ideality of the Literary Object*.”

⁷⁹ Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime, trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: U California P, 1960), 55.

One can readily say that the “indeterminacy that lies between reason and unreason” sketched by Blanchot as the undecidable arena of concern investigated in writing as *désœuvrement* is also the arena of concern in which Kant’s understanding of reason similarly attains its most ‘critical’ force and resonance, especially to the extent that reason also remains inextricable from an ever spontaneous practical investigation of the enlightened parameters of free moral agency.⁸⁰ Without unreason, reason would not have any field to which it could critically apply in theory or in practice, no situation with respect to which its spontaneity would find any challenge in response to which it can ‘rise to the occasion’ of being “aware of a certain [...] elevation above [...] sensible impressions”(CPJ §59, 227). Subjective agency, especially to the extent that can never entirely elude being identifiable as innately partisan of reason, would unthinkably have no possible context of application for the narrative ‘text’ of its practices.

According to Kant’s determination of the schematizing origin of judgments as an inevitably ideological accretion of subjective agency, irrespective of any possible division of genres of writing into “narratives,” “essays,” “poetry,” “automatic writing,” “annual reports,” “blog entries,” “philosophical texts” and so on, the involvement of logical and aesthetic judgment throughout the determination of any of these ‘genres’ as commonly being fields of *discourse* and/or expressions of *écriture* reveals an aspect of how the self reflects itself back to itself throughout all of its discursive practices of judgment, and reflects itself therein as the merely ideological (i.e. other than absolute) unity attributable to subjectivity as a location for the provision of a particularly demonstrable “schematism.” If ‘genres’ are to be unified as specific forms of a ‘generic’ discursive practice, all of these particular forms still remain, like any particular subject, only relative modalities of the indefinitely extensible practice of rendering discursive judgments which, overarchingly manifesting a cognitive appreciation of a “regress in the series of appearances,” is limited only by a “regulative principle of pure reason.” To the extent that the following passages from the CPR contain the basis for asserting an unorthodox yet arguable reason for identifying the “critical” thrust of Kant’s philosophy with his notion of “decomposing synthesis” much in the same

⁸⁰ See IC, 424: “Writing as unworking (in the active sense of the word) is the insane game, the indeterminacy that lies between reason and unreason.”

manner that Derrida's work can to greater or lesser but definite extents be identified with the notion of *deconstruction* and Blanchot's likewise with the notion of *désœuvrement*, it is worth citing the CPR here in separate phases at relatively extreme length. The key notion of a "regress" of "decomposing synthesis," a notion further fleshed out in Kant's subsequent prescription of a "regulative principle of pure reason," is first presented in the CPR as follows:

The multiplicity of parts in a given appearance is itself neither finite nor infinite, because appearance is nothing existing in itself, and *the parts are given for the very first time through the regress of the decomposing synthesis*, and in this regress, which is never given absolutely **wholly** either as finite or infinite (CPR 518/A505/B533, italics added).

What does Kant mean by "the regress of the decomposing synthesis"? The term "decomposing synthesis" [*dekomponierenden Synthesis*] almost appears to constitute a contradiction in terms and remains as provocative in its own regard as it is also scarcely (and perhaps singularly) yet very decisively used in the vocabulary of Kant's critical philosophy. Several uses of various forms of *decompositio* and further explorations of what "decomposition" means in any regress of a series of appearances indeed exist (cf. CPR 528/A523-4/B551-2), and yet do so to the end of clearly indicating that the appearance of this strange compound term cannot simply be an erroneous artifact of Kant's "silent decade." To my current knowledge, no other uses of the term "decomposing synthesis" exist in the body of Kant's work, let alone any uses which designate as unequivocally how a "decomposing synthesis" is procedurally involved in the key concern of the subject's spontaneous capacity to judge ("given for the very first time") the nature of its representational field of concern. The term is, however, asserted in the above-cited context with an undeniable relevance to and direct thematic associability with Kant's determination of the "regulative principle of pure reason," which by name alone would provocatively appear to be one of the most likely locations in the entire text of the Critique of Pure Reason where the procedural prescription of a novel philosophical method might be found. It is because the notion of "decomposing synthesis" is set forth by Kant in direct relation to the most clearly intentional methodological prescription attributable to the CPR that I seek to investigate how it may form the first version - "given for the very first time", as it were - of

what Derrida later came to posit with the notion of ‘deconstruction’ and what Blanchot similarly posits with the notion of *désœuvrement*.

Kant’s prescription of the “regulative principle of pure reason” arrives as a methodological guideline applicable not only to philosophy as a discursive practice, but more specifically to all spontaneously rendered forms of discursive judgment which aim to merit description as ‘rational.’ What Kant insinuates – he does not state it expressly, but leaves it plainly open to interpretation – is that the “indefinite regress” he has diagnosed as a methodological necessity for the subjective investigation of the objective effects of transcendental aporiae and dialectical antinomies is essentially cognate with the engagement of a “decomposing synthesis” on the part of the subject of the phenomenal appearances with respect to which the subject renders its judgments. Kant, at length (*italic emphases added*):

Since through the cosmological principle of totality no maximum in the series of conditions in a world of sense, as a thing in itself, is given, but rather this maximum can merely be given as a problem in the regress of the series, *the principle of pure reason we are thinking of retains its genuine validity only [...] as a problem for the understanding, thus for the subject in initiating and continuing, in accordance with the completeness of the idea, the regress of the series of conditions for a given conditioned. [...] Thus the principle of reason is only a rule, prescribing a regress in the series of conditions for given appearances, in which regress it is never allowed to stop with an absolutely unconditioned. Thus it is not a principle of the possibility of experience [...]; rather it is a principle of the greatest possible continuation and extension of experience, in accordance with which no empirical boundary would hold as an absolute boundary; thus it is a principle of reason which, as a rule, postulates what should be effected by us in the regress, but does not anticipate what is given in itself in the object prior to any regress. Hence I call it a regulative principle of reason, whereas the principle of the absolute totality of the series of conditions, as given itself in the object (in the appearances) would be a constitutive cosmological principle, the nullity of which I have tried to show through just this distinction, thereby preventing [...] the ascription of objective reality to an idea that merely serves as a rule. Now in order to determine the sense of this rule of pure reason appropriately, it must first be noted that it cannot say what the object is, but only how the empirical regress is to be instituted so as to attain to the complete concept of the object. [...] Thus with it one can by no means have the intention to say that the series of conditions for a given conditioned is in itself absolutely finite or infinite; for in that way a mere idea of the absolute totality, which is produced only in the idea itself, would think an object that cannot be given in any experience [...] Thus the idea of reason will only prescribe a rule to the regressive synthesis in the series [...] in accordance with which it proceeds from the conditioned [...] to the unconditioned,*

even though the latter will never be reached. For the absolutely unconditioned is not encountered in experience at all. To this end, *the first thing to do is to determine precisely the synthesis of a series insofar as it is never complete*. With this aim one usually employs two expressions, which are supposed to draw a distinction, even though one does not know how to specify the *ground* [*Grund*] of this distinction correctly. [On *Grund* as an exemplary instance of symbolic hypotyposis, cf. CPJ §59 - JCG] Mathematicians speak solely of a *progressus in infinitum*. But those who study concepts (philosophers) want, in place of this, to make the expression *progressus in indefinitum* the only valid one. [...] Now since the condition of this whole is its part, and the condition of this part is a part made of parts, etc., and *in this regress of decomposition an unconditioned (indivisible) member of this series of conditions is never encountered* [...] the question is no longer how big the series of conditions is in itself – whether it is finite or infinite – for it is nothing in itself; rather, the question is *how* we are to institute the empirical regress *and how far we are to continue it*. (CPR 520-22/A508-513/B536-541).

In the indefinite encounter with the prospect of establishing a valid basis for the issuance of cognitive judgments, aesthetic and logical alike, the subject cannot regard objects as ‘absolute wholes’ or absolutely comprehensible totalities, but instead only as hypothetical propositions which must be subjected to a decomposing synthesis of the schematically contextualized and temporally unfolded series of appearances which implicitly constitutes these objects as possible objects of thought. What the faculty of imagination critically grants to subjectivity in its cognitive elaboration of the decomposing synthesis is thus a prevention of any complete dependence of the understanding upon mere intuitions of sensibility. Rendering this prevention possible through its schematic coordination of the faculty of judgment, the faculty of imagination emancipates the understanding from any inherent subjection to a potential tyranny of sensibility – i.e., things *having* to be what they merely seem - at the same time that it guarantees the entire critical potency of reason. Without the faculty of imagination’s capacity to produce and reproduce representations independently of sensibility, the understanding would have to remain only the pure effect of an uninterrupted and mechanically causal relation between substance and cognition. Were the understanding unleavened by imagination, in other words, the difference between cognition and recognition itself would necessarily collapse like a house of poorly-sketched playing cards under the slightest breeze of any phenomenal awareness. The prospect of ‘making sense’ of any cognition would in

such a case also depend entirely upon an inconceivably uninterrupted and absolutely ‘disaster-proof’ constancy of the subject’s complete empirical context. In such a context (which for patently obvious reasons can readily be assimilated to any context subjected in its entirety to the ideological direction of a *Führer* or authoritarian “decider”), cognition itself would simply not be possible - only *recognition* without *cognition*, as it were.⁸¹ Such a hypothetical constancy would not only paradoxically forbid any and all understanding of causality, but moreover any spontaneous appreciation of temporality as a formally organizing condition of cognition. It is only on the basis of the subject’s constant susceptibility to a ‘disastrous’ and ‘violent’ yet necessary form of temporal interruption that the faculty of imagination remains, in being responsible for synthesizing *time itself* in the application of schemata to representations through the power of judgment, recognizable as also a practical condition of “inner sense.”

Channeled toward relevance to specific objects of cognition through categorical concepts of the understanding, the representational manifold of the imagination thus forms a condition of possibility for

⁸¹ Without delving too far into the topic but also without treating it too superficially, one can readily notice here how the very notion of a “war on terror,” at least to the extent which such a war must amount to a mobilization of hostilities toward nothing less than *the sublimity of the unpredictable itself*, stands in its very concept as inherently offensive to *the very concept of freedom itself* - a concept the ‘defense’ of which is regularly if paradoxically and perversely claimed by those responsible for the prosecution of this contemporary war as justifying it. The inherent conceptual offensiveness of a “war on terror” to the notion of freedom itself (as Kant could not have more clearly indicated in his considerations of the sublime, *freedom must be the freedom to be terrified*) is due to its actual, i.e. non-conceptual, targeting of *unpredictability* itself, which is a quality irreducibly involved in nothing less than the subject’s capacity to engage in spontaneous apperceptions of temporality. The subjective apperception of time itself precisely depends upon the subject’s exercising of its freedom to actively schematize cognitions of the radically unfamiliar elements endemic to every newly experienced moment from recognitions of what has already been schematically determined as familiar, instantiated, and understood. On these points, see Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, trans. Pascale Anne-Brault & Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004), 38-9: “In both senses of *différance*, then, democracy is differential; it is *différance*, *renvoi*, and spacing. That is why, let me repeat, the theme of spacing, the theme of the interval or gap, of the trace as gap [*écart*], of the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space, plays such an important role as early as *Of Grammatology* and ‘Différance’. Democracy is what it is only in the *différance* by which it defers itself and differs from itself. It is what it is only by spacing itself beyond being and even beyond ontological difference, it is (without being) equal and proper to itself only insofar as it is inadequate and improper, at the same time behind and ahead of the Sameness and Oneness of itself; it is thus interminable in its incompleteness beyond all determinate forms of incompleteness, beyond all the limitations in areas as different as the right to vote [...], the freedom of the press, the end of social inequalities throughout the world, the right to work, or any number of other rights. [...] I recall this in passing, with a quick turn of the hand, in an algebraic and telegraphic fashion, simply to recall that there never was in the 1980s or 1990s, as has sometimes been claimed, a political turn or an ethical turn in ‘deconstruction’, at least not as I experience it. The thinking of the political has always been a thinking of *différance* and the thinking of *différance* always a thinking of the political, of the contour and limits of the political, especially around the enigma or the autoimmune double bind of the democratic.” See also Maurice Blanchot, “Literature and the Right to Death”, in *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995; hereafter referenced as WF), 319: “Every citizen has a right to death, so to speak: death is not a sentence passed on him, it is his most essential right; he is not suppressed as a guilty person – he needs his death so that he can proclaim himself a citizen, and it is in the disappearance of death that freedom causes him to be born.”

