STUDIES IN KANT'S DOCTRINE OF AN INTUITIVE INTELLECT

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This dissertation consists of three independent essays treating Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect. I provide a brief description of each below:

1. In §76 of the third *Critique*, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind that represents the world *only* as it is. Taken together with his commitment to a *divine* intuitive intellect, this gives rise to a problem: If God does not represent other ways the world could be, it would seem to follow that there is no other way the world could be, which would be an unwelcome implication for Kant given his commitment to a conception of human freedom that presupposes that our moral characters could be other than they are. The first essay of this dissertation explores the philosophical resources Kant has to reconcile these commitments.

2. According to a received view, Kant maintains that only God could possess an intuitive intellect, i.e., a mind with an 'intellectual intuition' or, equivalently, an 'intuitive understanding' of objects. Such a view finds support in the first *Critique*, for instance, where Kant writes, "intellectual intuition […] seems to pertain only to the original being" and in lecture transcripts where we read, "[o]nly the understanding of God is called intuition." However, such a view is also brought into question by neglected texts suggesting that it involves a considerable oversimplification of his

position. The second essay of this dissertation examines these texts in an effort to illuminate Kant's conceptions of the intuitive and human intellects.

3. Scribbled in the margins of Kant's copy of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, we read: "That is the divinity of our soul, that it is capable of ideas." This final essay pursues this description of our ideas as "the divinity of our soul" with the aim of correcting a popular but misleading narrative that the critical Kant flatly rejects a theocentric model on which human cognition is measured against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect. Along the way, it also suggests a significant and ultimately illuminating Platonic influence on Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect *and* on the critical philosophy more broadly.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kimberly Brewer was born on a naval air station in the Central Valley of California and spent her early years in the city of Hanford. After graduating from Hanford High School in 2005, she moved south to San Diego, where she received a BA in philosophy at the University of California in 2009. Following a post-college stint conducting epidemiological research in mortality and morbidity, she headed east to Ithaca, New York, where she continued her philosophical pursuits at the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University. After receiving an MA in 2015, she spent a year as a DAAD research scholar studying German and writing her dissertation at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, Germany.

To Michael, Jon, and Dessy

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CHAPTER 1

All Objects God Cognizes Exist: Necessitarianism in §76 of the Third Critique[1]

"Perhaps never in so few pages have so many deep thoughts been pressed together as in §76 of the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*" (*Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy* 1.2.175, my translation).[2] Schelling's (1795) general sentiment here seems to have been widely shared by the post-Kantian German idealists, a number of whom famously appropriated a version of these "deep thoughts" into their own philosophical systems. The influence of this section (together with §77) on these later figures has been well canvassed in the literature.[3] Far less discussed, although certainly no less important, is the problem that this section seems to pose for Kant's own philosophical commitments—most notably, for his commitment to freedom. The present essay offers a discussion of this problem as well as an attempt to resolve it.[4]

What if John Wilkes Booth's derringer had jammed? What if Hitler had been accepted into art school? We often imagine alternative ways the world could be. Kant tells us in §76 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) that this is in fact an "absolutely necessary <*unumgänglich nothwendig*>" feature of the human mind

[1] I use the abbreviations listed at the end of this essay. The first *Critique* is cited in accordance with standard A/B pagination. Kant's other works are cited by volume and page number from the Akademie Edition. Where available, dates are included for lecture transcripts, letters, and reflections. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are from *The Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works* (edited by Guyer & Wood) and emphases are Kant's (or the respective author's) own.
[2] I first encountered this passage in Förster (2002).
[3] See, e.g., Förster (2012) and Sedgwick (2012).
[4] Insole (2013) and Stang (2016) offer the only other attempts to solve this problem that I am aware of. I treat their solutions in §2. See also Winegar (2017) for a discussion of another problem found in §76 related to Kant's concept of a free and moral God.

(5:401).[5] Yet in the same section, he also describes a kind of mind very different from our own, a so-called 'intuitive intellect', that would represent the world *only* as it actually is. More precisely, we are told that such an intellect would represent "no objects except what is actual *<keine Gegenstände als das Wirkliche>*" and, as a result, "no such distinction (between the possible and the actual) *<keine solche Unterscheidung (zwischen dem Möglichen und Wirklichen)>*" (5:402):[6]

> [A]ll objects that [it] cognize[s] would **be** (exist), and the possibility of some that did not exist, i.e., their contingency if they did exist, as well as the necessity that is to be distinguished from that, would not enter into the representation of such a being at all. (5:402-3)[7]

Taken straightforwardly, what we find in this passage is an expression of Kant's view that an intuitive intellect would not represent mere possibilities. I call this the 'modal

[5] More precisely, Kant writes in §76 that our judgment that "things can be possible without being actual" is "valid of objects insofar as our cognitive faculty [...] is concerned with [them]" (5:402). This is because we judge objects through (discursive) concepts, and there is neither a logical nor an extra-logical connection between the concept of an object and the object's existence. There is no logical connection in the sense that existence is not, in Kant's view, a predicate. Given this, when we represent an object through a concept, there isn't a predicate to determine that it must exist in the way that there is one to determine that a bachelorette must be female. There is also no extra-logical connection in the sense that, when we represent an object through a concept, that object is not ipso facto guaranteed to exist (say, by being produced or otherwise brought about through the concept). Thus, because there is no connection between concepts and existence, we represent and judge that objects need not exist, i.e., that they "can be possible without being actual."

[6] There is an interesting question here about why Kant thinks that an intuitive intellect would fail to make a distinction between actuality and possibility simply because it fails to represent merely possible objects. Jessica Leech (2014) has recently suggested an answer that draws from the functional approach to the philosophy of modality. According to John Divers's (2010) version of this approach, such modal distinctions should be included in an account of modality only if they serve a "legitimate and identifiable" function for the subject (quoted in Leech 358). In our own case, there is such a function since "we need the concepts of possibility and actuality to cope with our divided cognitive architecture" (358). But, Leech suggests, "it would be gratuitous to include in our theory of modality modal concepts or modal judgements for an intuitive understanding" since "there is no analogous function to be fulfilled" (362). See Leech (2014) and Divers (2010) for more on this approach to modality.

[7] Original: "[A]lle Objekte, die ich erkenne, **sind** (existieren); und die Möglichkeit einiger, die doch nicht existierten, d. i. Zufälligkeit derselben wenn sie existieren, also auch die davon zu unterscheidende Notwendigkeit, würde in die Vorstellung eines solchen Wesens gar nicht kommen können." See also R6020 18:425-6 1780-9: "Daher machen wir einen Unterschied zwischen Moglichkeit und Wirklichkeit. Da das letztere etwas seyn soll, was noch über dem Gedanken an sich gesetzt ist. Könnten wir durch Anschauung erkennen, so würden wir zwischen Moglichkeit und Wirklichkeit (wenn die erstere nicht durch Begriffe gedacht wird) keinen Unterschied finden."

characteristic' of an intuitive intellect. What seems to emerge from it, as we will see below, is an alarming Spinozistic necessitarianism that excludes mere possibilities and, with this, human freedom as Kant conceives of it.[8]

For taken together with his commitment to a *divine* intuitive intellect, this modal characteristic would seem to imply that God does not represent mere possibilities. Yet if God, who is of course omniscient, does not represent mere possibilities, it would also seem to follow that there are no such possibilities to represent, which would be a very unwelcome implication for Kant given his critical commitment to carving out logical space for a conception of our freedom that presupposes mere possibilities. Specifically, he holds that our freedom "presupposes that although something has not happened, it nevertheless ought to have happened" and, as a consequence of his view that ought implies can, that this something that has not happened could have happened (KrV A534/B562). This something would be a mere possibility, and it, together with our freedom, would seem to be ruled out by a divine intuitive intellect for which the modal characteristic applies. Henry Allison (1990) has famously characterized Kant's critical philosophy as "a philosophy of freedom" (1), and more recently, Desmond Hogan (2009) has defended a reading on which key critical doctrines are motivated by Kant's interests in "securing the metaphysical preconditions of freedom" (532). Given the importance of freedom to Kant's system, the historical significance of §76 more generally, and the frustrating fact that Kant does not himself propose a reconciliation, the question before us as sympathetic readers is this: Are there resources within his philosophy to reconcile his

[8] Spinoza's own necessitarianism is of course complicated and controversial. See Newlands (2018) for an illuminating discussion of Spinoza's modal metaphysics.

commitment to freedom with the conception of the divine mind that we find in §76?

In this essay, I aim to show that there are. In brief, I deny the implication that for Kant there would be no mere possibilities if the divine intuitive intellect didn't represent them. This generates two tasks for me: For in the next section, I will argue that the merely possible entities presupposed by human freedom are *worlds*—those in which an agent's moral character would be other than it actually is. Given that the dominant view in the 18th century is that worlds are possible only insofar as the divine intellect represents them, I will need to show that Kant has the philosophical resources to provide an alternative account of merely possible worlds that does not make appeal to divine representation. However, the problem in §76 is obviously not motivated solely by 18th century modal metaphysics but also by divine omniscience: If God does not represent these merely possible worlds, it would seem to follow that there are no such worlds, period. If I were to simply sacrifice divine omniscience in order to solve the problem, my proposal would seem not only trivial but even explicitly hostile to Kant's own theological position. I will thus also need to show that this alternative account is consistent with Kant's commitment to divine omniscience.

This essay will proceed as follows: I begin by clarifying the problem at issue in §76 (§1). I then argue against a number of proposals for a solution (§2). Finally, I present and defend what is, in my view, a better solution. The basic idea is that Kant can account for mere possibility without appealing to divine representation (§3) and without violating his commitment to divine omniscience (§4). I close by responding to three significant objections to my proposal (§5).

1. The Problem

Let me begin by elaborating and clarifying the problem at issue in §76. To this end, it is necessary to explain not only what this problem is but also and perhaps even more crucially what it is *not* since there are a number of nearby theological problems likely to be conflated with it and hence also likely to distract from its solution. I begin this discussion by distinguishing our problem from the closest two of these problems. The first is related to divine freedom and the second to what I call the 'synoptic characteristic' of an intuitive intellect.

1.1 Divine Freedom and the Synoptic Characteristic

The problem targeted in this essay is distinct from any problem related to divine freedom. For the freedom that God enjoys does not, in Kant's view, presuppose mere possibilities; it rather consists in absolute spontaneity alone, i.e., in "the faculty of beginning a state from [one]self, the causality of which does not in turn stand under another cause determining it" (KrV A533/B561).[9] For this reason, if §76 were to pose a problem for divine freedom, it would be distinct from the problem concerning mere possibilities that is targeted in the present essay.[10] For the same reason, any problem

[9] For a discussion of divine freedom, see RGV 6:50n and V-Th/Pölitz 28:1066-8 1783-4. See also Derk Pereboom (2006) for a very helpful analysis of Kant's views on freedom.

[10] Even so, permit me a brief word about this problem: Insofar as divine freedom consists only in spontaneity, I suggest that §76 does not pose a problem for it. While the nature of Spinoza's necessitarianism is controversial, it is significant that even he found room for a kind of spontaneity here: "That thing is called free which [1] exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and [2] is determined to act by itself alone" (EID7). According to Spinoza, only the divine will is free in this way since only it satisfies (1) and (2), and Kant would agree. That is, he would agree that only the divine will satisfies these conditions and is alone free in this way. Yet he would disagree that (2) is satisfied by the divine will "act[ing] from the necessity of [the divine] nature" (EIP17). Rather it is by God "decid[ing] only what is in conformity to his highest understanding" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1068 1783-4). This alternative way of satisfying the second condition is still consistent with necessitarianism since what is in conformity to this "highest understanding" might very well be the possibilities that are actual.

that might arise for freedom in virtue of the fact that it consists in spontaneity should also be kept distinct from the problem targeted in this essay, including therefore the problem we encounter in §77 of the third *Critique*.

Kant aims to establish in §76 that modal judgments are "merely subjectively valid for the human understanding" (5:402). By contrast, he aims to establish in §77 that the same is true for "the concept of a natural end," i.e., that our teleological judgments regarding organisms and nature as a whole are also merely subjectively valid (5:405). His argument in each case appeals to the characteristics of a being whose intellect is intuitive and for whom such judgments would not be valid as a result. However, the characteristic to which he appeals and the problem that arises differs in the two cases. In §77, he appeals not to the modal characteristic of an intuitive intellect but to what I refer to as its synoptic characteristic:

> Now, however, we can also conceive of an understanding which, since it is not discursive like ours but is intuitive, goes from the **synthetical universal** (of the intuition of a whole as such) to the particular, i.e., from the whole to the parts, in which, therefore, and in whose representation of the whole, there is no **contingency** in the combination of the parts, in order to make a determinate form of the whole, which is needed by our understanding, which must progress from the parts, as universally conceived grounds, to the different possible forms, as consequences, that can be subsumed under it. (5:407, my modified translation)[11]

Assuming that the *divine* intuitive intellect is also a mind for which the whole precedes its parts and in this way excludes the contingency therein, a problem indeed seems to arise for human freedom, but it is one distinct from that suggested by §76.

[11] Original: "Nun können wir uns aber auch einen Verstand denken, der, weil er nicht wie der unsrige discursiv, sondern intuitiv ist, vom **Synthetisch-Allgemeinen** (der Anschauung eines Ganzen als eines solchen) zum Besondern geht, d.i. vom Ganzen zu den Theilen; der also und dessen Vorstellung des Ganzen die **Zufälligkeit** der Verbindung der Theile nicht in sich enthält, um eine bestimmte Form des Ganzen möglich zu machen, die unser Verstand bedarf, welcher von den Theilen als allgemeingedachten Gründen zu verschiedenen darunter zu subsumirenden möglichen Formen als Folgen fortgehen muß."

This is because the natural interpretation of the passage above is that the divine intuitive intellect's "intuition of the *whole* as such" in which "there is no **contingency** in the combination of the parts" is a representation of a *world.* By causing a world to come into existence, it would seem to follow that God thereby determines everything that happens within that world (its 'constitution and combination of parts')—the individuals in it, the properties and causal powers of these individuals, and even the exercise of these causal powers. All of this would seem to be fixed by his representation of the world as a whole prior to that world coming into existence.[12] This in turn would seem to suggest that we could not "[begin] a state from [ourselves], the causality of which does not in turn stand under another cause determining it" because all such states would seem to stand under the divine cause (KrV A533/B561). If this is right, then what the synoptic characteristic most directly threatens is not the mere possibilities presupposed by human freedom but rather the absolute spontaneity that this freedom consists in.[13] Thus, this problem is also distinct from that targeted in the present essay—which concerns mere possibilities alone.

1.2 Mere Possibilities

Having homed in on this problem, a further question now arises: Which kind of mere possibilities does this freedom concern? For it is widely acknowledged in what is currently an active area of Kant scholarship that his modal theory is complex and

[12] Consistent with this suggestion is a reflection from the 1780s that states: "God's cognition determines every part in the whole" (R6174 18:478).

[13] This is not to say that this characteristic does not also affect these mere possibilities, although a few more steps would be needed to derive this implication. It is to say only that what this characteristic most directly affects is the absolute spontaneity involved in human freedom. This is, however, an additional problem that is beyond the scope of the present essay.

involves several kinds of possibility.[14] Given this, if we are to determine whether Kant has the philosophical resources to carve out logical space for the mere possibilities presupposed by human freedom, we will need to get clearer about which kind of possibilities these are. To this end, I propose that it will suffice to focus on Kant's notions of logical and real possibility. Logical possibility should be familiar. An object is logically possible if its concept is possible in the sense of not containing a contradiction. Real possibility may be less familiar. It is comparable to the contemporary notion of metaphysical possibility. An object is really possible if its existence is possible, or if the object could exist. For Kant, these notions can come apart since not everything that is logically possible is also, in his view, really possible. Consider his case from the Postulates chapter: "a figure that is enclosed between two straight lines" (KrV A220/B268). This figure is logically possible because its concept does not contain a contradiction. In Kant's words, "the concepts of two straight lines and their intersection contain no negation of a figure." Yet the figure fails to be really possible given "the conditions of space" constraining what can exist. Or consider a few Kripke-style cases: Water that is not H_20, Hesperus that is not Phosphorus, and (to borrow a positive case from Peter Yong (2014)) a human being that is made of ice. These are all logically possible but arguably not really possible.

So which kind of mere possibility is presupposed by human freedom? Logical possibility or also real? I want to suggest that for Kant the answer is the latter. Not only do mere logical possibilities seem too weak for the kind of incompatibilist conception of freedom that he seems concerned to make room for but, even when he

[14] See Pereboom (1991), Adams (2000), Chignell (2009), Stang (2011), Chignell (2012), Chignell and Stang (2013), Yong (2014), Abaci (2016), Stang (2016).

was a compatibilist, he rejected what he took to be the Leibniz-Wolffian view that such possibilities could "diminish the force of the necessity or the certainty of the determination" of our actions (PND 1:400). It would be difficult to argue that he changed his mind on this point after becoming an incompatibilist. If this is right, then when he tells us that human freedom "presupposes that although something has not happened, it nevertheless ought to have happened," his commitment to ought-implies-can is best understood as entailing that this something that ought to have happened *really* could have happened; it is a mere real possibility.[15]

Given Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism, however, we have not yet arrived at a sufficient answer to our question regarding which kind of possibility is presupposed by human freedom. The reason is that his idealism brings with it a further distinction within the notion of real possibility—namely, the distinction between real possibility relative to appearances (reality as experienced by discursive beings like us) and real possibility relative to things in themselves (reality as it is independently of our experience of it).[16] An object is really possible relative to appearances if it exists in a possible world of appearances, and it is really possible relative to things in themselves if it exists in a possible world of things in themselves. Like logical and real possibility, these notions can also come apart; this time in both directions. This is in part due to the fact that appearances are spatial and temporal, while things in themselves are not. For this reason, the conditions on what exists in each world differ. For example, temporal objects are really possible in a world of appearances but not in

[15] While I am quite confident on this point, notice that no great harm is done if I am mistaken here. A solution that can accommodate mere real possibilities can also accommodate mere logical possibilities.
[16] Cf Abaci's (2016) analysis of Kant's notions of possibility.

a world of things in themselves, while non-temporal objects are really possible in a world of things in themselves but not in a world of appearances.[17]

At this point, let us return to the question: Which kind of mere real possibilities is presupposed by human freedom? Those relative to appearances or those relative to things in themselves? I suggest that for Kant the answer here is again (at least most fundamentally) the latter. Consider his case of the "malicious lie" from the first *Critique* (A554-6/B582-4). He tells us that an agent is free with respect to this lie and hence also, in his view, blameworthy for it not in virtue of his or her "empirical character" but in virtue of his or her "intelligible character." This is because "another intelligible character would have given another empirical [character]" and likewise another action. What this means is that an agent is ultimately blameworthy not in virtue of a character in the world of appearances (e.g., "the wickedness of a natural temper insensitive to shame") but in virtue of a character in the world of things in themselves (one that prioritizes either morality or happiness). It is ultimately *this* character that Kant tells us "could have and ought to have determined the conduct of the person to be other than it is." Thus, the "something that has not happened [but] ought to have happened" is a something at the level of the agent's character in the world of things in themselves.

If this is right, then human freedom, as Kant conceives of it, presupposes mere real possibilities relative to things in themselves. Put another way, it presupposes really possible worlds of things in themselves other than the actual one in which my

[17] To be clear, I do not at all mean to imply that *every* temporal object is really possible in a world of appearances nor that *every* non-temporal object is really possible in a world of things in themselves. Kant would surely deny that a human being made of ice is really possible in a world of appearances.

intelligible character really could be other than it actually is.[18] Whether Kant has the philosophical resources to carve out logical space for human freedom is thus a question of whether he can carve out logical space for this kind of mere possibility. To help parse the modal layers in this question, let me put it another way: There are certain conditions that must obtain for such worlds to be able to exist, or to be really possible. Is the conception of the divine intellect found in §76 logically consistent with these existential conditions and in this way with human freedom? Is a divine intellect that does not represent such merely possible worlds logically consistent with the existence of them?

In §3, I will attempt to show that it is. I will argue that Kant's cosmology and modal metaphysics allow him to account for such really possible worlds without appealing to divine representation. This is itself significant insofar as divine representation is essential to the leading account of possible worlds in the 18th century. Many prominent early modern thinkers—most notably, Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten—endorse a version of the view that worlds are possible only insofar as the divine intellect represents them.[19] Yet the problem in §76 is clearly not exhausted by 18th century views about possible worlds. It consists also in the fact that God is omniscient, which seems to render impossible whatever he does not represent. Thus, I will also try to show in §4 that my proposed account of merely possible worlds is

[18] Of course, if it is really possible that this world is different, then it is also really possible that the world of appearances is different since, in Kant's view, the former grounds the latter; another intelligible world would have given another empirical one. For a related problem about whether Kant's claims in the Postulates imply that the world of appearances could not be different, see Abaci (2016).

[19] As Leibniz writes in §43 of his *Monadology* (1714): "[…] God's understanding is the realm of eternal truths or the ideas on which they depend; without him there would be nothing real in possibles, and not only would nothing exist, but nothing would be possible" (218). See Messina (2016) for a helpful overview of Leibniz-Wolffian accounts of possible worlds.

consistent with a Kantian conception of divine omniscience that is not only philosophically interesting in its own right but also not nearly as unorthodox as it might initially seem.

1.3 The Empirical Postulates

Before turning to these tasks, however, I would like to pause here in order to distinguish our problem from one further related problem. This too concerns a kind of necessitarianism and so runs the danger of being conflated with the problem presently under consideration. At the end of the Postulates chapter, Kant asks, "[w]hether the field of possibility is greater than the field that contains everything actual, and whether the latter is in turn greater than the set of that which is necessary [?]" (A230/B282-3). His questions here concern a kind of real possibility, and he offers a rather unsettling response: "It certainly looks as if one could increase the number of that which is possible beyond that of the actual, since something must be added to the former to constitute the latter. <u>But I do not acknowledge this addition to the possible</u>" (A231/B283-4, my underlined emphasis). This would seem to constitute an endorsement of a kind of necessitarianism insofar as Kant is in some sense denying that possibility extends beyond actuality. Yet notice that the necessitarianism that would seem to be implied by this denial is distinct from what we are concerned with in §76 for the reason that the Postulates chapter is most directly concerned with real possibility *relative to appearances*.

To see this, consider Kant's own clarification of the questions he has here posed to himself: "[T]hey mean, roughly, to ask whether all things, <u>as appearances</u>,

belong together in the sum total and the context of a single experience, of which each perception could belong to more than one possible experience (in their general connection)" (my underlined emphasis). In other words, what Kant is in some sense denying in the Postulates is that possibility relative to appearances extends beyond actuality. This problem is also distinct from the problem that concerns us here, and it is not the ambition of the present essay to solve it.[20]

2. Rejected Alternatives

At this point, we are finally in the position to try to solve the problem of §76. However, the proposal that I will ultimately be defending is certainly not the first to come to mind. There are several much simpler and more obvious alternatives that seem to do the trick just as well without getting into the thickets of Kant's cosmology and modal metaphysics. For this reason, I would like to begin by briefly explaining why some of the more obvious and tempting of these alternatives are unsatisfying.

2.1 Proposal 1

The first alternative I wish to consider draws attention to the fact that Kant maintains that an intuitive intellect would represent neither mere possibility *nor necessity*. Recall that he writes in §76 that "all objects that [this intellect] cognize[s] would **be** (exist), and the possibility of some that did not exist, i.e., their contingency

[20] Uygar Abaci (2016) has offered a very interesting proposal for solving this problem in the Postulates chapter. He argues that Kant is not making a metaphysical point but rather the epistemic point that "what we can assert as really possible is coextensive with what we cognize as actual" (22). Kant maintains that the only guide we have to real possibility is what we represent as actual. As a result, we cannot assert that a world in which sugar is salty is really possible since the world we represent as actual is one in which sugar is sweet. This does not mean that a salty-sugar world is not a real possibility; it means only that we do not and cannot know whether it is.

if they did exist, as well as the necessity that is to be distinguished from that, would not enter into the representation of such a being at all" (5:402-3, my underlined emphasis). According to this first proposal, this qualification allows Kant to easily avoid the charge of necessitarianism. If God is omniscient, represents reality as it is, and does not represent necessity, it would seem to follow that there is no necessity relative to things in themselves. Thus, even if §76 were to rule out mere possibilities, this need not automatically imply the necessity that should seem to accompany *necessit*arianism. In other words (symbols rather), this proposal sees Kant as in some sense surrendering $\sim\Diamond\sim p=\Box p$ and, equivalently, $\sim\Diamond p=\Box\sim p$.

This first proposal is unsatisfying for two reasons: First, it does not actually solve the problem but merely quibbles with my use of the term 'necessitarianism'. Regardless of whether there is no necessity relative to things in themselves, human freedom would still seem to be in jeopardy insofar as it presupposes mere possibilities; the present proposal does *nothing* to rescue these. Second, I grant that if God does not represent necessity, this would certainly *seem* to imply that there is no such necessity, but I do not grant that it automatically does imply this. As we shall see in §3, that God does not represent mere possibilities need not similarly imply that there are none.

2.2 Proposal 2

The second alternative denies that the modal characteristic is part of Kant's considered doctrine of an intuitive intellect. We find support for this proposal in the fact that there seem to be only two explicit statements of the modal characteristic in the entirety of Kant's published and unpublished works. The first is found in a section

of the third *Critique* that Kant himself describes as a passing remark, while the second is scrawled in the margins of his copy of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (1757): "[W]e make a distinction between possibility and actuality <*Unterschied zwischen Moglichkeit und Wirklichkeit*>, since the latter is something that is posited beyond the thought itself. If we could cognize through intuition, we would not find any distinction between possibility and actuality <*so würden wir zwischen Moglichkeit und Wirklichkeit […] keinen Unterschied finden*>" (R6020 18:426 1780-9). According to the present proposal, a passing remark and marginalia hardly constitute compelling grounds for burdening Kant with a doctrine that carries with it necessitarianism. Now because this proposal is unsatisfying for the same reason as the next, allow me to present the third alternative before discussing their shared point of weakness.

2.3 Proposal 3

The third alternative begins by rejecting the widespread assumption that all the characteristics that Kant associates with an intuitive intellect are inseparable, that is, that a mind for which one such characteristic applies is one for which all the other characteristics also apply. I call this the 'inseparability assumption'.[21] So far, we have discussed only two of these characteristics: the modal and synoptic characteristics. In addition, Kant tells us that an intuitive intellect intuits objects as they are in themselves (thing in itself characteristic);[22] that it would not represent objects by

[21] Michelle Kosch gave voice to this assumption at the 2012 Eastern APA: "Kant is usually taken to be listing […] some properties necessarily had by any such intellect (e.g. that for it nothing non-actual would be possible, concepts would not be universals, intuition would not be receptive but instead productive, and so forth) without suggesting that any of these properties could be instantiated independently of the others."

[22] See, e.g., KrV B307, V-Met/Mron 29:800 1782-3, and V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5.

means of general or discursive concepts (non-discursivity characteristic);[23] and that it produces or otherwise guarantees the existence of objects just by representing them (productivity characteristic).[24] The assumption that these characteristics are inseparable has not gone unchallenged in the literature. Most notably, Moltke Gram (1981) has argued that some of these characteristics are in fact incompatible.[25] Peter McLaughlin (1990) and Eckart Förster (2012) have also expressed opposition to the inseparability assumption. On McLaughlin's reading, Kant conceives of an intuitive intellect as a mind that possesses any one of a number of characteristics, where such minds are united "not [by] a particular property that they share but rather [by] their common function as contrasts" (170). "[T]hey are understandings that are in some particular respect *different* from ours" (my underlined emphasis). Förster pushes a very similar line of thought and even harshly criticizes the broader literature on this topic for its 'persistent' adherence to the inseparability assumption (145).

Drawing from this family of challenges, the present proposal defends Kant against the charge of necessitarianism as follows: Although he identifies the divine intellect as an intuitive intellect, he does not mean to suggest that the modal characteristic applies to it but only that some or even all of the other characteristics do. Independent support for this proposal is found in the fact that in at least some of Kant's statements of the other characteristics, he explicitly refers to the divine intellect. His statements of the modal characteristic seem to be an exception in this regard. In fact, the odd phrasing of these statements might be taken to provide

[23] See, e.g., KrV B145, A256/B312, and Prol 4:356.
[24] See, e.g., KrV B72, B139, and B145. Cf Leech (2014), who also uses this 'guarantee' formulation.
[25] Gram's reasons regarding this point are complicated (and I suspect confused) and getting into the details would take us too far afield.

additional support. Specifically, Kant writes that this characteristic would apply not 'if one could cognize through intuition' but "[i]f we could" (5:402, my underlined emphasis). It might be argued that he is in this way signaling that this characteristic would apply only to a finite intellect like ours were it an intuitive intellect. Before turning to why I find this proposal unsatisfying, allow me to disclose that I am sympathetic to its general resistance to the inseparability assumption. As I discuss elsewhere, there are a number of neglected texts indicating that Kant is willing to entertain the possibility of a finite intuitive intellect, and it is unclear whether all or only some of the above characteristics would apply in such a case.[26] Even so, the present proposal is unsatisfying for at least two reasons.

First, Kant explains at the beginning of §76 that "a finite rational being in general," insofar as we can conceive of its cognitive capacity, must judge that "things can be possible without being actual" (5:401-2, my underlined emphasis). This strongly suggests that the intellect that he sees as being exempt from this constraint (that is, one for which the modal characteristic would apply) would be God's *infinite* intellect. The second reason, and this reason also speaks against the previous proposal, is that the versions of the productivity characteristic Kant explicitly ascribes to the divine intellect imply that the modal characteristic would also apply to it. He writes in the first *Critique*, for instance, that the divine intellect "would not represent given objects, but through [its] representation the objects would themselves at the same time be given, or produced <*hervorgebracht*>" and likewise that divine intuition is "one through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given" (B145, B72). If

[26] See "Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects" (unpublished).

all the objects the divine intellect represents are "given" or "produced" by its very representation of them, then 'all objects that it cognizes would **be**.'

