

CHAPTER I

INTERPRETIVE HORIZONS

1. THE PROBLEM OF METAPHYSICS

. . . we begin from the point at which the common root of our power of knowledge divides and throws out two stems, one of which is *reason*. By reason I here understand the whole higher faculty of knowledge and am therefore contrasting the rational with the empirical (A 835/B 863).

This point marks also the beginning of metaphysics: The division gets retraced through that movement in which, turning away from the immediately present, one comes to have recourse to reason; thereby the division gets established in a certain overtness and the immediately present differentiated, retrospectively, as the (merely) empirical. Because it marks the beginning of metaphysics, Kant can, near the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, begin from this point “to project the architectonic of all knowledge arising from *pure reason*”—that is, to project the architectonic of that metaphysics for which that entire Critique is the requisite preparation, that metaphysics in which the cultivation of human reason would be consummated (A 850/B 878). And it is from this same point, strategically engraved at the end of the Introduction (“. . . there are two stems of human knowledge, namely, sensibility and understanding, which perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown root”—A 15/B 29), that the entire critical propaedeutic begins. From this point, which thus punctuates the Kantian text, one can invoke, perhaps most directly, with fewest strokes, the horizon explicitly governing that text. This same horizon is to govern the duplex interpretation to be made of a major segment of that text.

From this point of division arises the traditional distinction between historical knowledge and rational knowledge.¹ Kant formulates this distinction in terms of the origin of knowledge: “Historical knowledge is *cognitio ex datis*; rational knowledge is *cognitio ex principiis*” (A 836/B 864). Even at this level of mere appropriative reformation, a peculiar shift is already in play (one which will eventually prove decisive for placing Kant’s text within the history of metaphysics): Delimiting historical knowledge as that kind which is given from “elsewhere” (*anderwärts*), he thus shifts the locus of the immediately present; what was originally a turn away from the immediately present has become a turn to something present in a more profound and no less immediate sense; it has become a turn *from* the presence of objects (an imperfect presence because of the very difference separating objects from the subject) *to* reason’s presence to itself, a turn from presence to self-presence.

But what is more decisive in the present connection is the problematic generated by the concept of purely rational knowledge and confirmed by a cursory glance at the history of metaphysics. The problem is one which Kant never ceased to reiterate: If metaphysics consists of purely rational knowledge, knowledge *ex principiis*, knowledge purely through concepts (in distinction from historical, i.e., empirical knowledge, but also from mathematical knowledge which, though not empirical, involves construction in intuition), then how is it possible for metaphysics to be legitimated as a knowledge of things, as synthetic knowledge? How can there be knowledge of something that is “elsewhere” (outside the mere thought, the concept) without that knowledge having come from “elsewhere”? How is purely rational synthetic knowledge possible? Only if this problem is resolved in a rigorous, binding way can metaphysics, that “battlefield of... endless controversies” (A viii), be placed upon the secure path of science. Hence, the *problem* of metaphysics: How is metaphysics as science possible?

If this problem is regarded with sufficient generality, if it is formulated in terms not only of theoretical knowledge (determining of objects) but also of practical knowledge (self-determination), then it may be deemed the horizon of critique as such, of the entire enterprise to which the three critiques are devoted. By resolving this problem, critique is to prepare the ground for metaphysics (as science), for a system of pure reason:

For if such a system is one day to be completed under the general name of metaphysics (which it is possible to achieve quite completely and

which is of highest importance for the use of reason in every connection), the ground for the edifice must be explored by critique as deep down as the foundation of the faculty of principles independent of experience, in order that it may sink in no part, for this would inevitably bring about the downfall of the whole.²

On the other hand, the same problem, regarded in terms of theoretical knowledge only, forms the horizon of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

What, then, does the resolution of the problem require, taking it now in its more restricted form? The answer is given by the title which Kant assigns to that portion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that encompasses almost the entire text, excluding only the Prefaces, the Introduction, and the concluding Doctrine of Method: what is required is a Transcendental Doctrine of Elements. A doctrine of elements: an analysis of human knowledge into its elements, an exhibiting of its fundamental articulation. A *transcendental* doctrine of elements: an analysis distinguishing those elements which, constitutive of objects, belonging to the very conditions of the possibility of objects, are therefore sources of purely rational knowledge of those objects; an analysis distinguishing them especially from those elements which only *seem* to supply such knowledge, through such semblance drawing us instead into self-dissimulating error and onto that battleground of endless controversy thereby prepared. This dividing of the analysis into a delimiting of constitutive elements *and* a distinguishing of them from semblant elements broaches that division of the entire Transcendental Doctrine of Elements (hence of nearly the entire *Critique of Pure Reason*) which contrasts the Transcendental Dialectic, the negative component, with the entire remainder. Although this is not the only articulation at this level—another cuts across it, the division stemming from the division of the common root, the division into Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Logic—it nonetheless establishes the most immediate, explicit horizon of the Transcendental Dialectic and so is of focal significance for the corresponding duplex interpretation.

2. GATHERING

In the case of projective interpretation the horizon has a quite different character. Not explicit in the text itself, not already cast in its unity by the author's expressed conception of the problems and aims animating the text, it must rather be *assembled*. Yet it is anything but a matter of

constructing independently of the text at issue a horizon then to be imposed on that text as an alien framework; against such external violence of interpretation the advantage will always be had, quite rightly, by the counterdemand for a freeing, a restoration, of the text. Nevertheless, such restoration need not go to the extreme of hermeneutical positivism. Indeed the very schema that would then be implicit holds the issue of interpretation within an alien, not to say ontologically naive, framework, as though it were at most a question of various degrees stretching with utter continuity between two extremes: on the one hand, the text taken as it itself is (as though its objectivity were self-evident), on the other hand, the text taken in terms of some alien framework. It goes almost without saying that this schema effectively suppresses all genuine hermeneutical questioning.

