Imagining metaphors: cognitive representation in interpretation and understanding

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II Imagination

On Kant's theory of imagination and understanding.

Raison, raison, ô fantôme abstrait de la veille, déjà je t'avais chassée de mes rêves, me voici au point où ils vont se confondre avec les réalités d'apparence: il n'y a plus de place ici que pour moi [...] Fausse dualité de l'homme, laisse-moi un peu rêver à ton mensonge.
Louis Aragon 121

1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the role of imagination in the interpretation of poetic imagery and metaphorical utterances. One question that was considered was how this process of interpretation differs from other types of interpretation. We saw that metaphorical interpretation of poetic text requires the interpreter to actively create novel interpretations of a text in the reflection on its interpretational context. In this reflection 'targets', that is, what the text is about, for the text are considered. Metaphorical interpretation then involves the imaginary construction of an interpretational context.

Traditional semantics, as we saw, postulates a division of language into one part that is interpreted through emotional and imaginative representations, and another part that is interpreted on account of its assertoric force and its propositional content. Generally, semanticists consider the second type of language use as their subject. In our discussion of metaphors, we could find no strict division between the domain of metaphorical and non-metaphorical

121 'Préface à une mythologie moderne' in Le paysan de Paris.
language. There are, no limits to what may be interpreted metaphorically but
the possibility of imagining a suitable metaphorical target for an utterance.
Neither did we find any limits to literal interpretation: any metaphor may
simply be considered a literal statement, be it a falsehood, truism or
unintelligible utterance. Rather the metaphorical interpretation of an utterance
is the result of an interpretational attitude. The use of tropical metaphor, such
as a patent falsehood of the form 'X is a Y', is one conventional means to
provoke such an attitude from the interpreter.
The challenge that awaits us now, is to explain what the relation is between
metaphorical interpretation and literal understanding. Frege points out that the
difference between an utterance with assertoric force and other expressions lies
in the propositional content of the former. The propositional content is
something like an 'objective' content of language, since, although it is not an
object itself, it cannot be an entirely subjective representation of an object
either.\footnote{Cf. Frege[1977a]}

With this reasoning, some type of objectivity is assigned to the meaning of the
assertoric utterance, in opposition to the subjective nature of for instance,
poetic meanings. In this way, Frege's semantics appeals to the distinction
between 'objective' and 'subjective' representations. We observed, however,
that those utterances that give rise to 'objective' representations that are either
truthful or not, cannot rigidly be demarcated from those that lead to subjective
representations that have nothing to do with truth in the same sense. We could
however distinguish attitudes in interpretation, resulting in metaphorical or
literal readings of a text. Metaphorical interpretation involved, at least in the
more creative interpretations, the construction of a (possibly imaginary)
context to which the text could be related. A few features of the latter attitude
of interpretation could be characterized. It involves imaginative reflection and
a willingness to search for and construct an interpretation. As such,
metaphorical interpretation seems to result from an intentional act of
interpretation. Further we saw that the possible contexts of interpretation could
(but need not) diverge to great extent. Hence, the words that are interpreted
allow for rather flexible understandings, and even a single interpreter may
exploit such flexibility in a range of subsiding interpretations. As the property
of metaphoricity cannot be identified as an exclusive property that is shared by
all metaphorically interpreted texts or utterances, other than that these allow
for such an interpretation, I now turn to the working of interpretation itself,
and more specifically, to the cognitive processes that make it possible. In the
present chapter and in the following one, I explore several accounts of
cognition and cognizing, and discuss the possible light these theories shed on
the differences between literal and metaphorical interpretation. The question at stake, then, is whether the difference between conceptual understanding and metaphorical interpretation is motivated by a different use of cognitive faculties.