The modal characteristic would in this way seem to commit Kant to the converse of Berkeley's 'esse is percipi' doctrine, where for finite entities their percipi is their esse. Berkeley is also committed to this but only with respect to finite *bodies* insofar as the full version of his doctrine explains that "Existence is percipi or percipere (or velle i.e. agere)" (*Philosophical Commentaries* 429, 429a).[27] Interestingly, this leads Berkeley to grapple with a nearby theological problem: If the divine intellect has always possessed ideas of these bodies, then they have always existed, which would seem contrary to the literal account of creation found in Genesis on which finite bodies began to exist. The fourth proposed solution draws inspiration from Berkeley's answer to this problem.

2.4 Proposal 4

Berkeley explains (by way of his fictional character Philonous) that there is "a twofold state of things, the one ectypal or natural, the other archetypal and eternal" (*Three Dialogues* III.253-4). The former "may properly be said to begin their existence, or be created, when God decreed they should become perceptible to intelligent creatures," which "supplies us with the most natural, obvious, and literal sense of the Mosaic history of the Creation," while "the latter existed from everlasting in the mind of God." According to the present proposal, Kant could likewise appeal to this distinction to avoid the problem in §76. Christopher Insole (2013) gestures in the

[27] Existence is to be perceived or to perceive (or to will, i.e., to act).

direction of such an interpretation: "[B]eing 'actual' or 'existent' in this context does not mean being part of the created world that God instantiates, but being grounded in the actuality of the divine understanding" (22). Thus, "for God there is no extensional distinction between the actual and the really possible" only in the sense that everything really possible enjoys a kind of Berkeleyan archetypal existence in the mind of God.

This proposal is ultimately unsatisfying because the interpretation of the modal characteristic that it suggests leaves aside the context in which this characteristic is initially introduced in §76. One of Kant's central aims in this section is to establish that our modal judgments are "merely subjectively valid for the human understanding" (5:402). He does this by appealing to an alternative intellect for which the modal characteristic would apply—namely, one for which "there would be no such distinction <*keine solche Unterscheidung*> (between the possible and the actual)" and likewise one that excludes "all of our distinction <*unsere Unterscheidung*> between the merely possible and the actual" (5:402, my underlined emphases). The distinction at issue in the modal characteristic is thus supposed to refer to 'our such' distinction between possibility and actuality, and it is clear from the context of §76 that the actuality involved in this distinction is not some sort of idealist existence of the Berkeleyan variety but a "positing of the thing in itself (apart from this concept)," i.e., a straightforward existence of the thing independently of the representation of it.

2.5 Proposal 5

The fifth alternative registers the obvious response to what was unsatisfying about the third. It maintains that Kant could allow for other kinds of divine

representation in addition to the kind "through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given" (KrV B72). James Messina (2016) has proposed something very much like this on behalf of the pre-critical Kant: "Kant does not say what the ground of the possibility of non-actual possible worlds is, but it is open to him to say that God has a number of other (non-existing-giving) schemata, to each of which corresponds a world that God could actualize" (239). At issue here is a text from the *New Elucidation* (1755) where Kant tells us that the "scheme of the divine understanding" through which God represents a world also "gives existence" to that world (1:413). According to Messina, nothing prevents the pre-critical Kant from also allowing for a kind of 'non-existing-giving' schema to account for "the possibility of non-actual possible worlds." According to the present proposal, the critical Kant could similarly allow for a kind of divine representation in addition to that "through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given" such that it need not be the case that all objects God cognizes would be (B72).

This proposal is unsatisfying because whether or not it is consistent with Kant's pre-critical commitments, it would be difficult to square with a straightforward reading of the strong and striking language in §76: An intuitive intellect has "no objects <*keine Gegenstände*> except what is actual"; "there would be no such distinction <*keine solche Unterscheidung*> (between the possible and the actual)"; "all objects <*alle Objekte*> [it] cognize[s] would **be**"; "possibility […] would not enter into the representation of such a being at all <*gar nicht*>"; and so on (5:401-3). This strong and striking language similarly tells against Nicholas Stang's (2016) recent attempt at solving this problem, according to which Kant "might mean something more specific

by possibility and necessity than necessity and contingency *überhaupt*" when he writes that possibility and necessity "would not enter into the representation of such a being at all" (308). Stang proposes that on Kant's view God would represent a modal distinction between possible and actual objects, though not by means of *our* modal concepts but by "cogniz[ing] objects as depending either upon his will or merely upon his essence" (312). I want to insist, however, it would be better all things considered to hold out for a solution that remains faithful to a more straightforward reading of mere possibility "would not enter into the representation of such a being at all."

2.6 Proposal 6

The sixth alternative contends that when all things are considered it is not in fact better to hold out for such a straightforward solution. This proposal points to evidence in transcripts of Kant's lectures according to which he firmly denounces Baumgarten's distinction (appropriated from the 16th century theologian Luis de Molina) between divine cognition of what is possible and divine cognition of what is actual: "[I]n regard to God there is no distinction <*kein Unterschied*> between the possible and the actual; for a complete cognition of the possible is simultaneously a cognition of the actual" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). The underlined text is virtually identical to what we find in §76 (again, "there would be no such distinction (between the possible and the actual)"). However, we read on in the lecture transcripts to find that what Kant means by there is no distinction between the possible and the actual is only that the "actual is already included within the possible, since what is actual must also be possible, for otherwise it could not be actual." According to the present

proposal, this provides some support for pursuing a similar reading of §76.

This proposal is unsatisfying because what Kant writes in §76 clearly tells against such a reading: An intuitive intellect would have "no objects except what is actual"; "all objects that [it] cognize[s] would **be**"; "the possibility of [objects] that did not exist […] would not enter into the representation of such a being at all"; and so on (5:402-3). It would be implausible to interpret such statements as merely expressions of the position that the "actual is already included within the possible."

2.7 Proposal 7

The seventh and for us final alternative denies that the necessitarianism that seems to be implied by §76 poses a genuine threat to human freedom. The basic idea is that even we must believe that necessitarianism obtains, we cannot, given critical strictures, come to know that it actually does. This proposal is unsatisfying because it clearly runs afoul of one of the most central aims of the critical philosophy—"to make room for **belief/faith** <*Glaube*>" in "**God, freedom, and immortality**" (KrV Bxxx, my modified translation). It is difficult to see how Kant could accommodate all of these beliefs if they were to conflict. Perhaps this could be granted if his aim were merely to accommodate non-simultaneous belief, yet his practical philosophy obviously demands more. Kant explains that the moral law bids us to strive after a world in which happiness is commensurate with virtue. In his view, this means that such striving must be really possible and that we must *believe* in the conditions necessary for this possibility: God, freedom, and immortality.[28] Without such beliefs,

[28] To be clear, while Kant (*typically*) indicates that God and immortality are objects of *belief*, he often

Kant tells us it would be "practically impossible <*praktisch unmöglich*>" to strive after such a world (KpV 5:143). Given that these conditions make this world possible only in conjunction, we must on this view also believe in them in conjunction.

Of course, it might be argued that Kant need not also require that we comprehend precisely how these beliefs fit together. After all, he elsewhere appears rather unperturbed by our incomprehension in such matters: "It is, however, totally incomprehensible <*schlechterdings unbegreiflich*> to our reason how beings can be *created* to use their powers freely, for according to the principle of causality we cannot attribute any other inner ground of action to a being, which we assume to have been produced, except that which the producing cause has placed in it" (RGV 6:142).[29] Kant tells us here that it is "an impenetrable mystery <*ein undurchdringliches Geheimniß*>" how the absolute spontaneity that freedom consists in fits with divine creation, and yet he does not seem to regard this mystery as a threat to the beliefs involved (6:143). Notice, however, that there is a crucial difference between this case and the case that we are concerned with. It is not simply that we cannot see how the mere possibilities presupposed by human freedom and a divine intuitive intellect fit together; we can see that they in fact seem to rule each other out. Ours is not a case of an impenetrable mystery but a case of what seem to be a penetrable inconsistency, and it is unlikely that Kant would be satisfied with this. For even in the case of absolute spontaneity and divine creation, he does not simply settle for inconsistency, which is

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declares that freedom is an object of *cognition* and *knowledge*. See, e.g., KpV 5:4, 5:30, and 5:105. See also KpV 5:137 for one of Kant's less frequent discussions of God as an object of cognition.

[29] See also MpVT 8:264. Thanks to Hogan for reminding me of these passages.

evident by his attempt in the second *Critique* to reconcile the two.[30] At the very least, I want to again insist that it would be better all things considered to hold out for a genuine solution before surrendering to a kind of mysterian position if at all possible.

3. A Better Proposal

I turn in this section to the proposal that I will be defending in the rest of this essay. I will argue that even if §76 were to imply that the divine intellect does not represent merely possible worlds, this need not also imply that there are no such worlds. Taken together, Kant's account of how possibility in general is grounded and his account of how the actual world is grounded naturally suggest an account of how merely possible worlds could be grounded that is consistent with God not representing these worlds. To see this, let us begin with a sketch of these accounts.

3.1 The Ground of Possibility

Kant is a modal actualist about possibility. He holds that what is possible is somehow grounded by what is actual. The *locus classicus* of his modal actualism is his pre-critical theistic proof, the fullest version of which is found in *The Only Possible Argument* (1763). The critical Kant continues to endorse a version of this proof together with the modal account that it suggests. We read in mature lecture transcripts, for instance, that "this proof can in no way be refuted <*widerleget kann er auf keine Weise werden*>" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1034 1783-4).[31] However, where Kant once saw this proof as establishing knowledge that God exists, he later sees it as

[30] See KpV 5:100-3. For further discussion of this reconciliation, see Brewer and Watkins (2012).
[31] Adams (2000) and Chignell (2009/2012) also note this passage.

establishing only the "subjective necessity of assuming such a being." The proof begins with the premise that "something is possible" and argues, first, that this is true only if a formal and material condition are met and, second, that the material condition is sufficiently met only if the *ens realissimum* is actual, i.e., only if God exists (2:91).

Consider Kant's case of a fiery body. He explains that for a fiery body to be possible, it is not sufficient that the collection of its predicates contains no contradiction, or that the formal condition is met. It is also necessary that the material content of these predicates ("extension, impenetrability, force, and I know not what else") is "given in something actual, either as a determination existing within it or as a consequence arising from it" (2:80). This is because "possibility disappears not only when an internal contradiction, as the logical element of impossibility, is present, but also when there exists no material elements, no *datum*, to be thought" (2:78). Kant argues that this material condition is sufficiently met only by the existence of the *ens realissimum*:

> The data of all possibility must be found in the necessary being either as determinations of it, or as consequences which are given through the necessary being as the ultimate real ground. […] [A]ll reality is, in one way or another, embraced by the ultimate real ground. But precisely these determinations, in virtue of which this being is the ultimate ground of all possible reality, invest that being with the highest degree of real properties which could ever inhere in a thing. Such a being is, therefore, the most real of all possible beings [or the *ens realissimum*] (2:85)

In other words, Kant's account of how possibility in general is grounded is that the material content from which all possibility is constructed is given by the *ens realissimum* "as determinations of it, or as consequences given through [it]."

Robert Adams (2000) and Andrew Chignell (2009) offer versions of what is

today the dominant interpretation of this modal account, according to which the material content from which all possibility can be constructed is given by the *ens realissimum* in virtue of it "exemplify[ing] possibilities—not all possibilities, but the most fundamental qualitative possibilities" (Adams 427).[32] That is, this being "exemplifies a maximal version of every fundamental positive predicate or "reality"" from which all positive, negative, limited, and complex predicates can be constructed (Chignell 158). Thus, where F is a fundamental positive predicate or reality, the *ens realissimum* grounds the possibility of F, the negation of F, degrees of F, and composites of F and other predicates by exemplifying the most metaphysically robust version of F. By exemplifying omnipotence, for instance, the *ens realissimum* grounds the possibility of power, powerlessness, degrees of power, and powerful entities.

3.2 The Ground of the Actual World

Kant's account of how the actual world is grounded builds on the above account of possibility. He tells us that a world (of things in themselves) is a whole of substances that stand in real and reciprocal causal relations to one another, where such relations do not obtain simply in virtue of the existence of these substances but in virtue of "a communality of a cause, namely […] God" (PND 1:413).[33] Specifically, we are told that the "scheme of the divine understanding, which gives existence, [must] also [establish] the relations of things to each other, by conceiving their existence as correlated with one another" (my underlined emphasis). His account of

[32] Newlands (2013) also endorses such an interpretation.
[33] For evidence that this is also the critical account of a world, see V-Met/Mron 29:849-54 1782-3 and KpV 101-2. See Ameriks (1992) for a discussion of the continuity between Kant's pre-critical and critical metaphysical views.

the ground of the actual world is thus divine representation. God represents substances as causally related, and through his representation, he likewise "gives existence" to these substances *and* to these causal relations.[34] The possibility of these substances is in turn grounded by the maximal and fundamental realities that God exemplifies.

Notice that there seem to be two distinct sets of relations in the above account. I call these the 'internal' and 'external' relations of substances, and though Kant does not so explicitly refer to the former here, I suggest that it is most plausible to interpret him as maintaining that divine representation would similarly 'give existence' to these relations. What I have in mind here is this: The possibility of a given substance is grounded by the realities that the *ens realissimum* exemplifies in the sense that the realities that constitute such a substance (e.g., "extension, impenetrability, force, and I know not what else") are so grounded. However, I take it that extension is not itself a substance for Kant. Rather, it is a *whole* of extension, impenetrability, and force that constitutes such a substance. If this is right, then Kant's account of the actuality of substances and the actuality of their relations is best understood as follows: An actual substance is grounded in just the same way as an actual whole of substances (i.e., an actual world). Just as an actual world is grounded by the divine representation of substances standing in certain 'external' relations, an actual substance is grounded by the divine representation of realities standing in certain 'internal' relations. Having drawn attention to this distinction, I think we can largely set it aside in what follows.

To get a better grip on how Kant's account of possibility in general and his account of the actual world fit together, imagine a deity who is, in an analogous

[34] I follow Messina (2016) (esp. 239) here.

fashion, the *ens realissimum* with respect to all possible desserts. Such a deity grounds an actual chocolate chip cookie by representing and thereby also giving existence to the appropriate mixture of ingredients (the flour, butter, chocolate chips, and so on), and the possibility of these ingredients is in turn grounded by the maximal and fundamental ingredients that it itself exemplifies (a maximal version of the wheat that goes into the flour, the cocoa that goes into the chips, and so on). Yet given that this deity's representation 'give existence' both to the *ingredients* and to the *mixture* that it represents, what of the merely possible cookies, brownies, cupcakes, and so on? What is the ground of the mere possibility of the *mixture* of their ingredients?

The more important question of course is what is the ground of merely possible worlds for Kant? For not only is it intuitive that there should be such worlds, but human freedom, as he conceives of it, presupposes them. The frustrating fact is that Kant is as silent about this in the critical period as he is in the pre-critical period. Recall that because of this Messina (2016) offers an account on his behalf: "it is open to [Kant] to say that God has a number of other (non-existing-giving) schemata" (239). Yet, as we saw, whether or not such an account is consistent with Kant's pre-critical views, it does not seem to fit well with a straightforward reading of §76. For this reason, I would like to propose an alternative, one that is consistent with the implication that God does not represent such worlds.

3.3 The Ground of Merely Possible Worlds

This alternative account begins with Kant's conception of a world: a whole of substances that stand in real and reciprocal causal relations to one another. From this,

we can understand an actual world to be a whole of actual substances that stand in actual real and reciprocal causal relations and a merely possible world as a whole of possible substances that stand in merely possible real and reciprocal causal relations. Above we saw Kant's account of the former. He holds that the possibility of the substances of an actual world is grounded by the realities that the *ens realissimum* exemplifies, and the actuality of these substances together with the actuality of their relations is grounded by its representation of them. Of course, the possibility of the substances of a merely possible world could be grounded in just the same way, that is, by the realities that the *ens realissimum* exemplifies. The crucial question is this: What grounds the mere possibility of the relations within these merely possible worlds?

It would be tempting to say that the mere possibility of these relations is simply grounded by the fact that the divine intellect *could but does not* represent substances as standing in such relations. However, the suggestion that God 'could' do this presents something of a challenge for this proposal. For the critical Kant at times seems to defend a version of the Leibnizian principle of optimism. We read in transcripts of his lectures, for instance, that "[t]he product of such a [divine] will must be the greatest whole of everything possible, that is the *summum bonum finitum*, the most perfect world" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1061 1783-4, my underlined emphasis). This (together with KU §76) suggests that there is an important sense in which God is incapable of representing and thereby creating substances standing in different relations. If he must create the most perfect world, then the actual world (i.e., the actual substances standing in their actual relations) would have to be that world. Now there are other times when Kant seems to suggest a somewhat weaker position,

according to which God decides (presumably also creates) "only what is in conformity with his highest understanding" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1068 1783-4, my underlined emphasis).[35] Yet even this position, which I take to be closer to his considered view, fits rather uncomfortably with the present suggestion. Again, if God can create only the world that is in conformity with his highest understanding, then the actual world would have to be that world. Here again, there seems to be a sense in which God is incapable of representing and thereby creating substances standing in different relations. I would prefer to avoid such thorny theological territory together with the additional modal layers this option brings to the table if possible. What I will now propose goes a ways towards doing just that.

My proposal represents what is essentially a Kantian twist on Leibniz's 'per se possibility' strategy on which, as expressed in Leibniz's "On Freedom and Possibility" (1680-2), a world is said to "[remain] possible in its nature, even if it is not possible with respect to the divine will" (21). That is, I suggest that Kant could allow that the possibility of merely possible relations is simply grounded by the fact that there is no 'real repugnancy' among substances that would prevent such relations from obtaining. Kant tells us that real repugnancy "occurs where there are two things" and "one of them cancels the consequence of the other" (NG 2:175). This is what Chignell (2009) has referred to as 'predicate-canceling' real repugnancy: "It obtains when, for example, two opposed but equally powerful forces operate on a ship: one a wind blowing east, and one a current flowing west, say. Together they keep the ship from moving in either direction, and thus "each reciprocally cancels the effect of the other""

[35] For an illuminating discussion about whether God must create the best, see Robert Adams (1972).

(172-3). Chignell claims that there is evidence of another kind of real repugnancy, which he refers to as 'subject-canceling': "In these cases, the manner in which two or more predicates are opposed results in a "canceling" [...] of the subject itself" (173).[36] Drawing from these notions, I propose that the mere possibility of the relations between substances could simply be grounded by the properties of the realities and corresponding substances themselves, that is, by the fact that there is no predicate- or subject-canceling repugnancy between these properties that would prevent such relations from obtaining.

On this proposal, and this is of course essential to solving the problem of §76, divine representation does not serve as the ground of the possibility of the (internal or external) relations of substances. At least, it does not do so directly. There may be some indirect involvement insofar as divine representation itself exemplifies certain realities and these realities may themselves play some role in determining what relations are possible. However, the important point is that the possibility of these relations does not at all depend on these relations being the *object* of divine representation, as it does on the Leibniz-Wolffian account. This is true not merely for the possibility of merely possible relations but also for the possibility of the actual relations that obtain within the actual world. That is, the properties of the realities and substances themselves would likewise ground the possibility of these actual relations; divine representation would simply be what ultimately 'gives existence' to them.

Notice that this proposal runs counter to a now very prominent interpretation of Kant's modal proof, according to which the *ens realissimum* directly grounds via

[36] Abaci (2014) and Yong (2014) take issue with whether there is a notion of subject-canceling repugnancy here. See Chignell (2014) for a reply.

exemplification not just the possibility of the *realities* of substances but also the possibility of the *relations* between these realities. According to Chignell (2012), realities can be co-instantiated only if they are actually co-exemplified by the *ens realissimum*. For example, "having phenomenal red as a quality of consciousness" and "being omnibenevolent" can be co-instantiated because their content is co-exemplified by this being, while "being conscious" and "being extended" cannot because their content is not co-exemplified in this way (656). There is, however, a compelling reason to reject Chignell's interpretation in favor of my own. What Kant in fact tells us is that the "materials contain within them an extraordinary adaptedness to harmony; the essences of these materials themselves contain within them a harmony with a whole which is orderly and beautiful in many ways" (BDG 2:100, my underlined emphasis). I take this to mean that the possibility of the relations between realities (whether they are 'harmonious' or not) is ultimately grounded by the properties of the realities themselves (what they "contain within them"). This is of further significance insofar as it allows Kant to avoid a very undesirable Spinozistic consequence of Chignell's reading: The fact that "being impenetrable" and "being extended" can be co-instantiated would imply that God is an extended, impenetrable being (664-5).

Let us return to our analogy. Recall that the actuality of the chocolate chip cookie is grounded by the fact that the deity of desserts represents and thereby also gives existence to the mixture of its ingredients, and the possibility of these ingredients is in turn grounded by the more fundamental ingredients that this deity exemplifies. On the present proposal, the possibility of the ingredients of the merely possible brownie is grounded in just the same way, that is, by the ingredients that this

deity exemplifies. However, the mere possibility of the mixture of the brownie's ingredients is grounded by the fact that there is no real repugnancy present within these ingredients that would prevent them from mixing (say, in the way that the density and polarity of oil and water prevent them from mixing).[37] Given this, the merely possible brownie, just like the actual chocolate chip cookie, can be said to constitute a real possibility; for the conditions that must obtain for it to exist all find a ground in something actual, as is required by Kant's modal *actualism*. At this point, let us depart from the analogy and return to those worlds that are, in Kant's view, presupposed by human freedom: merely possible worlds of things in themselves.

I contend that the conditions that must obtain for these worlds to exist likewise find a ground in something actual on the present proposal. The possibility of the substances of these worlds is grounded by the realities that the *ens realissimum* exemplifies, and the possibility of the (internal and external) relations of these substances is (ultimately) grounded by the properties of these existent realities. The present proposal thus provides Kant with an account of merely possible worlds that is logically consistent with God not representing them and that fits very naturally with his official cosmology and modal metaphysics.

4. Divine Omniscience

Earlier I suggested that a solution that remains faithful to a straightforward reading of §76 would be better *all things considered*. However, insofar as the present proposal accepts that the divine intellect does not represent every possible world, a

[37] Admittedly, this analogy is flawed since oil and water can in fact come together with the aid of some kind of emulsifier. Apart from such an emulsifier, however, their properties are similarly repugnant.

rather important consideration might seem to have been left out: divine omniscience. I would here like to show that my proposal is in fact consistent with a Kantian conception of divine omniscience that is not only philosophically interesting but also not as unorthodox as it might initially seem.

4.1 A Hylomorphic Conception

Before turning to that conception, let us very briefly consider another tempting alternative. Contrary to what has just been said, the present proposal might be seen as allowing that God does in fact represent every possible world—just not 'as such'. To see this, recall that Kant sometimes seems to defend the view that "[t]he product of such a [divine] will must be the greatest whole of everything possible" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1061 1783-4). Taken together with his commitment to the doctrine of divine creation, it would seem to follow from this that the actual world is this greatest whole of everything possible, which gives rise to what I call the 'hylomorphic account' of divine omniscience. For insofar as Kant agrees with the Leibnizian position that "it is impossible for one reality to contradict another," it is at least logically possible that the actual world qua greatest possible whole contains within it all the material reality found in every possible world (28:1016). Given this, it is also logically possible that the divine intellect represents all the material reality contained within every possible world by virtue of representing the actual world.[38] In other words, my solution would seem to be consistent with a conception of divine omniscience on which the *matter* but

[38] Messina (2016) makes a similar point: "[I]f all possibles derive their possibility from God's essence, and God's essence is necessarily unitary and harmonious, it is not clear why all the possibles that derive from them would not themselves be unitary and harmonious such that they would all constitute one big, all-encompassing possible world" (242).

not the *form* of every possible world falls under the scope of divine representation.

There are, however, two immediate worries for such a suggestion. First, it might seem inconsistent with divine omniscience insofar as it excludes the form of merely possible worlds from divine representation. Second, it might seem to assume a questionable interpretation of "the greatest whole of everything possible" insofar as it identifies this whole with the most metaphysically robust world. Indeed, Baumgarten might be read as having such an interpretation in mind, and his *Metaphysica* (1757) is what Kant lectures from when he is reported to have said that "[t]he product of such a [divine] will must be the greatest whole of everything possible." Even so, it is not entirely clear that Kant in fact follows Baumgarten in this instance. Nor is it clear, as I briefly suggested earlier, that Kant even endorses the view that God must create the greatest possible world as opposed to whatever world 'conforms to God's highest understanding.' I am sympathetic to this second concern and would thus like to pursue an alternative, one that is independent of the hylomorphic account but not necessarily inconsistent with it. I see this alternative as a substitute, but a proponent of this hylomorphic conception might well appropriate it to respond to the first concern.

4.2 A Dignified Conception

I call this alternative the 'dignified conception' of divine omniscience. According to this conception, omniscience does not require that the divine intellect represent literally everything, including merely possible worlds. Though this might initially seem an unorthodox position, it is not without precedent. Consider by way of analogy the divine attribute of omnipotence. On Descartes's interpretation, which is

typically regarded as the extreme, omnipotence is the power of the divine will to do literally anything, including (rather notoriously) the power to "make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3" (359). We can, however, understand other early modern thinkers as effectively offering a weaker conception of omnipotence, one on which omnipotence is conceived as the power to do anything that is in some sense really possible, where the 'really' in this case is spelled out in terms of consistency with not only logical but also moral constraints. Leibniz, for instance, holds that the divine will is subject to a kind of moral necessity. We read in §234 of his *Theodicy* (1709) that "metaphysically speaking, [God] could have chosen or done what was not the best; but he could not morally speaking have done so" (271).

When Kant defends a version of the Leibnizian principle of optimism, as he does in an early publication and, as we have seen, is still reported as doing in some mature lecture transcripts, he follows Leibniz on this point.[39] He also holds that "God cannot decide otherwise than he does" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1068 1783-4). Rather he describes God as deciding "only in conformity with his highest understanding," where this restriction on what is really possible for God is not seen as limiting his power but as an expression of the "true freedom" of his will. For in determining the divine attributes, Kant proceeds *via negationis*, or through the method of negation: "I must […] leave out everything imperfect and negative, and ascribe to God the pure reality which is left over" (28:1021). In Kant's view, the ability to "always decide something else" is "a lack of [true] freedom in the human being" and such "limits must be left out and only the pure reality which is left over must be ascribed to God" (28:1068,

[39] See *Reflections on Optimism* (1759).

28:1022). Kant is led in this way to a conception of divine power that is congruent with what he regards as the "dignity of the divine nature" (28:1053).

I propose that we might proceed in the same way with the divine attribute of omniscience. Insofar as having a given representation involves limitation, the Kantian position would seem to be that it "must be left out" of the divine intellect. Again, this is not as unorthodox as it might seem. Many philosophers, including Augustine and Aquinas, are committed to the view that the divine intellect does not represent what it is like to experience, say, physical pain or phenomenal redness—and Kant agrees. His position is that some representations are essentially tied to the finitude of our faculties and so are not shared by God. In fact, there is an argument to be made that, for Kant, God also does not even represent space and time insofar as both are essentially tied to finite faculties.[40] But what limitation is involved in the representation of *mere possibility*? Here is my suggestion: Just as it is a limitation on our freedom that we can choose something other than the best, it is also a limitation on the deliberative nature of our practical reasoning that we must represent something other than the best to arrive at this best. To motivate this, consider another analogy: the amateur and expert bartenders. When presented with gin, vermouth, Campari, and an orange peel, the amateur bartender must reflect on the range of possibilities in order to arrive at a decent drink (the chilled vermouth, the olive-less martini, and so forth), while the expert bartender immediately sees only the best drink that can be made from these (the Negroni)—and this is considered to be an expression of her expertise. She doesn't

[40] See Brewer & Watkins (2012) (esp. 171n16) for a discussion of God's inability to represent space and time.

need to weigh the options to arrive at the best; she doesn't even notice them.[41]

In the same way, I contend that it is an expression of the dignity of the divine nature that the divine intellect represents and creates *only* what conforms to its highest understanding—a suggestion that finds independent support throughout Kant's writings and lectures: The "infinite understanding" need not "compare" "in order to establish conclusions" (PND 1:405). "Attention, abstraction, reflection, and comparison are only aids to a discursive understanding" and are "beneath the dignity of the divine nature" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053). In short, if possessing representations of alternatives serves no purpose for a being that lacks limitation, the Kantian position—which is expressly spartan in nature and informed primarily by practical considerations—would seem to be that they "must be left out" of the divine intellect (28:1022).[42] Interestingly, this too is not without precedent. Mogens Lærke (2007) argues that Leibniz, prior to arriving at his mature modal metaphysics and his strong conception of divine choice, also held that "God conceives only the best" and "does not exactly deliberate and compare options, but […] simply wills and produces the best" (6-7). My suggestion is that the mature Kant seems to resemble Lærke's early Leibniz in this regard.