the comprehension of all objects of intuition. The common dependency of produced cognitions and reproduced recognitions alike upon a concerted activity of the faculties of imagination and understanding makes the cognition and recognition of objects a far more intricate procedure than it can ever simply appear to be on the basis of any merely empirical presentation to intuition of any particular object. In conformance with Kant's definition of "imagination," then, representations produced by the imagination on the basis of mere sensibility should be regarded as mere *parerga* in comparison with representations wrought only by the "free play" of the imagination, representations for which "transcendental ideas" stand as limiting paradigms. Involved *a priori* in the determination of the field of the imaginary, transcendental ideas, in all of their incomprehensible yet imaginable necessity, thus haunt the entire basis of the subject's indefinitely constant elaboration of all its cognitions and cognitive processes.⁸²

Kant calls transcendental ideas "pure concepts of reason" (as opposed to "pure concepts of understanding," which comprise the 'categories') precisely because these representations of the imaginary, which neither stem from empirical experience nor are subject to any possible representation in any particular empirical experiences comprehensible as such, nevertheless underlie and ratify the entire representational field of cognition as it forms the basis for any and every rational activity of the mind. These transcendental ideas/concepts are divided by Kant into

three classes, of which the **first** contains the absolute (unconditioned) **unity** of the **thinking subject**, the **second** contains the absolute **unity** of the **series of conditions of appearance**, the **third** the absolute **unity** of the **condition of all objects of thought** in general (CPR 406 / A334 / B391, all emphases in original).

⁸² Cf. CPJ §14, 110: "Even what one calls ornaments (*parerga*), i.e., that which is not internal to the entire representation of the object as a constituent, but only belongs to it externally as an addendum and augments the satisfaction of taste, still does this only through its form: like the borders of paintings, draperies on statues, or colonnades around magnificent buildings." A fascinating note to this passage from translators Guyer and Matthews additionally draws attention to how the term "parerga" - quite like the CPR definition of "imagination" considered in Chapter 1- was itself also only introduced to the text of the CPJ with the publication of Kant's second revised edition. The inclusion of the term itself, one can thus argue, also performatively instantiates exactly that which Kant seeks to explain on a constative and theoretical level. The appearance of "parerga" in the text of the CPJ thus itself constitutes a parergon to that text, one only first presented upon the text's 're-presentation'. For a treatment of Kant's notion of 'parerga' which has historically sensitized theoretical attention to the seemingly passing yet key relevance of this notion to central issues in Kant's epistemology, see Jacques Derrida, "Parergon", in The Truth in Painting, trans. Geoffrey Bennington & Ian McLeod (Chicago & London: U Chicago P, 1987), 15-148 *passim*.

The binding feature between these three differentiated classes of “transcendental ideas” is their common dependence upon an empirically indemonstrable and pragmatically incomprehensible yet transcendently imaginable or apprehensible notion of absolute unity or singularity *qua* mathematically sublime notion of a magnitude beyond comparison. As the transcendental idea behind all transcendental ideas, then, absolute unity is especially not to be met with (even by any disastrous mistake) in any temporally mediated experience, as all temporally mediated experiences are precisely experienced as an unfolding of a series of representational appearances and conditions which can be decomposed and analyzed. Nothing encountered in temporal experience can be so absolute that it cannot be subjected to the reproductive capacities of the faculty of imagination (in other words: you cannot “un-see” something), which leaves the essentially incomparable ideal status transcendently attributable to the necessary concept/idea of ‘absolute singularity’ as necessary to cognition as it is also problematically *irrational*.

Indeed, how is ‘one’ to place the tantalizingly imaginable yet indefinitely incomprehensible idea of absolute singularity ‘itself’ into any kind of reasoned or reasonable relation? Is not the inherently disjunctive nature of ‘ratio’ thus also inherently heterogeneous to any concept of absolute unity - even in the case of the simplest tautological proposition of ‘ $A=A$ ’, which one would have to *read* in a certain sense as implicitly instantiating a narratologically schematized if temporally mediated form of disjunction between two discrete instantiations of ‘A’? Despite this fundamentally irrational challenge to reason, we must assume that we can perhaps come to a rational determination of relative and comparable if not absolute and transcendental singularities, and this is why the categories of quantity - comprising unity, plurality and totality - are placed at the head of Kant’s list of the categories or pure concepts of the understanding and receive first attention in the elaboration of the transcendental schema as a time-synthesizing endeavor of the subject. More than simply informing representational propositions capable of determining relative ‘singularities’ in the field of cognition, the categories are also concepts which pertain to the apperception of ‘sets’ in cognition, and thereby comprise the most basic *problems* encountered in the translation of cognitions into a schematized process of recognition through a representational manifold which irreducibly implies the transcendental ideas of self (the unity of the

thinking subject), cosmos (the unity of the series of conditions of appearance) and God (the unity of the condition of all possible objects of thought).

Because they are necessarily imaginable yet beyond any possibly corresponding encounter in sensible experience (even in the event of the confrontation of the dynamical sublime, which only inspires their independent subjective contemplation), transcendental ideas and/or pure concepts of reason thus supply a *negative* experiential basis or unfulfilled expectation which motivates the *positive* schematic application of categories to sensible as well purely theoretical cognitions as a matter of research the conducting of which is itself irrevocably involved in any self-assertion of independent subjective unity. As problematically apodictic necessities of rational thought, transcendental ideas provide the grounding yet abyssal matrix and problematic motive for the subject's schematic application of the categories to all hypothetical and actual objects of cognitive apprehension and comprehension alike. Such concepts and/or ideas - and this severe ambiguity between ideas and concepts is itself left to stand by Kant because it reflects the role played by these concepts/ideas in establishing a topography of relation between the ideational breadth of the imagination's representational manifold and the unrelenting specificity of the understanding's mobilization of specific categories - cannot in any way directly assist the subject in comprehending particular experiences of empirical sensibility, but do nevertheless 'underwrite' (or 'prescribe') their potential comprehensibility.⁸³

We can comprehend the concept of 'chair' and retain an imaginable idea of 'chairs' because the notion of 'chair' itself readily and regularly demonstrable in empirical experience is not in any way as incomprehensibly complex in the series of appearances which constitute its absolute unity as the transcendental ideas of the unities of self, cosmos or God. Because they are imaginable *a priori* as posing problematic tasks for the understanding to engage, these transcendental ideas remain an intrinsic part and parcel of the entire cognitive process and thus underwrite or are implicitly contained in any

⁸³ On this transcendental ambiguity between 'ideas' and 'concepts,' see again the passage from CPR 402 / A327 / B383-4 addressed in the first chapter (page 18 above): "By the idea of a necessary concept of reason, I understand one to which no congruent object can be given in the senses. Thus the pure concepts of reason we have just examined are **transcendental ideas**."

comprehension of things as simple as ‘chairs’ to the extent that all rational cognition intrinsically invokes the practical capability of the imagination to negotiate them over time as problems for the understanding. In a certain way, the understanding remains obsessively fascinated with the indefinitely aporetic yet nevertheless tantalizingly imaginable nature of these ideas. Transcendental ideas do not provide solutions to any quandaries of reason, but instead, as conceptual necessities of apodictic determination, are “given as problems by the nature of reason itself, and hence they relate necessarily to the entire use of the understanding” (CPR 402/A327/B384).

In the wake of Kant’s attribution to the imagination of a persistent activity beyond the field of any conscious sense experience (as dreams demonstrate), its representational capacity alone stands uniquely capable of and thus responsible for posing transcendental ideas as problems which motivate an active approach to understanding as being a dutiful task inherent issued to the subject by its very occupation of a vantage point attributable to a hypothetically unified subjective identity. These problems are essential to reason in the *manner* of concepts but only as concepts which, given their strictly imaginable ideality, are posed to the understanding as necessary objects of potential comprehension, i.e. as objects of thought which stand in indefinite need of further attempted comprehension. (The readily comprehensible idea of ‘chairs,’ as accessible to the understanding as it may be, can always nevertheless serve as a basis for further reconsideration and reinterpretation of the experiential dimensions that correspond to this idea. As Joseph Kosuth’s “One And Three Chairs” illustrated above, such reconsideration exemplarily takes place in novel approaches to the means and methods of designing, manufacturing and presenting ‘seating.’)

Two things about transcendental ideas remain unambiguous and not subject to any further determination, however: one is their essentially aporetic nature and the other is their *a priori* implication in any rational subjective employment of the imagination in concert with the understanding. As we have examined, this cooperative rational employment of the two faculties primarily comes to pass – and does so by synthesizing time itself as a subjective field of knowledge - in the subject’s procedural determination of a “transcendental schematism” as a first and blank ideology concerning the theoretically necessary prospect of a unified subjective integrity.

In and with its necessary assertion of transcendental ideas, the faculty of imagination plays a more constitutive if incessant and undeniably problematic role throughout the process of cognition than either any representational stimulus sporadically and contingently offered to cognition by empirical objects of sensibility or even any schematic application of categories of understanding to even merely theoretical cognitions (such as the schematized idea of “a thousand”).⁸⁴ Not only do these pure representations of the rational aims of the faculty of imagination supersede any representations attributable to empirical objects of intuition in the logical order of cognitive priority, but a symptom of this superseding is that the impossibility of subjecting transcendental ideas to any direct intuition serves as a provocatively problematic irritant constantly goading the understanding away from abusing the ubiquitous opportunities for complacent dogmatic slumber offered by merely reproductive uses of the imagination. Here we see the locus of Kant’s sly adaptation of Socratic humility (or irony): the faculty of imagination is *compelled* to imagine ontologically irreducible ‘things’ – viz. self, cosmos and God - which not only inherently defy the faculty of understanding’s greatest powers of comprehension, but furthermore test even the very representational limits of the faculty of imagination itself, which holds fast onto them only by the slightest thread of their analytically pure apodictic necessity.

Given the responsibility carried by the faculty of imagination to schematically mediate sensibility by means of understanding throughout the cognitive process, it becomes centrally important to appreciate how and why Kant poses objects of sensible intuition as ‘matters’ essentially immaterial (or ‘significantly insignificant’) in comparison with the imagination’s greater involvement in establishing, under the perfectly *obscure* light provided by the necessity transcendental ideas, all objects of sensible intuition as expressions of the deontological ‘objectives’ of subjectively mediated cognition itself. As Kant writes at the beginning of the B edition introduction to the CPR, “although all our cognition commences with experience, yet it does not on that account all arise from experience” (CPR 136/B1). Whereas intuition

⁸⁴ Cf., the citation of CPR 273/A140/B179 above on p. 78 (italics added), where Kant emphasizes the methodologically schematic aspect of imagining large multitudes: “[I]f I only think a number in general, which could be five or a hundred, *this thinking is more the representation of a method for representing a multitude* (e.g., a thousand) in accordance with a certain concept *than the image* [of, for instance, a thousand dots] *itself*.”

only corresponds to experiential sensibility, cognition corresponds to the rendering of judgments throughout all modes of thought, including those which are strictly theoretical, speculative and intellectual, and thus retains no intrinsic need of any externally imposed sensibility in order to function (although a certain decidable quantum of sensible input is indeed required if cognition is to ‘apply’ to any empirical thing at all). Before any concern with empirical experience, cognition therefore already requires an internal form of non-experientially based representational facility or ‘canvas,’ as it were, upon which theoretical cognitions of imagination can be schematically sketched. This type of representational facility holds no moorings in any type of ‘space’ other than the pure idea of the form of space itself.