To assemble a horizon for projective interpretation is a matter, not of preparing an alienation of that text, but rather of freeing a level of discourse submerged in that text and of establishing its unity by reference to a certain subordinate reflection—in the present instance, the reflection of the Kantian concept of reason back into its Greek origin, the translation of reason into λόγος, the posing of reason as gathering. But the horizon is to be assembled *from the text itself*, rigorously composed from elements of the proximate context of the text at issue.

Let me begin with the opening sentences of the Transcendental Aesthetic (A 19/B 33). Though outwardly cast as a mere series of definitions, this opening is of major systematic and interpretive import. Beginning from the point at which the common root divides, Kant sketches in these opening sentences the *beginning* of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e., that configuration of the matter at issue from which the entire development of this text will proceed. It is from this beginning that the assembling of the horizon needs to proceed.

The matter to be put at issue is knowledge of objects. Thus Kant begins: “In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, *intuition* is that through which it is in immediate relation to them. . . .” This says: In all knowledge of objects, in all synthetic knowledge (regardless of its specific character), intuition has a certain primacy. Intuition is that by which knowledge stands in *immediate* relation to its object. Whatever may be involved in the full structure of the relation of knowledge to its object, whatever else this relation

may involve, intuition is what gives it its element of immediacy. Intuition contributes the immediate content of knowledge. This peculiar primacy is held by intuition in *all* knowledge of objects; it extends over all distinctions between different kinds of knowing. In every case intuition is what provides knowing with its objective immediacy.

Whatever other elements may belong to knowledge must, accordingly, be considered in reference to the primacy held by intuition. Thus, in the first sentence Kant adds that intuition is that “to which all thought as a means is directed.” At least at the level of the beginning, intuition and thought must not be regarded as coordinate stems; rather, at this level intuition has primacy over thought, which is no more than a means in service to intuition. But the limits of this opening determination need to be carefully established: Kant’s posing of thought as a means in service to intuition does not consign it to a minor role within the structure of knowledge. On the contrary, thought is what is most problematic in that structure and what is most in need of the discipline of critique; correspondingly, the major part of the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements is a Transcendental Logic, i.e., an investigation of the role of (pure) thought in knowledge of objects. Nevertheless, if in the course of the *Critique of Pure Reason*—that is, in the *development* of the matter at issue, in contrast to its initial configuration—there emerges a respect in which thought enjoys a primacy within the structure of knowing, such primacy will be built, as it were, on the character of thought as a means in service to intuition and thus will complement rather than negate the distinctive primacy had by intuition.

Kant continues: “But intuition takes place only insofar as the object is given to us.” In what ways can the object be given? How can such giving occur? What forms can it assume? Two forms may be specified, corresponding to the possibility that the giving may proceed from the side of the subject or from the side of the object. In the first case the subject would give itself the object; in the other case the object would give itself to the subject.

This distinction between two ways of giving, which is itself generated formally from the subject-object distinction, opens, in turn, onto the distinction between an essentially self-enclosed, unlimited knowing and the exposed, limited knowing to which man finds himself constrained. The former, though associated (in an emphatically empty way) with the concept of the divine, is thematized almost exclusively in

structural terms. It is definitive of such unlimited or divine knowing that within it the intuition of the object is essentially free of any limitation by the object intuited, in no way dependent on (limited by) the object's giving itself. In limited, human knowing the intuiting is, by contrast, dependent on a giving which proceeds from the object.

This distinction between divine knowing and human knowing is decisive for the horizon to be assembled. Specifically, I shall go about assembling this horizon by elaborating structurally the opposed terms of this distinction and transforming it finally into a concept of the movement of human knowing. This elaboration of the distinction is a matter merely of unfolding the relevant concepts, of unfolding the possibilities contained in the concept of knowing and its modalization into limited and unlimited modes; in Kant's terms, this development falls on the side of thought rather than knowing.³ Most emphatically, it is not to be understood theologically, as though it were a matter of knowledge about God; rather, it is a matter of developing the distinction in such a way as to situate human knowing and to pose the problem of human knowing.⁴

Each of the two modes of knowing needs to be elaborated in such a way that certain components of its full structure are made explicit. In the case of divine knowing, these components are forms of unity: It is a matter of exhibiting the *fourfold unity* that is prescribed by the concept of such knowing.

Divine knowing corresponds to that form of giving in which the subject gives itself the object. To give itself the object is to bring the object forth, to create it in the very act of knowing it. The intuition operative in such knowing Kant calls *original* intuition (B 72): It is original in the sense that it *originates* the very object intuited, that is, contains within itself the origin of that object and thus first lets the object come forth into existence. In the case of original intuition the object does not exist beyond (independently of) the intuition; it neither arises outside the sphere of that intuition nor, originating within the intuition, is it released from that intuition so as to stand in itself. Thus, original intuition is not separated from its object; and, to the extent that divine knowing coincides with such intuition, it is a knowing which forms an immediate unity with its object, a knowing immediately *present* to its object. This unity of subject and object constitutes the *first* of the four forms of unity prescribed by the concept of divine knowing.

The unity is comprehensive, for divine knowing is nothing but such original intuition, nothing else beyond it. Divine knowing coincides with original intuition: Kant declares that in thinking the primordial being, it is to be granted that “all his knowledge must be intuition, and not *thought*, which always demonstrates [*beweist*] limitations” (B 71). What are these limitations that would be demonstrated, shown, made manifest by thought? They are not only—and not fundamentally—limitations belonging properly to thought but limitations within intuition. Thought would demonstrate, show up, not so much its own limitations as rather the limitations in intuition. How? The demonstration lies in the connection between the very need for thought and the limitation of the corresponding intuition: the very need for thought, the very involvement of thought in a knowing, would attest to limitations in the intuition on which that knowing is built. Thought is a means in service to intuition, and the need for that means would testify to limitations in the intuition. Conversely, if intuition is unlimited, perfect, complete, there will be no need for thought; and so a knowing built upon an unlimited intuition will be purely intuition, will involve no thought.