Further support for attributing to Kant a conception of divine omniscience that falls short of the traditional logical conception is found in his moral theology's deduction of this attribute. In the third *Critique* and a number of other texts, he argues that the God of moral theology must be omniscient so that "what is inmost in [our]

[41] Luc Bovens lends me a more highbrow analogy: The amateur pianist must fiddle around with the keys to arrive at a decent tune, while the expert pianist immediately pounds out a masterpiece.
[42] See V-Th/Pölitz 28:1073ff 1783-4 for a discussion of Kant's view that "[m]orality alone […] gives me a *determinate* concept of God."

dispositions (which is what constitutes the real moral value of the actions of rational beings in the world) is not hidden from him" (5:444). Similarly, in the first *Critique*, he writes that God must be omniscient "so that [he] cognizes the inmost dispositions and [our] moral worth" (A815/B843). Now commentators have rightly noticed that divine knowledge of our actual moral dispositions, however exact and complete, does not require anything as strong as logical omniscience and thus have thought that Kant's official deduction of omniscience leaves a gap analogous to the gap Hume locates in the design argument's deduction of God's omnipotence. Eric Watkins (2013), for instance, points out that "[t]o proportion virtue and happiness, such a being would presumably need to know the moral character of every rational agent, but not the state of everything else in the world, so omniscience"—presumably, he here means *logical* omniscience—"is not obviously required to bring about the highest good" (228). Similarly, Desmond Hogan (2014) has suggested that "[t]he details of Kant's grounding of the divine attributes […] suggest that concessions to a theoretical conception of God as *ens realissimum* take up considerable argumentative slack in these determinations" (48).[43] However, I think there is an alternative reading available on which Kant's moral argument does not leave any such gap at all. Rather he *never* meant to deduce anything as strong as logical omniscience but only a more restricted conception of omniscience—one sufficient for the attainability of the highest good.

Kant's moral theology does then require that God can somehow represent the degree to which an agent's moral disposition falls short of a perfect will so that the agent's happiness can be made proportionate with her moral goodness. But it is not at

[43] Watkins (2013) also concludes that Kant must be relying on this conception to close the presumed gap here (229).

all clear that this requires that God represent mere possibilities. If this is right, then my proposed solution is consistent with a Kantian conception of divine omniscience.

5. A Defense

In this section, I would like to very briefly respond to three significant objections to my proposed solution.

5.1 Objection 1

According to the first objection, even if this proposal is consistent with a *Kantian* conception of divine omniscience, it hardly seems consistent with *Kant's* own conception as expressed, for instance, in the second *Critique*:

> But it is impossible through metaphysics to proceed *by sure inferences* from knowledge of this world to the concept of God and to the proof of his existence, for this reason: that in order to say that this world was possible only through a *God* (as we must think this concept) we would have to cognize this world as the most perfect whole possible and, in order to do so, cognize all possible worlds as well (so as to be able to compare them with this one), and would therefore have to be omniscient. (5:138-9, my underlined emphasis)[44]

Kant tells us here not only that omniscience involves cognition of every possible world but also that such cognition is required in order to compare and in this way determine which one is the best (presumably also which one 'conforms to God's highest understanding'). Kant's own remarks would thus seem contrary to my attempt to reconcile a straightforward reading of §76 with his commitment to divine omniscience.

However, I contend that remarks like these should not be taken at face value insofar as Kant is insistent that the divine intellect would not engage in such acts of

[44] See also MpVT 8:256 and V-Met-K2/Heinze 28:792-3 1790-1.

comparison. Charity thus dictates that we interpret him as speaking loosely in passages that might seem to suggest otherwise, and notice that this proposal is especially plausible in the above case since Kant is there referring to the kind of omniscience finite beings like us would need "to proceed *by sure inferences* from knowledge of this world […] to the proof of [God's] existence." In other words, what is at issue in this passage is not divine omniscience but only some finite analogue to it. I would also like to insist that the conception of divine omniscience that I have sketched should not be seen as a revision to some previously worked out account because Kant quite simply does not seem to have had one and in fact writes very little on the subject. That said, there is something in his rare writings on this topic that we find in all three *Critiques* that should not be dismissed, which concerns the *practical* side of omniscience:[45] A divine intellect that would be omniscient in the sense that it "know[s] even the smallest stirrings of [our] innermost heart and all the motives and intentions of [our] actions" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1012 1783-4). For again, this is a necessary condition on the possibility of the highest good, and I submit that insofar as the divine intellect represents the actual world, as it would on my proposal, it would represent such stirrings, motives, and intentions. Moreover, it need not "compare" these with the stirrings, motives, and intentions we have in other possible worlds in order to render sound moral judgment, since such comparisons would again be beneath its dignity. Rather, the divine intellect need only see what these stirrings, motives, and intentions actually are—in *this* world.

[45] See KrV A815/B843, KpV 5:140, KU 5:444.

5.2 Objection 2

According to the second objection, my proposed solution is inconsistent with the fact that *we* represent mere possibilities. The basic idea here is that God is thought to enjoy a kind of privileged maker's knowledge of his creation, knowing not just every hair on our head but presumably every representation within it too, including therefore those of mere possibility.[46] If we represent worlds in which Lincoln is spared Booth's bullet and Germany its dictator, then surely Kant would have to allow that our maker represents our representations of such. The view that the divine intellect fails to represent mere possibility would in this way seem entirely unsustainable; either we should opt for something like one of the deflationary solutions explored in §2 or we should simply concede that §76 is indefensible.

In response, let me begin by pointing out that Kant is here no worse off than the traditional view mentioned earlier, according to which the divine mind does not represent what it is like to experience physical suffering. The objection would seem to prove too much, in other words, since the maker's knowledge that God enjoys would equally entail the absurdity of God's failure to represent our suffering. It might even be argued that this traditional view faces an additional 'practical' absurdity insofar as ensuring the proper distribution of happiness to virtue seems to require that God represent the suffering that agents experience in their moral lives. For if virtue is "assess[ed] only by the magnitude of the obstacles that the human being himself furnishes through his own inclinations," then this suggests that God must represent the physical suffering an agent endures for the sake of morality, i.e., the frustration of the

[46] See V-Th/Pölitz 28:1051-4 1783-4 for a discussion of God's maker's knowledge.

agent's sensible inclinations (MS 6:405). Having said this, however, I want to argue that Kant (*and* the proponent of the view that God doesn't represent what it is like to experience our suffering) can offer up formidable resistance to the present objection by drawing on the Cartesian distinction between the reality a representation possesses in virtue of its content (its 'objective' reality) and the reality it possesses in virtue of it being a representation ('formal' reality).[47] Armed with this distinction, Kant can deny that the divine intellect represents mere possibility, while at the same time allowing that it knows our representations of such possibility in the sense of representing the formal reality of these representations.

5.3 Objection 3

According to the third objection, my proposal can at best accommodate an account of merely possible worlds on an exemplification interpretation of Kant's modal account because only on such an interpretation do we locate a gap between the possibilities that the *ens realissimum* grounds and those that it represents. By contrast, on a non-exemplification interpretation of Kant's modal account, where the *ens realissimum* grounds possibilities not by exemplification but by representation, there is no such gap to be found.[48] Of course, this objection has real bite only if the exemplification interpretation is incorrect. While I won't argue for that interpretation

[47] For Descartes's own discussion of this distinction, see the Third Meditation.

[48] Stang (2010) offers an alternative to the interpretations discussed here, according to which the ground of possibility is not the *ens realissimum*'s being or its representation but rather its power: "what is possible depends...on what [God] *has the power to choose*" (296). Stang no longer holds this view, and I will not discuss it here since it seems to me to be neither a plausible reading of the text nor in the spirit of Kant's general rejection of Cartesian voluntarism, which is expressed at BDG 2:100. This passage was first brought to my attention in a footnoted exchange between Chignell and Stang in Stang (2010) (296-7). See Chignell (2017) for a follow-up on this exchange and Newlands (2013) (esp. 175n52) for similar criticisms of Stang's interpretation.

here, I do hold that there are good reasons to believe that some version of it is correct. I grant, however, that the text does not settle the matter as decisively as one would like. For this reason, I would like to say a little something about how this proposal might be modified to accommodate the non-exemplification interpretation. In brief, I think we can in fact locate a kind of 'as such' gap on such an interpretation.

To see this, consider a modified version of the *ens realissimum* of desserts, according to which both the actuality and the possibility of a chocolate chip cookie are grounded by the *ens realissimum*'s representation of the appropriate mixture of ingredients: the flour, baking soda, salt, butter, sugar, vanilla extract, eggs, and chocolate chips. Notice, however, that by representing and thereby grounding the possibility of this cookie's ingredients, this deity simultaneously represents and grounds the possibility of the brownie's ingredients: the flour, butter, sugar, eggs, and chocolate chips. Here, I suggest, is where we find our gap. Even if this deity does not represent the brownie as such, this brownie still constitutes a real possibility insofar as the conditions that must obtain for it to exist all find a ground: Its ingredients are a subset of the ingredients that the deity does represent and thereby grounds, and the ingredients themselves (*ex hypothesi*) contain no real repugnancy. In other words, even if the brownie is not represented as such, it is still really possible in virtue of what is represented. In just the same way, merely possible worlds, though not represented as such, could be really possible in virtue of what God does represent.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have shown that Kant's cosmology, modal metaphysics, and

philosophical theology allow him to reconcile a straightforward reading of §76 with an account of mere possibility on which such possibility would not enter into the representation of the divine intellect. In closing, allow me to briefly elaborate on how this account of possibility can accommodate the particular kind of mere possibility presupposed by human freedom; for it was of course a concern about such freedom that led us to seek out such an account in the first place. As I argued in §2, Kant's commitment to human freedom ultimately presupposes that there are really possible worlds of things in themselves in which an agent's moral character is other than it actually is. Above, I treated this issue only in relatively general terms and showed that Kant has the philosophical resources for an account of merely possible worlds consistent with the claims of §76. What I would like to do in closing is to address more explicitly, if very briefly, how he might account for merely possible moral characters in particular.

A moral character, as Kant conceives of it, depends on the choice of a moral agent to either subordinate morality to happiness or vice versa. The actual existence of an agent requires the existence of this agent's *reason* and *transcendentally free will.*[49] Since for any actual agent both faculties exist in the actual world, their metaphysical grounds in the realities exemplified by God (presumably including God's reason and transcendentally free will) are available to ground the agent's existence in any merely possible worlds in which she makes a different moral choice. Any such merely possible choice will itself depend on the merely possible agent's *transcendentally free will*, the grounds of which are likewise available in the realities exemplified by God

[49] A more extensive analysis of the metaphysical requirements for moral personhood is beyond the scope of the present essay.

insofar as these by hypothesis ground the actual agent. Even granting, then, that the divine intellect does not represent the merely possible agent or her merely possible choice that gives rise to a different moral character, there are, on the solution sketched above, grounds for this mere possibility. Now it seems plausible to assume that the merely possible agent's choice would affect not only her own individual moral character but also the broader mental and physical landscape of the possible world in which she exists. In that sense, this merely possible agent can be expected to affect the substances and relations that co-exist in that world. Fortunately, as we have seen in detail in §3, Kant's resources to account for such merely possible moral characters extend easily to these broader features of the merely possible worlds in question.[50]

Abbreviations[51]

Anth	Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht
BDG	Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund
Br	Briefe
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft
KrV	Kritik der reinen Vernunft
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft
MpVT	Über das Mißlingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee
MS	Die Metaphysik der Sitten
NG	Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen
PND	Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio
Prol	Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik
R	Reflexion
RGV	Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft

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[51] I borrow these abbreviations (with minor modification) from *Kant-Studien*.

V-Met-K2/Heinze	Kant Metaphysik K2
V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt	Ergänzungen Kant Metaphysik K3
V-Met/Mron	Metaphysik Mrongovius
V-Th/Pölitz	Religionslehre Pölitz

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CHAPTER 2

Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects[1]

The aim of this essay is to explore Kant's position regarding the possibility of finite intuitive intellects, i.e., finite minds with an 'intellectual intuition' (*intellectuelle Anschauung*) or, equivalently, an 'intuitive understanding' (*intuitiver/anschauender Verstand*) of objects.[2,3] According to a received view, Kant, unlike the later German idealists, maintains that only the divine intellect is or even could be an intuitive intellect.[4] Such a view finds support in the first *Critique*, for instance, where Kant writes, "intellectual intuition […] seems to pertain only to the original being, never to one that is dependent as regards both its existence and its intuition" (B72). It is likewise suggested by transcripts of his lectures where we read that "[o]nly the understanding of God is called intuition" (V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5). However, such a view is also brought into question by a number of neglected texts suggesting that it involves at the very least a considerable oversimplification of Kant's position—one that overlooks a certain ambivalence in writings and lectures.

Consider the following passage from transcripts of lectures delivered shortly

[1] I use the abbreviations listed at the end of this essay. The first *Critique* is cited in accordance with standard A/B pagination. Kant's other works are cited by volume and page number from the Akademie Edition. Where available, dates are included for lecture transcripts, letters, and reflections. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are from *The Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works* (edited by Guyer & Wood) and emphases are Kant's (or the respective author's) own.

[2] Kant also uses the Latin *intuitus intellectualis*.

[3] I will expand on what such a mind is like in §1 below. Notice that my shorthand here already puts me at odds with Eckart Förster (2012), who argues against this equivalence. I return to this dispute in §4.

[4] This received view has been challenged by Moltke Gram (1981), Peter McLaughlin (1990), and Eckart Förster (2012), though only indirectly. Their more direct target is what I call the 'inseparability assumption', which I discuss in §1 below.

after the initial publication of the first *Critique*:

> Of such an immediate intuition of the understanding [i.e., intellectual intuition] we have now no concept at all; but whether the separated soul, as an intelligence, could perhaps contain a similar intuition <*eine ähnliche Anschauung*> instead of sensibility, through which it might cognize things in themselves in their divine ideas <*in den Ideen der Gottheit*>—this can neither be denied nor proven. (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4, my underlined emphasis)

Now admittedly what Kant is reported to have allowed here is only that we, as *dis*embodied spirits, might come to enjoy a kind of non-sensible intuition that is "similar" to intellectual intuition. Yet notice that the similarity lies in the fact that this non-sensible intuition would enable us "to cognize things in themselves," and recall that such cognition "requires an intuition of the things in themselves, i.e., pure intellectual intuition" (R6050 18:434 1780s).[5] It is thus unclear what Kant could be allowing here if not just the possibility that we might come to possess a kind of intellectual intuition rather than something that is merely "similar" to it. The story becomes even more complicated when we take into account reflections in which Kant refers not just to our *possible* intellectual intuitions but to our *actual* intellectual intuitions of freedom as well as things outside ourselves.[6]

My motivations for taking a closer look at this story include not only its significance for a fuller understanding of Kant's epistemology and its considerable philosophical interest in its own right but also its importance for correctly mapping the relation between Kant's views and subsequent developments in German idealism. As Sally Sedgwick (2000) reminds us, "[t]he development of German idealism after Kant is in large part a story of the various ways in which features of Kant's Critical

[5] Indeed, the *Inaugural Dissertation* allows that we can have a kind of 'symbolic' cognition of things in themselves. However, these lectures and reflections postdate this view.
[6] See R4228 17:467 1769-70 and R5653 18:306 1780-9.

philosophy get either preserved or transformed in the systems of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel" (1). A crucial chapter of that story concerns the preservation and transformation of Kant's doctrine of an intuitive intellect. According to a familiar telling, his immediate successors are said to have revolutionized this doctrine by allowing for finite intuitive intellects. Neglected texts, including those cited above, raise the question of whether Kant and his successors are in fact so very far apart on this point after all. Indeed, the evidence suggests there may be considerable value in a careful reconsideration of Kant's position on this point, and it is the aim of the present essay to undertake the essential first steps in such a reconsideration. My primary concern in what follows will be the question of whether Kant allows that *any* finite being—human or otherwise—might enjoy such an intellect; if so, in what manner and under what circumstances. A full appreciation of Kant's arguments on this issue will help to bring into sharper relief his conception of our actual epistemic situation.

This essay will proceed as follows: I begin by laying out the central characteristics of an intuitive intellect (§1). I then consider Kant's position regarding two candidate models of a finite intuitive intellect that can be extracted from a range of texts (§§2-3). The first model, which I call the 'formal' model, can be teased out of Kant's descriptions of some of our cognitive faculties. These descriptions suggest that our intellects possess the characteristics of an intuitive intellect and to this extent might be regarded as a kind of intuitive intellect. The second model, which I call the 'real' model, makes its appearance in Kant's discussions of Plato and Malebranche.[7]

[7] Kant occasionally discusses this model in connection with Leibniz as well as Salomon Maimon's defense of a kind of Leibnizianism. In this regard, however, he regards Leibniz as belonging to a broadly Platonic school of thought, which is consistent with how Leibniz describes himself in the *New*

As we will see, Kant ultimately denies that the formal model represents a model of a genuine intuitive intellect. However, there is evidence indicating that he allows that a version of the real model does—and, moreover, that *we* might come to possess such an intellect. Reflection on his rationale in each case will help to shed light on his broader doctrine of the intuitive intellect, while also offering insight into our actual epistemic situation. These discussions will also set the stage for us to consider a third candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect (§4). I call this the 'common root' model to register its relation to Kant's infamous remarks in the first *Critique* concerning a so-called common root of our faculties of understanding and sensibility. His verdict regarding this third model is not as clear as it is with the first two models. Still, I suggest that reflection on his position regarding the other models will allow us to make headway here.

§1 An Intuitive Intellect

The natural place to begin this discussion is with Kant's concept of an intuitive intellect in general. Yet this might also seem to be the place at which this discussion must end since Kant's writings and lectures frequently (alas too frequently) suggest that the concept of such an intellect exceeds the limits of our understanding: "We are unable to form any concept of such an intuitive understanding"; we "cannot even form [...] the least concept of another possible understanding"; this intellect is "inexplicable […] to us human beings"; and so on (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1051 1783-4, KrV B139, V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5). This might lead one to think that there is no fruitful

Essays (1765). See Anth 7:141n, V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:207-8 1770s, Br 11:50 1789. Kant also associates this model with Emanuel Swedenborg. I discuss Swedenborg in more detail in §3 below.

discussion to be had about an intuitive intellect, period. However, I contend that such statements cannot be taken at face value if they are to be reconciled with the many other texts indicating that we can, should, and even must have some sort of conception of an intuitive intellect.

First, we *can* conceive of an intuitive intellect, at least in a broad sense, since its concept does not contain a contradiction.[8] Second, we *should* conceive of it insofar as morality demands "[c]omplete conformity of the will with the moral law" (KpV 5:122). For the best we can achieve in this regard is only an "*endless progress* toward that complete conformity," the rational pursuit of which requires, in Kant's view, that we postulate our immortality. Yet this postulate would be for naught if the endless progress it makes possible could not serve as a suitable proxy for the complete conformity of the will to the demands of morality. It can do so, Kant tells us, only if this progress is "found whole" in God's "single intellectual intuition of the existence of rational beings" (5:123).[9] The rational pursuit of the demands of morality thus requires that we conceive of an intuitive intellect, i.e., we *should* conceive of it. Finally, we *must* conceive of it insofar as this concept is a necessary and inevitable correlate of the positive concept of noumena, a concept Kant describes as "not only admissible, but even unavoidable" (KrV A256/B311). This seems to entail that the concept of an intuitive intellect inherits some unavoidability as well, which is to say that we *must* conceive of it. On top of all this, Kant's writings and lectures simply do develop in considerable detail the concept of an intuitive intellect. So what is it? At the most general level, we can understand an intuitive intellect to be a mind with an

[8] See, e.g., KU 5:408.
[9] See also RGV 6:67.

'intellectual intuition' or, equivalently, an 'intuitive understanding' of objects. Kant describes a number of characteristics that such a mind would have. In what follows, I briefly outline five of the most important.

First, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind whose representation of an object produces or otherwise guarantees the existence of that object.[10] We read in the first *Critique*, for example, that intellectual intuition is "one through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given"; an intuitive understanding is "an understanding through whose representation the objects of this representation would at the same time exist"; and "an understanding that itself intuited […] would not represent given objects, but through whose representation the objects would themselves at the same time be given, or produced <*hervorgebracht* >" (B72, B139, B145). I call this the 'productivity characteristic' of an intuitive intellect.

Second, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind that does not represent merely possible objects. The canonical expression of this characteristic is found in §76 of the third *Critique*. Kant writes there that "if our understanding were intuitive, it would have no objects except what is actual" and "all objects that [an intuitive intellect] cognize[s] would **be** (exist), and the possibility of some that did not exist […] would not enter into the representation of such a being at all" (5:402-3). Similarly, in a reflection written in the 1780s, we read, "[i]f we could cognize through intuition, we would not find any distinction between possibility and actuality" (R6020 18:425-6). I call this the 'modal characteristic' of an intuitive intellect.[11]

[10] Cf Leech (2014), who similarly uses this 'guarantee' formulation.
[11] I discuss the modal characteristic in more detail in "All Objects God Cognizes Exist: Necessitarianism in §76 of the Third Critique" (unpublished).

Third, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind whose representation is of a whole (or *totum analyticum*) that precedes and determines its parts, where such a whole is contrasted with a mere composite (or *totum syntheticum*) whose parts precede and determine it.[12] The canonical expression of this characteristic is also located in the third *Critique.* Kant tells us that an intuitive intellect enjoys a "**synthetic universal** (of the intuition of a whole as such)" through which it "would not represent the possibility of the whole as depending on the parts" but "would rather […] represent the possibility of the parts (as far as both their constitution and combination are concerned) as depending on the whole" (5:407, my modified translation).[13] I call this the 'synoptic characteristic' of an intuitive intellect.

Fourth, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind that does not represent objects "by means of general concepts," including the pure concepts (or 'categories') of the understanding (Prol 4:356). In the Transcendental Deduction, for instance, he explains that "for an understanding that itself intuited […] the categories would have no significance at all" (B145). Similarly, in the chapter on phenomena and noumena, we read that an intuitive intellect "cogniz[es] its object not discursively through categories but intuitively in a non-sensible intuition" (A256/B311-2). I call this the 'non-discursivity characteristic' of an intuitive intellect.

Finally, Kant characterizes an intuitive intellect as a mind that intuits objects as they are in themselves. Related to this is his view that an intuitive intellect intuits noumena in the positive sense: "[I]f we understand by that [i.e., a thing in itself] an object of a non-sensible intuition, then we assume a special kind of intuition, namely

[12] Cf Messina (2014) (esp. 6).
[13] Cf R6174 18:478-9 1780s.

intellectual intuition […] and this would be the noumenon in a positive sense" (B307). Similarly, we read in transcripts of lectures, "if a being had intellectual intuition […] it would intuit beings as they are, not as they appear" and an intuitive understanding is a "faculty for cognizing things as they are in themselves" (V-Met/Mron 29:800 1782-3, V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5). I call this the 'thing in itself characteristic'.

Of course, many questions can and should be raised regarding the details of these characteristics. Consider the non-discursivity characteristic: An intuitive intellect would not represent objects by means of general concepts. Does this mean that an intuitive intellect would not represent objects through concepts at all? After all, aren't concepts essentially general? Indeed, many have interpreted Kant in just this way, including Schelling and Hegel. Others, like Béatrice Longuenesse and Kenneth Westphal, have argued against such a reading.[14] They contend that an intuitive intellect would employ a kind of concept, though one very different from our own. While interesting and certainly worth exploring further, I suggest that the present discussion can remain neutral on details like these and will be best served by doing so.[15] In this regard, there is one detail in particular that is worth emphasizing: Though it is widely assumed that the above characteristics are inseparable (i.e., that a mind for which one applies is one for which all the others also apply), the present discussion will *not* be assuming this view.[16] If Kant does allow for a kind of finite intuitive

[14] See Longuenesse (2000) and Westphal (2000). I am indebted to Westphal (2000) for these references to Hegel and Schelling.

[15] Let me say, however, that I am very much in Longuenesse and Westphal's camp here. We find in writings and lecture transcripts that an intuitive intellect would represent objects "by means of a singular concept in the concrete" and likewise that it "receives concepts through itself" (MSI 2:396; V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). Similarly, in the third *Critique*, Kant discusses an intuitive intellect's 'synthetic universal', which is a kind of non-general or concrete concept.

[16] Michelle Kosch (2012) expresses this assumption: "Kant is usually taken to be listing […] some

intellect, it may be that it would possess only some of the above characteristics. At the very least, this is a possibility that should not be foreclosed without taking a closer look at the evidence. Thus, in this discussion, the term 'intuitive intellect' will be used to refer to a mind that possesses at least one of these characteristics.

§2. The Formal Model

The first candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect that I wish to consider can be teased out of Kant's descriptions of our own cognitive faculties. These descriptions suggest that our intellects might possess some or even all of the characteristics of an intuitive intellect and to this extent might be viewed as a kind of intuitive intellect. I call this candidate model, for reasons that will be explained shortly, the 'formal' model of a finite intuitive intellect. To cut to the chase, I will show that Kant denies that it represents a model of a genuine intuitive intellect. Before turning to his rationale, let us consider some of the ways in which our minds seem to possess the characteristics in question.

2.1 The Model

Central to Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism is the thesis that space and time are ontologically dependent on our intuitions of them. That is, we ground the existence of space and time through our very representation of them—in a manner

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properties necessarily had by any such intellect (e.g. that for it nothing non-actual would be possible, concepts would not be universals, intuition would not be receptive but instead productive, and so forth) without suggesting that any of these properties could be instantiated independently of the others." I discuss this 'inseparability assumption' in more detail in "All Objects God Cognizes Exist: Necessitarianism in §76 of the Third Critique" (unpublished).

analogous to an intuitive intellect's grounding of the existence of things in themselves in accordance with the productivity characteristic. This grounding is expressed, for instance, in Kant's claim that "if we remove our own subject or even only the subjective constitution of the senses in general, then all constitution, all relations of objects in space and time, indeed space and time themselves, would disappear" (KrV A42/B59). It is a consequence of this doctrine that we represent space and time not merely as they appear to be but, in a sense, as they truly are—offering a parallel to the thing in itself characteristic of an intuitive intellect. That is to say, we enjoy a kind of maker's knowledge of space and time; we represent them as they are because our representations make them what they are.[17] These two representations are also described as fundamentally non-discursive—evoking the non-discursivity characteristic of an intuitive intellect. As Kant writes, "[s]pace is not a discursive or, as is said, general concept" and "[t]ime is no discursive or, as one calls it, general concept" (A25/B39, A32/B47).[18] The two representations are further described as most fundamentally of a whole rather than a mere composite—presenting a striking parallel to the synoptic characteristic of an intuitive intellect: "[O]ne can only represent a single space, and if one speaks of many spaces, one understands by that only parts of one and the same unique space. And these parts cannot as it were precede the single all-encompassing space as its components (from which its composition would be possible), but rather are only thought in it" (A25/B39).[19] Finally, in a note

[17] See Bxviii. See also V-Th/Pölitz 28:1051-4 1783-4 for a discussion of God's 'maker's knowledge.' To be clear, I do not mean to deny that we can be mistaken in our geometrical judgments regarding the structure of space and time. My point is rather that space and time have no hidden essence beyond what they possess qua representations.
[18] See also MSI 2:405.
[19] For a similar characterization of our intuition of time, see A32/B47.

written shortly after the publication of the *Inaugural Dissertation*, we find Kant claiming that "[p]ossibility and actuality are not different in space and time" (R4515 17:579 1772).[20] What he means by this claim is not entirely transparent, but the parallel to the modal characteristic of an intuitive intellect is striking all the same.

Add to these considerations Kant's description of our apperceptive self-awareness. He writes that, in apperception, I represent "myself not as I appear to myself" but rather "**that** I am," where the 'I' in the second case is understood as "the self-activity of a thinking subject" (B157, B278). The implication here might seem to be that we, in some sense, represent the self as it is rather than as it merely appears to be—offering another echo of the thing in itself characteristic. Consider also our capacity for teleological judgment. In such judgment, we possess a "**representation** of a whole containing the ground of the possibility of its form and of the connection of parts that belong to that"—invoking once again what looks like a version of the synoptic characteristic (KU 5:408). For example, we represent a bird as containing the ground of "the structure of [that] bird, the hollowness of its bones, the placement of its wings for movement and of its tail for steering, etc" (5:360).

That Kant is not unaware of these parallels and similarities is clear from the fact that he calls attention to them himself. In §77 of the third *Critique*, for instance, he explains that our intuition of space "has some similarity to the real ground that we seek [i.e., intellectual intuition] in that in it no part can be determined except in relation to the whole" (5:409). He goes on to note that teleological judgment shares this similarity. For in such judgment, we follow "after the model of the intuitive

[20] See also R4208 17:456 1769-70.

(archetypal) understanding" insofar as we "represent the possibility of the parts […] as depending on the whole." Given Kant's acknowledgement of these similarities, the question arises why he nevertheless denies that the human intellect is a kind of intuitive intellect. Why are we said to be merely 'following after the model' of an intuitive intellect?

2.2 Kant's Verdict on the Formal Model

The materials for an answer to this question are found in Kant's reply to an important objection leveled against him by Johann Schultz. In 1771, Schultz published a review of the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) that was apparently well received by Kant. His 1772 letter to Marcus Herz praises the "[h]onest Pastor Schultz, the best head for philosophy I know in this neighborhood," for "grasping the points of the system very well" (10:133, my modified translation). Kant also addresses the review's charge that "space […] might very well be a true intellectual intuition and thus might be objective." To understand this suggestion, a bit of background is in order.

In §10 of the Dissertation, Kant declares that "[t]here is (for man) no *intuition* of what belongs to the understanding" (2:396). By this, he means that we cannot intuit things as they exist in themselves (i.e., the thing in itself characteristic). However, this is not to say that we have, in his view, *no* capacity for representing such things. The Kant of the Dissertation, unlike the Kant of the first *Critique*, allows that the understanding furnishes access to a kind of cognition of things in themselves.[21] He refers to this cognition as "*symbolic*," explaining that it is a cognition acquired "by

[21] Cf V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:241 mid-1770s.

means of universal concepts in the abstract, not by means of a singular concept in the concrete."[22] By analyzing these "universal concepts," we can gain insight into the nature of things as they exist in themselves. Such insight is, for instance, "displayed in ontology and rational psychology" (2:395). What we cannot do, according to this view, is represent these things "immediately or as a singular." We cannot, in other words, have an *intuition* of them. It is this prohibition that is being questioned in Schultz's charge that space might very well be a true intellectual intuition.