In the previous discussion it was emphasized that we lack a theory of imagination, if imagination is the faculty put to work in metaphorical interpretation. We saw that Ricoeur claims that metaphorical interpretation differs principally from understanding since it is based on the creative function of imagination. His theory of imagination, however, was found to be incomplete, since it does not present an explicit comparison of this functioning of imagination with the role of either perception or imagination in conceptual understanding. His understanding of imagination explicitly refers to Kant's concept of productive imagination, but, as we saw, also exhibits parallels to Kant's analysis of the reproductive imagination. In this chapter, I combine the search for a theory of imagination with a more thorough investigation of Kant's theory of imagination, and then reinvestigate whether any claims on the difference between metaphorical and literal interpretations follow. As I proceed in this discussion, the theory of imagination and of understanding as derived from the works of Kant is abandoned. Nevertheless it is clear that the outlined understanding of interpretation proposed in the final sections of this chapter is based upon the insights discussed here.
2 Imagination and judgement: the Critical Philosophy

For Kant, the faculty of imagination performs a different role in the two types of judgement he distinguishes. The first type consists of what is called determinant judgements, judgements that concern objective representations. The second type consists of reflective judgements, that is, judgements that concern the subjective representation of some perceived object. The role of the imagination in either is different, although prominent in both.

In determinant judgements, imagination is identified as the faculty that brings 'appearances' to concepts, and hence enables empirical knowledge. These appearances may stem from sense-impressions in perception, or from inner awareness, such as dreaming or hallucinating. The differences between these two types of appearances are not apparent in imagination itself, but depend, rather, on formal properties that are recognized in the conceptual organization of the representations. Imagination, here, is the faculty that produces and reproduces intuitive presentations, i.e. representations derived from the senses. The representation in imagination allow an intuitive presentations to be recognized under a concept; that is, that to be recognized as an instance of a given law. Empirical concepts are recognized through the analogy of a present intuitive presentation to formerly processed intuitive presentations, and hence the presentation is determined to be of a certain kind. This reproductive function of imagination lies at the heart of Kant's epistemology, for without it, empirical knowledge would be unattainable.

In reflective judgements, imagination plays a different role. Here, it does not only present a singular intuitive presentation, but, because of the lack of its immediate determination, imagination also generates other intuitive presentations to which the singular presentation can be compared, and may possibly result in a new, 'ad hoc law', a mock universal, which helps cognizing the representation without objectively determining it. Thus, the difference between the two functions of imagination is sometimes referred to as that between the reproductive and the productive imagination. The latter, productive imagination is described only in the Critique of Judgement, and its employment, as we will see, is restricted by Kant to specific instances of judgement.123

123 The quotations from the Critique of Judgement (abbreviated as CoJ) are derived from the translation by Meredith, unless explicitly indicated otherwise. The quotations from Critique of Pure Reason are from Kemp Smith's translation.
The difference between the two types of judgements can be characterized as a difference between two ways of determining a representation: in determinant judgements, a general law prompts the recognition of a singular representation; in reflective judgement, the singular representation leads to the tentative creation of a would-be general law.

Kant's understanding of imagination as the faculty that mediates between thought and intuition gives rise to several problems, which we shall address below. The basis for his understanding of the role of imagination is given in the transcendental argumentation in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. With it, Kant wants to explain how it can be that we have knowledge through perception, that is, empirical knowledge, and as such it serves as an answer to the sceptic argument that we are never certain whether our sense-impressions (and hence our knowledge) are not the result of hallucinatory delusions. He develops the transcendental argument, the determination of the necessary conditions under which we may come to possess knowledge of the world, without presupposing either form or substance in the world. Thus, in the transcendental philosophy knowledge of the world is the result of the *a priori* conditions of our faculties of intuition and thought.124

Concepts are divisible in empirical concepts, which are based on the combination of perceptual representations, and pure concepts, which are in themselves 'empty logical forms' of a highly abstract nature. The first are accidental, based on experience. The second are necessary, and both their form and their existence are deduced in the transcendental philosophy. The first problem that Kant has to deal with, is the connection between experience and pure concepts. This connection is first analyzed in the Transcendental Deduction, and later developed in the Schematism Chapter, which are discussed in section 3. We consider here the problems that arise from the assumption of representations of intuitive content on the one hand, and of *a priori* concepts that organize such content on the other. The main problem, we shall see, is that intuitive presentations have to be accessible as intuitive presentations, so that they may be combined with other representations, but that they cannot be cognizable without inherent conceptual structure. Thus, in order to recognize the same dog, I have to keep the first manifold containing the dog 'alive' in order to form a concept of that dog, but I cannot recognize it, yet, as a perception of that dog, since the concept is not yet available. Thus, some representation seems to be presupposed as an intermediary between the conceptual representation and the initial act of perception.