Original intuition is precisely such an unlimited, complete intuition. It brings forth its object in immediate unity with itself and thus has the object totally within its purview, is utterly self-enclosed. From such intuition the object cannot be withdrawn, cannot hold itself in reserve. It is prohibited from giving itself in a merely *partial* way such that there would remain in it, as given, as turned toward intuition, a certain indeterminacy—an indeterminacy which would then need to be repaired through the determining power of thought. Rather, original intuition is such that from its very inception the object is posed in its *full presence*—that is, original intuition involves no need for the object to be *gathered into presence*. Posed in its full presence, the object is intuited in its *full* determinacy; it is spared that indetermination which, testifying to a withheld reserve, announcing (making manifest, making present) a certain *absence*, would shatter the mirror of full presence. Divine knowing is fullness of vision, its object a unity of presence immune to all indeterminacy, all fragmentation; and if God does not think, it is because his intuition is so complete that he has no need to think. This *unity of intuition* constitutes the *second* of the forms of unity prescribed by the concept of divine knowing.

The issue involved in this form of unity is also expressed through Kant's identification of original intuition as "intellectual intuition" (B 72). This expression is taken over from the *Inaugural Dissertation*. According to the earlier work, divine intuition is independent (i.e., not dependent on an object existing independently of it) and archetypal (i.e., brings forth its object); it is "on that account perfectly intellectual."⁵ For an intuition to be intellectual means, within the context of the *Dissertation*, that it is intuition of intelligible things in contrast to sensible things, of things as they are rather than as they appear to an intuition that is sensible.⁶ The connection is clear: Because divine intuition is original, its object is totally within its purview, that is, incapable of being in any regard withdrawn, absent, concealed, from that intuition; within such an intuition the object must show itself as it is, and consequently the intuition is intellectual.

The expression "intellectual intuition" points also to another issue, for there is something highly problematic about the conjunction posed in this expression. Within the structure of human knowing the intellectual is set over against the intuitive: Whereas intuition, as sensibility, is that receptivity of the subject by which objects appear to it, the intellectual is what is not capable of appearing but must rather be thought.⁷ Thus, the expression "intellectual intuition" conjoins thought and intuition. Yet, how can these be so fused into unity that intuition not only uses thought as a means but is actually stamped by the character of thought, i.e., becomes intellectual? And how especially is such conjunction possible in divine knowing? How can divine intuition be intellectual if God does not think?⁸

The same problematic conjunction is also introduced in another form, namely, in the concept of an understanding which is also intuitive, an intuitive understanding. In the *Transcendental Deduction* (B 145) Kant refers explicitly to "an understanding which is itself intuitive" and then adds in parentheses: "as, for example, a divine understanding which would not represent to itself given objects but through whose representation the objects would themselves be given or produced." This explanation in reference to the example of divine understanding makes it clear that in this conjunction of intuition and understanding the issue is essentially the same as in the consideration of original intuition. But the issue has been transposed into the form appropriate to the *Transcendental Analytic*: whereas in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*

Kant considers divine knowing as an intuition so self-sufficient as to require no further contribution by thought, in the *Analytic* he regards it as an understanding—hence, as thought (cf. A 69/B 94)—so self-sufficient as to give itself its object, as an understanding thus in need of no separate faculty of intuition such as would otherwise be required to supply understanding with its object. In both cases it is a matter, not of one faculty to the exclusion of the other, but rather of their unity.⁹ It is a matter of thinking that unity from two different perspectives: In the *Transcendental Aesthetic* the unity of intuition and thought is considered from the perspective of intuition; in the *Transcendental Analytic* this same unity is considered from the perspective of thought or understanding.

Kant offers a still more refined formulation for that conjunction expressed in the concept of intuitive understanding. He writes: “An understanding in which through self-consciousness all the manifold would *eo ipso* be given, would be intuitive”—and then he adds the contrasting concept: “our understanding can only *think* and for intuition must look to the senses” (B 135; cf. B 138–9). This formulation poses the major term of the conjunction in a more radical form: *Transcendental apperception*, self-consciousness, is the fundamental act of understanding, and a self-sufficient understanding would be such as to give itself its object through this fundamental act. For such an understanding all positing relative to something other than itself would be dissolved into its own self-positing. Especially in this formulation the peculiar completeness, wholeness, unity, of divine thought is evident; it is a unity which consists in self-sufficiency, in not being dependent upon, mediated by, an essentially detached intuition. This *unity of thought* constitutes the *third* of the forms of unity prescribed by the concept of divine knowing.

In Kant's formulation of the two principal concepts of divine knowing there is an apparent conflict: according to the concept formulated in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* divine knowing would be primarily intuition, whereas according to the concept given in the *Transcendental Analytic* it would be primarily thought or understanding. However, this conflict between the concept of original intuition and that of intuitive understanding is resolved to the extent that both concepts prove to involve the same issue merely considered from two different perspectives, namely, that of the unity of intuition and thought. But is the

issue really the same in both cases? Can this sameness be maintained in view of the character of original intuition? Is not original intuition precisely such that it essentially excludes any admixture of thought whatsoever? Does Kant not stress precisely this exclusion of thought from original intuition? If God does not think, how can there be in divine knowing a unity of thought and intuition? How can it be maintained, then, that the concepts of original intuition and of intuitive understanding present the same issue?