In response to Schultz's suggestion, Kant explains that it is "obvious" why our intuition of space is not an intellectual intuition:

> [T]here is a reason why space is claimed not to be objective and thus not intellectual, namely, if we analyze fully the representation of space, we find in it neither a representation of things (as capable of existing only in space) nor a real connection (which cannot occur without things); that is to say, we have no effects, no relationships to regard as grounds, consequently no representation at all of a fact or anything real that inheres in things, and therefore we must conclude that space is nothing objective. (10:133-4, my modified translation)

Kant tells us that our intuition of space fails to be intellectual because it fails to be objective and that it fails to be objective because it fails to provide any "representation at all of a fact or anything real that inheres in things." He is here alluding to a central thesis of the Dissertation: "*Space is not something objective and real*" (2:403). What this means, at least in part, is that space has no existence independent of our intuition of it.[23] It is "subjective and ideal," "issu[ing] from the mind," merely the way *we*

[22] Kant borrows this terminology from the Leibniz-Wolffian school: "I have symbolic cognition of the triangle," Wolff writes, "if I think it to be a figure bounded by three lines" (*Psychologica Empirica* §289; qtd. Baumgarten 227). By contrast, "[i]f a triangle is traced out on a slate for me, so to speak, or if I represent a triangular rafter and moreover am conscious of this shape, I know a triangle intuitively" (§286, qtd. In Baumgarten 227). See also Leibniz' "Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas" (23-7) and §24 of "Discourse on Metaphysics" (56-7) for a further discussion of the distinction between intuitive and symbolic cognition.

[23] This is at least one way to read Kant's thesis that space is "not objective and real." Cf Janiak (2016).

coordinate things that appear to us. Though this kind of response might seem to beg the very question that Schultz takes issue with in his review (*and* to beg the question against the Newtonians and Leibnizians more generally), there is, by Kant's lights, an independent argument for this conception of space that issues from something like conceptual analysis ("if we analyze fully the representation of space").

In particular, Kant denies that our intuition of space is intellectual on the grounds that careful analysis of the content of the representation of space shows that it is not a real object, nor a representation of real objects or their causal relations, and thus, Kant concludes, it must be merely a form in accordance with which objects appear to us. Expressed more dramatically, it is a non-thing (*Unding*) or a being of the imagination (*ens imaginarium*).[24] What this tells us is that the thing in itself characteristic, if it is to be a mark of a genuine intellectual intuition, is essentially tied to the reality of things and their real (here apparently meaning causal) relations: A genuine intuitive intellect would intuit real objects and their real relations as they are in themselves. That this is so is further supported by Kant's reason for also denying that the representation "**that** I am" qualifies as an intellectual intuition: Though he agrees it is not a representation of the subject as it merely appears, it is also not a representation of a real subject at all, since it is "wholly empty in content" (A355). It

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James Messina (forthcoming) proposes another. He agrees that our intuition of space fails to be intellectual because space lacks reality. However, the sense in which it lacks reality, he suggests, is that it is causally inert. That is, one mark of reality, for Kant, is causal activity, yet space "does not involve causal activity. It is not sufficiently grounded in causal activity, as it would have to be if it had inherent existence, nor is it itself causally active, as it would have to be if it were a substance." On this reading, then, it is the fact that space is causally inert that Kant is directly referring to when he tells us that with regard to space "we have no effects, no relationships to regard as grounds, consequently no real representation of a fact." I have no strong opposition to this reading. Indeed, as we will see, I think causal activity is a mark of the kind of independent existence and thus the kind of reality that I think is at issue. Moreover, what lies at the heart of both readings is the same and is also, I submit, what lies at the heart of Kant's broader rejection of this formal account.

[24] See, e.g., KrV A39/B56 and A291/B347.

is but a formal condition on representation in general—the famous 'I think' that must be able to accompany all my representations (B131). By itself, then, the representation "**that** I am" offers "no acquaintance with the subject in itself" (A350).

I submit that this insistence on reality as a correlate of genuine intellectual intuition is not restricted to the thing in itself characteristic. Consider again space in relation to the synoptic characteristic. In the third *Critique*, Kant acknowledges that our intuition of space is similar to intellectual intuition "in that in [space] no part can be determined except in relation to the whole" (5:408-9). Yet he also tells us that the key difference between the two lies in the fact that space is "no real ground of generatings" (my underlined emphasis). The real properties of what is contained within our synoptic spatial representation, or the real properties of nature, are not really (here again presumably meaning causally) grounded by space. Space is rather a mere "formal condition." It is itself (as the "single all-encompassing space") a merely formal condition, and the spatial properties of the parts that it grounds (the spatial properties of nature) are also merely formal. Thus, we see that the synoptic characteristic of the intuitive intellect is also essentially tied to real objects: It characterizes a mind whose synoptic representation is of a *real* whole that grounds the *real* properties of its parts.

But what then of our capacity for teleological judgment? What of our synoptic representation of the bird as containing the ground of "the structure of [that] bird, the hollowness of its bones, the placement of its wings for movement and of its tail for steering, etc" (5:360)? The object at issue here is a real whole: the bird. So why are our intellects not intuitive by virtue of such a synoptic representation? Kant's answer,

I contend, is very similar to the answers we have already seen:

> [I]f we would not represent the possibility of the whole as depending upon the parts, as is appropriate for our discursive understanding, but would rather, after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding, represent the possibility of the parts (as far as both their constitution and their combination is concerned) as depending upon the whole, then, given the very same special characteristic of our understanding, this cannot come about by the whole being the ground of the possibility of the connection of the parts (which would be a contradiction in the discursive kind of cognition), but only by the **representation** of a whole containing the ground of the possibility of its form and of the connection of parts that belongs to that. (5:407-8)

In a teleological judgment, we do not in fact represent a real whole as grounding its parts. Rather we represent the *representation* of that whole *as though* it were such a ground. We imagine that an antecedent concept of the bird determines its hollow bones and its tail's placement, but we do not also represent the bird itself (the real object corresponding to this concept) in this way.

Consider by way of contrast our synoptic representation of space. As we have seen, our intuition of space is not intellectual because space is not a real object. Even so, the relationship between the whole and parts within it serves as a much better model of what a genuine intuitive intellect's synoptic representation is supposed to be like. This is because the representation of space and space itself are isomorphic in this regard; both are wholes in the sense of being *tota analytica*.[25] That is, we do not merely represent the *representation* of space as the ground of the parts of space; we represent *space* itself as such a ground. The former guarantees and brings with it the latter. But the bird is not represented in this way. Its genesis is represented along the model of art, where the *concept* of it and not *it* itself is represented as the ground.[26]

[25] Messina (2014) (esp. 15-6) is most explicit about this point.
[26] Here I am admittedly saying "far too little" (KU 5:374).

Indeed, this is what makes such a representation teleological. Yet it is also what distinguishes it from an intuitive intellect's synoptic representation, i.e., from an "intuition of the [real] whole *as such*" that grounds its parts.

Thus, we see that the synoptic characteristic is also essentially tied to real objects: An intuitive intellect is a mind whose representation is of a real whole, where that whole itself (rather than some idealized form of it) is represented as the ground of its parts. So too, I submit, with all the other characteristics. In short, although our spatio-temporal intuitions, apperceptive self-awareness, and teleological judgment seem to share many of the characteristics of intellectual intuition, they do not do so with respect to real content. They concern only the *form* of an object, the *form* of thought, and the idealized *form* of the whole rather than the *real* object, the *real* subject, and the *real* whole itself. As a result, these representations are not considered by Kant to be genuine instances of intellectual intuition but merely a formal analogue of it. It is for this reason that I call the model of cognition that can be teased out of these features of our representation the 'formal' model of a finite intuitive intellect. I am here drawing on Kant's use of the term 'form' to refer to what is devoid of real content.[27]

2.3 Significance

We have seen that Kant ultimately denies that what I have called the formal

[27] It has been pointed out to me that the cases I consider in this section might seem too heterogeneous to justify treating this formal model as a *single* model. While I am sympathetic to this concern, I think that in the present context the fact that each example fails to qualify as a genuine intellectual intuition precisely because each is in the relevant respect devoid of real content provides enough unity to justify treating these examples together.

model of a finite intuitive intellect furnishes a model of a genuine intuitive intellect. I suggest that further reflection on his rationale here provides insight not only into his broader doctrine of the intuitive intellect but also into his account of the human intellect. Most notably, we have learned that the five characteristics of an intuitive intellect outlined in §1 must be understood as making essential reference to *real* content. As a first pass: A genuine intuitive intellect is not simply a mind whose representation of an object produces or otherwise guarantees the existence of that object. It is rather a mind whose representation of a *real* object serves as such a ground. Likewise, it is not simply a mind that represents an object as the ground of its parts but one that represents a *real* object in this way; and so on.

To begin to see how our discussion of the formal model can also illuminate Kant's doctrine of the human intellect, notice that he never contests the striking similarities that our intellect shares with an intuitive intellect. Indeed, he repeatedly draws to our attention the fact that in many respects we follow 'after its model' ("*nach Maßgabe des intuitiven (urbildlichen) [Verstand]*") (KU 5:407). An important conclusion to be drawn from the investigation above, then, is just how sensitive Kant remains to the fact that various features of our representation—in pure intuition, in teleological judgment, and perhaps in apperceptive self-awareness—furnish analogues of the characteristics of God's intellectual intuition. This finding also shows that it is necessary to row against the current of a widely-held reading of his philosophy by insisting that he does in fact subscribe to his own distinctive version of the traditional Imago Dei doctrine applied not merely to our volition but to cognition.[28] We can

[28] I explore this point further in "Ideas as 'the Divinity of Our Soul': Kant's Theocentric and Platonic

recognize this point while also fully acknowledging that Kant ultimately presents the relevant features of our cognition as *mere* analogues of the characteristics of an intuitive intellect, and precisely in the sense discussed: We follow after the model of such an intellect in a merely formal way so that our intellect remains essentially different from the divine intellect. This essential difference should not, however, prevent us from looking to relevant similarities in order to make better sense of the human intellect as Kant conceives of it.

An instructive example of Kant scholarship sensitive to some of these points is provided by James Messina's (2014) examination of Kant's critical account of the unity of space. According to this account, the unity of space depends on the human intellect, but the precise nature of this dependency is a matter of considerable difficulty. Some commentators, like Béatrice Longuenesse, read Kant as maintaining that this unity is given by our understanding through an act of figurative synthesis, i.e., through an act of combining the parts of space into a single unified whole. Others, like Henry Allison, read Kant instead as maintaining that this unity is brutely given by sensibility. Yet both readings, as Messina has convincingly shown, are unsatisfying.[29] He proposes that we might make better sense of this dependency by attending to the similarities that our intellects share with the divine intuitive intellect described in pre-critical writings.[30] For while the critical Kant maintains that space and its unity depend

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Model of Human Cognition" (unpublished).

[29] See Messina (2014) (esp. 19-22). We will return to one of the potential problems for Longuenesse's view in §4.2.

[30] Kant does not, to my knowledge, use the terms *intellectuelle Anschauung*, *intuitiver/anschauender Verstand*, or *intuitus intellectualis* until just around the time of his 'great light' of 1769. Related to this, it is not clear to me the extent to which he has an official account of an intuitive intellect prior to this time. Even so, as I will suggest below, we might view some of the characteristics that he associates with the divine intellect in the pre-critical period as prototypical versions of the characteristics outlined in §1

on the human intellect, the pre-critical Kant does not. Rather he sees space and its unity not as something subjective and ideal but as something objective and real—*and* as dependent on the divine intuitive intellect in what we might view as prototypical versions of the productivity and synoptic characteristics. What's more, the pre-critical Kant is much more explicit about the nature of this dependency. In two early publications, the *New Elucidation* (1755) and *The Only Possible Argument* (1763), he explains that the unity of space is grounded on the divine *understanding* and, in particular, on the *unity* of this understanding, rather than on some synthetizing activity on its part. Though Kant's view of the status of space as something objective and real eventually changes, Messina argues that there is little evidence to suggest a change in his view of how the unity of space depends on an understanding. He concludes that the "[critical] explanation of the unity of space in terms of the discursive understanding is modeled after [Kant's] earlier explanation of the unity of space in terms of the intuitive understanding," i.e., that the unity of space in the critical period depends on the *unity* of the human *understanding* (9).

Whether or not Messina is right about this issue, we can nonetheless see the value of looking to similarities that Kant acknowledges between an intuitive intellect and the human intellect. Where Kant offers guidance about characteristics of an intuitive intellect that have a formal counterpart in the human intellect, his analogy can help shed light on his view of our cognitive situation. The illumination can also flow in the other direction. For example, Kant's discussion of the synoptic character of our

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and likewise this divine intellect as a kind of prototypical intuitive intellect. I take it that Messina means to proceed in such a way since he mentions the fact that the Kant would only later describe the pre-critical divine intellect as an intuitive understanding.

intuition of space is arguably much clearer than his rather compressed remarks in §77 of the third *Critique* regarding the synoptic character of an intellectual intuition, and it can help us make sense of the latter.

§3. The Real Model

I turn now to a second candidate account of a finite intuitive intellect that can be found in the text. To this end, let us return to the passage cited at the very beginning of this essay:

> Of such an immediate intuition of the understanding [i.e., intellectual intuition] we have now no concept at all; but whether the separated soul, as an intelligence, could perhaps contain a similar intuition <*eine ähnliche Anschauung*> instead of sensibility, through which it might cognize things in themselves in their divine ideas <*in den Idee der Gottheit*>—this can neither be denied nor proven. (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4)

What Kant is reported to have suggested here (what "can neither be denied nor proven") is that we, as disembodied spirits, might come to enjoy a kind of non-sensible intuition allowing us to cognize things in themselves. Indeed, this intuition is not identified as intellectual intuition above; it is described only as "similar" to such. Even so, it is difficult to see how this similarity relation isn't simply that of identity insofar as the object of this intuition is real—namely, "things in themselves."

Compare this with transcripts of lectures delivered in the 1770s and 1780s:

> [W]hen the soul separates itself from the body, then it will not have the same sensible intuition of this world; it will not intuit the world as it appears, but rather as it is. Accordingly the separation of the soul from the body consists in the alteration of sensible intuition into spiritual intuition [...] (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:297 mid-1770s)

> Perhaps this can be the case with a future world, that we will intuit things there as they are in themselves; that would be an intellectual world. Because God is

> the cause of the noumenal world and of the possibility of the interaction in it, if we could intuitively cognize its source then we would also cognize things in themselves thereby. But we cannot comprehend the possibility of that. Malebranche and others built on this, but here tried to have intuitions of God already, which is a wild fantasy since God is not an object of possible experience. (V-Met/Mron 29:857 1782-3)

Here we find evidence of Kant's openness to a kind of eschatological account on which we intuit the world "as it is."[31] Once again, the intuition discussed in these passages is not identified as intellectual intuition. However, it is again difficult to see how it doesn't qualify as intellectual intuition given that its object is again real—namely, "the world […] as it is" and "things as they are in themselves."

In this section, I will argue that neglected texts, including those cited above, provide evidence that Kant was willing to entertain the possibility of a kind of finite intuitive intellect. Unlike the finite intuitive intellect of the formal model examined in §2, the characteristics of this intellect are connected with real rather than merely formal features of things. For this reason, I will refer to it as the 'real' model of a finite intuitive intellect. As we will see, Kant denies that our intellects are intuitive even in this sense—at least in *this* life. Still, there is evidence indicating that he does allow that it is a possible model of an intuitive intellect, indeed that we might come to possess such an intellect as disembodied spirits in a future life, and that it might be possessed also by other finite spiritual beings.

3.1 The Model

The model I wish to consider here is most closely associated by Kant with

[31] This account on which the "soul separates from the body" is not the only account of the afterlife that Kant entertains. See, e.g., V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:297 1770s and R4108 17:418 1769.

Plato and Malebranche. To be clear, Kant's interest in invoking these figures is typically less with the exact details of their philosophy; it rather tends to involve fairly sweeping rational reconstructions.[32] As we will see, for example, he simply assumes the Augustinian interpretation of the Platonic forms as ideas in the mind of God; he also sometimes aligns Plato's idealism too closely with his own transcendental idealism.[33] The interpretative vulnerabilities of his reception of these philosophers are not my main concern in what follows.

One of the most important discussions regarding this real model is found in a reflection dated by Adickes to the 1780s. In it, Kant writes that the Platonic theory of forms and recollection, as well as Malebranche's vision-in-God thesis, were offered as a "way of explaining the possibility of *a priori* cognitions" (R6050 18:435 1780s).[34] The reflection begins with Plato's epistemology:

> Plato rightly noticed that through experience we do not know things as they are in themselves, but only learn to connect their appearances lawfully. (He further understood that to cognize things for what they are in themselves also requires an intuition of the things in themselves, i.e., pure intellectual intuition, of which we are not capable.) He noticed that in order for our representation to agree with the object, it must either be derived from the object or thought of as producing the object. The latter would be the original representation (*idea archetypa*), of which, if it is to be original in all points, we human beings are not capable. Thus the ideas can be encountered only in the original being. The ideas of this original understanding, however, cannot be concepts, but only intuitions, although intellectual ones. Now he believed that all *a priori* cognitions are cognitions of things in themselves, and because we participate in the former, we also participate in the latter, and among those he included mathematics. But we could not participate in those on our own, consequently only through the communication of divine ideas. But since we are not conscious of them as having been imparted and transmitted merely

[32] This is consistent with the approach towards the history of philosophy that Kant gestures at in the Transcendental Dialectic (A314/B370). See also V-Lo/Blomberg 24:36 1771.
[33] I discuss Kant's reception of Plato in more detail in "Ideas as 'the Divinity of Our Soul': Kant's Theocentric and Platonic Model of Human Cognition" (unpublished).
[34] See, e.g., *Phaedo* (esp. 65b-66a and 100a-105b) and *The Search After Truth* (esp. 3.2.6).

> historically, but rather as being immediately understood, they cannot be inborn concepts that are believed, but immediate intuitions that we have of the archetypes in the divine understanding. But we can unfold these only with difficulty. Thus they are mere recollections of old ideas from communion with God. (18:434-5) [35]

Kant takes himself to be in agreement with Plato on four points here: (1) cognition of things in themselves requires a kind of intellectual intuition; (2) we are not directly capable of what Kant here calls "pure intellectual intuition"; (3) there is a distinction between things in themselves and appearances; and (4) we are capable of synthetic a priori cognition. But the agreement ends roughly there. For while Kant famously uses the distinction between things in themselves and appearances to avoid appealing to intellectual intuition as the explanation for our synthetic a priori cognition, Plato does not. Rather "he believed that all *a priori* cognitions"—including therefore our synthetic a priori cognitions—"are cognitions of things in themselves." As a result, his explanation of this cognition must ultimately appeal to a kind of intellectual intuition.

As Kant recounts this Platonic explanation, we must somehow "participate" in what is ultimately required for cognition of things in themselves—namely, "pure intellectual intuition." However, we cannot participate in pure intellectual intuition directly; only the divine intellect is capable of that. The reason given is that pure intellectual intuition is productive of things in themselves "in all respects," which requires "original representation[s] (*idea archetypa*)" that "can be encountered only in the original being," and, as *divine*, "cannot be concepts, but only intuitions, although

[35] I draw heavily from this reflection because it provides one of the fullest versions of Kant's real model of a finite intuitive intellect, but note that its contents are corroborated by many other texts. Compare R6051 18:437-8 1780-9, R4275 17:492 1770-1, Br 10:131 1772, V-Met/Mron 29:759-61 1782-3, V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:953-6 1794-5, KrV A313/B370ff, A853/B881-A854/B882, Prol 4:375, KU 5:363-4, ÜE 8:248-9, VT 8:391, 8:398ff, and Anth 7:141n.

intellectual ones." In light of this, our participation in such intuition can only be indirect, viz. "through the communication of divine ideas," that is, through the "immediate intuitions that we have of the archetypes in the divine understanding."[36] It is by 'recollecting' these intuitions that we, as now embodied spirits, are said to possess synthetic a priori cognition. Though Kant does not refer to these intuitions as intellectual intuitions in this passage, he does so in a number of other texts. Most explicitly, we read in transcripts of lectures delivered in the mid-1790s that the "hypothesis of Plato" is "the presupposition of an intuitive intellect <*intellectus intuitivi*> or intellectual intuition <*intuitus intellectualis*>, i.e., the possibility that purely intellectual *a priori* concepts <*conceptus a priori mere intellectuales*> rest on immediate intuition of the [human] understanding" (or "[our] previously possessed faculty of an intuitive understanding") (V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:953 1794-5).[37]

Notice that the divine intuitive intellect does not access things in themselves in precisely the same way as the finite intuitive intellect of this real model. The former intuits things in themselves (thereby satisfying the non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) in virtue of its immediate first-person access to its divine ideas, where these ideas produce these things (productivity characteristic); and where this representation and its effect constitute a *totum analyticum* (synoptic characteristic).[38] Such divine intuition is what Kant refers to above as '*pure* intellectual intuition'. If it were his view that an intellect is to be designated as intuitive only insofar as it

[36] Notice that this is a (peculiar) kind of a priori cognition of things through their ground. For a helpful discussion of this kind of cognition, see Hogan (2009).
[37] See also Prol 4:375n and ÜE 8:248.
[38] That is, if we assume that a divine idea is isomorphic with its object in the same way spatial intuition is with its object, then a divine idea is also of a *totum analyticum*.

possesses *this* kind of intuition, then the received view on which only God could possess such an intellect would surely be correct. As Kant writes, we are simply "not capable" of pure intellectual intuition. However, this is not his view. As we have seen, he is willing to designate a finite intellect as intuitive in virtue of simply sharing some of the same characteristics of pure intellectual intuition.[39] In particular, such a finite intellect intuits things in themselves (non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) in virtue of possessing an immediate intuition of God's pure intellectual intuition, i.e., by participating in the divine ideas.[40]

On Malebranche's version of this real model, we "participat[e] in this communion with God and the immediate intuition of these ideas (mystical intuition) even now" (R6050 18:435 1780s).[41] We do not, in other words, merely recollect the intellectual intuitions we had as disembodied spirits as was the case on the Platonic version of this model; rather we have these intuitions now as embodied spirits. This claim is of course the centerpiece of Malebranche's so-called vision-in-God thesis, though once again our focus here remains on Kant's reception of this thesis.

As is well known, Kant rejects both the Platonic and Malebranchean real models of a finite intuitive intellect as presenting tenable explanations of our synthetic a priori cognition. His key objection is presented in the famous 1772 letter to Marcus Herz. He writes, "the *deus ex machina* is the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions" (10:131). Such an

[39] Kant is not consistent with this terminological distinction between "pure intellectual intuition" and this other kind of intellectual intuition. However, it is clear that there are two kinds of intellectual intuition at play in this and other texts, and it is helpful for present purposes to borrow this distinction.
[40] Whether we would also inherit a version of the productivity and synoptic (*and* modal) characteristics in virtue of this and what this *all* means for Kant's broader doctrine will be addressed in §3.3.
[41] See also Br 10:131 1772.

explanation of cognition counts for Kant as mystical, enthusiastic, and above all unphilosophical. As he notes elsewhere, it purports to make "research into synthetic a priori cognition unnecessary, insofar as we read [this cognition] in God" (R6051 18:437 1780s).[42] Even so, Kant does not also reject both versions of this model insofar as they are intended merely as coherent accounts of a finite intuitive intellect.

3.2 Kant's Verdict on the Real Model

To see this, recall the passage cited at the very beginning of this section. Kant suggests there that "the separated soul, as an intelligence, could perhaps contain a similar intuition instead of sensibility, through which it might cognize things in themselves in their divine ideas" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). What Kant seems to have in mind here is precisely the Platonic version of the real model (i.e., absent the theory of recollection), according to which a *disembodied* finite being—"the separated soul"—might enjoy a kind of intellectual intuition. Similar references are found in the other two passages cited at the beginning of this section where we are told that we might "intuit things there [i.e., a future world] as they are in themselves" by "intuitively cogniz[ing] its [divine] source" and likewise that we might come to intuit the world as it is "when the soul separates itself from the body" (V-Met/Mron 29:857 1782-3, V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:297 1770s). Taken together, such texts constitute strong evidence that Kant was in fact willing to entertain the coherence of the Platonic version of the real model.

But the same cannot be said for the Malebranchean version of this model that

[42] We will be returning to this 'deus ex machina' objection in §4 below.

allows that *embodied* finite beings could possess intellectual intuition. This Kant dismisses as "a wild fantasy <*eine Schwärmerei*>" (V-Met/Mron 29:857 1782-3). Why does he leave room for the one version of this model but not the other? A cryptic remark made in the same reflection from the 1780s gestures in the direction of a possible answer. Immediately following his discussion of Malebranche, Kant suggests it would be less fantastical to think we could somehow commune with "*genii*, astral spirits, [and] [a]eons" than to maintain with Malebranche that we could commune with God through intellectual intuition (R6050 18:435 1780s).[43] The less fantastical view Kant has in mind here is that proposed in Emanuel Swedenborg's *Arcana Cœlestia* (1749-56).[44] This "eight quarto volumes stuffed full of nonsense" and 'dull style,' as Kant describes it, is the subject of his amusing but significant early publication, *Dreams of A Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* (1766) (2:360). This work also suggests an answer to the question under consideration.

Kant tells us in *Dreams* that Swedenborg in his later years "devoted himself exclusively to cultivating the closest contact with spirits and with the souls of the dead" (2:354).[45] The spirit-seer claimed that God had given him a "gift," which, as Kant recounts, "is supposed to consist in becoming conscious of the obscure representations which the soul receives in virtue of its constant connection with the spirit-world" (2:361-2). Much like Plato, Malebranche, and Kant himself, Swedenborg

[43] In full: "But since it is probable that between us and God there is a great chain of creatures extending from us to Him—*genii*, astral spirits, [a]eon—one could first attain communion with these and with the prelude <*Vorspiel*> to intellectual original intuitions" (my modified translation).
[44] Gerhard Lehmann has similarly suggested that the view on which one could "[stand] in community with spirits" alluded to in transcripts of Kant's metaphysics lectures is that of Swedenborg (V-Met/Mron 29:761 1782-3). See the explanatory notes to the Cambridge collection of Kant's metaphysics lectures (562n18).
[45] I focus here on Kant's reception of Swedenborg, bracketing the question of whether his reading is true to the historical Swedenborg.

held that we are connected to two worlds: a spirit world, which includes the souls of both the dead and the living, and a corporeal world. In virtue of his connection to the former, Swedenborg claimed he could converse with "the souls of the departed" (2:363). He could see "in their memory (in their faculty of representation) the state in which they contemplate themselves, seeing it as clearly as if he were looking at it with bodily eyes" or "as if he saw them by means of an immediate intuition." Drawing on this "supposed intellectual intuition," as Kant describes it in a later reflection, Swedenborg put on Sylvia Browne-like performances for the Queen of Sweden and other dignitaries (R5026 18:65 1776-8, my translation).[46] He also insisted that such intuition allowed him to "contemplate the wonders of the spirit-world," revealing to him how spirits interact within that world and how they influence the corporeal world (TG 2:362). In this way, the spirit-seer presents himself as a kind of metaphysician, though one relying on "what his own eyes are supposed to have seen and his own ears to have heard" rather than the traditional method of conceptual analysis (2:360). It is in this capacity that he becomes a target of Kant's criticism.

This criticism focuses on the fact that metaphysics, as explained in the *Dreams* essay, is meant to be "a science of the limits of human reason," while Swedenborg in claiming to possess *intuitions* of the spirit world is guilty (not unlike many traditional metaphysicians) of laying claim to (in-)sights that "lie outside of the sphere of man" (2:369):[47]

[46] See Kant's 1763 letter to Charlotte von Knoblock and TG 2:354-6.

[47] This is why the full title of *Dreams*, which is ostensibly about Swedenborg's mysticism, is *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of* ***Metaphysics***. The real target of Kant's criticism in it *is* the more traditional metaphysician, who he explicitly and rather brutally mocks for "*build[ing] castles in the sky*" (2:342). Swedenborg is only an amusing exaggeration in this regard. As Kant writes in a letter from the same year: "I cannot conceal my repugnance, and even a certain hatred, toward the inflated arrogance of

> For the representation which the human soul, using an immaterial intuition, has of itself as a spirit, in so far as it regards itself as standing in relation to beings of a similar nature, is quite different from the representations it has when the soul's consciousness represents itself as a *human being* by means of an image drawn from the impression made on the organs of the body and which can only be represented in relation to material things. Accordingly, while it is true that there is one single subject which is simultaneously a member of the visible and the invisible world, it is nonetheless not one and the same person, for the representations of the one world are not, on account of their different constitution, the accompanying ideas of the representations belonging to the other world. And hence what I think as a spirit is not remembered by me as human being (2:337-8)

Kant remarks here that intuiting the spirit world requires a kind of spiritual (i.e., immaterial or intellectual) intuition, yet we are limited, as embodied spirits, to merely sensible intuition. As Michelle Grier (2002) summarizes his position, "either you've got a spiritual intuition, or you've got a sensible one. You cannot have the two simultaneously" (11). And indeed later lecture transcripts report Kant as saying precisely this: "But since I still have a sensible intuition in this world, *I cannot at the same time have spiritual intuition*" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:300 1770s).[48]

What the above criticism of Swedenborg suggests is that Kant conceives of finite minds (and please forgive the somewhat anachronistic analogy here) on something like the model of a computer partitioned to run different operating

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whole volumes full of what are passed off nowadays as insights; for I am fully convinced that the path that has been selected is completely wrong, that the methods now in vogue must infinitely increase the amount of folly and error in the world, and that even the total extermination of all these chimerical insights would be less harmful than the dream science itself, with its confounded contagion" (10:70). For an illuminating discussion of Kant's (self-)criticism in *Dreams*, see Laywine (1993).