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124 The transcendental argument, under this description, does not present any proof of an external world, but merely shows how it is possible that we can reason on the basis of its existence. Cf. Stroud[1982]
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In this discussion, most of the time, I shall ignore the possibility of concepts that do not require experiential content, that is, I do not look into the status of what Kant calls the pure concepts, until in section 5.2 I consider a different understanding of these concepts. In the Schematism Chapter pure concepts are called empty logical forms, as long as they are not brought into connection with intuitive content. Thus, for example, some mathematical ideas become problematic, since it is disputable what their intuitive content is. Although it is an important, and relevant problem, in this chapter I am primarily concerned with the work of imagination in understanding, and hence, along with Kant's analysis of imagination in the connection between concepts and experiential content.

Another restriction in the discussion is that I am not concerned with Kant's proof of the transcendental form of concepts. The following discussion is not intended to defend an interpretation of Kant's intentions, nor does it claim any exegetical value for whom wants to understand Kant's writings better. Rather the discussion of Kant's works is used as a stepping-stone to develop an understanding of imagination that might be useful in the analysis of metaphorical interpretation. I summarize how the first Critique might be relevant in such a way in section 3.4; a further speculation on the functioning of imagination based on the third Critique is elaborated in section 5.

An important issue that Kant has to deal with in his epistemology is how the individual subject can conceptually determine novel experience. The first Critique presents a model of the recognition of intuitive presentations under a concept. It takes the perspective of defining the possibility of objective knowledge, and thus determines the necessary form of human cognition; the efforts of the individual in coping with the world are not considered. The second problem Kant has to deal with, then, is the relation between individual cognizing and the universal character of knowledge.

It is only in the Critique of Judgement that Kant considers the act of judging as resulting from a separate faculty of judgement. Here, he presents a model for judgements that are not determinant in the sense of applying the rules laid out by a priori laws; instead these judgements arise from the subject's reflective powers in imagination. Kant distinguishes two instances in which imaginative reflection gives rise to subjective judgement: aesthetic judgements and teleological judgements. Imagination acquires a different function in these judgements. In imaginative reflection a given intuitive presentation is actively

125 Some interpreters consider the requirement of intuitive presentation in a way that reminds of Russell's distinction between knowledge through description and knowledge through acquaintance (Russell[1905]). For instance, Laughaan Chipman points out that for most of us the empirical concept of 'bone-marrow' has itself no perceptual grounding, and is therefore problematic (Chipman[1982]).
compared to other representations, as the subject attempts to tentatively produce a concept within the imagination. Imagination here is not reproductive, but productive: it is both free and creative. The role of imagination and subjectivity in judgement, as they are described in the third Critique, are discussed in section 4 below.

The role of imagination in reflective judgement has been taken to indicate a greater importance of imagination for conceptual determination than the first Critique attributes to it, and hence, as an indication that productivity in imagination is not necessarily restricted to the two types of judgement that Kant singles out. Since we were driven toward a theory of imagination mainly because traditional semantics situates metaphors and their meaning in the realm of the imaginative, the suggestion of imagination’s possible relevance for conceptual understanding or literal interpretation could provide us with an insight in the relation between the two. I explore the suggested interpretation of Kant’s theory of imagination in section 4.5, as well as its consequences for objectivity in judgement. Finally I turn to the relevance of the faculty of imagination as it emerges from the discussion for our investigation, and outline a possible understanding of the function of imagination in both literal and metaphorical interpretation in section 5.