It is necessary to consider more carefully what Kant would exclude in excluding thought from original intuition. The sole issue in the exclusion—what is to be preserved by it—is the unity, the completeness, of divine intuition; and so, what Kant would exclude is all thought that would be correlative to some limitation in the intuition. What kind of thought would this be? It would be a thought correlative to an *indeterminacy* on the side of intuition, a thought which as means in service to intuition would “repair” such indeterminacy. What Kant excludes is all thought that would assume the form of a *determining*, of an establishing of determinacy in a more or less indeterminate “given.” Does this mean that *all* thought is excluded? It does not—as can be seen by examining more closely the concept of original intuition.

In original intuition the object is not only intuited but also brought forth, created, posited in its existence as an object. Furthermore, the positing is in thoroughgoing unity with the intuiting: the object is not posited and then intuited but rather is posited in its very being intuited and is intuited in its very being posited. However, intuition is as such receptive. Thus, if within original intuition there is to be a positing of the object, a positing in unity with the intuitive reception, there must be incorporated into that intuition a spontaneity which, despite the opposition between spontaneity and receptivity, is unified with that intuition. Such spontaneity, such power of positing (in contrast to mere receiving) is the power of thought.¹⁰ Hence, in this respect thought must be integral to original intuition. However—and this is what Kant’s exclusion enforces—such thought is not a determining thought, not a thought which establishes determinations in something, not a thought which posits relative to a “given,” not a discursive thought.¹¹ It is rather a thought which posits *originally*,¹² which posits the object as such instead of merely positing determinacy in a pre-given object.

I conclude: In divine knowing—whether regarded as original intuition or as intuitive understanding—intuition and thought are not merely correlative, not merely two “stems,” but rather are fused into an essential unity. Divine knowing is anterior to the point at which the common root divides,¹³ anterior of course to metaphysics and critique—or rather, in another sense, divine knowing is precisely that point, that original unity posited by critique. This *unity of intuition and thought* constitutes the *fourth* of the forms of unity prescribed by the concept of divine knowing.

Thus unfolds from the concept of divine knowing—specified as original intuition and as intuitive understanding—a fourfold unity: unity of subject and object, of intuition, of thought, and of intuition and thought. These four forms of unity within the structure of divine knowing are the moments which the assembling of the (projectively) interpretive horizon is to take over from this term of the general distinction between divine knowing and human knowing. Taking them over, it is then a matter of extending the elaboration to the corresponding moments within the structure of human knowing—that is, of unfolding the fourfold disunity, the fourfold fragmentation, which within human knowing corresponds to the fourfold unity of divine knowing.

Let me rejoin the opening of the Transcendental Aesthetic: “But intuition takes place only insofar as the object is given to us.” This says: Human knowing corresponds to that form of giving which proceeds from the object; in human knowing the object gives itself to the subject. The intuition involved in such knowing Kant calls “derivative intuition.” Here the knowing subject is dependent on something not created by that subject, on its announcing itself, on its affecting the subject. Thus Kant continues: “This again is only possible, to man at least,¹⁴ insofar as the mind is affected in a certain way.” Such dependence on affection already indicates the relevant disunity between subject and object. This disunity is more specifically determined through Kant’s concept of sensation and of the role played by sensations in human knowing: “The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is sensation.” As mere effects, mere modifications of the subject’s receptivity, sensations cannot be regarded as corresponding to anything in the object itself. What the object gives, the effects which it produces in the mind, does not coincide with the object as it is in itself; indeed the breach in the presence of subject to

object is so radical that even the assertion of it is rendered problematic. This radical separation between the object (the thing-in-itself) and what is given on the side of the subject (sensation) constitutes the *first* of the forms of disunity, a *disunity of subject and object*.

To an intuition thus dependent on affection and thus separated from its object the inner nature of that object is not given. To such intuition is not given the substance of the thing, i.e., the inner essence which would make the thing what it, in its singularity, is. To human intuition is not given the thing in its singular intelligibility.¹⁵ Rather, in place of the thing in its singular unity, there is given to human intuition only sensations, which not only are remote from the thing-in-itself but also, since they “occur in the mind separately and singly” (A 120), constitute a radically dispersed manifold. Sensations constitute only the “matter” of appearances; they are devoid of form, utterly fragmentary, utterly lacking wholeness and unity (cf. B 129–30; A 99). This *disunity of intuition* is the *second* of the forms of disunity. It is a disunity which shatters the full presence of divine intuition, leaving the object withdrawn, absent, and in its stead only scattered fragments. Here the need is obtrusive: the need for the object to be *gathered into presence*.

Because of its fragmentary character, its radical dispersal, its indeterminacy, human intuition requires thought as a means. Such intuition needs thought in order to be supplied with that determinacy which it itself lacks, in order thus to be raised to the level of a knowing; it needs thought in order for the object to be gathered into presence. In turn, the distinctive character of human thought derives from the peculiar directedness which it has to human intuition, to serving the need of human intuition. Specifically, human thought has the character of a determining; it is an establishing of determinacy in something pregiven to it, namely the indeterminate manifold of derivative intuition. Human thought is a positing *relative to* a “given”—not, as in the case of divine thought, a positing of the object itself.¹⁶ At every level it is subject to a sensible condition. It is a positing which is thus dependent, partial, which requires that a content be supplied to it from elsewhere, and which remains fragmentary without that content.¹⁷ This *disunity of thought* is the *third* of the forms of disunity.

Since human intuition is derivative, the object for such intuition is not simply posited through an act of positing thought fused into unity with the intuition itself. On the contrary, there is a separation between

receptivity and spontaneity, between the intuited and the determination posited by thought for the intuited. In other words, there are two stems of human knowledge. Its division into these two stems, i.e., the *disunity of intuition and thought*, constitutes the *fourth* of the forms of disunity.