[48] It is not entirely clear whether Kant means by this that one cannot have spiritual intuition together with sensible intuition in general or outer sensible intuition in particular. Recall that he is reported as claiming in lectures that "the separated soul, as an intelligence, could perhaps contain a similar intuition instead of sensibility <*statt der Sinnlichkeit*>," which would seem to exclude sensible intuition entirely (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4, my emphasis). However, a somewhat different story is suggested by the assertion that "inner sense still remains even without the body" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:296 1770s). That Kant sees no conflict between being disembodied and having some sort of inner sense is again suggested by a reflection from the period of his so-called 'great light'. He writes that "it is to be suspected that sensibility diminishes <*vermindre*>" after death—where the implied contrast is with simple disappearance (R4108 17:418 1769, my translation and emphasis). Similarly, although perhaps less clearly, we read that "intuitus is comparatively [more?] intellectual the more inner sense grows."

systems.[49] Even though it is one computer running the systems, the files of each are not accessible to it simultaneously. The Mac operating system isn't set up to access the Windows files, nor is the Windows system able to access the Mac files; the respective files are, so to speak, worlds apart. Similarly, "one single subject which is simultaneously a member of the visible and the invisible world" would be such that its intuitions of both worlds are not accessible to it simultaneously. As Kant puts it, "the representations of the one world are not, on account of their different constitution, the accompanying ideas of the representations belonging to the other world" (2:337-8). The embodied spirit isn't set up to access the intuitions of the disembodied spirit nor vice versa; their worlds are worlds apart.

With this, we have finally arrived at the answer to our question above: If Kant conceives of finite minds along the lines just suggested, then it becomes a kind of conceptual truth that we cannot have intellectual intuition as embodied spirits, which is contrary to both the Swedenborgian and Malebranchean versions of the real model of a finite intuitive intellect. This point comes out even more clearly in lecture transcripts in which embodied spirits intuiting the spirit world are described as "contradictory" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:300 1770s). Such versions of the real model are thus 'wild fantasies' in the sense that they can be ruled out for Kant as conceptual possibilities (V-Met/Mron 29:857 1782-3). Indeed, the same must be said for the full-blown Platonic version of the real model that includes the doctrine of recollection; for it is also a wild fantasy to think that we can bring to mind intuitions we may have had

[49] There is a very interesting discussion to be had about *why* Kant conceives of finite minds in this way; it concerns the importance of the unity of an experience and the unity of a world as well as the nature of the relationship between these two unities. Such a discussion is, however, beyond the scope of the present essay.

as disembodied spirits: "[W]hat I think as a spirit is not remembered by me as human being" (TG 2:338). However, Kant sees no similar conceptual barrier to the more moderate Platonic version of this model, according to which disembodied spirits intuit the spirit world. For this reason, such an intuition "can neither be denied nor proven" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). What Kant means by this, on the reading I propose, is that this kind of intellectual intuition cannot be denied as a *conceptual* or *logical* possibility nor proven as a *real* or *metaphysical* possibility.[50] Real possibility can only be proven, for us at least, through experience, while the experience at issue in this case "lie[s] outside of the sphere of man" (TG 2:369).

That answers our original question, but another one remains: What of Kant's cryptic remark that it would be less fantastical to suppose that we could somehow commune with genii, astral spirits, and aeons than to maintain with Malebranche that we could commune with God through intellectual intuition? What does Kant have in mind here? Here's a stab. After denying that we could intuit the spirit world, Kant continues:

> This heterogeneity between spirit-representations and those which belong to the bodily life of man need not, however, be regarded as an impediment serious enough to prevent all possibility of our becoming aware, from time to time, even during this present life, of the influences which emanate from the spirit-world. For these influence can enter the personal consciousness of man, not, it is true, directly, but nonetheless, in such a fashion that they, in accordance with the law of association of ideas, excite those images which are related to them, and awaken representations which bear an analogy with our senses. They are not, it is true, the spirit-concept, but they are symbols of it. [….] This spirit-influence cannot be felt immediately; it can only reveal itself to consciousness by means of the images of the imagination which are akin to it, and which assume the semblance of sensations. (2:338-40)

Kant seems to allow here that we might be capable of some kind of awareness of

[50] Kant does not distinguish between conceptual and logical possibility.

spiritual influences, even if we cannot intuit the spirit world. Rather like Swedenborg, he seems prepared to allow that the spirit world (or the world of things in themselves) might exert an influence on the corporeal world. He also seems to allow that we could become aware of this influence, though "clothed in the images of our imagination" and in such a way that it would not "be possible to distinguish the element of truth […] from the crude illusions surrounding it" (2:339-40). My hunch is that representations of this kind, in which "the cause of the illusion is a genuine spirit-influence," are the 'less fantastical' representations alluded to above. In fact, such a representation (rather than intellectual intuition) seems to be much closer to what Swedenborg actually purports to possess in virtue of his gift. For in his conversations with spirits, according to Kant's report of the experience, the "language is at all times combined with the appearance of the language which the person concerned normally speaks" (2:362).

It is of course necessary to emphasize here that Kant *seems* to be allowing for the possibility of a spiritual communion of this kind. It is unclear just how seriously he intends such speculations to be taken in the context of *this* essay. And even if he does regard this communion as less fantastical than the kind of divine communion that Malebranche proposes, this does not entail that he does not see it as fantastical nonetheless.

3.3 Significance

In this section, we have found evidence of Kant's willingness to allow not only that the Platonic version of the real model of a finite intuitive intellect is in itself

coherent but even that finite beings might possibly possess such an intellect. These beings include ourselves in a possible future life and presumably also other beings in what Kant describes as the "great chain of creatures extending from us to [God]" (R6050 18:435 1780s, my modified translation). Unlike the finite intuitive intellect of the formal model considered in §2, the characteristics of this intellect *are* connected to real features of things. As we have seen, however, the nature of this connection differs from the case of the divine intuitive intellect: The latter would intuit things in themselves (satisfying the non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) by possessing immediate first-person access to its own ideas, where these ideas produce these things (productivity characteristic); and where this representation and its effect constitute a *totum analyticum* (synoptic characteristic). By contrast, a finite intuitive intellect would intuit these things (satisfying the non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) by way of its immediate intuition of God's pure intellectual intuition.

Both the differences and the similarities here raise some rather difficult questions about how best to understand Kant's broader doctrine: Can we understand this finite intuitive intellect as possessing all the characteristics outlined in §1? Or do we need to revise our present sketch of them so that this intellect can be understood in this way? Alternatively, should we conclude that Kant has some kind of bifurcated doctrine? One part with all the characteristics and the other with only a version of some of them? I am somewhat undecided here. That the finite intuitive intellect of this real model possesses the thing in itself and non-discursivity characteristics is clear. After all, Kant tells us it would intuit things in themselves. Indeed, it would do so only in virtue of its immediate intuition of the pure intellectual intuition that grounds the

existence of these things. Even so, we are told that one "intuit[s]" things "as they are in themselves" by "intuitively cogniz[ing] [their] source" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:297 1770s). As for the other characteristics, the story is less clear. At a minimum, I want to say that there is more in common between the divine intuitive intellect and this finite intuitive intellect than first meets the eye.

Consider the productivity characteristic. Though the finite intellectual intuition of this Platonic model is not itself the ground of the existence of things in themselves, it is an immediate intuition of that ground. It still involves in this way a kind of immediate connection to production, even if the nature of this immediacy differs from that of divine intellectual intuition. Consider also the synoptic characteristic. Though this finite intellectual intuition is not itself an idea of the whole, it still involves an immediate intuition of such an idea. Here again, there is a kind of immediate connection to the whole.[51] Now it might be thought that in this case the connection is only as immediate as that found in teleological judgment. For in such judgment, we also possess only a *representation* of the *representation* of a whole. That is, we conceive of an antecedent concept of the bird as determining the placement of its tail and wings. Yet such a connection, as we saw in §1, is hardly thought by Kant to be so significant as to involve intellectual intuition. In response, there is plenty of room to argue for a key difference between the two cases: In teleological judgment, we merely conceive of the antecedent representation of the bird as determining the relations of its

[51] It is unclear what we should say about the modal characteristic, which does not figure so explicitly, if at all, in Kant's retelling of Plato and Malebranche. Here is a suggestion: What comes out of Kant's criticism of Swedenborg is that an intellect can have only one kind of intuition at a time. If that intuition is an immediate intuition of an intuition that itself has "no objects except what is actual," then it seems to follow that it too would "have no objects except what is actual." If this is right, it suggests that the modal characteristic would more straightforwardly apply to this intellect than would the productivity and synoptic characteristics.

parts; we do not *intuit* the synoptic representation that grounds the bird and its parts.

What we ultimately make of these kinds of connections will be of significance not only for how we answer these tough questions but also for whether we accept the inseparability assumption. Again, this is the view that the characteristics outlined in §1 are inseparable. If we conclude, for instance, that the real model of a finite intuitive intellect includes only the thing in itself and non-discursivity characteristics, then we should also conclude that the inseparability assumption is false or at least in need of modification. In this regard, it will be necessary to keep sight of the fact that whatever characteristics the finite intuitive intellect does possess are had only in virtue of a divine intuitive intellect that possesses all the characteristics outlined in §1.[52] This finding suggests a more limited sense in which the inseparability thesis can be upheld.

Before we move on to the third and final model of a finite intuitive intellect, this is a good time to address a question that has loomed in the background of the discussion to this point: What of those passages in which Kant does seem to rule out finite intuitive intellects—e.g., "[o]nly the understanding of God is called intuition" (V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5)? How are we to reconcile such passages with what we have seen here? To begin, notice that such apparently categorical claims are rare. More often than not, Kant identifies the divine intellect as one case of an intuitive intellect rather than the only case—e.g., "a pure intuition of the understanding […] such as that which is divine," and "an understanding that itself intuited […] as, say, a

[52] Again, though the modal characteristic does not figure explicitly in Kant's retelling of Plato and Malebranche, it is clear from other texts that he thinks it would apply to the divine intuitive intellect. This comes out most clearly in texts where he ascribes to God versions of the productivity characteristic that imply that the modal characteristic. See, e.g., KrV B71-2, B145. I discuss this point in more detail in "All Objects God Cognizes Exist: Necessitarianism in §76 of the Third Critique" (unpublished).

divine understanding" (MSI 2:413; KrV B145, my underlined emphases). Moreover, close examination of passages that seem to identify the divine intellect as the only case of such an intellect often reveals that the intent is simply to rule out the claim that the human intellect is intuitive. Immediately following the passage stating that "[o]nly the understanding of God is called intuition," for example, we read: "[A]s inexplicable as this kind of understanding is to us human beings, it is still supposed to indicate that God would have the faculty for cognizing things as they are in themselves, which is wholly lacking in human beings" (my underlined emphasis)

Of the remaining passages, I contend that they are not in fact inconsistent with what we have established above. Take, for instance, Kant's claim that "intellectual intuition […] seems to pertain only to the original being, never to one that is dependent as regards both its existence and its intuition" (KrV B72). We might lean heavily here on the "seems" (*scheinen*) or note again that 'intellectual intuition' does not seem to have a univocal sense for Kant. I suggest, however, that we might also simply concede that he remains ambivalent about, and perhaps even somewhat dogmatically resistant to, the possibility of a finite intuitive intellect and furthermore that his attitude makes a great deal of sense in the context of his broader epistemological project. After all, not only does he clearly think that the concept inspires a kind of philosophical laziness insofar as it underwrites speculative claims to metaphysical insight, but even more seriously, it places a question mark beside a foundational assumption of his own critical system. This is the assumption that a representation can agree with an object and serve as a basis for knowledge in only one of two ways: "Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the

representation alone makes the object possible" (KrV A92/B124-5). To the extent that Kant does reveal his readiness to at least entertain the coherence of a model on which such agreement arises through another kind of mechanism entirely—e.g. a finite mind agreeing with its real object via immediate intuition of God's pure intellectual intuition—he must realize (and hence his understandable resistance) that he is placing in question a key pillar of his own critical epistemology.

§4. The Common Root Model

To motivate a third and for us final candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect, I begin with a slight detour: Recall that I first introduced an intuitive intellect as a kind of mind enjoying what Kant calls an 'intellectual intuition' or, equivalently, an 'intuitive understanding' of objects. This put me at odds with Eckart Förster (2012), who argues against such an equivalence. On his reading, Kant associates different characteristics with each—characteristics that, at least in their critical incarnations, could come apart. Specifically, Förster contends that Kant associates the productivity and modal characteristics exclusively with intellectual intuition and the synoptic characteristic exclusively with an intuitive understanding. As I have noted, I too am open to the possibility that these characteristics could come apart for Kant. However, that he makes this further distinction between intellectual intuition and intuitive understanding is simply not borne out by the text.[53]

[53] It is not even borne out by the text Förster cites as evidence. In §76 of the third *Critique*, for instance, Kant clearly associates the modal characteristic with an intuitive understanding: "if our understanding were intuitive, it would have no objects except what is actual" (5:402). See chapter 6 of *Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy*. Michelle Kosch raised this same textual issue in her comments on his book at the 2012 Eastern APA.

Jessica Leech (2014) has also challenged Förster on this issue. She suggests that the terminological variation here is simply Kant's way of emphasizing either the spontaneity (intuitive *understanding*) or the actual presentation (intellectual *intuition*) associated with such an intellect. She writes, "the useful philosophical stalking horse [vis-à-vis an intuitive intellect] is the idea of our two cognitive capacities collapsed into one" (344). In thought, we spontaneously bring to mind objects but only abstractly, while in intuition, we are actually given the objects but only passively. Leech's suggestion is that an intuitive intellect collapses this spontaneity of thought with the actuality of intuition. The modal characteristic, which is her focus, can be approached from this perspective by noting that an intuitive intellect's spontaneous representation of an object would guarantee the existence of that object: "[I]f the representations of the intuitive understanding guarantee themselves an object […] then there is no need for a concept of possibility" (347). Some of the other characteristics might also be approached in this way. For instance, the productivity characteristic can be understood by noting that such an intellect's (non-discursive) thought guarantees the existence of its object precisely by producing it. Relatedly, the thing in itself characteristic can be accounted for by noting that what would be produced and represented by such a thought is a thing in itself.[54]

The main point of this little detour, aside from registering opposition to what is today an influential interpretation of Kant's doctrine of an intuitive intellect, is to bring into closer focus Leech's 'philosophical stalking horse' of a mind in which the functions of sensibility and understanding are 'collapsed.' For this notion will help

[54] On this point about production and things in themselves, see KpV 5:102.

guide us toward a third candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect. The model takes its inspiration from a notorious passage in the Introduction to the first *Critique,* in which Kant writes that "there are two stems of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root <*aus einer gemeinschaftlichen, aber uns unbekannten Wurzel*>, namely sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought" (A15/B29). This reference to a common root has historically given rise to a suspicion that Kant might be committed to our intellects being a kind of intuitive intellect after all—indeed, despite his protestations to the contrary.[55] And we can now see why this is the case. Kant's invocation of this root brings us precariously close to Leech's philosophical stalking horse: "the idea of our two cognitive capacities collapsed into one" (344). In this section, I will develop this thought and evaluate Kant's position regarding what I will propose as a third candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect, which I dub the 'common root' model. Kant's position regarding this model is not as forthcoming as was the case with the formal and real models. Still, by drawing on his verdicts in these other cases, we may be able to make progress here as well.

I begin this discussion by evaluating Kant's position regarding a common root of our faculties of understanding and sensibility. I will conclude, contrary to one prominent and historically influential reading, that Kant is not committed to the existence of such a root but only to its logical possibility. I will then explore whether this stance entails commitment to the possibility that our intellect is a kind of intuitive intellect. In examining this question, I will draw on the results already established

[55] For an overview of the early literature arguing in favor of such a reading, see Vaihinger (1881) (esp. 485-9).

concerning the formal and real models. My conclusion will be that Kant need not be committed to the possibility that our intellect is an intuitive intellect simply in virtue of his commitment to the possibility of a common root of our faculties.

4.1 Kant on a Common Root of Understanding and Sensibility

As noted already, Kant's notorious remarks in the Introduction to the first *Critique* have historically been read as a commitment to the existence of a common root of our faculties of understanding and sensibility. According to the judgment of Heidegger (1929), for instance, Kant positively confirms this position when he announces in the Architectonic chapter that the task of "outlining the **architectonic** of all cognition from **pure reason** [will] begin only at the point where the general root of our cognitive power divides and branches out into two stems" (A835/B863). While this text on the face of it offers good support for the common root thesis, it has been persuasively shown that such a conclusion is in fact overly hasty. In briefly outlining the case against a range of common root readings in what follows, I draw on the seminal analysis of Dieter Henrich (1994/1955). Henrich's basic position is that the "perhaps" in the Introduction to the first *Critique* "merely concedes the possibility that there might be such a first principle, though there would be no reason to assume that it had to exist." Furthermore, Kant's description of it as "to us unknown" is not meant, as it has sometimes been understood, as a kind of call to action as if this root were only "yet to be reached in our knowledge" (19-20). Rather the "to us unknown" is an expression of Kant's "insight that the task of revealing the common root reaches beyond the limits of human knowledge."

Henrich traces the origins of Kant's position here to an important 18th century debate between Christian Wolff, a proponent of a version of the common root (identified as the *vis repraesentativa universi,* or 'universal power of representation'), and Christian August Crusius, a staunch opponent of Wolff's model of cognition. According to Henrich, Crusius's primary issue with such a model is that he finds it utterly inconceivable how "through [one basic power] the soul could sense, meditate, infer, and so on" (*Entwurf* §73, qtd. Henrich 24).[56] "[T]hose things, since they differ in more than grade and direction, would be impossible to conceive from one basic principle." Henrich makes a compelling case that Kant very much sides with Crusius on this point. According to lecture transcripts, for example, Kant agrees that "we certainly cannot derive effects which are actually different from one another from one basic power […] for who would want to try to derive the understanding from the senses?" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:262 1770s, qtd. Henrich 20n8).[57] This does not yet show that Kant completely rules out the idea of a common root of our cognitive faculties. Inconceivability is not, on his view, a reliable guide to impossibility. What it does show is that he registers strong doubts about it. Not only are the details of such a reductive model beyond our comprehension—and necessarily so in the context of Kant's later critical strictures on speculative insight—but he regards a plurality of basic powers as a viable alternative. His critical system does not suggest any transcendental argument that would justify proposing, still less positively asserting,

[56] Crusius's deeper objection is that this model reduces the will to intellect and in this way supports Wolff's own Socratic and compatibilist moral psychology, according to which all action is 'under the aspect of the good'. My thanks to Hogan for discussing this point with me. For discussion of Kant's critique of Leibniz's PSR as demanding a collapse of the faculties of understanding and will that is inconsistent with Kant's own moral theory, see Hogan (2013).

[57] See 28:261-2 and also Anth 7:177. English translations of Kant, even if quoted in Zoeller's 1994 translation of Henrich's essay, are from *The Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works.*

the existence of such a common root.

What then is to be made of the passage from the Architectonic chapter, which, according to Heidegger, involves a positive commitment to the existence of such a root? Kant announces there that the task of "outlining the **architectonic** of all cognition from **pure reason** [will] begin only at the point where the general root of our cognitive power divides and branches into two stems" (A835/B863) Closer examination of this passage reveals that Kant is not asserting the existence of a common root of our faculties. As Henrich rightly points out, Kant's position is rather that while we have no *objective* ground to assert the existence of such a root, there is nonetheless a *subjective* ground to make use of its idea as a guiding principle of enquiry. The basic motivation here is found, according to lecture transcripts, in "the main rule of the philosopher" or what the first *Critique* calls our regulative employment of ideas of reason: "One asserts not that such a [basic] power must in fact be found, rather *one must seek it for the benefit of reason* […] one must in such a way bring systematic unity into cognition" (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:262 1770s, A649-50/B677-8, qtd. Henrich 26-7). To summarize, Kant does not mean to assert that a common root exists; he rather avails himself of the idea as a kind of guiding principle expressing a fundamental need of reason to "bring systematic unity into cognition"—precisely his stated task in the Architectonic.

Where does this leave us? I believe that Henrich's analysis establishes that Kant is not committed to the existence of a common root of the faculties of understanding and sensibility. While this result might seem to greatly diminish the threat of Leech's philosophical stalking horse, I suggest that a more nuanced

conclusion is in order. Although Kant is certainly not committed to the existence of such a common root, he does explicitly acknowledge its possibility. This is precisely what is indicated by his "perhaps" in the famous passage in the Introduction of the first *Critique.* And in light of this possibility, we are still confronted with the important question of whether Kant is in turn committed to the possibility that the human intellect is a kind of intuitive intellect after all.

4.2 Versions of the Common Root: the Formal Model

There have historically been a good number of proposals for what the supposed common root of understanding and sensibility could consist in. Notable proposals have included the understanding itself, the imagination, the soul, a kind of receptive spontaneity, and various other options.[58] Whether Kant would entertain the possibility of any of these candidates and whether any of them would in turn commit him to the possibility that we possess an intuitive intellect strongly depends, as we are now in a good position to appreciate, on how the root is spelled out.

To begin to see this, let me return to a debate briefly touched on in §2 above regarding the unity of space. Longuenesse (1998) contends that this unity depends on the human intellect in virtue of a synthetic act of the understanding. She finds evidence for this reading in §26 of the B-Deduction, where Kant draws his well-known distinction between a spatial form of intuition (*die Form der Anschauung*) and a formal intuition of space (*die formale Anschauung*). He explains that the latter "gives unity of the representation" and "presupposes a synthesis" (B160-1n).

[58] For an overview of some of these proposals, see Vaihinger (1881) (esp. 485-9).

According to Longuenesse's reading, this spatial 'form of intuition' is nothing more than a kind of "potentiality" for having an intuition of space, which is given by sensibility, whereas the 'formal intuition' is the "actualized" intuition itself, which requires a synthetic act of the understanding (221).[59] Such an interpretation has, however, met with sharp criticism for supposedly collapsing our two cognitive faculties into one. As Longuenesse (2005) summarizes Michel Fichant's (1997) expression of this charge, such a reading "den[ies] that Kant grants any independence to sensibility with respect to the understanding" (65). James Messina (2014) agrees: "[I]f a form of intuition requires the influence of the understanding in order to be actualized, then what principled reason could Kant have for attributing forms of intuition to a distinct stem of cognition?" (37).

Notice, however, that even if such a criticism were well placed (a question beyond the scope of this essay), the kind of common root that would be implied by Longuenesse's reading would not concern what is *real* in our cognition, but only what is *formal* within it. In other words, even if sensibility does require the understanding's influence for our form of intuition to be actualized, this need not imply that the understanding's influence is required for us to be affected by what is real; it certainly does not imply that what is real must be generated by the understanding. My point here is simply this: Insofar as a common root understood along these lines ultimately concerns only what is formal in our cognition, Kant would not see it as implying that our intellects are a kind of intuitive intellect. For one of the main lessons we learned from his rejection of the formal model of an intuitive intellect is that an intuitive

[59] See Longuenesse (1998) (esp. chapter 8) and (2005) (esp. chapter 3). See Longuenesse (1998) (esp. 221-2n) in particular for a discussion of what she means by "potentiality" here.

intellect properly speaking is essentially tied to what is real in cognition.

4.3 Versions of the Common Root: the Real Model

Let us consider then Kant's position regarding a real model of the common root, by which I mean a root of our cognitive faculties that *is* in a relevant sense tied to real content. To this end, let us return to Leech's proposal that an intuitive intellect can be understood as a mind whose spontaneous representation of a (real) object is *guaranteed* to be veridical. Let us set aside for present purposes the problem arising from spontaneity in this characterization. For as Leech admits, it is a matter of considerable difficulty what constitutes such spontaneity for Kant; furthermore, as we saw in §3, he is willing to regard a finite intellect as a kind of intuitive intellect even though the content of its representations is constrained by the content of the divine ideas rather than spontaneously generated.[60]

I suggest that we might understand the veridicality guarantee in Leech's characterization as taking the form of an *internal* or an *external* guarantee. By an internal guarantee, I have in mind something like a grounding or productive relationship between our representation and its object, where the root in this case could be the understanding or perhaps the productive imagination. Such a model of the common root would indeed seem to bring with it the possibility that our intellects are a kind of intuitive intellect (i.e., satisfying the productivity and thing in itself characteristics). However, it is also clear that Kant would not entertain this possibility.

[60] Leech writes, "It is a controversial issue how to understand what Kant means by 'spontaneous', but it seems at least to have some connection to the freedom of thought—we have freedom in our thinking in a way that we do not in our perceiving. For example, I might be free to direct my attention to different things, but what I perceive still seems to be determined by the direction of my gaze" (345).

As we have seen, his consistent position is that "we human beings are not capable" of such a productive representation (R6050 18:434 1780s).[61]

By an external veridicality guarantee, I have in mind either a natural or supernatural version.[62] According to the natural version, our representation guarantees its object via a kind of *direct realism* that would simply allow us to perceive the object as it is. Under these circumstances, we might understand the root as something more akin to sensibility, though understood as the direct realist conceives of it. Here too such a conception of the common root would seem to bring with it the possibility that our intellects are a kind of intuitive intellect (insofar as the model satisfies the thing in itself characteristic). However, it also seems clear that Kant would not be willing to entertain this kind of model, and this for at least two reasons. First, he takes himself to have a powerful argument against any such direct realism insofar as he claims that the antinomies of pure reason rule out the reality of space and time. Second, he denies that such cognitive access could account for the kind of cognition we actually possess. We find one of many expressions of this thought in his 1789 letter to Herz:

> Even if were capable of an intellectual intuition (for example, in such a way that the infinitely small elements of intuition were noumena), it would be impossible to show the necessity of such judgments in conformity with the nature of our understanding in which concepts such as "necessity" exist. For such intuitions would still be mere perceptions; for example, the perception that in a triangle two sides taken together are larger than the third side—not the recognition that this property would have to belong to a triangle *necessarily*. (Br 11:51, my underlined emphasis)

Similarly, we read in the *Prolegomena*:

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[61] See also Br 10:130 1772: "[O]ur understanding, through its representations, is [not] the cause of the object (save in the case of moral ends)."

[62] The image of two stems arising from a single root might seem to suggest that the guarantee must be internal. But this is only a metaphor. I see no reason to exclude the possibility of an external guarantee. At the least, I see no reason not to examine the implications of such a guarantee in the present context.

> [I]t is incomprehensible how the intuition of a thing that is present should allow me to cognize it the way it is in itself, since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation; but even granting such a possibility, the intuition still would not take place *a priori*, i.e., before the object were presented to me […] (Prol 4:282, my underlined emphasis)

Because such a model of the common root could not account for our cognition of necessity nor therefore our *a priori* cognition more generally, Kant would not entertain its possibility.[63]

According to the supernatural version of the external veridicality guarantee, our representation corresponds to its object thanks to some divine contribution. We might think of this divine common root along roughly *Malebranchean* lines, so that we "cognize things in themselves in their divine ideas," (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4); along roughly *Leibnizian* lines, so that God harmonizes our cognitive faculties and their objects by means of general laws; or along *Crusian* lines, so that God implants in us bridge principles allowing inferences from what we can and cannot think to reality. We have already considered Kant's reaction to the Malebranchean model above. In short, while the model presents our intellects as a kind of intuitive intellect (by satisfying the thing in itself and non-discursivity characteristics), Kant holds that it is not possible for embodied beings like us to enjoy such a spiritual intuition.

Kant's position vis-à-vis the Leibnizian model is found in his response to Salomon Maimon, who objected in his day that the first *Critique*'s proof of the

[63] Notice that these concerns about explaining a priori cognition and cognition of necessity need not also apply to the real account, according to which finite beings have immediate intuitions of divine ideas. On the one hand, divine ideas are the ground of things in themselves. Thus, immediate intuitions of them would seem to be a way of cognizing them through their ground, which is an *a priori* cognition of them and their *necessary* features. On the other, Kant does not tell us what kind of cognition these finite beings would have, i.e., whether they would in fact have a priori cognition and cognition of necessity. Thus, it isn't obvious that the real account would need to explain this kind of cognition.

applicability of the categories to experience cannot succeed unless Kant is willing to accept a common root model of the relation between sensibility and understanding. Broadly similar reasoning led many of Kant's more sympathetic readers, including Karl Leonhard Reinhold and Hermann Cohen, to the same conclusion. For what could account for the unity of these faculties if not a common origin? As Henrich writes:

> [T]he faculties which together make up the human mind do not simply coexist [….] [T]he understanding cannot obtain knowledge without sensibility. And sensibility, in turn, must be so structured that the understanding is able to determine it according to the condition of its unity, i.e., the categories. After all, appearances could be so constituted that the understanding found them not conforming to the condition of its unity. (30-1)

Maimon, one of Kant's most discerning early readers, saw no suggestion that Kant does in fact endorse such a common root model; rather its supposed indispensability is presented as a fundamental challenge to Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories. Kant summarizes and addresses this challenge in his 1789 letter to Herz.[64] He understands Maimon to be asking how "the understanding is to have a law-giving relationship to sensible intuition" if it is not "the originator not only of the sensible forms but also of the material of intuition, that is, of objects" (11:49-50). For how could we "explain the possibility of agreement between a priori intuitions and my a priori concepts, if each has its specifically different origin"?