Like the transcendental ideas of self, cosmos and God, the form of space (which is the very first major issue taken up in the first chapter of the first Critique concerning the “Transcendental Aesthetic”) can also only be problematically manifested by the faculty of imagination. As was determined in the analysis of the schematism as the location of the subject’s transcendental time-determining agency, the domain of the imaginary considered as a representational manifold must be understood as based upon the attribution of a minimal temporal aspect to the transcendental form of the idea of space in general. Although it corresponds to “outer sense,” to the extent that spatiality is imaginable without reference to an actual space and its itself discursively considerable, it must always relate in a certain sense to the schematically rendered time-determinations proper to “inner sense.” This minimally temporal aspect of spatiality must be synthesized in the cognitive act of imaginatively apprehending that despite the problematically transcendental nature of thinking of the self as an absolute unity, a hypothetically and this provisionally singularized notion of the self implicitly accompanies all cognitive representations in general, as such representations must always be representations considered or beheld by ‘someone.’

As a provisionally individualized instance of a general transcendental subjectivity, this hypothetical notion of the self thus theoretically bears a spatiotemporal form primarily attributable not to any type of absolutely determined empirical fact or sensually experienced example, but bears instead a spatiotemporal form primarily attributable to an *a priori* necessary type of transcendental *fiction*. Because the considerations of ‘average’ beauty or sublimity undertaken in the development of any implicitly plural

‘aesthetics’ must be based upon a primary appreciation of the basic spatiotemporal structures informing to a singular “transcendental *aesthetic*” (one the ‘singularity’ of which corresponds to the cognitively researched transcendental unity of the subject itself), the raw and originary (rather general or ‘averaged’) notions of sublimity and beauty the subject must possess *a priori* with reference solely to the spatiotemporal forms of the transcendental aesthetic thus in essence “exceed the known average” and therefore are correspondingly subject to being considered as “fictitious” - although not any less *true* for this fictitious nature. (To the end of demonstrating this, one can indicate that even if Socrates had only been a fictitious individual dreamt up by Plato, such an historical de-realization could not stand to affect the actual ‘truth-content’ relayed by the Socratic dialogues in any way.)

As a transcendental idea the absolute unity of which implicitly remains under constant cognitive investigation, the singularity of the subject, which serves as a heuristically necessary hypothetical condition of all subjective cognition, is uncannily encountered as approaching quasi-epistemological degrees of representational demonstration in the imaginatively wrought varieties of subjectivity that are coherently depicted in terms of discernible ‘individuals’ in works of fiction - i.e., in its ‘characters.’ Whereas the subject must always lack a comprehensive understanding of its own absolute unity, simulacra of a type of absolute unity hypothetically attributable to subjects in general are set forth in narrative depictions of characters who, presented in works which retain a semblance of teleologically fulfilled Aristotelian plot structure, can be regarded by the subject as hypothetical and/or fictitious yet true models of absolute unity. (Such is the sad epistemological fate of the megalomaniacal role played by “Absolute Spirit” in Hegelian philosophy: by virtue of its dialectically rendered eponymous claim to describe the nature of a perfectly absolute *and* absolutely perfect subjective status, “absolute spirit” remains condemned to merely comprise the ‘hero’ of an enormous novel the plot of which can ultimately only concern Hegel’s authorial capacity to fulfill his encyclopedia’s plot-driving wish to turn all of the hyperbolae it manifests into matters of indisputable fact exclusively by means of rhetorical fiat.)

If narratology comprises the logic proper to any representational mediation of imaginary time-synthesis, any discernible ‘characters’ rendered in narratologically mediated works of art thus comprise

hypothetical examples of the subjective singularity which rational subjects remain compelled to research throughout all cognitive engagements. Whether one is considering Dostoevsky's 'Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov,' Flaubert's 'Emma Bovary,' Stendhal's 'Julien Sorel,' Faulkner's 'Benjy' or Bret Easton Ellis' 'Patrick Bateman' as individual subjects the fictitious depictions of which remain potentially comprehensible as *contained* within the narratological structures of the associable novels in question or whether one considers the role individually and 'characteristically' played by the color blue in the paintings of Mark Rothko, Picasso or Yves Klein, or at an even further extent, the roles played by various pieces of detritus from modern life such as bottle-racks, bicycle wheels and urinals in the works of Marcel Duchamp or the roles played by 'intoxication' in the poems of Baudelaire or Rimbaud - in each of these cases a 'subject' in (or 'of') a work is presented as potentially constituting an exemplary exploration of the notion of how questions of 'absolute unity' can be approached through representational means. The indefinitely plural number of such represented subjects thus summarily comprises the "unavowable community" associable with the specific type of "sensus communis" that must be invoked and furthermore negotiated in any apprehension of narratological form as this form expresses the representational outcome of the time-synthesis conducted in any subject's ideological determination of a schematism for concepts of the understanding.

In the course of imaginatively taking the characters transcendently depicted in the narratological dimensions attributable to works of art (dimensions which relate to artworks in the same manner that the time-synthesizing nature of schematism-formation relates to subjects) as paradigmatic of the representational possibility of hypothesizing exemplarily 'unified' if temporally mediated cases or instances of subjectivity (a dynamic which, as we have seen, operates even in the case of as starkly yet statically content-allergic a work as Malevich's *Black Square*), one tends to similarly depict oneself in response to and in conversation with these 'models,' as it were, as similarly being the agonist of all of the narratologically structured if temporally mediated cognitions one comes to attribute to oneself through the temporally mediating productions of the faculty of judgment. One can attribute cognitions to oneself only on the basis of a fictive if hypothetical approach to the prospect of determining the singularity of that self

as possibly being a subject *of* representation, in both the ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ moods of this genitive: both as a subject which actively *represents* cognitions as well as a subject which can be recognizably and passively *represented*. The analytically necessary participation of such a hypothetically and/or ‘fictitiously’ unified idea of ‘self’ in cognition turns the subject’s apperception of the temporal through the schematization of basic categories of understanding into a matter of arriving at an ideological comprehension of the narratological dimensions of one’s persisting coherence not just as a subject, but even furthermore as a particularly representable “character.” This “character” constitutes the agonist of cognition which is always already and simultaneously its hero, nemesis, chorus and audience in the theoretically imaginative theatre of approaching comprehensions of transcendental ideality.

Throughout the representational determination and elaboration of this ‘character’ considered as an active process to which the subject is duty bound because this elaboration provides the only means by which any subject can possibly begin to come to understand itself as agent of reason, the subject must attempt to reconcile itself as rationally as possible to the irreducibly multiplicitous if temporally riven nature of the representational constructs it inhabits and yet the ‘meaning’ and ‘truth’ of which the subject may ultimately perhaps be able to understand or comprehend only very little. (With respect to some of the more banal forms of these inhabited representational constructs - such as one’s place in a truly ‘global economy,’ for example - one can understand that the truth and meaning of this construct is one about which one can, in many certain ways, perhaps only have as little knowledge of as a goldfish has of the fishbowl which contains it.) The reconciliation of the notion of the ‘self’ considered as a subject-position from which representations *qua* judgments may actively and characteristically be produced to the notion of the ‘self’ considered as an entity the character of which thus must also remain passively open to being represented or judged by ‘others’ (and by ‘oneself as another,’ by oneself as an entity which always *temporally distributes* itself) is a procedure indefinitely conducted through the decomposing synthesis of any series of appearances by means of which the subject first becomes temporally apprehensible to itself as a possible object of thought in general. In leading his readers toward his presentation of the notion of transcendental ideas, Kant is unambiguous about the fact that the pragmatically indefinite nature of the

necessary attempt of the subject to comprehend the notion of ‘unity’ in general as an absolute magnitude can only start from and with such a posing by the subject of its own unity of apperception as an object of concern the parameters of which must remain open to question as well as discursive judgment. Kant furthermore unambiguously identifies this indefinite research as expressive of an overarching attempt to understand a notion of absolute unity that is as ineluctably necessary to cognition as its goal is unattainable, be the type of researched unity in question that which ‘one’ would seek to attribute to the self, the cosmos or God, and even the inscrutable totality one can always seek to recognize as an *absolute* attribute of *any* given object of consciousness – such as any ‘chair,’ and indeed even the unity attributable to the “faculty of imagination” itself:

Thus reason relates itself only to the use of the understanding, not indeed insofar as the latter contains the ground of possible experience (for *the absolute totality of conditions is not a concept that is usable in an experience, because no experience is unconditioned*), but rather *in order to prescribe the direction toward a certain unity of which the understanding has no concept, proceeding* to comprehend all of the actions of the understanding in respect of every object into an absolute whole. (CPR 402/A326-7/B383, italics added).

Given the fictional resonance of the necessarily hypothetical character of the subject’s approach to questions regarding the unity which it always seeks, through more or less actively or passively self-conscious (or self-conscientious) degrees of attention, to be able to coherently and characteristically attribute to itself, we can now consider in a different light how the faculty of imagination *itself* has also, for more or less unavoidable reasons, been allotted the *prosopopoeial* character of a *protagonist* over the course of this thesis. In seeking to follow how Kant has identified it, we have naturally been tempted to attempt to think its potential ‘singularity’ as an identifiable aspect or characteristic of reason, and have thus been challenged therein with the prospect of thinking how its schematic crisis of meeting external presentations of sensibility through the application of categories of understanding to them can be perhaps reconciled with the pathos internal to its own judgment-producing nature. In a certain sense, the typographically performative differentiations of “imagination” mobilized in Kant’s primary CPR

presentation of the definition of the term may even be regarded at this point as functionally similar in a certain sense to the typographical off-setting of a character's name in the presentation of a dramatic text.

It is indefinitely toward an impossible comprehension of the notion of absolute unity and (*pace* Hegel) not on the basis of any established comprehension of it that the entire structure of our cognitive apparatus is constantly mobilized. Recalling our treatment of Kant's doctrine of the schematism as rendering a first and 'blank' form of ideology concerning subjective identity, the practical conduct of the subject's bearing of reason toward itself and toward the world instills any apprehension of an object of cognitive concern as being *singular* - starting with the subject's assumption of itself as a *singular* entity - with an unavoidable set of ideological ramifications. This is because the constantly attempted assessment of objects as potentially absolute unities or singularities is bound up with the subjective determination of recognizable and repeatable representational paradigms for experience. These paradigms *qua* schemata of pure concepts of the understanding come to be repeatedly applied to experience in cognition on the ideological basis of the complete procedural schematism that the subject establishes regarding how imagination must be regarded as procedurally conversant with the understanding in general and, furthermore, how judgments are thereby generally to be applied to objects of cognition. The schematism remains the zero-degree "ism" of an ideology concerning identity in general which is gradually and progressively established by the subject as a repeatable template for the total assimilations of *eidos* to *logos* that constantly take place at the most basic level of quotidian considerations of any thoughts judged and/or identified as being both imaginable *and* intelligible.