My intention in thus elaborating the terms of the general distinction, in exhibiting the fourfold unity of divine knowing over against the fourfold disunity within human knowing, has been to sketch in its basic structure the hiatus separating human from divine knowing. However, this separation is not a matter of a mere static gap between two immovable levels—or, rather, it is such only as the abstract framework of a movement. The transformation of the elaborated distinction between divine knowing and human knowing into a concept of the movement of human knowing constitutes the decisive final step in the assembling of the (projectively) interpretive horizon.

This transformation is a matter of granting human knowing its intrinsic movement: Human knowing is not simply situated once and for all on the lower side of the gap but is rather the movement across the gap, the movement of closing the gap. In other words, the fourfold disunity, the fragmentation within human knowing, constitutes only the *beginnings* of human knowing. Such knowing is not, however, merely subject to, and totally determined by, these beginnings but rather is a movement *from* the beginnings. It is a movement of ascent toward the level of divine knowing, a movement of self-perfecting. More precisely, it is a movement of gathering the fragmentary beginnings into unity, a movement of gathering through which the fourfold disunity of the beginnings would be repaired, a movement by which the object, gathered into its unity of presence, would be gathered into presence to the subject. It is a movement through which the initially dispersed, disunited, fragmentary, would be gathered up into a unity akin to that of divine knowing. Human knowing as a movement of gathering, is a movement toward re-creating out of the fragmentary beginnings of human knowing a unity akin to that of divine knowing.

The horizon for the projective interpretation is thus assembled: It is constituted by this complex concept of gathering—gathering of fragmentary beginnings into unity akin to that of divine knowing, gathering of object (and ultimately of self) into presence. Yet this gathering, in its highest aspirations, coincides with metaphysics itself. For critique it is accordingly a matter of carefully attending to the limit of the gathering

ascent of human knowing, of rigorously establishing that point at which, in dramatic terms, the bond of human knowing to its fragmentary beginnings reasserts itself, threatening aspiration with tragedy and diverting philosophy into sophistry. The *Critique of Pure Reason* would determine this limit and, insofar as possible, provide means by which human knowing might be restrained within it.

3. MODES OF GATHERING

The horizon thus assembled is to serve for the projective interpretation of a text, the Transcendental Dialectic, which is itself part of a larger text, the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is thus a text which has in the strongest and most literal sense its context. In order to prepare for the interpretation, this context needs, then, to be assimilated to the horizon—that is, the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic need to be referred to the issue of gathering. They need to be rendered (though only in a global, preparatory way) as presenting various *modes of gathering*.

The basic issue in the Transcendental Aesthetic is, as the title indicates, sensibility or intuition considered in reference to its *a priori* elements. The issue is *a priori* sensibility, i.e., pure intuition (A 21/B 35–6). How does pure intuition constitute a mode of gathering?

Within the context of the beginnings as constituted by the fourfold fragmentation, sensation may be designated as the *utter* beginning of human knowing both in the sense that the dependence of human knowing on sensation is at the root of all its forms of fragmentation and in the sense that sensation provides the beginning element of which human knowing is in a certain respect only a development. At the level of this beginning element there is utter disconnection, utter dispersal, utter lack of form, sheer content (cf. A 99; A 120; B 129–30). But this level, sensation, is only the beginning; it is not yet a knowing, not yet even intuition in the genuine sense. Rather, intuition and the knowing built upon it require a movement away from this beginning—that is, intuition takes place as a surpassing of this beginning level, as an informing of the sheer content, as bringing it under form. This informing, this provision of form, takes place, at the most elemental level, through *pure intuition*. Pure intuition serves to *gather* the dispersed manifold of sensations. As a constitutive moment within empirical

intuition, it serves to gather the sheer “given” into the pure forms of space and time, forms which are so “essentially unitary” that, in contrast to the objects of empirical intuition, they admit manifoldness only by limitation (cf. esp. A 25/B 39; A 32/B 47–8). Pure intuition is a mode of gathering; it is the first mode of gathering, since within the structure of the gathering as a whole it is presupposed by all further modes.

In what way does this gathering serve to repair the disunity that constitutes the beginnings of human knowing? Just how does it serve to gather in unity what is fragmented? Which specific forms of fragmentation does it serve to repair? Clearly the disunity repaired is not one involving thought, neither that of thought itself nor that of thought and intuition, for the gathering in pure intuition occurs at a level at which thought is not yet installed, at the level where the matter for thought is first constituted.¹⁸ Also, there is at this level no repairing of the disunity of subject and object but, at most, only remote preparations for such. The disunity that does get repaired through pure intuition is that of intuition itself (the second of the four forms). That utter fragmentation, so radical that even the title “intuition” is not yet appropriate, is surpassed through the gathering in pure intuition; what was utterly fragmented is gathered into unity, granted wholeness. In the case of *original* intuition such a gathering would of course not be necessary, for the very fragmentation thus repaired is lacking; it is in this connection that one should understand Kant’s insistence that divine knowing does not involve any pure intuition: “We are careful to remove the conditions of time and space from his intuition” (B 71).

In the concept of pure intuition there is a peculiarity which needs to be noted. Because of its character *as intuition*, pure intuition is such that something is given to it. Yet, because of its character *as pure*, what is given to such intuition must be such as to originate, not from the side of the object, but rather from the subject itself. Thus, in pure intuition the subject gives something (a form) to itself—that is, what is given (intuited in pure intuition) is *posited* within that very intuition, in unity with it. In other words, the structure of pure intuition is the same as that of original intuition; in both cases there is unity of intuiting and positing.¹⁹ The difference is that pure intuition brings forth only the formal constituents of the appearing object (space and time as the forms of appearances) whereas original intuition brings forth the object

as a whole, is its sole origin. Thus, with pure intuition there is inscribed at the core of human intuition an image of original (divine) intuition. Within pure intuition itself, considered in abstraction from its role in empirical intuition and thus in knowing as a whole, all forms of fragmentation would be abolished and not just repaired; the gathering would be absolute (if I may for strategic purposes retain this contradiction). But, this image of original intuition is always inserted into the total structure of empirical intuition—indeed in such a way that its gathering power is carried over in limited form to the whole of empirical intuition (and the contradiction thereby decomposed).