In response, Kant repeats much of what he has already said in the first *Critique*, including his stock response that any investigation of the origin and harmony of the faculties "of course lies wholly beyond the limits of human reason" (11:52, qtd. Henrich 32). He nevertheless indulges himself further: "If we wanted to make

[64] Henrich merely quotes Kant's answer to Maimon without noting any details about their exchange or even the fact that there was an exchange. See Villinger (2017) for an in-depth discussion of the key issues.

judgments about their origin [viz. the faculties and their harmony in producing cognition] […] we could name nothing beyond our divine creator."[65] This amounts to a version of a 'pre-established harmony' hypothesis—though in this case the harmony concerns what Henrich terms the 'intramental' relation between understanding and sensibility rather than the mind-world relation.[66] In other words, Kant does allow for what might be construed as a divine common root of the faculties. However, this concession does not commit him to the view that our intellect is itself a kind of intuitive intellect insofar as it does not entail a collapse of the faculties at all. The 'common root' Kant suggests, though only as a speculative hypothesis, is a divine ground of the harmony between faculties that are themselves distinct. Now it might seem odd that Kant would allow for such a possibility in light of his earlier denunciation in the famous 1772 letter to Herz of the '*deus ex machina'* model of cognition, described as "the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions" (10:132 1772). Notice, however, that the 1789 proposal is not at all intended as a justification of the validity of our cognitions but rather as an account of the origin and unity of our distinct faculties. Kant's

[65] The original passage reads: "Es ist mislich, den Gedanken, der einem tiefdenkenden obgeschwebt haben mag und den er sich selbst nicht recht klar konnte, zu errathen; gleichwohl überrede ich mich sehr, da Leibnitz [sic] mit seiner Vorherbestimmten Harmonie (die er sehr allgemein wie auch Baumgarten in seiner Cosmologie nach ihm) nicht Harmonie zweyer Verschiedenen Wesen, nämlich Sinnen und Verstandeswesen, zweyer Vermögen eben desselben Wesens, in Sinnlichkeit und Verstand zu einem Erfahrungserkenntnisse vor Augen gehabt habe, von deren Ursprung, wenn wir ja darüber urtheilen wollten, obzwar eine solche Nachforschung über die Grenze der menschlichen Vernunft hinaus liegt, wir weiter keinen Grund, als den Gottlichen Urheber von uns selbst angeben können, wenn wir gleich die Befugnis, vermittelst derselben a priori zu urtheilen, (d. i. das qvid iuris) da sie einmal gegeben vollkommen erklären können."
The underlined text is ambiguous between a judgment concerning (a) the origin of sensibility and understanding or (b) the origin of their harmony. While the *Cambridge Edition* translates the text as (a), I am inclined to read it with Henrich as (b), since 'von deren Ursprung' seems to refer to the singular feminine noun 'Harmonie.' Note that on either translation, Kant regards the common root as at least possible. My thanks to Nathan Birch and Florian Marwede for helpful discussions of this passage.
[66] See Villinger (2017) for an illuminating discussion of this pre-established harmony hypothesis.

position remains that once the faculties of sensibility and the understanding are given to us, as they are, "we are fully able to explain their power of making a priori judgments" without appeal to any divine mechanism (11:52).

Let us consider, finally, the Crusian model of the common root, according to which the veridicality of relevant representations is guaranteed via principles implanted by God in the understanding. In Crusius's case, the principles at issue are the so-called principles of inseparability and non-combinability: What cannot be separated or combined in thought cannot be separated or combined in reality.[67] An alternative version of this model is furnished by Descartes's principle of clear and distinct perception: Whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive is true.[68] Here, too, we are presented with a kind of pre-established harmony—though this time between the mind and its objects (indeed Kant refers to Crusius's doctrine as the "pre-established intellectual harmony theory"). Here, too, we can regard God as a kind of common root ensuring the veridicality of our representations (Br 10:131 1772).[69]

Unsurprisingly, Kant also raises his 'deus ex machina' objection to this Crusian model. Unlike the model of pre-established harmony that he himself upholds,

[67] See *Entwurf* §15 and *Weg* §261

[68] See *Meditations* 3:36. Kant speaks more directly to the Crusian version of this model, so we will do the same. See also Prol 4:319n.

[69] One might be tempted to argue that there is a sense in which the *understanding* itself can also be regarded as a common root on this model insofar as it provides access to reality independently of sensibility. In that limited sense, the understanding absorbs some of sensibility's function of ensuring a veridical mind-world relation (i.e., through the understanding alone, we can represent how objects really are). It would be misguided, however, to describe this as a collapse of the two faculties since the mere existence of two distinct modes of epistemic access to things does not entail the reducibility of either of these modes (understanding, sensibility) to the other. Moreover, neither Descartes nor Crusius endorse such reducibility. According to Descartes' theory of sensible ideas, for example, sensibility makes an indispensable contribution to knowledge by furnishing what Alison Simmons calls 'ecologically salient' information that is essential to the preservation of the mind-body unit. See Simmons (1999). My thanks to Hogan for discussion of these specific issues and Crusius's epistemology more generally.

the Crusian model does make essential appeal to God to explain our cognition. What irks Kant about this is not simply that it constitutes lazy philosophy insofar as it purports to justify a priori cognition by "employing the magical power of a few formulae concerning *what can* and *what cannot be thought*" (TG 2:342). Such a model also "encourages all sorts of wild notions and every pious and speculative brainstorm" insofar as its essential appeal to God in effect views "every principle and cognition of the faculty of understanding as revelation" (Br 10:131 1772; V-Met/Schön 28:467 1785-90, my translation).[70] Kant sometimes puts this charge in terms of a "vicious circularity" in how Crusius justifies such cognition (Br 10:131). What he seems to have in mind here is a Cartesian-style circle, according to which, as Hogan (forthcoming) puts it, "the reliability of [Crusius's] thinkability criterion is divinely guaranteed, while the divine guarantor's existence is demonstrated on its basis."[71]

More to the point for present purposes, however, is that Kant argues that Crusius's principles of inseparability and non-combinability cannot be treated as a reliable guide to the necessities governing mind-independent reality. He puts the case against Crusius's "pre-established intellectual harmony theory" in these terms in §27 of the B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction:

> If someone still wanted to propose a middle way between the only two, already named ways, namely, that the categories were neither **self-thought** *a priori* first principles of our cognition nor drawn from experience, but were rather subjective predispositions for thinking, implanted in us along with our existence by our author in such a way that their use would agree exactly with the laws of nature along which experience runs (a kind of **preformation-system** of pure reason) then […] this would be decisive against the supposed middle way: that in such a case the categories would lack the **necessity** that is

[70] I first encountered this second passage in Hogan (forthcoming).
[71] See Hogan (2010) (esp. 31-2) for a more extensive discussion of Kant's criticisms of this Crusian model of a priori cognition.

> essential to their concept. For, e.g., the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object (i.e., necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected; which is precisely what the skeptic wishes most, for then all of our insight through the supposed objective validity of our judgments is nothing but sheer illusion […] (B168, my underlined emphasis)[72]

Stepping back then, we can see that Kant rejects this Crusian model for the same reason he rejects the direct realist model. It cannot explain the insight into necessity Kant thinks we actually enjoy. For we do not merely represent "that in a triangle two sides taken together are larger than the third"; we also "recogni[ze] that this property would have to belong to a triangle *necessarily*" (Br. 11:51 1789).

But would the possibility of this Crusian model even have brought with it the possibility that our intellects are a kind of intuitive intellect? I suggest that the answer is no. What this model seems to give us is something like the thing in itself characteristic insofar as our representations of things *in general* are guaranteed to be veridical when formed according to certain principles of thought. However, the species of representation here is not intuitive; it is not of things "immediately or as a singular" (MSI 2:395). Rather, it is more like what Kant refers to in the *Inaugural Dissertation* as symbolic cognition*,* which he explicitly distinguishes from intellectual intuition. Though Kant changes his mind about whether we could possess symbolic cognition, I see no evidence to suggest that he ever gives up on the intuitive/symbolic distinction. If this is right, then even if Kant were to harbor any sympathy for the

[72] This "middle way" is a reference to the Crusian account: "Crusius alone knew of a middle way" (Prol 4:319n).

Crusian model of a common root, which he does not, such a model would not entail any suggestion that our intellects are intuitive.[73]

Conclusion

In this essay, I have explored Kant's relatively complex views regarding three candidate models of a finite intuitive intellect. In closing, I would like to briefly summarize the main findings. After outlining five characteristics that Kant consistently associates with an intuitive intellect in §1, I considered what I called the 'formal' model of a finite intuitive intellect in §2. On this model, the human intellect is regarded as a kind of intuitive intellect insofar as features of our spatio-temporal intuition, apperceptive self-awareness, and teleological judgment mirror many, if not all, of the characteristics of an intuitive intellect discussed in §1. Our investigation established that while Kant is sensitive to these many interesting and underexplored parallels between the human intellect and an intuitive intellect, he ultimately denies that this formal model represents a genuine intuitive intellect. The central rationale for this is that the relevant features of our intellect are not connected with what is *real* in cognition; rather they concern only the *form* of an object, the *form* of thought, and the idealized *form* of the whole. The analysis did, however, suggest that there may be considerable exegetical value in exploring these neglected parallels between the human intellect and an intuitive one in order to better understand Kant's conception of our cognitive situation.

[73] That Kant often discusses Crusius in connection with Plato and Malebranche but also consistently distinguishes them provides further support for this. For example, he writes that Plato and Malebranche explain cognition "from *intuitu intellectuali*" but Crusius from "*systemate praeformationis*" (R4275 17:492 1770-1).

We turned our attention in §3 to what I called the 'real' model of a finite intuitive intellect. On this model, relevant features of a finite intellect are appropriately connected with reality. In particular, such an intellect possesses an immediate intuition of God's pure intellectual intuition and in this way intuits things in themselves by means of an intuition of their divine source. We examined evidence indicating that Kant regards a version of this model as representing a genuine intuitive intellect. More surprisingly, he sometimes suggests that we might come to possess such an intellect as disembodied spirits and furthermore that such an intellect might be possessed by other disembodied finite spirits. This finding is significant insofar as it raises the question of the precise strength and restrictions on Kant's commitment to a key foundational assumption of the critical epistemological framework, viz. the view that a representation can agree with an object and thereby serve as a basis for knowledge in only two ways: "Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible" (KrV A92/B124-5).

Finally, in §4, we considered a third candidate model of a finite intuitive intellect inspired by Kant's infamous remarks in the Introduction to the first *Critique* that our faculties of understanding and sensibility "may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root" (A15/B29). On this 'common root' model, the human intellect may be viewed as a kind of intuitive intellect insofar as such a root involves, or is taken to involve, a 'collapse' of the faculties of understanding and sensibility. Drawing in part on earlier findings, I argued that Kant's suggestion of a common root of our faculties in the Introduction does not in fact commit him to the view that the human intellect is a kind of finite intuitive intellect. Careful analysis of his position

established, on the contrary, that he explicitly dismisses a number of candidate roots that arguably do have this implication (the notion of a productive intellect, a direct realist model, Malebranchean vision-in-God). We found in addition that the account of pre-established harmony of understanding and sensibility Kant espouses in his 1789 Herz letter, while it does propose a divine common root of these faculties and their harmony, is not intended nor can aptly be described as a model of a finite intuitive intellect.[74]

Abbreviations[75]

Anth	Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht
BDG	Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund
Br	Briefe
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft
KrV	Kritik der reinen Vernunft
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft
MSI	De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis
PND	Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio
Prol	Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik
R	Reflexion
RGV	Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft
TG	Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch die Träume der Metaphysik
ÜE	Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll
V-Lo/Busolt	Logik Busolt
V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt	Ergänzungen Kant Metaphysik K3
V-Met-L2/Pölitz	Metaphysik L 2
V-Met/Mron	Metaphysik Mrongovius
V-Th/Pölitz	Religionslehre Pölitz
VT	Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie

[74] Thanks to Andrew Chignell, Desmond Hogan, Michelle Kosch, James Messina, and Derk Pereboom for helpful feedback on earlier versions of this essay.
[75] I borrow these abbreviations (with minor modification) from *Kant-Studien*.

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CHAPTER 3

Ideas as 'the Divinity of Our Soul': Kant's Theocentric and Platonic Model of Human Cognition[1]

Scribbled in the margins of Kant's copy of the 4th edition of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (1757)—near a section entitled "Perfection"—is a reflection that Adickes dates to just a few years prior to the publication of the first edition of Kant's magnum opus, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/7): "That is the divinity of our soul, that it is capable of ideas <*Das ist das G[ö]ttliche unserer Seele, daß sie der [I]deen fahig ist*>" (R5247 18:130 1776-8, my translation). Kant's thought here is poetic, poignant, even a bit Shakespearean: "What a piece of work is man, How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, […] In apprehension how like a god" (*Hamlet* 2.2.13).[2] The present essay pursues this intriguing description of our ideas as "the divinity of our soul" with the primary aim of correcting a popular but misleading narrative that the critical Kant flatly rejects a theocentric model on which human cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of the *divine* intuitive intellect (§§1-2).[3] Along the way, it will also suggest a significant and ultimately illuminating Platonic influence on Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect *and* on the critical philosophy more broadly (§3).

[1] I use the abbreviations listed at the end of this essay. The first *Critique* is cited in accordance with standard A/B pagination. Kant's other works are cited by volume and page number from the Akademie Edition. Where available, dates are included for lecture transcripts, letters, and reflections. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are from *The Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works* (edited by Guyer & Wood) and emphases are Kant's (or the respective author's) own.

[2] Interestingly, we know that Kant was familiar with this play. See R1519 15:875 1781-1791 for an explicit reference to it and V-Lo/Busolt 1789-90 24:630 for a possible allusion to its opening scene.

[3] See Henry Allison (2004) (esp. 27-34). Allison writes that "the idea of such an intellect functions" on this theocentric model as a "norm in the light of which human cognition is analyzed and measured" (28). Allison's view will be discussed in more detail in §1.

§1 A Popular Narrative

Henry Allison (1983/2004/2006) is today a prominent spokesperson for the narrative I wish to challenge.[4] Central to his influential interpretation of transcendental idealism is the thesis that this doctrine can be understood by way of a positive point of difference with transcendental realism. In particular, what distinguishes and thereby defines these doctrines on this interpretation is that the transcendental realist—who, in Allison's view, represents not just classical rationalism but also classical empiricism—is committed to a theocentric model on which human cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of what Kant refers to as the 'intellectual intuition' (*intellectuelle Anschauung*) or, equivalently, the 'intuitive understanding' (*intuitiver/anschauender Verstand*) enjoyed paradigmatically by the *divine* intuitive intellect.[5,6] By contrast, the transcendental idealist, namely the critical Kant, is said to reject this model in favor of an anthropocentric one that "consider[s] the human mind as the source of the rules or conditions through which and under which it can alone represent to itself an objective world" (38).

The view that Kant rejects a theocentric model of human cognition fits

[4] Unless indicated, references to Allison will be from the second edition of *Transcendental Idealism*: *An Interpretation and Defense* (2004). As Nicolas Stang (2016) rightly points out, "Allison characterizes the transcendental realist "picture" in at least three ways, and it is not obvious that they are equivalent" (my underlined emphasis). In the present essay, I focus exclusively on Allison's characterization of "transcendental realism as the implicit commitment to the "theocentric" paradigm of knowledge" (ibid).

[5] Kant also uses the Latin *intuitus intellectualis.* My identification of intellectual intuition and intuitive understanding puts me at odds with Eckart Förster, who argues against this equivalence. For a discussion of why I reject Förster's view, see my "Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects" (unpublished).

[6] Allison acknowledges the scandalous nature of his thesis that "the classical empiricists, in spite of their characteristic appeal to the "human understanding," were implicitly committed to the theocentric model" and "that they viewed human cognition as essentially intuitive in the Kantian sense (as contrasted with discursive)" (xvi). This acknowledgement is accompanied by what I find to be an unconvincing defense of this thesis (31-32). In the present essay, I will set aside this issue. However, see Stang (2016), which gives voice to some of my concerns.

naturally with a certain extreme, albeit prevalent, conception of him as being generally antagonistic towards all things theistic. Such a conception finds expression in Moses Mendelssohn's oft-cited criticism of him as 'the all-destroying Kant' (*der Alleszermalmende Kant*) for his refutation of the traditional theoretical proofs of God's existence as well as in Heinrich Heine's amusing dismissal of Kant's alternative practical proof as nothing but a "half-benevolent, half-ironic" sop to his old servant Lampe, who (Heine imagines Kant saying to himself) "must have a God, or else the pathetic man cannot be happy. However, man must be happy in the world—so says practical reason—for all I care [!]—and so practical reason can guarantee the existence of God" (my translation). Even setting aside such an extreme, and extremely implausible, interpretation, the view that Kant rejects a theocentric model in favor of an anthropocentric one seems to fit naturally with a more judicious appreciation of the critical system, in which the human mind, rather than God, is supposed to be in some sense responsible for the laws of nature and morality and in which there is little patience for the 'great absurdity' of the *deus ex machina* to account for human cognition (Br 10:131 1772). It is, moreover, quite natural to think that a theocentric model is simply ruled out for Kant by the very fact that he regards the divine and human mind as distinct not merely in degree but in *kind*; the former is intuitive, the latter discursive—apples and oranges. Rachel Zuckert (2007) seems to be giving voice to this very thought: "Our knowledge, Kant argues, should not be understood as an approximation to God's knowledge, but as different in kind: we are not intuitive intellects (as God is thought to be), but discursive intellects" (8).

Yet however natural, the view that Kant flatly rejects such a model ultimately

fails to do justice to the complexities of his critical account of human cognition, his notion of an intuitive intellect, and his doctrine of transcendental idealism. To begin to see this, notice that by a theocentric model, Allison seems to simply have in mind one on which the "the proper objects" of human cognition are taken to be things in themselves (28). He labels this model 'theocentric' because Kant holds that cognition "requires that its objects somehow be "given" to the mind" via intuition (*Anschauung*), and "the only kind of intuition that could supply the objects themselves is intellectual, which is traditionally thought to characterize a divine or infinite intellect." The transcendental realist, on Allison's interpretation, thus regards human intuition "*as if it were intellectual*, because [she] tacitly assumes that, insofar as our intuition acquaints us with objects at all, it acquaints us with them as they are in themselves." ('Insofar as' is key here since such a realist might agree with Kant that the outcome of such a position is an empirical or skeptical idealism according to which "the human mind has no direct cognitive access to objects so considered" (24).) In other words, the transcendental realist is said to analyze and measure human cognition against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect simply in the sense that she, unlike the transcendental idealist, holds that "we […] know objects just to the extent to which our thought conforms to their "real" nature or, equivalently, to God's thought of these same objects" (37, my underlined emphasis). That is, for the transcendental realist, on this interpretation, our knowledge is "evaluated in terms of its conformity (or lack thereof) to the norm of a putatively perfect divine knowledge" (Allison 2006: 114).

There are, however, at least two worries for this conception of a theocentric model of human cognition, especially in light of the use that Allison wishes to make of

it. First, so conceived, the thesis that the transcendental realist is committed to a model on which human cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect would seem to be neither central nor substantive—as it is intended to be on this interpretation—but entirely superfluous to understanding transcendental realism and likewise transcendental idealism in relation to transcendental realism. For surely any putative commitment to such a cognitive model is not only *secondary* but arguably also *separable* from what Allison contends is the realist assumption that insofar as our intuition acquaints us with objects at all, it acquaints us with them as they are in themselves.[7] (I would here prefer to say '*a* realist assumption' since I reject Allison's view that a representationalist like Locke is committed to such a thesis. At present, I will set this issue aside.[8]) What is essential for such a realist is rather the failure to properly distinguish things in themselves and appearances in the first place. Given this, the *only* candidate objects of *any* genuine cognition (human, divine, or otherwise) would be things in themselves. Lucy Allais (2015) raises a similar concern. She sees Kant as accusing the realist simply of "think[ing] that things as they appear to us—what we experience—are things as they exist independently of our experiencing

[7] I express some hesitation here regarding this separability point on account of Stang's (2016) suggestion that "[e]ven atheists can be in the grip of the "theocentric" model of knowledge, for they can still hold that human knowledge is *knowledge* to the extent that it reveals how objects are from the (in fact unoccupied) "God's eye point of view."" Indeed, there seem to be indications of this proposed 'unoccupied divine viewpoint' in Allison's own articulation of the theological model. For example, he writes, "the appeal to [the norm of an intuitive intellect] does not commit one either to the existence of such an intellect or to the assumption that knowledge of this type is actually possessed by the human mind" (1998: 199, my underlined emphasis). At a minimum, I want to simply suggest here that we can bracket off any sort of commitment to such a theocentric model from the assumption that insofar as our intuition acquaints us with objects at all, it acquaints us with them as they are in themselves.

[8] It has been pointed out to me that it is not clear that Kant ever refers to Locke as a transcendental realist. However, it seems to me that *Prolegomena* §13 furnishes fairly explicit materials for concluding that Kant regards him as subscribing to a version of this view. Moreover, Allison clearly thinks that Kant sees Locke in this way, which is, as I suggest here, problematic for Allison's overall interpretation of transcendental idealism.

them" (88). Thus, she grants that "both empiricists and rationalists could be transcendental realists, not because they need to be committed to thinking that we cognize objects with an intuitive intellect or from a God's eye point of view, but rather to the extent that they think that the objects we are presented with in experience are the way they are independently of our experiencing them."[9]

In fact, contrary to Allison's interpretation, Kant does not represent the transcendental realist as being committed to a *single* model of cognition at all. Indeed, he broadly identifies Plato, Malebranche, and at times, even Leibniz as being committed to a model on which human intuition is regarded as intellectual.[10] Though it should be noted that when he does identify Leibniz as being committed to such a model, it is typically while regarding him—as Leibniz presents himself in the Preface of the *New Essays* (1765)—as belonging to a broadly Platonic school of thought.[11]

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[9] I have similar reservations about the application of Allais's analysis to a Lockean representationalist. Consider, for example, the following from Locke's *Essay* (1689): "What I have said concerning *Colours* and *Smells*, may be understood also of *Tastes* and *Sounds, and other the like sensible Qualities*; which, whatever reality we, by mistake, attribute to them, are in truth nothing in the Objects themselves, but Powers to produce various Sensations in us" (2.8.14 my underlined emphasis)

[10] See Br 10:131 1772, R4275 17:492 1770-1, R6051 18:438 1780-9. Kant also associates this model once with Salomon Maimon, who defends a Leibnizian thesis. See Kant's 1789 letter to Marcus Herz.

[11] See Anth. 7:141n and ÜE 8:248-9. Leibniz writes in the *New Essays*, "Indeed, although the author [Locke] of the *Essay* says hundreds of fine things which I applaud, our systems are very different. His is closer to Aristotle and mine to Plato, although each of us parts company at many points from the teachings of both of these writers. [….] Our disagreements concern points of some importance. There is the question whether the soul in itself is completely blank like a writing tablet on which nothing has yet been written—a *tabula rasa*—as Aristotle and the author of the *Essay* maintain, and whether everything which is inscribed there comes solely from the sources of various notions and doctrines, which external objects merely rouse up on suitable occasions, as I believe and as do Plato and even the Schoolmen and all those who understand in this sense the passage in St Paul where he says that God's law is written in our hearts (Romans, 2:15). The Stoics call these sources Prolepses, that is fundamental assumptions or things taken for granted in advance. Mathematicians call them common notions or *koinai ennoiai.* Modern philosophers give them other fine names and Julius Scaliger, in particular, used to call them 'seeds of eternity' and also '*zopyra*'—meaning living fires or flashes of light hidden inside us but made visible by the stimulations of the sense, as sparks can be struck from a steel. And we have reason to believe these flashes reveal something divine and eternal: this appears especially in the case of necessary truths" (47-9)

Still, he describes Crusius as subscribing to a very different model.[12] This is one on which God is said to implant in us rules of thought that are valid of things in themselves, including, e.g., the principles of inseparability and non-combinability: What cannot be separated or combined in thought cannot be separated or combined in reality.[13] Interestingly, the Kant of the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) also subscribes to a model on which things in themselves are cognitively accessible through the principles governing our thought—a model he makes a point of distinguishing from one on which human intuition is regarded as intellectual: "There is (for man) no *intuition* of what belongs to the understanding" but only a "*symbolic*" cognition "by means of universal concepts in the abstract, not by means of a singular concept in the concrete" (2:396). While Kant goes on to reject this model, there is no evidence to suggest that he also relinquishes this distinction between symbolic and intuitive cognition.[14] That he seems to set the Crusian model apart from Plato's even in the first *Critique* strongly suggests that he does not.[15] To claim, therefore, that Crusius and with him the early Kant are nonetheless implicitly committed to the same model as Plato is to explicitly ignore how Kant himself sees fit to characterize the situation.

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[12] See Br 10:131 1772, R4275 17:492 1770-1, R4866 18:14-5 1776-8, R4893 18:21 1776-8.

[13] More precisely, God is said to implant into us bridge principles, like the ones cited above, that make the thinkability or non-thinkability of some conceptual contents a reliable guide to things in themselves. For example, Crusius maintains that it is not thinkable that an event (which isn't a free act) lacks a determining ground and so concludes that every event (which isn't a free act) has a determining ground. See *Entwurf* §15 and *Weg* §261. My thanks to Hogan for discussing this point with me.

[14] Allison (2015) suggests that there is such evidence. He writes, "In the third *Critique* [Kant] denied that there is a sharp distinction between intuitive and symbolic cognition, maintaining that the symbolic is merely a species of the intuitive" (62n52). However, this is misleading since the *Dissertation* and the third *Critique* employ different notions of symbolic cognition. Moreover, even in the third *Critique*, the symbolic cognition at issue does not consist in direct intuitive access to things in themselves but rather provides only "indirect presentations," or a kind of 'schematism by analogy' (5:352).

[15] See B167-8. Although Crusius isn't named in this passage, it is plausible to think that the proponent of the "middle way" it describes refers to him, especially in light of Kant's remark in the *Prolegomena* that "Crusius alone knew of a middle way" (4:319n). See also R4866 18:14 1776-78.

A second and for present purposes more significant worry for Allison's interpretation is that it neglects the complexities of Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect. As a result, the narrative that Kant rejects a *theocentric* model—where, again, this model is presented as one that analyzes and measures human cognition against the norm of the divine *intuitive intellect*—is at best misleading and at worst tendentious. That is, Kant tells us that an intuitive intellect intuits objects as they are in themselves (thing in itself characteristic);[16] that it does not represent objects by means of general or discursive concepts (non-discursivity characteristic);[17] that it represents only actual objects (modal characteristic);[18] that it produces or otherwise guarantees the existence of objects by representing them (productivity characteristic);[19] and that it enjoys a synoptic representation of its objects, where this is typically understood as a representation of a whole that precedes and determines its parts (synoptic characteristic).[20] Although Allison gestures at some of these other characteristics, his theocentric model focuses almost exclusively on the first. [21] This makes sense insofar as his interest in the theocentric model rests on an interest in locating a positive point of difference between transcendental idealism and transcendental realism, and it is reasonable to suppose that this would indeed center on things in themselves.

So understood, Allison is right that Kant rejects a model on which human

[16] See, e.g., KrV B307, V-Met/Mron 29:800 1782-3, and V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:978 1794-5.
[17] See, e.g., KrV B145, A256/B312 and Prol 4:356.
[18] See, e.g., KU 5:402-3 and R6020 18:425-6 1780-9.
[19] See, e.g., KrV B72, B139, B145. Cf Leech (2014), who also uses this 'guarantee' formulation.
[20] See, e.g., KU 5:407 and R6174 18:478-9 1780-9.
[21] For example, Allison acknowledges that "God's knowledge is thought to consist in a timeless, synoptic vision of the whole" (xvi, my underlined emphasis). He likewise refers to "the synoptic God's-eye view of things" (430, my underlined emphasis). However, as we'll eventually see, he fails to officially acknowledge that for Kant reason (and later, reflecting judgment) fashions our discursive understanding after the model of this synoptic view of the divine intuitive understanding.

cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect *when* that norm is understood solely in terms of the thing in itself characteristic and *when* this amounts to the view that we truly cognize objects only to the extent that we have intuitive access to things in themselves.[22] However, it would be deeply misleading to use *this* as license for so simplistically characterizing Kant's cognitive model as anthropocentric since, among other reasons, there are clearly other ways in which the divine intuitive intellect might serve as a model for our cognition. This is at any rate what I aim to show in the next section, taking as my inspiration Kant's remark cited at the beginning of this essay and exploring its relation to the *synoptic characteristic* of the divine intuitive intellect. To put the challenge more forcefully, the official Allisonian narrative maintains that while Kant does not deny the "inadequacy [of our discursive cognition] measured by some putative theocentric standard, he does deny the normativity of the latter standard for finite cognizers, such as ourselves" (79, my underlined emphasis). I will show that the divine intuitive intellect does serve as such a norm within Kant's critical model of human cognition.

Before turning to this task, allow me to clarify three points: First, my aim in what follows is not to show that Kant does not develop an anthropocentric model of human cognition; I think he does. My aim is rather to show that this needn't preclude him from also being committed to features of the theocentric model; for these need not be regarded as wholly distinct models in the first place. As we'll see in §2, these two models are for Kant very much intertwined such that his model is perhaps most

[22] Though notice that Crusius—presumably also a transcendental realist on this interpretation—would likewise reject this view, contrary to Allison's thesis. Crusius is notably absent from Allison's analysis in the second edition of his book.

accurately—though also cumbersomely—described as an 'anthropomorphized theocentric' one. Second, my claim that Kant is committed to a theocentric *epistemological* model should be kept distinct from the claim that he is committed to a theocentric *metaphysical* model, i.e., a model on which things in themselves are as the divine intuitive intellect represents them. Even so, permit me a brief word on the latter: While I see Kant as being committed to a version of such a metaphysical model, I take issue with Marcus Kohl's (2015) recent account of it, according to which we can infer that things in themselves do not have categorial properties (e.g., causal properties) from the fact that the divine intuitive intellect does not represent them through categories (the non-discursivity characteristic). The main problem with this account, in my view, is its failure to respect the distinction Adickes (1924) has rightly drawn between categories as modes of synthetic unification (*Arten der synthetischen Vereinheitlichung*), on the one hand, and categorial properties as ways of being (*Seinsweisen*), on the other.[23] That the divine intellect does not employ categories in the former sense need not imply that they lack categorial properties in the latter sense. Setting this disagreement aside, I do think that Kohl hits on a profound and underexplored insight that the notion of an intuitive intellect can serve as an invaluable resource in understanding the broader critical philosophy. We will return to this insight in the conclusion.[24]

Finally, my critique of this Allisonian narrative should not be viewed

[23] See Adickes (1924) (72-4). Kohl (2015) offers what is to my mind an unconvincing case against this distinction (see 97ff). See also Colin Marshall (2018) for a more recent challenge to Kohl's account and Reed Winegar (2017) for a more general and nuanced rejection of the thesis that things are as the divine intuitive intellect represents them.