As this 'first' and essentially blank form of raw ideology, the schematism functions as an essentially programmatic principle established and put to use by the subject in its ongoing differentiation of reproductive from productive uses of the imagination. This difference forms a matter of tempo or habit introduced for the sake of the subject's ability to recognize itself as an empirically embedded agent of necessarily transcendental thoughts, and the formalization of this difference as a criterion of experiential comprehensibility in general is the first "vocation" of the subject – indeed the "vocation" referred to by Kant in his treatment of the violence of the mathematical sublime as "purposive for the whole *vocation* of

the mind” (CPJ 142). This vocation is taken up and practiced in the subject’s recognition of its primary responsibility to consider itself as a capable and free if never yet absolutely unified subject of reason. In a statement concerning ideology which presciently appeared as heterodox to common misunderstandings of ‘ideology’ as merely being a sophisticated euphemism for ‘dogma’ or ‘habit,’ Blanchot very correctly and starkly assimilates ideology in this schematic sense to the subject’s entire capacity to manifest discursively rendered judgments, judgments which can be considered “written” objects of reference for the reproductive capacities of the imagination inasmuch as the latter is constantly invoked in the subject’s ongoing determination (or more schematic than automatic ‘sketching’) of the nature of temporality:

*Ideology is our element: that which causes us to breathe, and, at the limit, asphyxiates us. Writing [...] is never yet free from ideology because there is still no writing without language. To believe oneself sheltered from ideology, even if it is a matter of writing in accordance with the demands of the knowledge that is proper to the sciences called human, is to give oneself over, without the possibility of choosing, to the worst ideological excesses. Therefore we will choose our ideology. This is the only choice that might lead us to a non-ideological writing: a writing outside language and outside theology.*⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See Maurice Blanchot, “Atheism and Writing: Humanism and the Cry”, in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993, referenced hereafter as IC), 262 (italics added). Blanchot’s reference to the notion of “a writing outside [of] language” and “theology,” which is cognate with Derrida’s expansion of the notion of *écriture* and posed by Blanchot as a form of ‘writing’ implicitly capable of allaying Nietzsche’s “fear” that “we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar” (see F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols / The Anti-Christ*, Trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1968), 48) can, in the elemental ‘context’ for it that Blanchot outlines, be understood as the most primitive form of reproductive recollection actively attributed to objects of thought in the case of any temporally mediated cognition, a form as easily forgettable yet persistently ‘drawn’ throughout all processes of thought as the action of breathing, in a similarly forgettable way, must underwrite any and every instance of vivid human experience. “Writing” in the sense presented here can thus be identified with any formal production of the subject that introduces articulating differences into the procedural apperception of temporality considered as an active yet also inherently recollective (or memory-invoking and creating) process. Such a type of ‘writing’ would be ‘outside language’ inasmuch as it only ‘pre-scribes’ the subjective production of discursive judgments in general. It would also be ‘outside [of] theology’ to the extent that the question concerning the unity attributable to “the condition of all objects of thought” - a question the asking of which Kant expressly indicates as proper to theological inquiry (see CPR 406/A334/B391 cited at p. 93 above and also cf. CPR 589/A641/B669) - can only remain open as a similarly pre-scribed field of potential investigation rather than dogmatically assumable as entirely contained in a culturally predetermined and completed field discourse - in other words as the mere consideration of the raw *possibility* of theology in general rather than as the coercive indication of theology as a historically determined form of complete discourse to which nothing can be added. Such a type of not entirely ‘non-linguistic’ or ‘non-theological’ but pre-linguistic and pre-theological ‘writing’ would, in short, constitute the ‘non-work’ of ‘désœuvrement’, a ‘non-work’ identifiable by its origin in the consideration of how apprehensions of self-consciousness are related to apprehensions of temporal form. This ‘non-work’ would also be of an entirely common cloth with the “free play” of the imagination diagnosed by Kant as essential condition of the formation of aesthetic judgments in general. In a 1958

In the course of regarding any object not as a temporally ‘novel’ or newly considerable object of cognitive judgment but rather as an object readily and more or less automatically rather than schematically recognizable as ‘singular’ (and thereby as implicitly paradigmatic of an entire species of objects - e.g. “This is THE novel”), a chain – indeed, a “signifying chain,” in Lacanian parlance - of established ideological assumptions and fixed ideological criteria is set into motion by the subject, assumptions and criteria which reflect the identity of the subject as an impossibly reified quantum but ironically can only work at cross-purposes to the cognitive freedom of the subject as a rational agent. The setting in motion of this chain of ideological dogmas, however, is also an irreducible symptom of any expression of that freedom recognizable as such. The spontaneous vigilance which one thus must always be ready to assume with respect to the attribution of any ‘unity’ or ‘singularity’ to objects of cognition thereby begins with the subjective consideration of the own possible grounds for comprehending the potentially identifiable particularity which the subject, throughout all of its cognitive enterprises, must attempt to attribute to its own subjectivity as ‘characteristic’ of it.

The difference between the ever-new if active cognition of any ‘chair’ as a mere conceptual assemblage determined only by the expandable parameters of the subject’s free application of categories

essay on René Char’s poem *La Bête Innommable*, Blanchot treats the indefinite possibility of such an ‘unworking’ form of writing as an aspect deeply posed for consideration in any recognized experience of art as capable of presenting questions which underscore the absolute impossibility of comprehending the unity of the notion of ‘the eternal.’ To the extent to which it successfully indicates any subjective need to contemplate ‘the eternal,’ any work of art thereby must also risk becoming incomprehensible as a unified ‘work,’ as it thus precisely succeeds in raising the question of a condition which comparatively renders the work absolutely insignificant: « Il est, dans l’expérience de l’art et dans la genèse de l’œuvre, un moment où celle-ci n’est encore qu’une violence indistincte tendant à s’ouvrir et tendant à se fermer, tendant à s’exalter dans un espace qui s’ouvre et tendant à se retirer dans la profondeur de la dissimulation : l’œuvre est alors l’intimité en lutte de moments irréconciliables et inséparables, communication déchirée entre la mesure de l’œuvre qui se fait pouvoir et la démesure de l’œuvre qui veut l’impossibilité, entre la forme où elle se saisit et l’illimité où elle se refuse, entre l’œuvre comme commencement et l’origine à partir de quoi il n’y a jamais œuvre, où règne le désœuvrement éternel. » Maurice Blanchot, *La Bête de Lascaux* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1982), 34-5. Our admittedly mediocre translation : “There is, in the experience of art and in the genesis of the work, a moment in which it is yet only an indistinct violence tending to open and tending to close itself, tending to exalt itself in a space which opens itself and tending to withdraw itself in the depth of dissimulation: the work is then the intimacy struggled over in irreconcilable and inseparable moments, communication torn between the measure of the work which becomes power and the ‘unmeasure’ of the work which wants impossibility, between the form where it is seized and the unlimited where it declines, between the work as commencement and as the origin from which there is never work, where the eternal unworking [*désœuvrement*] reigns.”

to intuitions on the one hand and the hypostasized recognition of the idea of “chair” as providing a passive logical basis for metaphorical abuse on the other – for instance, as the “chair” of a corporation or as the “chair” which exceeds cognitive appreciation as such in serving as the throne of a sovereign to the will of whom ‘subjects’ can always be coercively ‘subjected’ – this difference forms precisely the extent of the distance or ‘spacing’ which must be open to vigilantly consideration and active ‘measurement’ by the subject if the essentially ideological nature of its schematic attribution of a provisional unity to its own subject position is to be ethically minimized to adequately reflect the transcendently mysterious incomprehensibility of the imaginably possible but logically incomprehensible nature of any ‘absolute unity.’ Opposed to assumptions of recognition which express an automatically mechanistic application of the schematism to cognitions, this vigilance is fully identifiable with the ‘heightened’ notion of respect [*Achtung*] (or rather, “re-spect”, written with a hyphenation to emphasize how the subject’s capability to differentiate objects of active cognition from objects of passive recognition constitutes this vigilance as a need for spontaneous ‘looking again’ or ‘double-take’) as it is presented throughout Kant’s critical philosophy as a basic aspect of the subject’s consideration of the ethical ramifications of its position as an agent of reason.

In a 1949 essay the very title of which illustrates Blanchot’s keen awareness of how conventions of linguistic usage shelter ideological attitudes toward the ‘absolute unity’ that can only ever fictitiously (and/or hypothetically) be attributed to subjects and objects alike - “Literature and the Right to Death” - Blanchot summarizes how the epistemological basis of this problem remains internal to the formation of all judgments, discursive and aesthetic alike (each of which contain an irreducible aspect of the other) by subjecting the basis of the commonplace differentiation between so-called ‘ordinary’ and so-called ‘literary’ uses of language to a very thorough if somewhat strangely wrought deconstruction:

Naturally, a writer can always make it his ideal to call a cat a cat. But what he cannot manage to do is then believe he is on the way to health and sincerity. On the contrary, he is causing more mystification than ever, because the cat is not a cat, and anyone who claims that it is has nothing in mind but this hypocritical violence: Rolet is a rascal (WF 310-11).

Further on in the essay, Blanchot resumes and further clarifies this diagnosis of the unpredictable instability of the differential limits dividing indicative from aesthetic or rhetorical uses of language:

Everyday language calls a cat a cat, as if the living cat and its name were *identical*, as if it were not true that when we name the cat, we retain nothing of it but its absence, what it is not. Yet for a moment everyday language is right, in that even if the word excludes the existence of what it designates, it still refers to it through the thing's nonexistence, which has become its [idea or] essence. [...] Common language is probably right, this is the price we pay for our peace. But literary language is made of uneasiness; it is also made of contradictions. [...] It observes that the word "cat" is not only the nonexistence of the cat but a nonexistence made word, that is, a completely determined and objective reality. [...] *How could the infinite absence of comprehension consent to be confused with the limited, restricted presence of a single word? And isn't everyday language mistaken when it tries to persuade us of this?* In fact, *it is deceiving itself* and it is deceiving us, too. [...] Already the seal which held this nothingness within the limits of the word and within the guise of its meaning has been broken; now there is access to other names, names which are less fixed, still vague, *more capable of adapting to the savage freedom of the negative essence* – they are unstable groups, no longer terms but the movement of terms, an endless sliding of "turns of phrase" which do not lead anywhere. Thus is born the image that does not directly designate the thing but, rather, what the thing is not; it speaks of a dog instead of a cat (WF 325-6, italics added).

Not only does the substitution of referents engaged in any linguistic relation of ideas readily depend upon an equal ability of the subject to issue such judgments as that of "cat" as "cat" on the one hand and of "Rolet" as "rascal" on the other, but it also allows the same type of referential substitution that grants Kant a respectable license to use all of the performative resonances available to the many forms of written linguistic presentation in the service of convincing us to consider the importance of such performative aspects as they directly pertain to the manifestation of the core epistemological meaning of "imagination" which he prescriptively presents through and only by the heuristic aid of such substitutions.

As the strictly constative elements of Kant's definition of "imagination" expressly echo the Platonic theory of forms or ideas [*eidōs*] with an emphatic privileging of cognition over substance and the constative over the performative, the CPR definition of "imagination" must treat the relevance of empirical objects to their denotative representation in the imaginary as primarily being negative because such denotative representations, to the extent that they fall as purely *reproductive* uses of the imagination,

only “*commence* with experience.” In other words, unquestioned identifications of imaginable objects (e.g. that of “cat” as “cat”) exhibit a passively distracted inhabitation of experience which, although it must be maintained on the level of the subject’s literal approach to the real, nevertheless only commences with empirical experience rather expressing a freely active participation on the part of the subject in engineering the schematic architecture of cognition as something which cannot “*commence* with experience” but only “*arise* from experience.” The contemplation of unity implied as occurring in any assertion of the temporal persistence of “cat” as “cat” necessarily invokes a foregrounding if tacit subjective contemplation of the transcendently imaginable yet non-experiential idea of ‘absolute unity’ as the paradigm which underwrites every cognitive recognition form of any empirical form of ‘unity.’ It is toward prescribing an avoidance of potential immurement within the empirical dimensions of experience and in view of a greater appreciation of the critical capabilities of reason that the entire thrust of Kant’s “Copernican” innovation thus is in fact aimed. (Considering its uncanny similarity to Platonic formalism, this innovation may not in the end have been as drastic as Kant suggested it to be, although the full significance of Kant’s refutation of Plato’s anamnestic epistemology itself still remains a matter to be fully investigated and appreciated).⁸⁶ This critical difference elucidated by Kant between the experiential basis for intuiting the phenomenal aspects of objects of sensibility and the theoretical basis for arriving at a cognitive understanding of this content as subject to active representation by subjects remains, for Kant, an absolute – in fact *the* absolute upon which his claim to have instigated a Copernican shift in the historical trajectory of philosophy is itself based.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Direct and comprehensive reference to Plato’s theory of ideal forms is made by Kant in the course of laying of the groundwork for his treatment of the relationship between representations *qua* judgments and the establishment of “transcendental ideas” as the most basic “concepts of pure reason.” In this vein it is interesting to note that in his treatment of Plato Kant begins by remarking upon Plato’s use of the term *eidos* or “Idee” as an “expression” [*Ausdruck*]. “Plato made use of the expression *idea* [*Plato bediente sich des Ausdrucks I d e e*] in such a way that we can readily see that he understood by it something that not only could never be borrowed from the senses, but that even goes far beyond the concepts of the understanding (with which Aristotle occupied himself) since nothing encountered in experience could ever be congruent with it” (CPR, 395/A313/B370). The question begged by such representations of the term *idea*, “Idee” or *eidos* thus universally concern, like the term ‘imagination’, the matter of the comprehensible parameters possibly attributable to the term’s *denotative* capacity as an *expression* or *Ausdruck*.