\textsuperscript{126} Cf. e.g. Mark Johnson[1987] pp 147; or Sarah Gibbons[1994] esp. pp 82. The latter account is discussed in chapter 2, section 4.5, and the former in section 3.1 above.
3 Kant's theory of imagination in the first Critique

3.1 The synthesis of imagination: The Transcendental Deduction-A

In the Critique of Pure Reason imagination is described as 'one of the fundamental faculties of the human soul' (A124). It is however only in a very specific, and technical understanding that we may see it as such a fundamental faculty. The faculty of imagination mediates between intuition (the faculty that provides us with impressions from the senses) and thought (Verstand), by presenting the sense-impressions in an apprehensible form to the conceptual mind. Imagination is thus seen as the internalized presentation of sensory information, in such a form that it is apprehensible to a conceptual mind. It is called the reproductive imagination. Two chapters in the first Critique are specifically concerned with the role of imagination. They are the Transcendental Deduction and the Schematism chapters. The first addresses the reproductive function of imagination, the second addresses its schematizing function.

In the Transcendental Deduction, two questions are at stake. The first is how sense-impressions acquire the form of conceptual knowledge; the second is how that knowledge can be found to be true and part of a whole of organized knowledge such as science presents us with.\(^{127}\) Kant addresses both issues by deducing the conditions under which the human mind may conceptualize any perceptual information. That is, he deduces the nature of the mind, such that the organized whole of scientific knowledge may be the result of its working, i.e. he deduces the pure transcendental form of knowledge. There are two versions of the first Critique; the first, A-version of the first Critique offers an importantly different account of imagination in the Deduction than the B-version. I will discuss both accounts and their differences, as well as the development in thought that can be read from them. Then I will turn to the schematic function of the imagination, as described in the Schematism Chapter. After that I will turn to the Critique of Judgement, in which an altogether different function is assigned to imagination.

The goal of this discussion is to show how the Kantian dualism between faculties of thought (Verstand) and imagination leads to a problem with respect to issues of representation in the first Critique, since, according to the Transcendental Deduction, only strictly categorized 'objective' representations can belong to a conscious mind. I shall argue that in the third Critique, where

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\(^{127}\) That is: such as for instance Newtonian physics presented at Kant's time.
the function of imagination is restated, Kant seems to acknowledge those problems, but does not provide an altogether satisfactory solution. In the A-Deduction, Kant begins his deduction of the transcendental form proper to the mind with the basic level of experience: the impressions of the senses. From there he deduces the necessary conditions the human mind must fulfil, in order to arrive from purely sensory appearances at the level of empirical knowledge. There are three basic synthetic acts that must be performed on the sense-impressions in order to arrive at a conceptual understanding of experience:

1 Apprehension in intuition
First the impressions from the senses must be conceived as a related whole: we relate all the single momentary representations. That is, we create a synthesis of all the impressions we have at one moment, and so arrive at an apprehensible manifold.

2 Reproduction in imagination
Second we have continuity in our perceptions; that means that in order to connect one manifold to another, we must be able to reproduce former impressions, in order to relate them to present impressions. Thus we perform a synthetic act of reproduction; this act takes place in the imagination.

3 Recognition in a concept in apperception
Third, we form a structured unity of representations. Therefore we need to recognize them as of a certain kind, synthesizing different temporal representations in a concept. Thus, in the synthesis of apprehension different manifolds are brought together under a concept.

The synthetic acts on the impressions are guided by a priori principles, that is, principles inherent to the human mind. In the second section of the A-Deduction Kant explains of each synthetic act what its pure transcendental form is: that is, he determines the properties of the mind that must precede any knowledge from experience. The pure transcendental synthesis of the imagination, according to the deductive argument, is the 'productive imagination'. The necessary function of the imagination is to reproduce former representations, so that they can be

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128 The use of the term here refers to the transcendental form of imagination: it produces time to the mind. The 'productive imagination' is defined differently in the Critique of Judgement, where it indicates the production of a subjective law. See section 4.3 below.
connected to our present representations. A necessary condition of our form of thought, i.e. a transcendental property of cognition, must then be that we have the a priori capability of reproducing past representations, before we have any representations. The pure transcendental imagination then must produce time to our understanding, that is, the same form devoid of any empirical content. By virtue of this act the synthetic, productive imagination is 'the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience' (A118).