At the level of the Transcendental Analytic or, more generally, at the level of thought there are several different modes of gathering. The distinction between them is rooted in a threefold distinction that emerges from Kant's initial delimitation of the concept of transcendental logic (cf. A 50/B 74–A 57/B 82): the distinction between *logical thought*, which, as in syllogistic reasoning, abstracts from all content so as to deal only with the form of knowledge; *empirical thought*, which deals with empirical content, as in ordinary empirical judgments; and *pure thought*, which involves a content that is pure, i.e., nonempirical. The modes of gathering corresponding to these types of thought need to be considered.

Kant avers that “we constantly have need of inference” (A 303/B 359). What is accomplished by means of inference? What need is satisfied thereby? One does not, strictly speaking, extend his knowledge of things, for inference (of the deductive kind at issue here) is purely formal. According to Kant, inference serves rather to establish connections between items of knowledge already in one's possession, that is, to give *formal unity* to knowledge, as, for example, when a proposition is brought under certain further conditions by means of a syllogism. Kant says that “in inference reason endeavors to reduce the varied and manifold knowledge obtained through the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions) and thereby to achieve in it the highest possible unity” (A 305/B 361). Thus, in logical thought items of knowledge already constituted, i.e., judgments, are gathered into formal unity. Logical thought is a mode of gathering.

This need for inference, the need for the gathering in logical thought, is rooted in the fragmentary beginnings to which human knowing is tied. In human thought there is a fundamental disunity, a lack of

wholeness, of self-sufficiency, in the sense that such thought does not include its correlative intuition in unity with itself. Rather, it depends on an independent, essentially detached faculty of intuition which provides its content. Such thought takes the form of a *determining* of this content. Yet, a content can be determined in various regards; for example, one and the same thing can be determined as red, long, heavy, etc.; and so, *many* determinations arise. Instead of the single unified act of positing the object, as in divine knowing, there is a multiplicity of partial positings in which the object is determined *as* something, i.e., as having some definite character. Consequently, human thought is *dispersed* into a manifold of determinations. Because it is dispersed, there is need of that gathering which is accomplished in logical thought.

The gathering character of empirical thought is evident even at the level of mere conceptualization. In contrast to intuitions, concepts are never simply given but rather arise through the spontaneity of thought; whatever may be the source of their matter (content), that form by which they are specifically constituted as concepts is always made rather than given. Kant describes such form when he defines a concept as “a representation of that which is common to many objects.”²⁰ Correspondingly, the basic act of conceptualization by which the form originates is an act of bringing many under a one; in his *Logic* Kant calls this basic act “reflection” and indicates how in its full structure it engages two other acts, the subordinate acts of comparison and abstraction.²¹ In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant refers to the basic act not only as reflection (e.g., A 85/B 117) but also as function: “Whereas all intuitions, as sensible, rest on affections, concepts rest on functions. By ‘function’ I mean the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation” (A 86/B 93). This basic act is a gathering of many under a one.

The *significance* of the gathering character of empirical thought is more evident in Kant’s account of the way in which concepts are actually used in knowing things, namely, in empirical judgments of the kind that lie at the root of the need for logical thought, empirical judgments in which something is determined *as* having some definite character. The relevant significance is expressed when Kant writes: “Accordingly, all judgments are functions of unity among our representations; instead of an immediate representation, a *higher* representation, which comprises the immediate representation and various others, is used in knowing

the object, and thereby much possible knowledge is collected into one” (A 69/B 93–4). Why is such recourse to a higher representation required? Why is a generic representation, a concept, used in knowing the object? Because the immediate representation does not suffice for knowing the object. In other words, since intuition (the immediate representation) does not present that inner essence of the object that would render it genuinely intelligible, recourse must be had to concepts (higher representations) in which the object is made intelligible through unification with others under a one. The lack of a singular unifying essence is compensated for by gathering the object together with others under a generic unity; lack of full presence is compensated for by a gathering which, having recourse to concepts, indirectly makes present.

It is clear that the fragmentation which the gathering repairs in the case of empirical judgments is that of intuition. But there is something peculiar about this gathering: Empirical thought does not simply gather the relevant manifold into that unity which it lacks but instead gathers it into a higher unity. Why does the gathering take this form? Why does empirical thought not simply gather the manifold into the unity of the thing’s singular essence? Thought could gather the manifold in this direct way, into the singular essence, *only if* thought first of all *posited* that unity, since it is decisively not given to human knowing. But this is impossible: Thought cannot simply posit the singular essence of the object, for the object is so withdrawn from the subject that there is lacking entirely any ground that could render such positing objectively valid. Nevertheless, empirical thought must posit a unity for its gathering of the manifold, since none is given. But the unity which it posits is not that of a singular essence but rather a determination freed from intuition by conceptualization, a concept.²²

Just as logical thought (inference) takes over what has already been accomplished by empirical thought in order that it might be brought to a higher level of unity, so empirical thought presupposes the accomplishment of pure thought. Indeed, the Transcendental Logic takes pure thought as its principal theme (as the title indicates), and all developments concerning empirical thought or logical thought are ultimately for the sake of dealing with the problem of pure thought. Yet, the Transcendental Logic is divided into an Analytic and a Dialectic, and this division corresponds to a modalization of pure thought, its division into the modes of understanding and reason. Most of Kant’s initial

presentations of this distinction are formulated in terms of the (formal) logical employment of the two faculties; but such employment provides no more than a clue for developing the distinction between pure understanding and pure reason. Such fundamental distinctions are never ready-made such that at the outset one could simply formulate them once and for all; they have rather to be worked out through the inquiry itself from whatever initial opening is available, however inadequate that initial grasp might eventually prove to have been. In the case of the distinction between understanding and reason, the deepening of the distinction through the inquiry itself can be made especially evident by projecting the issue upon the (projectively) interpretive horizon; it is then possible to grasp the distinction in terms of a fundamental difference between two modes of gathering. But such a grasp cannot be had at the outset.