⁸⁷ See CPR 110/Bxvi: “Up to now it has been assumed that all our rational cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on

In establishing this Copernican elevation of subjectivity over the objects of its empirical concern, Kant however takes pains to emphasize that the absolute nature of this difference between the empirical and the theory which determines it is internal only to critical uses of reason by the subject in its approach to the conceptual comprehension of objects of thought, and not internal either to objects of cognition in themselves as blank noumena or immanent to ‘the world’ considered as the totality of all actual and possible empirical appearances. Each object of thought fully understood as such by the subject must retain both empirically phenomenal aspects apprehensible through experience and transcendently noumenal aspects comprehensible through theoretically oriented cognition, and this is precisely why the objects of thought implied as analytically necessary yet incomprehensible by the apodictic nature of transcendental ideas remain so very problematic: the imaginable idea of ‘absolute unity’ which the transcendental ideas imply itself defies any sensible encounter in intuition, yet remains necessary as a limit idea/concept of reason which provides nothing less and nothing other than a basis for the entire practical extension of any subjectively mediated understanding as a critical enterprise:

The division of **objects** into *phenomena* and *noumena*, and of **the world** into a world of sense and a world of understanding, can therefore not be permitted at all, although concepts certainly permit of division into sensible and intellectual ones; for one cannot determine any object for the latter, and therefore also cannot pass them off as objectively valid. If one abandons the senses, how will one make comprehensible that our categories (which would be the only remaining concepts for noumena) still signify anything at all, since for their relation to any object something more than merely the unity of thinking must be given, namely a **possible** intuition, to which they can be applied? (CPR 351/A255-6/B311, boldface emphasis added).

Rather than subjecting the difference between sensibility and understanding to abuse as a principle which, dialectically rendered, may appear capable of providing the false shelter of an essentially rhetorical and symbolic sense of ‘absolute unity,’ and knowing full well that Kant regards ‘unity’ as an

this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an a priori cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest.”

inherently problematic because transcendental idea, Kant's rigorous posing of the difference between sensibility and understanding remains to be appreciated, much in the manner of the "transcendental ideas" and/or "pure concepts of reason," as irremediably differential and therefore indefinitely problematic in itself, coming indeed as close as possible to constituting a absolute theoretical object of pure experiential controversy.⁸⁸ In Dieter Henrich's assessment of such a profound contretemps,

[T]his distinction between the faculties of sensibility and understanding establishes in Kant's system a duality that, from his point of view, remains indissoluble and irreducible. For this reason, there can be no linear theory, no one-dimensional system that starts just from one concept and shows that all the other mental activities can be defined in its terms.⁸⁹

No unifying singularity, in other words, can be attributed to this difference. Henrich's explanation of this conflict, which can be read as constituting a Kantian basis of approach toward that which Derrida has called *différance*, continues on to illustrate that given the absence of any rational basis for a paradigmatic concept of singularity or unity to be coherently attributed through representational means either to pure sensibility or to the faculty of understanding (let alone to the faculty of imagination, which primarily deals with the representational *manifold* and transcendental ideas the unity of which remains problematic to the understanding), even this duality's concentration of an apparently 'unique' difference does not provide any solid basis for considering it as comprehensibly 'singular' in itself, i.e. as 'one' problematic in light of which Kant's philosophy could be considered susceptible to being distilled down to a simple and simplistic dualism. 'Singularity' remains indefinitely *multifaceted* in its mysteriousness.

In bringing the paragraph cited above to closure, Henrich explains the auto-exponential nature of this problem of establishing a comprehensible basis for unity by noting that "Kant's system does not, however, remain dualistic; rather it becomes *multidimensional* in that Kant introduced further principles

⁸⁸Cf. CPR 401-2/A326-7/B383-4: "[T]he absolute totality of conditions is not a concept that is usable in an experience, because experience is unconditioned." It is also relevant to note here that Kant's elaboration of the difference between phenomenal and noumenal domains as internal to subjectivity and not as internal to objects was so dedicated to preserving this principle of essential multiplicity that the A and B edition elaborations of this difference remain strikingly different from one another - yet not to any point of unilateral or mutual *contradiction*.

⁸⁹ Dieter Henrich, "Sensation, Cognition and the 'Riddle of Metaphysics'" in *Between Kant and Hegel*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 2003, referenced hereafter as BKH), 38.

that cannot be reduced to one of the two elements of knowledge, either to sensation or to cognition” (ibid, italics added). Such a proliferation of the dimensions of Kant’s system can be seen as corresponding to the proliferations of referential meaning assessed by Blanchot as undermining the stability of any fixed differentiation between aesthetic and normative uses of language and also as being reflected in the perversity of Kant’s use of emphasis as a signifying element in his determination of the epistemological meaning of “imagination.” It remains the subject’s responsibility not to negate or ignore the constantly accruing ideological ramifications of such proliferations of referential meaning, as such would be as hubristic in intent as impossible in practice, but rather to minimize indefinitely, indeed ‘criticize’ as much as possible these unavoidable proliferations, as well as more fundamentally the schematic automatisms of rational insight which instigate them, through the extension of an ethically vigilant – indeed, “re-spectful” – and dynamically receptive practice of reasoned critique.

The constitutive role played by the faculty of imagination in cognition can be regarded as just one of the “principles” indicated by Henrich as “introduced” by Kant to address his systemic concern with multiplicity. Reducible neither to being a strictly practical faculty of sensation nor a strictly theoretical faculty of cognition, the faculty of imagination rather remains participant in the establishment of both in its direct coordination with the understanding through their mutual determination of the transcendental schema, which is expressed through the discursive judgments produced by the subject as the ideological mode of the subject’s approach to the hypothetical and/or fictitious yet ineluctably necessary prospect of individual subjective unity which every representational judgment that the subject actively creates must imply. At the same time, the imagination also remains immune from consideration as either absolutely unified in itself (such an asserted ‘unity’ of imagination would be indistinguishable from madness) or as capable of posing any discursive representation or judgment of absolute unity comprehensible by the understanding, as any perfectly comprehensible ‘representation’ of absolute unconditioned unity would have to implicitly negate the indefinitely ‘manifold’ character of the representational field of the imaginary. Henrich’s reasons for devoting an entire text to the idea of “The Unity of Reason” in Kant are therefore as manifest as they are massively appreciated. In the text in question, Henrich makes an

observation concerning the role played by the faculty of imagination in Kant's epistemology which also serves to further explain his previous interesting assessment of Kant's system as 'multidimensional':

It might be the case that the capacity designated 'imagination' itself consists of many parts. We do not and cannot know how that capacity is able to apprehend the contingent form of time and whether it could only mediate that one form or other possible forms as well. All such questions fail to understand the methodological skepticism toward the subjective deduction deemed necessary by Kant. *After all, we do not know how and due to what conditions the unity of that which we know as thinking is possible.* "Imagination" is merely the term for the unity of "activities" required, in addition to the objective principles of knowledge, to render intelligible the actuality of knowledge.⁹⁰

The 'multidimensional' character of Kant's system can thus be regarded as reflected by and in the 'multifaceted' considerations of objects of thought provided to sensation and cognition alike by the faculty of imagination's promiscuously polymorphous and incessantly functioning (if occasionally more passively relied upon than actively engaged) capacity to produce and reproduce representations. It is because it forms a basis for the functioning of the imagination in general that the *a priori* nature of transcendental ideas also always demands further productive and spontaneous research with respect to the relation of their unfathomable necessity to the potential comprehensibility of all of the representations produced and considered by the faculty of imagination. The *a priori* nature of the transcendental ideas cannot, however, certify any full reliance of cognition upon the imagination's capacity to merely reproduce ideas. As noted before, any such exclusive reliance upon the purely reproductive capacities of the imagination would be indistinguishable from madness – and, more trenchantly, also indistinguishable from the agency of a consciousness entirely guided by the rhetorically mediated symbolic value of the hypotyposes set forth with virulent duplicity in discourses of political ideology as somehow mysteriously being capable of functioning as absolutely self-evident and integral examples of logical necessity.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Dieter Henrich, "On the Unity of Subjectivity," tr. Guenter Zoeller, *The Unity of Reason* (Cambridge & London: Harvard UP, 1994), 39. In an observation sympathetic with our impending assessment of Heidegger's treatment of these issues, Henrich immediately continues here to note that "It thus becomes more and more clear how far Heidegger has moved away from the motives that gave rise to the form of Kant's system as we have seen it."

⁹¹ Without going into detail, it suffices here to refer to how mere *invocations* of the events of September 11, 2001 by members of the current U.S. administration are chronically abused as capable of providing an extra-judicial basis for the sanctioning of *torture*, in contravention of many international agreements, as a 'legitimate' state practice.

Duty driven to adhere to the principles he has articulated, Kant does expansively address the dualism between sensation and understanding as generative of the difference between phenomenal and noumenal realms. The multiplicitous status of this bifurcation as well as the multiplicity inherently associable with the representational manifold are equally symptomatic of the subject's greater grappling with the notion of 'absolute unity' as an irresolvable question the research of which remains qualitatively embedded within the subject's practical approach to all of its representational judgments of rational truth. While not fully identifiable with the faculty of imagination's capacity to produce and reproduce representations (an identification maintained by Heidegger incorrectly to the extent that its maintenance could only be exacted at the direct cost of his disregard of the integral importance of ethics throughout the tripartite architecture of Kant's system), this approach does however depend upon the faculty of imagination's capacity to negotiate the representational manifold.⁹²

⁹² Our parenthetical aside regarding Heidegger should be taken as an indication of the fact that although thorough familiarity with the text in which Heidegger makes his controversial claims concerning the meaning of the imaginary in Kant and a true appreciation of how this text itself functions within the greater context of Heidegger's work have been attained, the text in question will not receive further attention beyond an acknowledging refutation of its subject matter's appearance of relevance to the concerns assembled in the body of this thesis. This decision to treat Heidegger's approach to Kant telegraphically at best has been reached on the basis of the diagnosis of an irremediable contradiction between Kant's appreciation of philosophy as an open-ended, indefinite, and ethically regulative procedure and Heidegger's ultimately more utilitarian than existentialist exploitations of philosophy as a discourse the rhetorical flexibilities of which he treats as capable of providing an ideological platform for a type of praxis evacuated of any sufficient reference to and consideration of the philosophically necessary concepts of 'judgment' as well as any corresponding concept of 'justice.' That Heidegger's "Kant Book" seeks to cast Kant's analyses of the faculty of imagination and the transcendental schematism as necessarily leading to a type of "philosophical anthropology" which Heidegger presents as a historically manifest necessity renders the book an infelicitous attempt to force Kant's critique of metaphysics, which was meticulously wrought to remain open-ended, into the service of Heidegger's unifying obsession with determining the ontologically fixed forms of "authenticity" attributable to specific quotidian cultural practices (e.g., the "idle talk" encountered in "ontic" modes of "dwelling"). As Heidegger writes on page 140 of the text in question, "What occurs in the Kantian ground-laying? Nothing less than this: the grounding of the inner possibility of ontology is brought about as an unveiling of transcendence, i.e., of the subjectivity of the human subject. The question as to the essence of metaphysics is the question concerning the unity of the basic faculties of the human 'mind'. The Kantian ground-laying yields: the grounding of metaphysics is a questioning with regard to the human being, i.e., *anthropology*." Three pages further on, Heidegger takes this very roughly sound if anthropocentrically misguided appropriation of Kant to its unfortunate culmination, and does so not surprisingly without paying requisite attention to the truly enormous complexity of how the term *Grund* functions in Kant's philosophical vocabulary. In the CPJ (§59, 225-8), *Grund* is assessed by Kant as a problematic example of symbolic hypotyposis in language. The ambiguity of reference presented by such hypotyposes Kant takes as underscoring the need to issue aesthetic judgments which must minimally retain a recognizable level of logical and ethical coherence despite any and all potential dependence of aesthetic judgments upon the rationally volatile nature of any symbolic content of language. Despite this necessary ambiguity and the clarity of Kant's cautions about it, Heidegger continues on page 143 to make the patently arrogant if far less than historically perspicacious assertion that "No time has known so much and such a variety about mankind as is the case today. [...] But also, no time has

This negotiation occurs, as Kant has indicated, in the absence of any empirically comprehensible master-concept or master-idea of unity in accordance with which either particular objects of cognitive experience or the transcendental ideas qua general “concepts of reason” could be rendered absolutely transparent through any discursively couched agency to the understanding as “absolute wholes” or “absolute totalities”. Such wholes or totalities can never be assumed but only further researched throughout reason’s indefinite extrapolation of its innate compulsion to attempt to comprehend the transcendental unities of the self, the universe, and God. These constantly attempted comprehensions are pragmatically *allegorized* as procedural necessities in the establishment of any hypothetical apprehension of cognitive singularities, beginning with the subject’s pragmatically heuristic and deeply hypothetical and/or fictitious attributions of provisional unity to its own cognitive position as a rational subject.