Where the unity of representations provided by the reproductive imagination is time, the unity of apperception is given by the synthesis of representations in a subject. This unity of the manifold within the subject is synthetic, and thus presupposes a possibility of combining the appearances in the manifold 'in one knowledge' (A118). The pure synthetic unity of apperception then must be the act of relating all representations to one consciousness; for 'intuitions are nothing to us, and do not in the least concern us if they cannot be taken up into consciousness' (A116).

This synthesis of manifolds is subject to rules, for if not, experience would be a mere matter of 'accidental collocations' (A121), and would not give rise to any knowledge. Further these rules must be grounded in the pure synthesis of apperception, otherwise it would be 'entirely accidental that appearances should fit into a connected whole of human knowledge' (A121). The subjective consciousness, that is the formal unity of the synthesis of apperception, applies the rules to structure the appearances. These rules are the categories, i.e. the rules by which the subjective consciousness determines the form of appearances. Through this recognition concepts are brought to experience, thus they 'render possible the formal unity of experience, and therewith objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge' (A125).

3.2 The relation between imagination and apperception in the A-Deduction

In A 102 Kant writes that the pure transcendental syntheses of reproduction and of apperception are 'inseparably bound up to one another'. The unity of experiential knowledge in one mind presupposes a possible structuring of all representations, and that is just what the productive imagination provides: the temporal ordering. Thus the transcendental unity of the apperception presupposes the productive imagination.

The logical presupposition of the transcendental synthesis of imagination can been understood in different ways, as is reflected by the many interpretations.
of it. One reading of the description of the syntheses is that it provides a description of stages of conceptualization, starting with sensory impressions, and leading to a conscious conceptual determination of the intuitive presentation. In view however of the second version of the Deduction, the distinction between these three synthetic acts is usually considered as a distinction between different aspects that are presupposed by a single spontaneous conceptual synthesis, and not as a description of chronological stages of conceptualization. Upon the first interpretation then, the relation of presupposition between the second and the third synthesis is also understood as a temporal ordering of the actual synthetic acts. Such an interpretation then leads to the claim that the imaginative synthesis is an independent stage in the process of conceptualizing experience. More concretely we can put it this way: the mind must represent the temporally structured flow of manifolds, before the different synthesis of conceptually associating the appearances is performed.

Upon such an interpretation, the synthesis of imagination is not only logically presupposed by the conceptualized representations, but, going by the differing formal conditions for the two syntheses, it also involves qualitatively different representations. The form of the appearances in reproductive imagination is determined only by our senses and by the single formal condition of imagination: time. Imagination subsequently presents these but temporally ordered appearances in the inner sense to the conceptual mind; however in the intermediary stage the synthetic representations in imagination have not yet acquired any status of objective conceptual determination. Thus, this reading implies the possibility of representations that are first of all inherently subjective, and secondly pre-conceptual.

Concepts are described as rules in the A-Deduction, and understanding is called the 'faculty of rules' (A126). When rules are objective, that is , insofar as they necessarily depend on the knowledge of the object, they are called laws. Empirical concepts then are the laws learned through experience, but are instances of the laws of understanding nevertheless, since 'they are only special determinations of still higher laws, and the highest of these, under which the others all stand, issue a priori from the understanding itself' (A126).

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129 For an overview see e.g. Makkreel[1990] He discusses at length the different positions on the relation between the different syntheses (while maintaining that the logical relation of presupposition does in no way imply the possibility of representations that are not recognized under a concept).