[24] Marshall (2018) has similarly praised Kohl for this insight: "Kohl's challenge is not merely novel—it helps direct our attention to an issue that has received relatively little attention in discussions of Kant's metaphysics: the significance of the intuitive intellect" (28).

ultimately as a mere matter of emphasis. It is first and foremost a criticism of a more widespread failure to fully acknowledge the complexities of Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect, leading to an overly simplistic and misleading depiction of his account of human cognition. That said, my critique is also a matter of an emphasis I believe counts for a great deal. Consider a comparable case: Whether one reads Spinoza as elevating nature to divinity *or* as demoting divinity to nature will surely affect one's insights into his monism, necessitarianism, and so on.[25] So too, whether one characterizes Kant (with Mendelssohn, Heine, and Allison) as *der Alleszermalmende Kant* or rather (with Allen Wood) as "fundamentally unable to conceive of the human situation except theistically" will have significant ramifications for how one understands the broader critical philosophy (Wood 1978: 17).

§2 Reason, Ideas, and A Synoptic God's-Eye View of the World

Although Kant asserts that "the divinity of our *soul* [is] that it is capable of ideas," his official position is that it is our faculty of reason (*Vernunft*) that generates ideas (R5247 18:130 1776-8).[26] (In an even more Shakespearean spirit, he might very well have written: 'How *divine in reason*.') Yet that he would suggest that reason is in any sense divine is somewhat surprising given the more disparaging remarks about reason found elsewhere. For example, in transcripts of his lectures on philosophical theology, we read that the divine intuitive intellect "has no need of reason; for reason

[25] Nadler (2018), for example, writes that the identification of God and nature ('*Deus, sive Natura*') is "ambiguous, since Spinoza could be read as trying either to divinize nature or to naturalize God."

[26] Kant is actually inconsistent about this point. In the Antinomy of Pure Reason, he writes, "reason really cannot generate any concept at all, but can at most only **free** a **concept of the understanding** from the unavoidable limitations of a possible experience" (A408-9/B435). Wolfgang Malzkorn (1999) also acknowledges this inconsistency (79). In either case, it is clear that reason has some essential role to play in the genesis of ideas.

is only a mark of the limits of an understanding […] Thus, the expression "reason" is beneath the dignity of the divine nature" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). Similarly, in the *New Elucidation* (1755), he writes, "the winding course of reasoning <*abstractione*> is scarcely becoming to the measurelessness of the divine understanding" (1:405). So how might we interpret his suggestion that reason expresses a kind of divinity? And is this consistent with his more disparaging remarks about this faculty? To answer these questions and ultimately to locate a significant theocentric strand in Kant's conception of human cognition, we'll need to begin with a brief summary of his account of reason.

In the Transcendental Dialectic, the *locus classicus* of his account, Kant describes reason as essentially a prosyllogistic faculty whose "proper principle […] is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding" (A307/B364).[27] Kant presents the relationship between the major premise, minor premise, and conclusion of a categorial, hypothetical, and disjunctive syllogism in terms of a condition-conditioned relationship between cognitions. Consider the categorial syllogism: *All women are mortal* (the major premise, or 'condition'). *Hypatia is a woman* (the minor premise). *Therefore, Hypatia is mortal* (the conclusion, or 'conditioned'). Kant tells us that, in the standard case, it is the conditioned, *Hypatia is mortal*, that is given to reason as the problem (*aufgegeben*) for which it must seek the condition, *All women are mortal*. Reason thereby also seeks the condition for, and likewise the unifying principle of, other such conditioned

[27] For commentary on the Transcendental Dialectic (and in particular on Kant's doctrine of ideas and the Appendix, which will here most concern us), see Norman Kemp Smith (1918), T. D. Weldon (1958), John D. McFarland (1970), Philip Kitcher (1986), Thomas E Wartenberg (1992), Michelle Grier (2001), and Michael Rohlf (2010).

cognitions, e.g., *Émilie Du Châtelet is mortal*. "[R]eason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions), and thereby to effect the highest unity of that manifold" (A305/B361). Yet because the condition in the present case, *All women are mortal*, is itself also conditioned, it is "exposed to this same attempt by reason, and the condition of its condition thereby has to be sought (by means of a prosyllogism)" (A307/B364). In this case, Kant might have in mind, for example, the prosyllogism, *All humans are mortal. Every woman is human. Therefore, all women are mortal*. In this way, reason ultimately aspires to "the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed" (A307/B364). More precisely, its aim is the whole series of conditions, embracing the unconditioned either as the first member of the series or as the whole series itself.[28]

Looking back from this vantage point at Kant's 1755 claim that "the winding course of reasoning is scarcely becoming to the measurelessness of the divine understanding," we may include this circuitous syllogistic procedure that *we* must undertake to advance toward the whole series of conditions. For the divine intuitive intellect would simply "intuit all things immediately through its understanding, and everything at once" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1051 1783-4). Yet in addition to this *procedure* of reasoning, there are also *products* of reason. These are what Kant points to when he deifies reason in his reflection, which is, interestingly enough, located near a section of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* entitled '*Perfection*'. That is, Kant tells us that reason "itself contains the origin of certain concepts and principles, which it derives neither

[28] See, e.g., KrV A322-3/B379 and A417-8/B445-6.

from the senses nor from the understanding" (A299/B355). Inspired by Plato, he calls such concepts 'ideas' (*Ideen*) and explains that they are representations to which "nothing encountered in experience could ever be congruent" (A313/B370). Through these ideas, we will see that reason "prescribes and seeks to bring about" a kind of *cognitive perfection*, one modeled after a perfection of the divine intuitive intellect: its synoptic view (A645/B673).

Although Kant at times speaks as though there are only three ideas—namely, the soul, the world (as a totality), and God—he also discusses many others, including ideas of pure and/or fundamental political, physical, and moral objects.[29] These three ideas are, however, of great importance to him insofar as the *raison d'être* of the first *Critique* is to determine to what extent we might have insight into their objects as the traditional objects of metaphysics. Following critical protocol, Kant provides an account of their *a priori* origin, i.e., a metaphysical deduction of the ideas. While he borrows a good deal from Plato's doctrine of ideas, he parts ways with "the sublime <*erhabene*> philosopher" on this point, which he summarizes as follows: "In [Plato's] opinion [the ideas] flowed from the highest reason, through which human reason partakes in them; our reason, however, now no longer finds itself in its original state, but must call back with toil the old, now very obscure ideas through a recollection" (A313/B370). (We will return to this Platonic influence in §3.) Kant's own deduction is somewhat less fantastical, although arguably only slightly less far-fetched.[30] In brief, he claims that the ideas of the soul (as the *unconditioned* unity of the thinking

[29] See, e.g., A323/B379-80, A334/B391, and R5553 18:222 1778-9. In fact, the soul, the world, and God are not strictly speaking only three ideas but seven since the cosmological ideas comprise four ideas. See A415/B443.
[30] For a discussion of the dubious nature of this deduction, see Malzkorn (1999) (62-87).

subject), the world (as the *unconditioned* unity of the series of conditions of appearances), and God (as the *unconditioned* unity of the condition of all objects of thought) are generated by reason by means of a completed series of, respectively, categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive prosyllogisms (A334-5/B391-2).

Kant identifies two uses that reason makes with its ideas: logical and real. In its logical use, reason uses its ideas *qua ideas* to regulate its essential activity of unifying the cognitions of the understanding, i.e., to give these cognitions "a certain form, called 'logical' form" (A305/B362). Consider the ideas of pure earth, water, and air. "[A]s far as their complete purity is concerned," Kant thinks that nothing in experience could ever be congruent to these ideas, yet reason nonetheless requires them in order "to determine the share that each of these natural causes has in appearance" (A646/B674, my underlined emphasis). "[T]hus one reduces all materials to earths (mere weight, as it were), to salts and combustibles (as force), and to water and air as vehicles (machines, as it were, by means of which the aforementioned operate), in order to explain the chemical effects of materials." (We'll return to this use in just a moment.) In its real use, by contrast, reason considers its ideas *qua their objects*; it posits the actual existence of these objects. This use is made legitimate in the realm of practical reason by our experience of our moral obligation to promote the highest good, i.e., a world in which happiness is commensurate with virtue. This consciousness licenses or even requires us to presuppose the real possibility of the object of this obligation and to posit in turn the existence of the conditions necessary for this possibility: an immortal soul, God, and freedom.[31] However, no equivalent

[31] See KpV 5:107ff.

experience, which is to say no *intuition*, is on Kant's view available to legitimize such a use in the realm of theoretical reason. There is only a natural but illegitimate synthetic principle of pure reason masquerading as a license: "when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given" (A307-8/B364). This is certainly not to say that Kant commits these ideas to the Humean flames; he simply denies that we enjoy theoretical insight into the existence of their objects.

In fact, a main aim of the Dialectic is to expose the sophistical nature of this real use of theoretical reason with the ultimate aim of paving the way for a legitimate real use of practical reason. In Kant's words, his goal is to "mak[e] the terrain for these majestic moral edifices level and firm enough to be built upon; for under this ground there are all sorts of passageways, such as moles might have dug, left over from [theoretical] reason's vain but confident treasure hunting" (A319/B375-6). There is undoubtedly much about the majesty of practical reason contained in Kant's deification of this faculty. Through practical reason, the idea of freedom acquires not only reality but a content by virtue of which our will finds common ground with the holy will—"a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same" (GMS 4:447). Indeed, on this point, Kant would undoubtedly agree with Descartes's sentiment in the 4th Meditation that "it is above all in virtue of the will that I understand myself to bear in some way the image and likeness of God" (2:40).[32] (We will return to this point in the conclusion.) Here, however, I want to focus not on practical reason but on what there is in the *theoretical* use of the ideas that might also

[32] Though Kant of course would take issue with Descartes's particular characterization of free will.

be said to express a kind of divinity.

In the Appendix to the Dialectic, Kant turns to the "excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use" of the ideas within the realm of theoretical cognition, specifically within the realm of the 'systematic' in theoretical cognition or, equivalently, within the realm of natural science:[33]

> If we survey the cognitions of our understanding in their entire range, what reason quite uniquely prescribes and seeks to bring about concerning it is the **systematic** in cognition, i.e., its interconnection based on one principle. This unity of reason always presupposes an idea, namely that of the form of a whole of cognition, which precedes the determinate cognition of the parts and contains the conditions for determining *a priori* the place of each part and its relation to the others. Accordingly, this idea postulates complete unity of the understanding's cognition, through which this cognition comes to be not merely a contingent aggregate but a system interconnected in accordance with necessary laws. […] the idea serves the understanding as a rule. Such concepts of reason are not created by nature, rather we question nature according to these ideas, and we take our cognition to be defective <*mangelhaft*> as long as it is not adequate to them. (A644-5/B672-3, my underlined emphasis)

As will become clear in the following, what we find in this passage is an expression of Kant's position that reason, by means of its ideas, fashions our discursive understanding "after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding <*nach Maßgabe des intuitiven (urbildlichen)*>" insofar as it seeks to "represent the possibility of the parts […] as depending upon the whole" (KU 5:407).[34] This is as

[33] See Eric Watkins's "General Introduction" to the Cambridge collection of Kant's scientific writings for a discussion of Kant's views on the nature of science.

[34] Cristiana Mihaela Fistioc (2000) similarly emphasizes this feature of Kant's account. Her primary aim is to draw attention to a number of striking parallels between Plato's *Symposium* and the third *Critique* in an effort to use the former "as a tool which can provide an introduction to the reading of the third *Critique*" (164). Such an approach leads her to a similar finding that I discuss in the present section as well as in the next section where I consider the Platonic heritage shared by Kant's doctrine of ideas and his account of the divine intuitive intellect. She writes: "There is a way in which the figure of God towers over the third *Critique* much like the blessed gods tower over Plato's *Symposium*. On Kant's picture, just as on Diotima's, while we are not God, we can, and indeed do, imitate God's way of thinking: we work painstakingly at seeing things from the top, in their interconnections, the way God sees things effortlessly. [….] To speak of God or the gods is ultimately to speak of a perfection. It is a perfection which beckons to us and invites us to make it our standard: the more we think like the gods,

much as to say that, contrary to the official Allisonian narrative, our cognition *is* analyzed and measured against the norm of a synoptic God's-eye view of the world (KU 5:407). It may be noticed that this latter passage comes not from the first *Critique* but the third and that it refers not to reason but the reflective power of judgment. My reason for using it in the present context will become clear in what follows.

Kant tells us that our understanding, by means of its categories, prescribes laws that are necessary to make possible our cognition of objects. Such categorical laws concern both the constitution and combination of these objects; e.g., that they must have extensive magnitudes and stand in causal relations to one another. The understanding is in this way the source of a general lawful unity of our cognition, though one that is *incomplete* insofar as "[p]articular laws, because they concern empirically determined appearances, **cannot** be **completely derived** from the categories" (B165). For example, that all salts are acidic or alkaline is a law that cannot be derived from the fact that they must have extensive magnitudes.[35] Such empirical laws must, however, be sought after in as much as reason, in accordance with its logical use, demands the complete lawful unity of our understanding's cognitions, which—owing to its lawfulness—must be a *whole system* of cognition. This is because Kant maintains that laws are not mere contingent regularities of the Humean variety but rather express necessity.[36] As a result, particular empirical laws, just like the laws prescribed by the understanding, cannot be passively sought; for "accidental observations, made according to no previously designed plan, can never

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the closer to their state we ourselves are" (188). In other words, Fistioc also sees the third *Critique* as endorsing a kind of theocentric standard of the human intellect.

[35] See A652/B680.

[36] See Watkins (2014) for a discussion of Kant's account of laws. See also Gerd Buchdahl (1971).

connect up into a necessary law" (Bxiii). Rather reason, as Kant explains above, must actively pursue them by means of its idea "of the form of a whole of cognition, which precedes the determinate cognition of the parts and contains the conditions for determining a priori the place of each part and its relation to the others" (A645/B673, my underlined emphasis). It must do this in such a way that these 'accidental observations' inherit a kind of necessity from their relation to the whole and "[come] to be not merely a contingent aggregate but a system interconnected in accordance with necessary laws."

This whole of cognition or, equivalently, systematic unity is for us a mere idea. Its object "cannot be given in experience; for experience never gives an example of perfect systematic unity" (A691/B709). It nevertheless serves as the goal (*Ziel*), prescription (*Verfügung*), demand (*Forderung*)—Kant employs a wide variety of normative terms here—for our understanding's cognitions. In the effort to meet this demand, reason must make use of the idea of this whole to pick up the slack, as it were, when "the understanding alone does not attain to rules" (A648/B676). Recall here that reason is a faculty that seeks the conditions for conditioned cognitions. When the condition is already given, e.g. when the condition is a categorial law, reason proceeds 'apodictically': "the universal is **in itself certain** and given, and only **judgment** is required for subsuming, and the particular is necessarily determined through it" (A646/B674). But when the condition is not given, reason must instead proceed 'hypothetically' in order "to find a principle for the manifold and particular uses of the understanding, thereby guiding it even in those cases that are not given and making it coherently connected" (A647/B675). In the latter case, reason is guided not

simply by its idea of a whole of cognition but also by its ideas of the soul, the world, and God—as well as a number of other ancillary ideas (pure earth, water, air) and hypothetical principles (homogeneity, specification, continuity, purposiveness).[37] In fact, Kant's transcendental deduction of the psychological, cosmological, and theological ideas entails establishing their indispensability in "show[ing] not how an object is constituted but how, under the guidance of that concept, we ought to **seek after** the constitution and connection of objects of experience in general" (A671/B699).

The idea of God holds special significance in this task of progressing toward the systematic unity of our cognitions.[38] While Kant continues to maintain that there is no theoretical basis for (apodictically) positing the existence of the object corresponding to this idea, he also insists that "reason bids us [to] consider every connection in the world according to principles of a systematic unity, hence **as if** they had all arisen from one single all-encompassing being, as supreme and all-sufficient cause."[39] Expressed in a way even less congenial to the Allisonian narrative, it bids us to consider these connections "**as if** they were ordained by a highest reason of which our reason is only a weak copy <***als ob*** *sie Anordnungen einer höchsten Vernunft wären, von der die unsrige ein schwaches Nachbild ist*>" (A678/B706). The idea of God is in this way the idea of a divine intention determining the constitution and

[37] We saw above how reason is guided by the ideas of pure earth, pure water, and pure air. Again, see KrV A646/B674. In a moment, we will also consider how the idea of God serves this function.
[38] Cf McFarland (1970) (32-7). This point is also recognized clearly by Buchdahl (1969) (362n53).
[39] One might object that this passage invokes only God's creation of the world rather than his synoptic representation of it. In the present context, however, this is a distinction without difference. Kant's position is that divine creation is inseparable from the synoptic representation that precedes it (and, given KU §76, that such a representation is likewise inseparable from creation). Accordingly, approaching the world as if it had arisen from the divine cause is just to approach the world from an idealization of the synoptic God's-eye view of it.

connection of the objects within the world, i.e., of the world's purposive unity or its *systematic unity* in another guise:[40]

> The greatest systematic unity, consequently also purposive unity, is the school and even the ground of the possibility of the greatest use of human reason. Hence the idea of it is inseparably bound up with the essence of our reason. The very same idea, therefore, is legislative for us, and thus it is very natural to [hypothetically] assume a corresponding legislative reason (*intellectus archetypus*) from which all systematic unity of nature, as the object of our reason, is to be derived. (A694-5/B722-3)

We can begin to see here that by guiding our understanding's cognitions toward systematic unity, reason, by means of its ideas, is at the same time fashioning our discursive understanding after the model of the synoptic representation of the divine intuitive understanding. That is, the demand for systematic unity is precisely the demand for the synoptic God's-eye view of the world, i.e., for God's "whole of cognition" (A645/B673). That this is so is developed more explicitly in Kant's canonical discussion of the intuitive intellect in the third *Critique*, where his distinction between apodictic and hypothetical reason develops into the distinction between the determining and reflecting power of judgment.[41,42]

Roughly the same scene unfolds in the third *Critique*: Reason demands the complete lawful unity of cognition, yet our understanding provides only an incomplete unity insofar as its categories underdetermine the particular laws of nature. In this

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[40] This view of God's synoptic representation as the source of the world's unity echoes Kant's discussion of the principle of co-existence in the *New Elucidation* (1755). He argues there that no real unity can obtain between substances "unless the self-same scheme of the divine understanding, which gives existence, also establishes the relations of things to each other, by conceiving their existences as correlated with each other. It is most clearly apparent from this that the universal interaction of all things is to be ascribed to the concept alone of this divine idea" (1:413). See also MSI 2:406-10.

[41] See, e.g., KU 5:179: "If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) is given, then the power of judgment, which subsumes the particular under it […], is **determining**. If, however, only the particular is given, for which the universal is to be found, then the power of judgment is merely **reflecting**."

[42] We will here pass over the details but see, e.g., Paul Guyer (1990) and Rachel Zuckert (2007) (chapter 1) for discussion of this development.

case, however, it is the reflecting power of judgment that is given the task of pursuing these laws in accordance with reason's idea of the world's purposive unity. Kant is quite explicit that our understanding is in this way made to follow "after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding":

> Thus if we would not represent the possibility of the whole as depending upon the parts, as is appropriate for our discursive understanding, but would, after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding, represent the possibility of the parts (as far as both their constitution and combination is concerned) as depending upon the whole, then, given the very same special characteristic of our understanding, this cannot come about by the whole being the ground of the possibility of the connection of the parts (which would be a contradiction in the discursive kind of cognition), but only by the **representation** of the whole containing the ground of the possibility of its form and of the connection that belongs to that. But now since the whole would in that case be an effect (**product**) the **representation** of which would be regarded as the **cause** of its possibility, but the product of a cause whose determining ground is merely the representation of its effect is called an end (5:407-8)

The key point here is that an intuitive understanding enjoys an intuition—or 'synthetic universal' (*Synthetisch-Allgemein*)—of the whole of nature. That is to say, it looks upon this whole as such and grasps the necessity whereby all the objects within it are constituted and combined in relation to that whole. In this way, it achieves the complete lawful unity demanded by reason. Our understanding, by contrast, enjoys no such intuition. It represents this whole only by way of its parts or, equivalently, only as a contingent aggregate. Thus, in an effort to meet reason's demand for complete lawful unity—which excludes such contingency—our understanding is made to follow "after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding" through a kind of idealization. It does this by representing the *idea* of this whole as if this idea preceded and determined the objects within it. It represents nature *as if* it were guided by the

divine representation of it or *as if* it were guided by divine intention.

At this point, let us return to Kant's description of our ideas as "the divinity of our soul." We have now briefly considered a kind of divinity expressed by the *theoretical* use of our ideas. By guiding our understanding toward the norm of the complete lawful unity of our cognition, reason by means of its ideas (later, reflecting judgment) is at the same time modeling our discursive understanding after the synoptic representation of the divine intuitive understanding. We have also seen how despite a critical shift to an anthropocentric cognitive model that "consider[s] the human mind as the source of the rules or conditions through which and under which it can alone represent to itself an objective world," Kant is still very much committed to a theocentric model on which human cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect (Allison 38). These represent two strands in his thought that are very much intertwined: Though *we* are regarded as the legislators of nature so far as the universal laws are concerned, our understanding's legislation is incomplete insofar as its categories underdetermine the particular empirical laws of nature. As a result, reason has recourse to an idealization of the synoptic God's-eye view of how objects are constituted and combined in relation to the whole of nature so that our 'accidental observations' can inherit a kind of necessity from their relation to this whole and thereby mere rules governing nature may come to be elevated to the status of law.[43] In this way, our discursive understanding is fashioned "after the model of the intuitive (archetypical) understanding" (5:407). The theocentric model is, as we can now see, not only a far cry from being excluded by Kant's anthropocentric model;

[43] For an illuminating analysis of this transformation, see Michael Friedman (1992).

it is very much built into it.[44]

Now Allison is obviously not unaware of Kant's claims in the Appendix, though he seems at pains to deflate them. To this end, he stresses how "we can never be in a position to attain the synoptic God's-eye view of things"; that it is a "projected unity" and a "fiction"; and at one point misleadingly recasts this synoptic conception as that of a "superhuman intelligence" (430). Yet that we are unable to fully attain this synoptic **God's**-eye view is beside the point when addressing whether Kant is committed to a theocentric cognitive model. The point is whether this view functions as a norm, which Allison somewhat reluctantly admits. On his reading, it is not a "pre-given norm to which human knowledge must conform," i.e., a norm "inferred from a pre-given order of things" (445-6). Still, he grants that it nonetheless involves "a more radical reconfiguration of normativity, which is just Kant's "transcendental turn" understood as a turn not *to* transcendental but *from* one form of transcendentalism to another." I am prepared to read this as a concession, if somewhat muffled, that contrary to Allison's official position, Kant is committed to a model on which human cognition is analyzed and measured against the norm of the divine intuitive intellect.

Allow me to pause here to address a concern regarding the reading I have proposed above: It has been suggested to me that God's synoptic view of things and the synoptic view demanded by our reason are too dissimilar to support a reading of Kant on which the former constitutes a *norm* for us. While God realizes his synoptic

[44] Indeed, Kant seems to be gesturing at this very feature of his account in the Introduction to the third *Critique*: "[S]ince universal laws of nature have their ground in our understanding, which prescribes them to nature (although only in accordance with the universal concept of it as nature), the particular empirical laws, in regard to that which is left undetermined in them by the former, must be considered in terms of the sort of unity they would have if an understanding (even if not ours) had likewise given them for the sake of our faculty of cognition, in order to make possible a system of experience in accordance with particular laws of nature" (5:180).

view without any toil, we can never achieve such a view but only laboriously work towards it. I believe there are two possible worries at issue here:

The first concerns the normative principle ought-implies-can. Kant is widely recognized as a notable proponent of this principle insofar as he holds that if an agent ought to choose a moral act *x*, this act must be really possible for the agent. There are, however, instances in which he proposes norms for us that are explicitly described as exceeding our capacities. Consider the norm of holiness, which Kant tells us "is not attainable by any creature but is yet the archetype which we should strive to approach and resemble in an uninterrupted but endless progress" (KpV 5:83). Given his commitment to ought-implies-can, one might try to argue that the impossibility of perfect holiness for beings like us means that such holiness *cannot* serve as our norm; rather our goal must be some approximation falling just short of it. But this proposal is absurd. If we imagine a scale on which complete unholiness is represented as 0, complete holiness as 100, what could serve as the target of our moral strivings on such a view? Should one say 99? 99.9? 99.99? Any value short of perfect holiness gives rise to an immediate challenge: Why not a little less or a little more holiness? Indeed, the impossibility of determining a norm *except* by appeal to a 'maximum' is one of Kant's insights and the very reason he insists on full or maximum moral perfection as the target of moral progress. We find one of many expressions of this insight in lectures transcripts:

> [T]o expound morality in full purity is to set forth an Idea of practical reason. Such Ideas are not chimeras, for they constitute the guideline to which we must constantly approach. They make up the law of approximation. We have to possess a yardstick by which to estimate our moral worth, and to know the degree to which we are faulty and deficient; and here I have to conceive of a

> maximum, so that I know how far away I am, or how near I come to it. (V-Mo/Mron II 29:604–5 1784-5)

So too in the present case, God's synoptic view of the world, with its view of a maximum of systematic connection, is the only coherent aim for a norm of systematicity, even if we can never achieve such a synoptic view.

A second possible worry with my proposed reading focuses on the disparity in *effort* in seeking this synoptic view of the world. This disparity, however, seems to me entirely irrelevant to whether God's synoptic view and that aimed at by human reason are the same. By analogy, consider that the divine and human will aim at conformity with one moral law, even though the divine will attains such conformity without the least moral struggle.

§3 The Common Heritage of the Platonic Tradition

I would like to approach both the theocentric model sketched above, and Kant's description of our ideas as "the divinity of our soul," from a slightly different although very much converging *Platonic* perspective. Alfred North Whitehead (1978) famously proclaimed that "[t]he safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" (39). According to Allison, the theocentric model represents yet another footnote in this series: "The theocentric model, with its ideal of an eternalistic, God's-eye view of things, is the common heritage of the Platonic tradition" (28-9). What is interesting about this remark, and adds support for my contention that Kant is committed to such a model, is that this heritage is shared by his doctrine of ideas and his notion of an

intuitive intellect, although the latter point has gone mostly unremarked in the Anglo-American literature. Recognition of this Platonic influence will allow for a deeper appreciation of our findings in §2 above.

Kant was not a Plato scholar nor did he pretend to be. In the first *Critique*, he is very open about the fact that his interests in Plato do not so much concern the historical figure himself as a suitable reconstruction of his thought.[45] Even so, Kant's reconstruction is not without historical precedent. Although the extent of his first-hand familiarity with Plato's works and his competence in classical Greek are uncertain, it is generally accepted, thanks in large part to the careful scholarship of Gerhard Mollowitz (1935), that Kant acquired much of his knowledge of Plato from Johann Jakob Brucker's depiction of Plato in the *Critical History of Philosophy* (1742/1767).[46] Like Brucker, Kant's conception of Plato is markedly Augustinian. He interprets the forms as archetypal ideas in the mind of God and Platonic recollection in terms of a pre-embodied, intuitive acquaintance with these divine ideas. While Kant criticizes several features of this Platonic account—including its 'exaggerated hypostatization', its metaphysical deduction of ideas, and its pretension to theoretical insight—he is quite explicit in the Transcendental Dialectic that it significantly influenced his own doctrine of ideas.[47] Most notably, he appropriates the Platonic view that ideas are normative a priori concepts that act as the measure of all things and that they allow for a kind of practical cognition of the true nature of reality. We find

[45] See KrV A313-4/B370. See also V-Lo/Blomberg 24:36 1771.
[46] William Enfield (1791) provides an abridged English summary of the *Critical History*. Fistioc (2000) also provides a detailed discussion of Brucker's discussion of Plato and of Kant's familiarity with Plato's works more broadly. See also Wundt (1924) (162-3).
[47] See KrV A312-20/B368-77.

expression of this latter thought in lecture transcripts: "Now morality teaches us that we are free [….] The human being, as phenomenon, stands entirely under the laws of natural necessity. Only as noumenon is this not so, and only through morality, he comes to know himself thus" (V-Met/Dohna 28:661 1792-3, my translation). As we saw in the previous section, Kant appropriates also the Platonic view that ideas serve an indispensable (although, for Kant, only regulative) role in natural science.

That Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect shares this Platonic heritage has been less widely appreciated, at least by Anglo-American scholars.[48] (In more recent literature, interest in the origins of this notion has generally been eclipsed by interest in its legacy in subsequent idealist, romantic, and transcendentalist thought.[49]) This is possibly due in part to an understandable temptation to regard Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect as simply inherited from the Leibniz-Wolffian school. (Indeed, Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten all discuss a kind of intuitive cognition that is also synoptic and paradigmatically divine.[50]) However, careful attention to the texts reveals that from his earliest discussions of the topic, Kant associates the intuitive intellect primarily with Plato and Platonic ideas rather than the epistemology of his modern

[48] The German scholar Ernst Cassirer (1918) has located the roots of the more general notion of an intuitive intellect in Plotinus and Neoplatonism. Kacha Kazitadse (2002) has also offered a survey of this Neoplatonic development. See also Klaus Düsling (1968) for a discussion of the Neoplatonic origins of Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect. (I am indebted to Winegar (2017) for this Düsling reference.) These accounts are consistent with what I suggest here insofar as Kant shares this Neoplatonic conception of Plato. I simply want to suggest that Kant himself would have likely seen as his immediate inspiration Plato rather than Plotinus—whose name is mentioned only once in Kant's writings (R1635 16:58 ca. 1752-1789). Among German scholars, Wundt (1924), Mollowitz (1935), and Heimsoeth (1965) provide some of the more illuminating discussions of the Platonic origins of Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect.

[49] See, e.g., Sedgwick (2000) and Förster (2012). For an exception, see Fistioc (2000).

[50] See Leibniz's "Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas" (1684) and "Discourse on Metaphysics" (1686); Wolff's *Rational Thoughts on God, the World, and the Soul of Man, and All Things In General* (1719) (§963); and Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (1757). The relation between Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect and the Leibniz-Wolffian accounts of intuitive cognition is what has been emphasized in recent literature. See, e.g., Winegar (2017).

predecessors. For example, we find the following in early writings and lecture transcripts:[51]

> For we rightly assume that *whatever cannot be cognized by any intuition at all is simply not thinkable*, and is, thus impossible. But since we cannot, by any effort of the mind, nor even by invention, attain any other intuition than that which occurs in accordance with the form of space and time, it comes about that we treat as impossible every intuition whatsoever which is not bound by these laws (leaving aside a pure intuition of the understanding which is exempt from the laws of the sense, such as that which is divine and which Plato calls an idea) <*(intuitum purum intellectualem et legibus sensuum exemptum, qualis est divinus, quem Plato vocat ideam, praetereuntes)*> (MSI 2:413 1770; cf 2:396-7)

> Crusius explains the real principle of reason on the basis of the *systemate praeformationis* (from subjective *principiis*); Locke, on the basis of *influxu physico* like *Aristotele*; *Plato* and *Malebranche*, from *intuitu intellectuali*; we, on the basis of *epigenesis* from the use of the natural laws of reason. (R4275 17:492 1770-1)

> Plato (*ideae innatae*) and Pythagoras make *intellectualia* into particular objects of possible intuition. [….] *Intuitus intellectualis* from which everything originates. (R4449 17:555 1772)

> *Dogmatic idealism* is mystical, and can be called *Platonic idealism*. I myself intuit myself, but bodies only as they affect me. But this manner does not teach me the properties of things, e.g., wax held by a fire melts, and clay dries. Thus the difference lies here in the bodies, how they are affected. But bodies are pure appearances which something must underlie. So far I have philosophized correctly. But if want to go further in the determinations, then I deteriorate into mystical idealism. *If I maintain thinking beings of which I have intellectual intuition <intellectuelle Anschauungen>, then that is mystical.* But intuition is only sensuous, for only the senses intuit; the understanding does not intuit, but rather reflects. (Metaphysik L1 28:207 1776-8)

> The mystical ideal of Plato's intellectual intuition. <*Das mystische ideal der intellectuellen Anschauung des Plato*> (R6611 19:108 mid- to late-1770s.)[52]

We also find this Platonic association in later writings and lecture transcripts:[53]

[51] In addition to the early texts quoted, see: Br 10:131 1772, R3917 17:342 1769 (with later additions explicitly referring to Plato), R4446 17:553-4 1772, R4451 17:556 1772, R4894 18:21-2 1776-1778.
[52] The original note is dated to 1769-70. This sentence is a later edition.
[53] In addition to the texts quoted, see R6051 18:437 1780s, V-Met/Volckmann 28:367-80 1784-5, ÜE 8:248-9 1790, KU 5:363-4 1790, V-Met-L2/Pölitz 28:542 1790-1, VT 8:391 1796, Anth. 7:141n 1798.

Idealism proper always has a mystical tendency, and can have no other; but mine is solely designated for the purpose of comprehending the possibility of our a priori cognition of objects of experience, which is a problem never hitherto solved or even suggested. In this way all mystical idealism falls to the ground, for (as may be seen in Plato) it inferred from our cognitions a priori (even from those of geometry) another intuition different from that of the senses (namely, an intellectual intuition <*intellectuelle Anschauung*>), because it never occurred to anyone that the senses themselves might intuit a priori. (Prol 4:375n 1783)

Plato rightly noticed that through experience we do not know things as they are in themselves, but only learn to connect their appearances lawfully. (He further understood that to cognize things for what they are in themselves also requires an intuition of the things in themselves, i.e., pure intellectual intuition <*reine intellectuelle Anschauung*>, of which we are not capable.) He noticed that in order for our representation to agree with the object, it must either be derived from the object or thought of as producing the object. The latter would be the original representation (*idea archetypa*), of which, if it is to be original in all points, we human beings are not capable. Thus the ideas can be encountered only in the original being. The ideas of this original understanding, however, cannot be concepts, but only intuitions, although intellectual ones. <*Die Ideen aber dieses Ursprünglichen Verstandes können nicht Begriffe, sondern nur Anschauungen, aber intellectuelle, seyn*> (R6050 18:434-5 1780s) (I return to this passage below.)

At [Plato's] time there also arose the question: how do our intellectual cognitions arise? Sensitive cognitions need not be explained, they come from the senses. - We note that either our understanding has an intuitive faculty <*Anschauungs Vermögen*> of another kind than the sensible, this latter delivering only appearances of things, but the former things as they are. Then there would be intellectual things through intuitions <*intelleaualia per intuitus*>; or it has a conceptual faculty for making concepts through reflection on the intuitions of things; these would be intellectual things through concepts <*intellectualia per conceptus*>. Intellectual things through intuitions <*intellectualia per intuitus*> are objects which only the understanding alone can intuit, and through concepts <*per conceptus*> would be concepts which the understanding makes. The first is a mere phantom of the brain; the understanding cannot intuit, but rather the senses [alone can], thus there are only intellectual things through concepts <*intellectualia per conceptus*>. Professor Kant calls the first mystical, the other logical intellectual things <*Intellectualia*>. The philosophers were classified accordingly. Plato maintained mystical intellectual things <*intellectualia*>, Aristotle logical ones. (V-Met/Mron 29:759-60 1782-3)

[M]ysticism, or the presupposition of an intuitive intellect <*intelleaus intuitivi*> [*intellectus intuitivi*] or intellectual intuition <*intuitus intellectualis*>, i.e., the possibility that purely intellectual *a priori* concepts <*conceptus a priori mere intellectuales*> rest on immediate intuition of the understanding. This mystical

> hypothesis thus assumed that the understanding could operate like the senses, having pure intuitions <*intuitus puros*>; however the faculty of intuition, which rather applies to the senses alone, cannot be attributed to the understanding, therefore this hypothesis of Plato's collapses by itself. [….] The principle of Plato, namely, that by virtue of their previously possessed faculty of an intuitive understanding <*anschauenden Verstandes*> human beings would now still have the power to remember by their understanding back to previously held concepts, rests clearly on a mistake to which the notable clarity and astonishing fruitfulness of many mathematical propositions, of which he was master, misled him, and consisted in this, that he took pure *a priori* intuition <*intuitus a priori puros*> and pure a priori concepts <*conceptus a priori puros*> as the same. (V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:953-4 1794-5)
>
> *Plato the academic*, therefore, though through no fault of his own (for he used his intellectual intuitions <*intellectuellen Anschauungen*> only backwards, to *explain* the possibility of a synthetic knowledge *a priori*, not forwards, to extend it through those Ideas that were legible in the divine understanding), became the father of all enthusiasm *by way of philosophy*. (VT 8:398 1796)

In fact, insofar as Kant does associate the intuitive intellect with Leibniz, it is typically while regarding him as belonging to a broadly Platonic school of thought:[54]

> He [Leibniz] also seems, with Plato, to attribute to the human mind an original, though by now dim, intellectual intuition of these super-sensible beings […] (ÜE 8:248-9 1790)
>
> But Leibniz was actually to blame. For he, adhering to the Platonic school, assumed innate, pure intellectual intuitions called ideas, which are encountered in the human mind, though now only obscurely; and to whose analysis and illumination by means of attention alone we owe the cognition of objects, as they are in themselves. (Anth. 7:141n 1798)

This is not to claim that Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten had no independent influence on Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect. However, it is notable that Kant never uses the terms *intellectuelle Anschauung*, *intuitiver/anschauender Verstand*, or *intuitus intellectualis* in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, the 1766 essay in which he criticizes the Leibniz-Wolffian epistemology by way of a critique of Swedenborg's mystical

[54] Again, this is consistent with Leibniz's self-presentation in the Preface of the *New Essays* (1765). See also Metaphysik L1 28:206-9 1776-8.

visions.[55] These visions bear strong resemblance to what Kant would later call intellectual intuition, and by the late 1770s, he does in fact refer to them using this language.[56] Yet the terms themselves don't make their first appearance in his writings, so far as I can ascertain, until shortly after his so-called 'great light' of 1769. This dates their appearance to a period following the 1765 release of both the *New Essays* (in which Leibniz proclaims himself a kind of Platonist) as well as the second edition of Brucker's *Critical History* in 1767—which, as I have already mentioned, greatly influenced Kant.[57] There is some reason to think that Kant was reading Brucker around this time given the fact that he offered several lectures on the history of philosophy between 1767 and 1772.[58] Moreover, powerful evidence that Plato was at the forefront of his mind as his views about the intuitive intellect began to emerge is found in his striking shift towards Platonism in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770), which is also his first publication to explicitly refer to an intuitive intellect and indeed in connection with Plato.[59] (I will return to these points in the conclusion.) In short, although Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten certainly played an important role in the development of Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect, there is clearly a significant Platonic influence present here as well—one most firmly established by the fact that he associates this intellect, first and foremost, with Plato.

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[55] *Dreams* occasionally makes use of the nearby expressions *anschauend erkennen* (intuitively cognize), *anschauende Vorstellungen* (intuitive representations), and *anschauende Kenntniß* (intuitive cognition) when referring to Swedenborg's purported intuitions of the spirit world (2:328, 2:333, 2:341). Typically, however, these intuitions are described as 'immediate' (*unmittelbar*) or 'immaterial' (*immateriell*).
[56] See R5026 18:65 1776-8.
[57] See R5037 18:69 1776-8.
[58] Wundt (1924), Fistioc (2000), and Manfred Kuehn (2001) also make note of Kant's sudden interest in teaching history of philosophy at this time; the former two do so with an eye toward supporting the view that there is a significant Platonic influence on Kant's thought.
[59] See MSI 2:413 and 2:396-7.

Recognition of this influence allows us to better appreciate the depths of Kant's commitment to a theocentric model of human cognition. Specifically, it allows us to more readily see how closely his doctrine of ideas is tied to his notion of a divine intuitive intellect. For the Platonic account of ideas, as Kant understands it, accords a central place to the intuitive intellect—indeed to *two* different types of such intellect.[60,61] The fullest discussion of this topic occurs in a reflection (partially quoted above) detailing how Plato explains the possibility of our a priori cognition:[62]

> Plato rightly noticed that through experience we do not know things as they are in themselves, but only learn to connect their appearances lawfully. (He further understood that to cognize things for what they are in themselves also requires an intuition of the things in themselves, i.e., pure intellectual intuition, of which we are not capable.) He noticed that in order for our representation to agree with the object, it must either be derived from the object or thought of as producing the object. The latter would be the original representation (*idea archetypa*), of which, if it is to be original in all points, we human beings are not capable. Thus the ideas can be encountered only in the original being. The ideas of this original understanding, however, cannot be concepts, but only intuitions, although intellectual ones. Now he believed that all *a priori* cognitions are cognitions of things in themselves, and because we participate in the former, we also participate in the latter, and among those he included mathematics. But we could not participate in those on our own, consequently only through the communication of divine ideas. But since we are not conscious of them as having been imparted and transmitted merely historically, but rather as being immediately understood, they cannot be inborn concepts that are believed, but immediate intuitions that we have of the archetypes in the divine understanding. But we can unfold these only with difficulty. Thus they are mere recollections of old ideas from communion with God. (R6050 18:434-5 1780s, my underlined emphasis)

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[60] As Mollowitz (1935) rightly observes: "[F]or Kant, the intuitive intellect, from which everything originates, stands in close connection to the Platonic idea" (27, my translation). This is an explicit reference to R4449 17:556 1772. In what follows, I develop this thought.

[61] This is noteworthy because there has been some controversy in the literature about whether Kant has a single account of an intuitive intellect. See, e.g., Moltke Gram (1981) and Eckart Förster (2012). I discuss this issue in connection with the two types of intuitive intellect we see in the above passage in "Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects" (unpublished).

[62] I draw from this reflection because Kant is so explicit in it. However, published works, lecture transcripts, and other reflections support its contents. See, e.g., R6051 18:437-8 1780-89, R4275 17:492 1770-1, Br 10:131 1772, V-Met/Mron 29:759-61 1782-3, V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt 29:953-6 1794-5, KrV A313/B370ff, A853/B881-A854/B882, Prol 4:375, KU 5:363-4, ÜE 8:248-9, VT 8:391, 8:398ff, and Anth 7:141n. Mollowitz (1935) also makes prominent use of the above passage.

I wish to argue that Kant's own notion of the divine intuitive intellect draws considerable inspiration from this Platonic account. As he understands it, the *divine* intuitive intellect intuits things in themselves (non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) in virtue of its immediate first-person access to its divine ideas; where these ideas produce these things (productivity characteristic); *and* where this representation is synoptic by virtue of this property of ideas on Kant's account (synoptic characteristic). Kant refers to this first kind of intellectual intuition as "pure intellectual intuition."[63]

A second kind of intellectual intuition is also described in this passage: the intuition that would be enjoyed by a *finite* intuitive intellect. Kant tells us that such an intellect would intuit things in themselves (non-discursivity and thing in itself characteristics) in virtue of its possession of an immediate intuition of God's pure intellectual intuition. In other words, it would enjoy God's view of things by 'participating' in the divine ideas, thereby acquiring a peculiar kind of a priori cognition of things through their ground.[64] Now Kant of course firmly denounces the proposal that "a previous intuition of divinity" should serve as an explanation for our a priori cognition; as he insists in his famous 1772 letter to Marcus Herz, "the *deus ex machina* is the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions" (10:131).[65] This negative assessment must, however,

[63] I am here borrowing from my analysis in "Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects" (unpublished).
[64] For a helpful discussion of this kind of a priori cognition, see Hogan (2009).
[65] However, there is evidence that indicates some willingness on Kant's part to entertain the possibility of a *future* intuition of divinity. We find in lecture transcripts moderate sympathy for a Platonic eschatology on which our disembodied souls would have an intuition allowing them to "cognize things in themselves in their divine ideas <*in den Idee der Gottheit*>" (V-Th/Pölitz 28:1053 1783-4). See also V-Met/Mron 29:857 1782-3 and V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28:297 1783-4. I explore this evidence in more detail

be juxtaposed with the first *Critique*'s insistence that the Platonic meaning of the expression 'idea' "exactly fits *<passt genau an>*" his own notion of a concept of reason (A312/B369, my modified translation). What Kant intends by this is not, I contend, exhausted by the fact that "Plato understood by ['idea'] something that […] could never be borrowed from the senses" (A313/B370). He also intends to exploit a close connection between the Platonic idea and the divine intuitive intellect.

My proposal here, and it is one for which we have already found evidence, is that Kant regards our ideas as the "divinity of our soul" precisely in the sense that it is through such ideas that we strive after and 'participate' in divinity. This is perhaps most readily seen in the realm of practical reason. (Indeed, it might well be argued that what Kant remarks of Plato is also true of himself; that is, he also "finds his ideas preeminently in everything that is practical" (A314/B371).) Consider, for instance, Kant's view that moral and political ideas are to be regarded as normative ideals through which we are motivated to strive towards *perfection* and in terms of which we measure our moral and political shortcomings.[66] In fact, though Kant generally follows Brucker's analysis of Plato, he conspicuously parts ways with him on this very point:

> The **Platonic republic** has become proverbial as a supposedly striking example of a dream of perfection that can have its place only in the idle thinker's brain; and Brucker finds it ridiculous for the philosopher to assert that a prince will never govern well unless he participates in the ideas. But we would do better to pursue this thought further [….] A constitution providing for the **greatest human freedom** according to laws that permit **the freedom of**

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in "Only the Understanding of God is Called Intuition? Kant On Finite Intuitive Intellects" (unpublished).

[66] See, e.g., KrV A315/B372ff. Also: "Plato's doctrine of ideas should serve to prevent us from seeking in empirical principles that which can have its source and archetype in reason alone, namely, true perfection" (R4862 18:13 1776-8) and "Plato's hyperbolic elevation of ideas as archetypes that are in the highest intelligence when it is personified is not to be blamed; they are the standard for things which restrict one another and do not fulfill their end individually, so no experience is congruent with them" (R5553 18:227 1778-9).

> **each to exist together with that of others** […] is at least a necessary idea, which one must make the ground not merely of the primary plan of a state's constitution but of all the laws too [….] Even though this may never come to pass, the idea of this maximum is nevertheless wholly correct when it is set forth as an archetype, in order to bring the legislative constitution of human beings ever nearer to a possible greatest perfection. For whatever might be the highest degree of perfection at which humanity must stop, and however great a gulf must remain between the idea and its execution, no one can or should try to determine this, just because it is freedom that can go beyond every proposed boundary. (A316-7/B372-4, my underlined emphasis)

Consider also the central role of the idea of freedom in Kant's moral philosophy encapsulated by the *Groundwork's* so-called 'Reciprocity Thesis': "a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same" (4:447). Dieter Schönecker (1999) and Christine Korsgaard (1996), among others, have argued that this thesis should be understood as proposing an analytic connection between morality and the idea of a free will in the maximal sense of a 'perfectly good' (*vollkommen gute*) or 'absolutely good' (*schlechterdings gute*) will.[67] Kant also refers to such a will as a "holy" (*heilige*) will—one "whose maxims necessarily harmonize with the laws of autonomy" (4:439, my underlined emphasis). The moral law is, in our own case, a synthetic rather than an analytic proposition "because we have no such perfect will" (4:420n); our wills are not such that moral action necessarily follows. Rather the bindingness of morality is for us found in synthetic imperatives, which express a constraint that would not apply to a holy will. Nevertheless, Kant insists that our own moral obligation is only:

> […] made possible by this: that [this] idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world and consequently, if I were only this, all my actions *would* always be in conformity with the autonomy of the will; but since at the same time I intuit myself as a member of the world of sense, they *ought* to be in conformity with it; [so that] this categorical ought represents a synthetic

[67] See Schönecker (1990) (170ff) and chapter 6 of Korsgaard (1996).

> proposition a priori, since to my will affected by sensible desires there is added the idea of the same will but belonging to the world of the understanding—a will pure and practical of itself […] (4:454, my underlined emphasis) [68]

Kant's view of our ideas as the "divinity of our soul" is, however, by no means limited to his doctrine of practical reason. In another crucial passage from the first *Critique*, we read:

> But Plato was right to see clear proofs of an origin in ideas not where human reason shows true causality, and where ideas become efficient causes (of actions and their objects), namely in morality, also in regard to nature itself. A plant, an animal, the regular arrangement of the world's structure (presumably thus also the whole order of nature)—these show clearly that they are possible only according to ideas; although no individual creature, under the individual conditions of its existence, is congruent with the idea of what is most perfect of its species (as little as a human being is congruent with the idea of humanity that he bears in his soul as the archetype of his actions), nevertheless these ideas are in the highest understanding individual, unalterable, thoroughly determined, and the original causes of things, and only the whole of its combination in the totality of a world is fully adequate to its idea. If we abstract from its exaggerated expression, then the philosopher's spiritual flight, which considers the physical copies in the world order, and then ascends to their architectonic connection according to ends, i.e., ideas, is an endeavor deserves respect and imitation […] (A317-8/B374-5, my underlined emphasis)

As I have already suggested in the previous section, Kant does in fact imitate Plato in this endeavor. What he praises as the "excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use" of ideas in the first *Critique*'s Appendix to the Dialectic is, as he suggests here, best understood as a self-conscious imitation of the great philosopher's "spiritual flight" towards a God's-eye view of nature. Put another way, it is precisely the ascent described above towards a conception of the architectonic connection of the

[68] My thanks to Hogan for discussion of this point and for the following suggestion: Insofar as morality provides the foundation for Kant's mature 'practical-dogmatic' metaphysics of the supersensible on which theoretical ideas of God, freedom, and immortality acquire justification from their connection to moral ends entailed by the *idea of freedom*, we might even infer that the 'divinity of our soul' expressed in its generation of ideas of practical reason mediates all such justifications.

things in nature according to ends. Let us recall at this point Allison's remark cited at the outset: "The theocentric model, with its ideal of an eternalistic, God's-eye view of things, is the common heritage of the Platonic tradition" (28-9). We are now perhaps in a much better position to appreciate that this ideal is very much alive and well in Kant's own critical model of human cognition.

Conclusion

In closing, I wish to gesture towards avenues of future research suggested by the findings above. The discussion thus far, though brief, supports the conclusion that careful attention to Kant's notion of an intuitive intellect holds considerable promise for illuminating his broader critical system. We have seen that the first appearance of the notion of an intuitive intellect in Kant's thought constitutes solid evidence of a significant Platonic influence right at the advent of the critical philosophy. This influence figures also in his appeal to the Platonic distinction between phenomena and noumena in the 1770 *Inaugural Dissertation*'s first public statement and defense of transcendental idealism. It is likewise evident in the Dissertation's striking shift away from an earlier empiricist position to an explicit Platonism in ethics.[69]

Viewed from the perspective of Kant's later thought, the dual character of this Platonic influence corresponds to the two sides of his famous slogan summarizing the critical philosophy's motivations. Kant declares in the Preface of the first *Critique* that he was forced "to deny **knowledge** in order to make room for **belief/faith** <*ich mußte das Wissen aufheben, um zum Glauben Platz zu bekommen*>" (Bxxx, my modified

[69] See §7 and §9 of the *Inaugural Dissertation*.

translation). The knowledge he denies is theoretical knowledge of things in themselves, including most notably the traditional objects of metaphysics: the soul, the world as it ultimately is, and God. The influence of this critique on the subsequent course of philosophy was of course significant and indisputable. Indeed, it is the source of Kant's reputation as *der Alleszermalmende.* By contrast, the aim of making room for belief—*moral* belief in an immortal soul, God, and freedom—has often been viewed as ancillary to the critical enterprise, even something of an afterthought. We find this expressed in Heine's dismissal of Kant's doctrine of moral belief as essentially a mere expression of pity towards his old servant Lampe. Yet such a deflationary reading stands in clear tension with the importance Kant explicitly assigns to this doctrine. After all, he explains that he was forced to deny metaphysical knowledge *in order to* make room for moral belief.[70] My suggestion is that we might make better sense of this claim and in turn the critical philosophy as a whole by taking seriously the influence of Plato and Platonic themes on Kant's intellectual

[70] It has been suggested to me that Kant does not explicitly say in the B-Preface that he had to deny knowledge in order to make room for ***practical*** or ***moral*** belief and thus that he might have in mind here not just moral belief but also pragmatic and doctrinal belief. However, I find it difficult to understand why Kant would be forced to deny theoretical knowledge of things in themselves, where that denial involves rejecting an unrestricted version of the PSR, in order to make room for pragmatic and doctrinal belief. This is clear in the case of moral belief. For such belief requires morality and morality for Kant requires freedom understood as an unconditioned spontaneity that is inconsistent with an unrestricted version of the PSR. By contrast, it is not at all clear why doctrinal belief in aliens, a physician's pragmatic belief that his patient has tuberculosis, or a merchant's pragmatic belief that the harvest will be poor requires that Kant relinquish the PSR (KrV A824-5/B852-3 and FM 20:298). Given these considerations, it is not surprising to find that closer attention to the text reveals that moral belief is precisely what Kant points to in the B-Preface. The relevant passage reads: "Thus I cannot even **assume God, freedom and immortality** for the sake of the necessary practical use of my reason unless I simultaneously **deprive** speculative reason of its insights, speculative reason would have to help itself to principles that in fact reach only to objects of possible experience, and which, if they were to be applied to what cannot be an object of experience, then they would always actually transform it into an appearance, and thus declare all **practical extension** of pure reason to be impossible. Thus I had to deny **knowledge** in order to make room for **faith**; and the dogmatism of metaphysics, i.e., the prejudice that without criticism reason can make progress in metaphysics, is the true source of all unbelief conflicting with morality, which unbelief is always very dogmatic" (KrV Bxxix-xxx, my underlined emphases). See Chignell (2007) for a helpful discussion of Kant's notion of belief.

development. In particular, I suggest that reflection on Plato's insights and errors may have played a key role in helping Kant arrive at this position.

On the one hand, Kant comes to view Plato's rationalist epistemology as a kind of 'enthusiasm,' which his own system treats as a main target—a point already clear in his 1772 letter to Herz.[71] In this way, reflection on the epistemological shortcomings of Plato's account of ideas figures centrally in his critical restriction on theoretical knowledge. As we have seen, his view of Plato's model of theoretical cognition is by no means solely negative. Kant's account of the "excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use" of reason is, as we saw above, a rather self-conscious imitation of Plato's "spiritual flight" towards a God's-eye view of nature—a view that is, in Kant's view, essential to the scientific enterprise of seeking and systematizing knowledge. On the practical side of things, we find that by the time of the *Inaugural Dissertation,* Kant is already deeply committed to a version of Plato's moral rationalism. As he writes in §9 of that work:

> *Moral philosophy*, therefore, in so far as it furnishes the first *principles of judgment*, is only cognized by the pure understanding and itself belongs to pure philosophy. Epicurus, who reduced its criteria to the sense of pleasure and pain, is very rightly blamed, together with certain moderns, who have followed him to a certain extent from afar, such as Shaftesbury and his supporters. In any genus of things, the quantity of which is variable, the *maximum* is the common measure and principle of cognizing. The *maximum of perfection* is nowadays called the ideal, while for Plato it was called the idea (as in the case of his idea of the state). It is the principle of all things which are contained under the general concept of some perfection, in as much as the lesser degree, it is held, can only be determined by limiting the maximum. (2:396)

The indispensability of rational ideals remains a key theme of his own moral and political philosophy. In addition, we find that Kant holds it is precisely an excessive

[71] See 10:131. See also R6050 18:434-7 1780-9, R6051 18:437-8 1780-9, KU 5:363-4, VT 8:398 1796.

theoretical rationalism that threatens a legitimate moral rationalism. One of his targets here is the principle of sufficient reason, which he regards not only as self-undermining (a realization that helped guide him towards his great light via the antinomy of pure reason) but also as a genuine threat to our freedom conceived as an unconditioned spontaneity.[72] While Kant's criticisms of the PSR are traditionally thought to center on Leibniz, we should remember that this critique is directed towards what Kant himself describes as Leibniz's "Platonic conception of the world" (MAN 4:507).[73] He very likely regarded Leibniz as sharing common ground with Plato regarding the PSR, and indeed, Brucker portrays Plato as being committed to some version of this principle (*ex nihilo nihil fit*).[74]

The key point in all of this is that Kant's criticisms of Plato's theoretical philosophy and enthusiastic defense of some aspects of his practical philosophy emerge at the same time and seem to be closely linked. They also seem to be implicated in the emergence of the critical system, which is still poorly understood.[75] I suggest that by taking seriously the dual nature of what we have seen to be a significant influence of Plato and Platonic themes on Kant's intellectual development, we might be able to make better sense not only of his critical model of human

[72] See also A533/B561.
[73] Thanks to Hogan for reminding me of this passage.
[74] For example: "On Theology, the fundamental doctrine of Plato, as of all other ancient philosophers, is, that from nothing nothing can proceed. This universal axiom, applied not only to the infinite efficient, but to the material cause, Plato, in his Timæus, lays down as the ground of his reasoning concerning the origin of the world" (from Enfield's English summary of Brucker 223, my underlined emphasis).
[75] Wundt (1924) offers an informative survey of some of the influences that have been thought to have led Kant to his great light (esp. 153-78). Friedrich Paulsen (1875) and Erich Adickes (1895) have pointed to Hume, while Wilhelm Windelband (1878) and Hans Vaihinger (1922) have pointed instead to Leibniz. Wundt argues against these proposals and instead names Plato. I agree that Plato was important in the development of the critical philosophy, but I also think Wundt greatly understates Leibniz's potential role in leading Kant to his great light. See Wundt (1924) (esp. 160).

cognition but also of the meaning of the broader critical system.[76]

Abbreviations[77]

Anth	Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht
Br	Briefe
FM	Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnitzens und Wolf's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?
GMS	Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft
KrV	Kritik der reinen Vernunft
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft
MAN	Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften
MSI	De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis
Prol	Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik
R	Reflexion
TG	Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch die Träume der Metaphysik
ÜE	Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll
V-Lo/Busolt	Logik Busolt
V-Met/Dohna	Metaphysik Dohna
V-Met-K3E/Arnoldt	Metaphysik K3
V-Met-L2/Pölitz	Metaphysik L2
V-Met/Mron	Metaphysik Mrongovius
V-Met/Volckmann	Metaphysik Volckmann
V-Mo/Mron II	Moral Mrongovius II
V-Th/Pölitz	Religionslehre Pölitz
VT	Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie

[76] Thanks to Andrew Chignell, Desmond Hogan, Michelle Kosch, and Derk Pereboom for helpful feedback on earlier versions and/or stages of this essay.

[77] I borrow these abbreviations (with minor modification) from *Kant-Studien*.

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