Contrary to any appearances - or rather, given its complete *lack* thereof - the “thing in itself” does not stand capable of serving in any way as a master-concept or master-idea capable of facilitating a comprehension of the unity that is only ever hypothetically attributable even to ‘particular’ objects of cognitive concern. This is precisely why the apodictic nature of “transcendental ideas”/“concepts of pure

known less about what man is than today. In no other time has man become as questionable as in ours. However, is not precisely this breadth of and uncertainty about anthropological questions sufficient to allow a Philosophical Anthropology to arise and, for the effort, sufficient to bestow upon it a particular force? With the idea of a Philosophical Anthropology, has not that discipline been attained upon which the whole of philosophy must concentrate?” The answer being: absolutely *not*, not unless one holds unaddressed motives to relegate the entirety of philosophy as a discourse to the status of providing mere auxiliary support to the manipulative agencies of a discipline euphemistically posited as “Philosophical Anthropology” yet which is transparently recognizable as a species of Social Psychology infused with delusions of meta-philosophical grandeur. The overarching mistake Heidegger has made in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is in brief that it gives short shrift to how Kant not only decidedly took pains to explain how metaphysics must remain the problematic object of any regulative value attributable to the discourse of philosophy, but furthermore methodologically magnified therein how the irreducibly problematic nature of metaphysics precisely motivates the indefinite pursuit of critically beneficent and ethical uses of reason as the pursuit which itself constitutes the regulative core of philosophical agency. In response to the “problem of metaphysics” which Kant labored so intensively to establish as irremediable yet precisely thereby worthy of indefinite analytic pursuit, Heidegger hastily takes it upon himself to simply provide a ‘final solution’ to this problem – or rather, render it the exclusive problem of those who can bear no possible point of rational input with respect to the decisionist principles that informing his unethically totalized concept of “Philosophical Anthropology.” See Martin Heidegger, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1990), 140-43. As one contemporary philosopher has usefully if obliquely encapsulated this historical controversy in the reception of Kant, “In my opinion, Kant’s decision not to resort to the positivity of a third faculty (the imagination), his reduction of the problem of the one to that of a mere operation of the understanding, testify to his critical intransigence and his refusal to concede anything to the aesthetic prestige of the ontologies of presence.” Alain Badiou, TW, 140.

reason” stands as a problematically motivating rather than automatically ratifying condition of thought, i.e. as generative of the productive spontaneity of the imagination rather than prescriptive of any *ad nauseam* ideological abuse of the imagination’s reproductive capabilities. If the “thing in itself” were capable of serving as a model for the comprehension of absolute unity, it would have to be tantamount to a single all-consuming thought of a single ‘thing’, and would render the universe itself as the primary field of externality an undifferentiated mass. Such a classification contradicts the very flexibility of the intrinsically multiplicitous ‘noumenon’ as it forms an absolutely generic and empty notion capable of grounding theoretical contemplation of any imaginable ‘thing.’ Despite its radical blankness, the noumenon thus cannot even be considered the mysterious ‘root’ of the irreconcilable difference between sensibility and understanding, but instead only serves to further indicate that root of conceptual ‘unity’ in all of its transcendental difficulty.

Because it must remain indefinitely flexible and generic to grant a capacity for the cognitive appreciation of objects in general, the “thing in itself” or noumenon thus cannot serve as any kind of template for subjective comprehensions of particularity or unity. Impervious to imagination, sensibility and understanding alike, it - if one can even call it an ‘it’, as Kant ultimately comes to prefer the indefinite plurality of ‘noumena’ over the entirely misleading form of singularity or unity potentially implied by ‘noumenon’ - problematically stands defined only by a radical lack of all comprehensible characteristics, including most problematically (and transcendently) any characteristic of unity or singularity.⁹³ In this regard, noumena are actually quite ‘similar’ to any recognized (but because only *re-cognized*, and therefore intrinsically *not* unified) object of thought in that the comprehensibility of their possible unity also always itself remains subject to further cognitive investigation. Falling to knowledge as a necessary “boundary concept” (CPR 362/A255/B311) which bisects the schematic interstice of cognition in which

⁹³ See CPR 351/A256/B311-12: “[T]he concept of a noumenon, taken merely problematically, remains not only admissible, but even unavoidable, as a concept setting limits to sensibility. But in that case it is not a special **intelligible object** for our understanding; rather an understanding to which it would belong is itself a problem, namely, that of cognizing its object not discursively through categories but intuitively in a non-sensible intuition, the possibility of which we cannot in the least represent. Now in this way our understanding acquires a negative expansion, i.e., it is not limited by sensibility, but rather limits it by calling things in themselves (not considered as appearances) noumena.”

the qualitative and quantitative orders of comprehension risk becoming recursively determined, the “thing in itself” cannot be comprehended as informing the conceptual determination of any object of cognition as being in any way ‘particular’ at all. It is (or, noumena are) merely a cognitive placeholder(s), a completely generic notion in accordance with which we first become capable of ‘placing’ - or, as Derrida will show, ‘spacing’ - possible concepts of ‘objects’ under rational scrutiny.

As the generic and inherently multiplicitous notion of any ‘thing’, the noumenon is thereby a notion of ‘no...thing’ in particular, and thus of nothing possibly subject either to quantitative or qualitative predication as ‘singular’. The consideration of noumena is rather what “takes place” in the subject’s elaboration of temporality, whereas “what happens” in this elaboration of temporality is the overarching investigation by the subject of the possible grounds for comprehending itself as well as the objects of its rational consideration as provisionally unified if individually particularized objects of thought. This investigation is conducted by means of the regulative schematic lashing of *eidos* to *logos* which underwrites all of the indicative uses of cognition mobilized in identity-claims as they relate to and are related by the discursive procedures of the understanding, which is responsible for manifesting the first discourse considerable by the subject as potentially capable of demonstrating the singularity it always seeks to attribute to its own cognitive agency. As Roland Barthes relates the narratological essence of this epistemological condition,

“What takes place” in a narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing [Barthes here notes Mallarmé’s *Crayonné au théâtre*: “A dramatic work displays the succession of exteriors of the act without any moment retaining reality and, in the end, anything happening.”]; “what happens” is language alone, the adventure of language, the unceasing celebration of its coming.⁹⁴

As “what takes place” in the narrative established by the subject’s temporal elaboration of cognition through discursive judgments, noumena are yet only quantitative and qualitative lacunae for thought – indeed ciphers, zeroes, or, according to Derrida’s approach, grounds of hypotyposis for a

⁹⁴ Roland Barthes, “Structural Analysis of Narratives” in *The Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 295.

primary approach to the notion of “spacing” in thought. This “spacing” as it formally corresponds to time-synthesis in the subject’s theoretical extrapolation of the “transcendental aesthetic” into a truly plural “transcendental aesthetics” can only be posed as being so intimately internal to the temporally based cognitive procedures of the subject that it alone provides a first basis for understanding how the appreciation of space as a conditioning form of transcendental apperception in general is immediately associable with the form of time as an equally conditioning form of the same. As a verbal or procedural action, “spacing” is thus that which is *performed* in the subject’s most primitive lashing of space to time in the determination of its “transcendental unity of apperception,” the only unity capable of granting the subject a model of provisional unity hypothetically assignable to objects of thought, including *itself* as an object of thought.

The way in which all cognitions imply the drawing of an analytically necessary connection by the subject between the forms of space and time, a ‘drawing’ or ‘sketching’ *qua* graphical practice of “écriture” which Derrida ‘de...scribes’ with the gerund “spacing,” can be understood in strictly Kantian terms as that which establishes the subject’s “transcendental unity of apperception” as it pertains only to the indefinite apprehension, and not any determinate comprehension, of the singular individuality of the subject as a potentially unified ‘self.’ Noumena are thus not responsible for synthesizing the subject’s “transcendental unity of apperception,” but are produced, as blank concretions of the raw need to positing an ideological ‘standpoint’ attributable in principle to any subject, in and with the very first spontaneous discursive expressions on the part of the subject regarding the ‘nature’ of this hypothetical unity. Since the subject’s treatment of itself as a hypothetical unity must reflect to a consideration of its own subjectivity as an object of (self-)consciousness, the ‘objective’ nature of noumena in their blankness would be the first concept of objectivity capable of corresponding to the subject’s hypothetical consideration of its own subjectivity as a possibly ‘objective’ unity.

Since the subject itself is responsible for actively synthesizing its recognition of space and time as forms of apperception which mutually serve as conditions of possibility underlying all apperception of any potentially comprehensible cognition, it posits noumena in a cognitive gesture which amounts to a

simultaneous temporalization of the basic form of space and a differentiation of the orders of internal and external sense. It is in this way that the “transcendental synthesis of the imagination” is related to the “transcendental unity of apperception.” Without the syntheses of the imagination, the transcendental unity of apperception would have no formal basis for apprehending its involvement in fathoming any kind of formal relations between space and time. It is in this sense that the positing of noumena as primitive and blank objective ‘placeholders’ expresses the formation of the possibility of understanding through the active production of discursive judgments the first and most basic syntheses undertaken by the subject of the relations between space and time. This first unifying synthesis of space and time, which is prior to any schematization and any judgment of cognitions but concomitant with the positioning of the basic theoretical possibility and necessity of noumena for thought in general, is the synthesis of the imagination. Furthermore, the “unity of apperception” – which constitutes the subject’s implicit accompaniment of all of its considerations of objects – “in relation to the synthesis of the imagination *is* the understanding, and this very same unity, in relation to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, is the *pure* understanding” (CPR 238/A119, italics added).

Formulated in clear response to Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological considerations regarding the consciousness of internal time, Derrida’s notion of “spacing” can be taken as providing a ground for understanding how internally considered concepts of objects come, in light of the radical indeterminacy of the “thing in itself”, to be applicable to particular objects of intuition as well as to the subject’s own provisionally singularized field of thought. This does not happen in or through “spacing” and even less happens in or through “space”, but rather *against* them, in the temporal consideration of all objects of thought that the notion of “spacing” permits with its necessary introduction of a primitive recursion in the domain of subjective cognition between “inner sense” and “outer sense.” Derrida’s actively verbal form of “spacing” articulates, in brief, how the idea of space must itself, as an idea, also therefore be a temporally mediated and discursively represented idea. As Derrida positions it:

As soon as we admit spacing both as “interval” or difference and as openness upon the outside, there can no longer be any absolute inside, for the “outside” has insinuated itself into the

movement by which the inside of the nonspatial, which is called “time”, appears, is constituted, is “presented”. Space is “in” time, it is time’s pure leaving-itself, it is the “outside-itself” as the self-relation of time. The externality of space, externality as space, does not overtake time; rather, it opens as pure “outside” “within” the movement of temporalization.⁹⁵

In “spacing,” noumena thus stand as the principle in relation to which the subject first comes to apprehend the temporal in general with respect to its schematizing involvement in the cognition of transcendental (or possible) as well as empirical (or actual) objects of thought. The succession of appearances out of which the subject actively derives its comprehension of the temporal by conducting a regress in the series of these appearances by means of a decomposing synthesis entirely depends upon the possible appearance of objects of thought, but these theoretical objects require a limit which can prevent them from being confused with intuitions of sensibility. Noumena constitute this “limit” or “boundary concept” capable of guaranteeing the theoretical integrity of objects of thought, and on this basis remain capable of assisting in the subject’s determination of the temporal in general. In a manner similar to the way in which transcendental ideas are necessary to the imagination yet concomitantly immune from any actual encounter in experience, noumena also do not ever ‘appear’ but rather, by “taking place” or by guaranteeing a “place” for objects in thought, serve to open the process of “spacing” as “what happens” in the subject’s time-synthesizing establishment of a rationally conceptual principle of potential economy between the “inner” (i.e. temporal) and “outer” (i.e. spatial) forms of “sense.”