The mode of gathering that is principally at issue in the Transcendental Analytic is that linked to pure understanding. Kant elaborates this mode of gathering at successively more fundamental levels, corresponding roughly to the three middle chapters of the Analytic (Transcendental Deduction, Schematism, Principles). In this preparatory sketch I shall limit consideration to the first of these levels.

The principal elements of the relevant gathering are first laid out at that point, prior to the Transcendental Deduction, where Kant introduces the categories by following the clue provided by the logical table of judgments (A 76/B 102 – A 83/B 109). Since pure understanding involves no empirical content, it cannot be related to objects in terms of any such content; its relation to objects cannot, as with empirical understanding, consist in determining objects with respect to some definite empirical content. Its relation to objects must be a pure, nonempirical relation. In general, understanding can relate to objects only mediately, only through intuition (cf. A 19/B 33); and so, in particular, the pure relation of pure understanding to objects must be mediated by intuition. Thus, at the level at which the Transcendental Deduction begins, Kant presents the relation of pure understanding to objects as simply mediated by *pure* intuition; since the Transcendental Aesthetic has at this point already worked out the relation of objects to pure intuition (pure intuition constituting the form of appearances), the central issue becomes that of the relation between pure understanding and pure intuition.²³

How can understanding be related to pure intuition? It can relate to such intuition only by somehow applying its spontaneity to the material (content) provided by pure intuition—that is, by providing concepts under which this material can be unified. Thus Kant says that the manifold of pure intuition provides the “material for the concepts of pure understanding” (A 77/B 102). This manifold must, he continues, “be gone through in a certain way, taken up, and connected.” He adds: “This act I name synthesis”—“the act of putting different representations together and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge.” Pure understanding provides the concepts for the synthesis of pure intuition, the concepts under which its manifold is gathered into unity. These concepts Kant calls pure concepts of the understanding or categories.

Thus, in that mode of gathering that is linked to pure understanding, the manifold to be gathered is that of pure intuition and the form of unity into which this manifold is to be gathered is that which is thought in the pure concepts of understanding. However, pure understanding does not itself gather the manifold into unity. What actually accomplishes the gathering is, not understanding, but imagination: “Synthesis in general . . . is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no knowledge whatsoever but of which we are scarcely ever conscious” (A 78/B 103). Thus, the gathering involves three elements: pure intuition, pure understanding, and imagination. It is clear that imagination, bringing the manifold of pure intuition under the concepts of pure understanding, is the mediating element.

Within the Transcendental Deduction the elaboration of the structure of this gathering proceeds in relation to the general task of the Deduction. This task itself comes, in the course of the Deduction, to be grasped at progressively more fundamental levels. According to the initial formulation the Deduction has as its task to settle a certain question of right (*quid juris*), namely, that with which certain concepts are applied to objects. Regarding which kind of concepts does there arise such a question of right? It arises with regard to those concepts which are not derived from the things of experience, i.e., those concepts which are nonempirical but which (it is claimed) apply to these things in other than a purely formal way. In other words, the task of the Deduction is to show how *pure* concepts can have objective validity. In

Kant's words, the Deduction is "the explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate *a priori* to objects" (A 85/B 117).

Kant delimits the relevant conditions of possibility: There are only two ways in which a concept and an object can have a necessary relation to one another: Either the object must make the concept possible or the concept must make the object possible. In the first case the relation is empirical, the concept an empirical, not a pure, concept. The case of pure concepts must fall under the other alternative: a pure concept, if it is to have necessary relation to an object, must be such as to make the object possible. Thus, the question becomes more specific: How do pure concepts make possible the object of experience? Kant excludes one alternative, implicitly bringing into play the distinction between human knowing and divine knowing: Pure concepts do not make the object possible in the sense of producing it, bringing it into existence. Rather, they make the object possible *as an object*, that is, they make possible its very character as an object, that is, they constitute its objectivity:

The question now arises whether *a priori* concepts do not also serve as antecedent conditions under which alone anything can be, if not intuited, yet thought as object in general. In that case all empirical knowledge of objects would necessarily conform to such concepts, because only as thus presupposing them is anything possible as *object of experience*. Now all experience does indeed contain, in addition to the intuition of the senses through which something is given, a *concept* of an object as being thereby given, that is to say, as appearing (A 93/B 125–6).

Pure concepts make it possible for appearances to be experienced not merely as appearances but as appearances *of something, of an object*. It is in this connection that Kant describes the categories as "concepts of an object in general" (B 128; cf. B 146).

Two different descriptions of the categories have emerged. On the one hand, Kant describes them as concepts of synthesis, i.e., as concepts which define a unifying unity, a unity for a gathering. On the other hand, he calls them concepts of an object in general, i.e., concepts through which appearances are constituted as appearing objects. It needs finally to be seen how these two descriptions converge in the issue of the transcendental object.

This issue originates in the further determination of the way in which pure concepts make possible the object of experience. Kant proposes to

clarify what is meant by object or, specifically, by “an object of representations”:

We have stated above that appearances are themselves nothing but sensible representations, which, as such and in themselves, must not be taken as objects capable of existing outside our power of representation. What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge? (A 104).