Although Derrida’s understanding of “spacing” is most directly offered in response to a problem of Husserlian phenomenology, the problem in question is clearly a legacy of Kant’s considerations of how time comes to be regarded by the subject as a comprehensible form of cognition. It is this legacy which is most trenchantly impacted by the conceptual economy Derrida establishes in his formulation of ‘spacing’ as an active procedure, as Derrida’s formulation picks up on the specifically Kantian problematics relayed by Husserl and furthermore extrapolates the steep importance of spontaneity in the subject’s response to these problematics. The reverse leap from Derrida to Husserl to Kant permitted by addressing the origin

⁹⁵Jacques Derrida, “The Voice that Keeps Silence” in *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973), 86.

and resonance of Derrida's notion of 'spacing' also helps us to avoid falling into the hubris-laden impasses of post-Kantian tendencies to use the force of dialectical rhetoric to conceal (or worse, ideologically capitalize upon) any intractable philosophical aporiae of a purely analytic nature, impasses consolidated by Hegel to the horrific effect of producing pseudo-encyclopedic justifications detectable at the root of all modern and postmodern political philosophies of totalitarianism.⁹⁶ The historical template

⁹⁶ Because our placement of historical responsibility for the role played by philosophy in establishing of conditions of possibility for modern totalitarianism squarely lands on the shoulders of Hegel (and the responsibility for its further toxic 20th century development being placed at the feet of Heidegger and Schmitt), we will devote this relatively extensive note to grounding such a serious claim. First, see Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1968), 249 (italics added): "It is true that a *concretization of ideas* had first been conceived in Hegel's theory of state and had been further developed in Marx's theory of the proletariat as the *protagonist* of mankind. [...] Yet neither Marx nor Hegel assumed actual human beings and actual parties or countries to be ideas in the flesh; both believed in the process of history in which ideas could be concretized *only in a complex dialectical movement. It needed the vulgarity of mob leaders to hit upon the tremendous possibilities of such concretization for the organization of masses.* [...] It is this absoluteness of movements which more than anything else separates them from party structures and their partiality, and serves to justify their claim to overrule *all objections of individual conscience.* The particular reality of the individual person appears against the background of a spurious reality of the general and the universal, *shrinks into a negligible quantity* or is submerged in the stream of dynamic movement of the universal itself. In this stream the difference between ends and means evaporates together with the personality, and *the result is the monstrous immorality of ideological politics.* All that matters is embodied in the moving movement itself; every idea, every value has vanished into a welter of superstitious pseudoscientific immanence." This "pseudoscientific immanence" to which Arendt here refers can readily be understood as expressed in Heidegger's sought and dogmatically found rationale for manipulating Kant's treatment of the imagination into leading to not a 'transcendental' but rather a "philosophical anthropology." See also pages 348-9: "The chief qualification for a mass leader has become unending infallibility; he can never admit an error. The assumption of infallibility, moreover, is based not so much on superior intelligence as on the correct interpretation of the essentially reliable forces in history or nature, forces which neither defeat nor ruin can prove wrong because they are bound to assert themselves in the long run. [Arendt continues in a note:] That Hegelian dialectics should provide a wonderful instrument for always being right, because they permit the interpretation of all defeats as the beginning of victory, is obvious." Another text especially worth consulting for its detailed comparisons of Kant and Hegel in investigation of the origins of modern totalitarian ideologies is Edith Wyschogrod, Spirit in Ashes: Hegel, Heidegger and Man-Made Mass Death (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985). Page 202: "In contrast to Kant's view of time as a function of the subject, Hegel interprets time as becoming and destruction. Even if, for Hegel, time is sublated in the absolute, it is penultimately a destructive force which sweeps away the detritus of moribund civilizations. Both aspects of Hegel's view are reflected in the death-world. Victims experience the annihilatory power of time while those who control the sorting myths try to stop time by creating a simulacrum of end-time which they hope will eventuate in a static eternity. The effort to create an eternal present freed from contamination of the impure is, in fact, the driving force of these myths. The self in its everyday existence, caught between the accelerated time of technique and the various efforts to stabilize this process, flounders between these modes of temporality." By way of addressing Schopenhauer's critique of Hegel, Louis Dumont aptly cites an essay of Dieter Henrich's which also falls in support of these considerations. Dumont, and thereby Henrich as well, are thus also worth citing at length: "It is clear that Schopenhauer did not accept the transition from Kant, whom he greatly admired, to the 'philosophers of the chair' [cf. the treatment of 'chairs' offered throughout the present text – JCG]. He sees them as imposing their fantastic constructions upon the reader through the impenetrability of their style. If we may isolate for our own use a relatively mild form of the complaint, Schopenhauer argues in one passage that Hegel fails to comply with the usual rules of communication by abusively shifting onto the reader a large part of the work an author has to do in order to make himself understandable [Dumont refers us here to Schopenhauer's "Ueber die Universitäts-Philosophie", in Sämtliche Werke, 4:173-242, Parerga und Paralipomena 1 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1963), 200-202]. For anyone who has struggled to penetrate Hegel's writings, the stricture makes some sense. It is symptomatic, incidentally, that there

for this abuse of philosophical aporiae as fodder for rhetorical manipulations of rote ideological symbology was unfortunately instigated by the post-and/or Neo-Kantians (Schiller, Schelling, Schlegel and especially Fichte) who sought to render Kant's "transcendental idealism" not only a simple nominal appellation, as it was for Kant, but instead the basis for an entirely unapologetic because altogether aesthetically motivated and thus altogether aesthetically justified conflation of ideological potency with untrammelled philosophical veracity.⁹⁷ The problem passed directly from Kant to Husserl and on to

was until recently a sort of taboo on that question among those who wrote on Hegel's philosophy: Hegel was accepted – and presumably understood – wholesale, or rejected wholesale. It comes as a relief to hear from a professional German philosopher [namely, Henrich] that it remains difficult to make out what Hegel was really after." Dumont then cites the foreword to Henrich's *Hegel in Kontext* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975): "Whoever wants to understand Hegel is still always by himself alone. He will find no commentary that would help his reading instead of only wanting to replace it... We know, that we still cannot say what really happens in Hegel's thinking – the last one that had the power to be a theory of science, society, consciousness and world in one. No one doubts its significance. Its diagnosis is missing." See Louis Dumont, "Collective Identities and Universalist Ideology: The Actual Interplay" in *German Ideology* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1994), 32.

⁹⁷See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989), 239-40 (italics added): "In these lines, as elsewhere (one might also use the examples of Schelling or Schlegel) the scheme we find – which is the very matrix of the scheme of the dialectic – is constructed on the basis of a rereading, explicit or not, of Aristotelian mimetology. And consistently, the operation has a cathartic end or function. [...] We know furthermore that the opposition of Naïve and Sentimental involved a whole series of oppositions for Schiller, not only historical (Ancients and Moderns), geographical (as for Winckelmann: South and North), or aesthetic (plastic and poetic, epic and lyric), but also properly philosophical. *They are borrowed, in this instance from Kant: intuitive and speculative, objective and subjective, immediate and mediate, sensible and ideal, finite and infinite [...]* In strict Kantian orthodoxy... *these oppositions should have remained oppositions, and as such, irreducible. But as is clear in each line of Schiller's text, the whole demonstration organizes itself around nothing other than the desire or will to reunite these oppositions and to produce, as Hegel will say, reconciliation. [...]* We encounter here the theme of asymptotic completion; it is common to the entire epoch, up to (but not including) Hegel: to the Fichte of *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* (practically contemporary with Schiller's essay), to the Schlegel of Fragment 116 of the *Athenaeum* on progressive poetry (that is, Romantic poetry), and even to the Schelling of the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*. All the same, infinitizing means, in addition, absolutizing. It also means effectuation, *Verwirklichung* – or 'organization', in the rigorous sense of the term. And moreover, when he tries to think the law thus 'put into work,' Schiller will outline in potential form the movement of the dialectical logic." For a more specifically targeted treatment of the ideological stakes which became manifest in the phase of philosophical history spanning Kant and Hegel which also retains a degree of methodological sympathy with Hegelian imperatives, see "Schiller and Hegemony" and "The World as Artifact: Fichte, Schelling, Hegel" in Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 102-151. From page 127 of the latter essay (italics added): "'Self-consciousness', as Schelling writes in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 'is the source of light for the entire system of knowledge, but it shines only forward, not backward.' In the act of self-positing, for Fichte and Schelling, *I know myself as infinite and absolute* [a determination of self-consciousness which even the most superficial readers of Kant should realize as anathema with respect to Kant's cautious handling of absolutes as aporiae - JCG]; and since transcendental philosophy is no more than a complex elaboration of the act, its founding absolute principle is the very gesture of self-consciousness itself. The whole theoretical enterprise becomes no more than a reprise of that primordial, incontrovertible act by which the subject posits itself, a metaphor of that infinite movement in which the subject *ceaselessly* re-emerges into being." Suffice it to say that Eagleton's unabashedly celebratory treatment of the Neo-Kantian qua Pre-Hegelian regard for subjectivity as capable of providing a comprehensible "metaphor" for "infinite movement" can also be read, in our contextualization of it, as indicating precisely those aspects of the Neo-

Derrida can be noticed protruding from the uncanny similarity of logical terrain shared by the two following formulations, between which Husserl's can be regarded as having transplanted the "common but...unknown root" of Kant's enigmatic indication into a context where this root's meaning shows potential for fruition: a context which directly concerns the role played by the subject in the determination of temporality. First, Kant:

All that seems to be necessary for an introduction is that there are two stems of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us *unknown* root, namely sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought (CPR 151/A15/B29, italics added).

In considering the statement above, one must keep in mind that it is of course only by virtue of the second, the understanding, that objects 'given' to us through the first, sensibility, become available to cognitive consideration. This passage must also be considered in tandem with the following passage from the "Transcendental Schema" section of the CPR, a passage considered earlier yet which is worth revisiting to reconsider the truly radical nature of the responsibility it proposes:

The pure image of all magnitudes (*quantorum*) for outer sense is space; for all objects of the senses in general, it is time. The pure **schema of magnitude** (*quantitatis*), however, as a concept of the understanding, is **number**, which is a representation that summarizes the successive addition of one (homogenous) unit to another. Thus number is nothing other than the *unity of the synthesis of the manifold* of a homogenous intuition in general, because *I generate time itself in the apprehension of the intuition* (CPR 274/A142-3/B182, italics added).

Now, with the implied question of how the subject's apprehension of temporality may be operant at the 'unknown root' of sensibility and understanding, let us consider Husserl (italics added):

Time-constituting phenomena, therefore, are evidently objectivities fundamentally different from those constituted in time. They are *neither individual objects nor individual processes*, and the predicates of such objects or processes cannot be meaningfully ascribed to them. [...] But no doubt we can and must say: A certain *continuity of appearance* – that is, a continuity that is a phase of *the time-constituting flow* – belongs to a now, namely, to the now that it *constitutes* [...] We can say nothing other than the following: *The flow is* something we speak of in conformity

Kantians which stand as most condemnable because most generative of politically ideological – i.e., rhetorically infinitive and thus 'finalized' - 'solutions' to analytically *indefinite* Kantian problematics.

with what is constituted, but it is *not* “something in objective time.” It is absolute subjectivity and has the absolute properties of something to be designated *metaphorically* as “flow” [...] For all of this, we lack names.⁹⁸

Husserl’s evident hesitation at rendering his own concept of “absolute subjectivity” ‘absolutely’ amenable to Hegel’s strictly dialectical and phenomenological model of “absolute subjectivity” is made evident in his assessment of the subject’s direct *involvement* in determining the temporal nature of its apprehension of any “continuity of appearance”. This assessment is cognate in form with Kant’s analysis of the time-generating aspect implied by the subject’s essentially quantitative apprehension of any “succession of appearances” in the “homogenous manifold” of intuition. Formed in the most intimate ‘expression’ possible of the imagination’s capacity to produce and reproduce representations, the apprehension of successive appearances is for Kant part and parcel of the subject’s apprehension of all magnitudes throughout cognition as essentially time-determined through the subject’s schematic extension of its faculty of understanding toward the production of discursive judgments. As soon as one imagines any object, be it hypothetical or ‘real,’ even something as simple as a mere point in space, one must imagine something which inherently bears comprehensible (if not yet fully comprehended) quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. The primary apprehension of that minimal quantitative dimension is the cognitive gesture of mind in which time comes to be synthesized by the subject as a form irreducibly constitutive of any apprehension of objects in general.

The truly shocking nature of Kant’s claim concerning the origin of temporality should not be let to pass without a repetition which seeks to open it up to further exploration, as it were (i.e., without the ‘successive addition of one homogenous unit to another’): it is the individually cognizing consciousness which itself *generates time* as a constitutive form of apperception in its intuitive apprehension – not its comprehension, but its apprehension – of a homogenous manifold, an apprehension which takes place in the faculty of imagination’s capacity of establishing a figurative synthesis (*synthesis speciosa*) of the

⁹⁸Edmund Husserl, “The Time-Constituting Flow as Absolute Subjectivity”, in On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1991), 79.

manifold character attributable to all representations of the imaginary. In other words, the subject generates time by engaging in something not entirely dissimilar to a cognitively based act of *counting*, albeit not an act of counting reducible to any mere denotation of “1, 2, 3” or assessment of a hypothetical image of points on a line (as the example of the ‘five dots’ in the schematism section literally *showed*), but rather in the spontaneous acts of judgment ‘set’ forth in the cognitive apprehension of any magnitude, be it ‘intensive’, ‘extensive’ or ‘flowing’, as forming potentially recognizable ‘sets’ of irreducible conceptual multiplicity. The first multiplicity which provides the basis for the apprehension of all objects of thought as ‘sets’ is the formal multiplicity of the representational manifold itself, which can only be thought as a synthetic product of a conjunction of space and time as mutually conditioning forms ‘in-forming’ of all cognition.

The transcendental unity of apperception implies the unity of the subject precisely on the basis of its foregrounding imaginary synthesis of the intersection of space and time at the basis of its representational manifold, an intersection which constitutes the first noumenal ‘point’ of potentially comprehensible objectivity in correlation to which the subject is capable of regarding itself as a provisionally if hypothetically and/or fictitiously determinable singularity. The ‘unity’ which the subject comes to attribute to objects in the extrapolation of the schematism through judgment is modeled on this unity hypothetically attributed to the subject, which in turn has taken its example from this synthetic unity of apperception. With admirable clarity, Longuenesse addresses this condition as follows:

[S]pace and time as presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic are already *entia imaginaria*, products of the *synthesis speciosa* of transcendental imagination, the determination of inner sense by the understanding. There would be no space and time as quanta if they were not “an effect of the understanding on sensibility,” which presents them as an intuition in which the “successive addition of homogenous units” (*quantitas*) can be reflected. [...] This explains in what sense Kant calls space and time *quanta infinita*: any *quantitas* determined in them will be a part, not a whole, relative to the one space and time that precede and make possible their parts. In other words, according to the definitions of ‘larger’ and ‘smaller’ given in Kant’s Lectures on Metaphysics, space and time are larger than any *quantitas*. This is why, on the one hand, space and time must be termed infinite given magnitudes (*quanta infinita*), and on the other hand, any determination of a *quantitas* in space and time **can be indefinitely pursued** (KCJ 267-8, closing emphasis added).

The ‘indefinite pursuit’ Longuenesse indicates as a component of the apperception of any object of thought as a discrete yet multiplicitous spatiotemporal set is a direct expression of the decomposing synthesis identified by Kant as operant at the basis of all cognition. As a form of analysis which violently collides against an always spontaneously arising need to apprehend the transcendental synthesis of the imagination and the synthetic unity of apperception yet which is not on these synthetic accounts rendered inherently amenable to any purely dialectical approach to cognition (an approach which Kant insists can only foster the abuse of hypotyposes as “subreptions” of “transcendental illusion”⁹⁹), the analytic regress of the decomposing synthesis cannot ever be given wholly as either finite or infinite but only ever as provisionally indefinite because, as a regress in the series of appearances manifested in the imagination’s forwarding of a representational manifold to the understanding, this regress is always yet to be determined as expressive of either a reproductively automatic (and thus intuitively based) or productively spontaneous (and thus cognitively based) use of the imagination. To the extent that they are subsequent and antecedent factors, the process of differentiating reproductive from productive uses of the faculty of imagination can respectively be identified with the process of differentiating comprehension from apprehension in the determinations made by the faculty of understanding. The differentiation between reproductive and productive uses of the faculty of imagination, which always precedes any determinations made by the faculty of understanding, is rendered in the subject’s active process of schematically applying *a priori* categories of understanding to the cognitive field of intuition beginning with and from the application of the schema of quantity.

If it cannot be the “thing in itself”, what then can be said to provide the ‘time signature’ or indication of the ‘downbeat’ according to which the subject must initially begin to count time, according to which the subject locates its ‘tempo’ in the progressive differentiation of cognitions from recognitions, in the ongoing discernment of spontaneously productive from reflexively reproductive applications of the imagination to the understanding? How does the subject attain an avenue of approach toward the

⁹⁹ Cf. CPR 590/A643/B671.

provisional determination of singularity that is implied throughout its successively schematized appreciations of number and without which all of its appreciations of magnitude throughout the cognitive field would remain strictly incomprehensible? As is his wont, Kant has indeed provided us with a model for the apprehension of number as a multiplicity or set of homogenous magnitudes, but not any model for the comprehension of number as either an absolute singularity or as a 'set of all sets' totality. As we have noted, the qualitative and quantitative ambiguity of the "thing in itself" as a first negative index of spatiality for temporally mediating cognition in general cannot serve as an index for the apprehension of singularities in general, especially considering that its essential range of application falls toward an *inner* determination of *outer* sense - i.e. toward the temporal determination of spatiality - and not toward any inner comprehension of inner sense, which is where the crux of the schematic procedure of time-determination would have to rest alongside the "transcendental ideas" and/or "pure concepts of reason."

Here it is essential to recall that Kant expressly juxtaposed the transcendental form of space as corresponding to the "outer sense" and the transcendental form of time as corresponding to the "inner sense" of the subject, a posing in the context of which Derrida's verbal notion of "spacing" not only becomes comprehensible, but truly illuminative of the productive acceptability of Kant's discursive elaboration of dilemma as the cautionary tale concerning the necessity of a regulative principle. The horizon of difference drawn between space and time in the subject's deference to their formal heterogeneity as transcendental conditions of the entire aesthetic register of cognition sketches the contour, in a certain sense, of the very 'skin' of the subject itself as an auto-apprehending and self-relating theoretical entity which is also an innately practical partisan of pure reason. A recognition preserved by the subject of the *qualitative* difference between the synthetically unified transcendental forms of space and time, a difference which remains assimilable to the subject's *quantitative* differentiation between what Kant classifies respectively as "extensive" and "intensive magnitudes," forms the semi-permeable boundary that first divides the transcendental unity of the subject's apperception from the formal conditions which contain it. Derrida's actively gerundial notion of "spacing" is thus not only exactly faithful to Kant's understanding of the subject as something which determines itself in the critical process

of extending a spontaneous free volition, but furthermore and on that basis indicates the active spontaneity of the temporally cognizant gesture of schematization through which the subject's transcendental capacity to synthesize a unity of apprehension comes to apprehend the quantitative magnitudes associable with space and time as qualitatively 'extensive' and 'intensive' magnitudes.

The "spacing" to which Derrida refers is thus nothing other than that which "takes place" in the subject's consideration of spatiality in general as a formal property as this property must become subject to possible comprehension as a qualitatively *intensive* rather than *extensive* magnitude - i.e. as one which must corresponds to the temporality of "inner sense" while remaining heterogeneous to it and thereby becomes applicable to the free subjective exploration of transcendental ideas. This procedural *cognition* of spatiality as an intensive rather than extensive magnitude, albeit apparently perverse to the extent that space is the domain of extensive magnitudes in general, reflects the laying a basic discursive ground for spontaneity in the subjective schematization of categories. The static *recognition* of space or the spatial *simpliciter* strictly as an "outer sense" pertains only to objects of sensual intuition and takes place along the schematic register of the comprehension of extensive magnitudes, as any object in space can readily be regarded as an inherently extensive magnitude (e.g. the length of a line or the image of the full array of dots which form an image of 'a thousand').

Space in itself, however, considered as the form of a transcendental idea which holds no possible point of availability to experience considered in itself, thus cannot itself so readily be assessed as a purely extensive magnitude. Rather, it can only be quantifiably assessed as an intensive magnitude, since the apprehension of space as a formal condition of all apperception entirely depends upon the synthetic capacities of the faculty of imagination as the most essential and flexible faculty of "inner sense" in general. This assessment cannot solely depend upon or be a purely analytical-tautological product of the faculty of understanding, as such would make any apprehension of the form of space itself tantamount to a total comprehension of the 'absolute unity' of the entire universe as an extensive magnitude - a situation which would render all questions of cosmology moot and the subject's position with respect to the regress of any series of appearances a matter of absolutely incomprehensible ubiquity. Nor can the apprehension

of the form of space as an intensive magnitude depend upon sensibility, which also would make this apprehension tantamount to the absurd omniscience of an actual view of the entire totality of the universe in one fell swoop of visual consciousness, a vantage point which would also thereby render any particular instance of spatial understanding irrelevant.

How is the cognitive approach to any regress in a series of appearances to be conducted according to Kant? By means of a decomposing synthesis that expresses a regulative principle of pure reason in the subjective creation of the judgments which comprise the discursive content of cognition. How are the matters of ‘truth’ represented in philosophical texts to be considered as potentially being artifacts of the ever ambiguous relationship of logic to rhetoric in philosophical prose? By means of a gradual deconstruction of logocentric abuses of ideology. How are the matters of transcendental ideality handled in artworks to be understood as not encapsulating dogmatic necessities regarding perception but instead prescriptive of imaginative approaches to an open-ended form of temporality? Through the treatment of the aesthetic contemplations that artworks inspire as demonstrative of *désœuvrement*. At this juncture, the first connections between that which Kant indicated as “decomposing synthesis,” that which Derrida indicated as “deconstruction” and that which Blanchot indicated as “unworking” or *désœuvrement* can be seen as falling into collective view, but not without a necessary detour through the establishment of the calculation of subjective individuality – a calculation which, expressive of a persistent need to render transcendental *eidos* subject to representation by *logos*, abandons us like perpetual infants on the threshold of ideology itself in the subjectively interrogative domain of the transcendental schematism. We risk regarding this threshold as home-like only at our own peril, as in doing so we must always forget to a certain extent the responsibility to remain vigilant with respect to the always imaginatively discerned difference between spontaneously productive and automatically reproductive applications of the schematism of understanding to cognition itself. To take this threshold for granted simply as home-like is to forget and furthermore sanction forgetting that the subject’s attempt to comprehend the true objective nature and extent of its own subjectivity as an identifiable partisan of critical reason must always remain a somewhat irreducibly *unheimlich* if ever spontaneously and thus scrupulously assayed cognitive affair.

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