This says: Appearances alone, the material supplied by intuition, do not constitute objects; they lack objectivity, lack that character of standing over against knowledge. The problem is then: How can there be objects? How is an object constituted? Or, in a more detached formulation: What is that “objectifying function” by which appearances are referred to an object, that is, constituted as appearances *of* an object?

One might suppose this objectifying function to be merely a matter of referral, i.e., merely a connecting of appearances with the object. In the strict sense, however, such a connecting would be impossible, for the object is not given, is “nothing to us” (A 105). It is not as though appearances and object were equally present to intuition such that one could simply be referred to the other; it is not as though the subject would need only to supply the connection between the two terms.

What, then, must be the character of the objectifying function and of the object to which appearances are attached through this function? Kant continues: “It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general = x , since outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it” (A 104). Here there are two essential indications. (1) Since the object is not given, it can enter into the structure of experience only as *something thought*, as something posited by thought. But (2) as what is it posited? As having what specific determination? The point is that it is not posited as having any specific determinations, not posited as a specifically determined object; for there are no specific objective determinations given, such that it could then be posited as corresponding to them. Rather, it is thought only as something in general = x ; it is posited as object in general, posited only as having those determinations which anything must have in order to be an object (in the most general sense).

The object thus posited may be identified as the *transcendental object*:²⁴

But these appearances are not things in themselves; they are only representations, which in turn have their object—an object which cannot itself be intuited by us and which may, therefore, be named the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = x. The pure concept of this transcendental object (which actually throughout all our knowledge is always one and the same = x) is what can alone confer upon all our empirical concepts in general relation to an object, that is, objective reality (A 109).

In short, since the object is not given, it can only be posited as object in general, as transcendental object, to which, then, appearances would somehow be referred. Thus regarded, the objectifying function would involve two components: the positing of the transcendental object and the referral of appearances to this object.

The transcendental object is, then, simply the totality of those determinations that belong to any object whatsoever, that define the very sense “object.” The crucial point is that these determinations are *forms of unity*; this is why Kant can write of “that unity which constitutes the concept of an object” (A 105). More specifically, these determinations are precisely those forms of unity represented by the categories; thus Kant writes that the categories “are fundamental concepts by which we think objects in general for appearances” (A 111). Pure thought (more precisely, pure understanding) is the thinking *of* the transcendental object, the thinking in which it is posited. Or, to cast the issue in terms of form/content, pure understanding represents the objective form for the matter of appearances; it posits the form under which that matter must be brought, by which it must be informed, in order to be objectified and thus constituted as appearance of an object.

These terms especially serve to clarify the other component of the objectifying function, the referral of appearances to the transcendental object. For, in a sense, it is not a referral at all but rather an informing, a unifying, of appearances:

Now we find that our thought of the relation of all knowledge to its object carries with it an element of necessity; the object is viewed as that which prevents our modes of knowledge from being haphazard or arbitrary and which determines them *a priori* in some definite fashion. For

insofar as they are to relate to an object, they must necessarily agree with one another, that is, must possess that unity which constitutes the concept of an object (A 104–5).

For appearances to be related to an object requires that they possess that unity, those forms of unity, that is thought in the transcendental object (or, correlatively, in the categories). In other words, appearances can be objectified only by being made to embody that unity, only through the synthesis of the manifold: “It is only when we have thus produced synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition that we are in a position to say that we know the object” (A 105). Even more directly: “an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united” (B 137). The objectification of appearances, the constitution of appearances as appearing object, the bringing forth of the object into presence, takes place as the gathering of the manifold of appearances into the forms of unity defined by the concepts of pure understanding. But this gathering of the manifold of appearances is, according to the Transcendental Deduction, made possible—even, in effect, accomplished—by that gathering of *pure* intuition into these forms of unity. The entire issue of objectivity is brought back to the issue of the fundamental gathering.

This fundamental gathering, in its extension through pure intuition to the empirical manifold of which pure intuition is the form, serves to repair all those forms of disunity that constitute the beginnings of human knowing. First of all, through this gathering the intuited is gathered into the form of an object, constituted as an object. Thus, in place of that object in itself from which the finite subject is radically separated, this gathering constitutes an object correlative to finite subjectivity. Gathering the object to the subject, it repairs the disunity of subject and object. Yet, it repairs it only within limits; the gathering does not establish such absolute, self-enclosed unity as that which defines divine knowing but only a unity in which articulation is essentially preserved as trace of the gathering. Second, by this provision of an object *for* what is intuited the gathering also repairs the disunity of intuition, i.e., it brings the intuited appearances under the form (unity) of objectivity, brings the object forth into presence. Third, it grants a wholeness to thought. Within the structure of the gathering, thought is in a certain regard freed of dependence on empirical content, that is,

thought accomplishes a genuine positing of the object, namely, of the transcendental object. To this extent, pure thought is an image of divine thought (just as pure intuition proved to be an image of original intuition). However, it is *only* an image of divine thought, for it is a positing which is subject to a sensible (though not an empirical) condition, the condition expressed in the schematism or, more generally, in its dependence on the power of imagination actually to accomplish the synthesis which it prescribes. Finally, this subjection of thought to a condition indicates that the gathering serves to repair the disunity of intuition and thought. Thought is not only dependent on imagination but, by virtue of that very dependence, is gathered together with intuition. Imagination, gathering the object into presence to the subject, binding intuition and thought together in a unity akin to that of intellectual intuition, nevertheless sets apart from the divine that unity of human knowing thus constituted, sets it apart by inscribing in it articulation (or, more precisely, the modes of articulation as such, the transcendental schemata).