130 A brief discussion of the 'spontaneous synthetic act' described in the B-version, is given below.

131 E.g. Gibbons[1994]. Argumentations for a separate pre-conceptual synthesis of the imagination naturally focus on the A-Deduction. Gibbons however also cites passages in the B-Deduction that suggest at least an unclarity on this point on Kant's part. For a discussion, see section 4.5 below.
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The representations thus determined by understanding are of a different formal nature than the associations in imagination: their formal condition is not that they have been perceived at some time, but that they have been identified by one consciousness as being of the same kind as other representations of former intuitions. Hence, conceptualized representations are the result of a determinant judgement, performed in the synthesis of apperception.\footnote{This point is made in Gibbons[1994]. In her discussion of the A-Deduction Gibbons emphasizes the distinction between the synthetic unity of appearances and the conceptualized knowledge; the former belonging to imagination, the latter to understanding. The study uses Kant's understanding of imagination and reflective judgement in the \textit{Kritik der Urteilskraft} to reinterpret some passages in the \textit{Kritik der Reinen Vernunft}. In view of other passages of the first \textit{Critique}, the noted distinction takes a more subtle form than in the argument presented here. For instance when considering the schematic function of the categories, Kant claims that the synthetic unity produced in imagination is necessarily subjected to the transcendental form of the categories. The point to be made there, upon Gibbons' interpretation, is that these forms are produced in imagination, and thus establish priority of imagination over apperception. (Cf. the discussion in section 3.3).}

Since the aim was to describe how objective knowledge is possible, the possibility of maintaining any other than objective representations in his theory should be highly unwelcome, since it would provide the occasion to doubt whether a representation is indeed objective or simply a result of some arbitrary association of representations. The solution to this problem in the A-Deduction is twofold. First, all representations that result from the synthesis in imagination have to be conceptualized. In A 122 Kant says that the rule-based affinity of appearances is a necessary consequence of the synthesis of imagination. The second, much stronger argument against non-objective representations, is his claim that without the attribution of the synthesis of appearances to one mind, these would belong to some 'empirical consciousness', in a so-called 'state of separation' (A122). The latter state, of conscious experience without self-consciousness, Kant maintains is impossible, since we are always aware (or can become so at any point) that it is us that have a representation. Hence: 'The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them' (A123). Thus the subjective unity of the apperception is a necessary condition for any conscious representation. Kant concludes that any representation necessarily fits the categories of the subjectively conscious mind, or else we would not be capable of being conscious of it. In this way the order and regularity of nature, and hence the objectivity of knowledge is introduced by the subject (A126). The objectivity of knowledge is secured by the pure synthesis of apperception, where the introduction of the subject's awareness of any representation equals its conceptualization. In other words: only objective knowledge can be maintained consciously by a subjective mind.
II Imagination: on Kant's theory of imagination and understanding

The attempt to finally bring all empirical content, be it derived from syntheses in imagination, intuition or apperception, under the systematic ordering of the transcendental categories is clear. For if Kant would, in this context, allow for subjective representations apart from the 'objectivized' conceptual knowledge, the objective grounds of human knowledge and science cannot be secured. The argumentation shows that the assumption of a separate synthesis in imagination is deemed problematic, and yet it is not dismissed at this point. In the line of reasoning of the A-Deduction, certainly when considered as an isolated passage, that is not hard to understand. On the one hand, imagination is appointed as the origin of the formal condition for empirical knowledge, i.e. time; on the other hand it should not interfere with objective knowledge. Thus, two conceptions of imagination seem to play a role here: the first is its important innovative role of mediator between senses and mind; the second is that of imagination as a delusive source of mistaken beliefs, a conception that indeed pervades the history of philosophy. To summarize the problem that is posed once more: on the one hand reproductive imagination must be capable to represent former manifolds in order to associate them to present manifolds and thus render time possible as produced as the transcendental form of knowledge; while on the other hand, the assumption of pre-conceptual, entirely subjective representations might give rise to a sceptic view of empirical knowledge. Possibly such considerations led to the second version of the Transcendental Deduction, in which the independent functioning of imagination is ruled out, in favour of the overall dominance of conceptual thought.

In the B-Deduction the order of deducing is reversed: it starts with the subjective mind, and works its way down from the 'intellectual synthesis' to the 'figurative synthesis'. Of course in this order it would be hard to leave any ground of synthetic, perceptual representations uncovered by the intellect; and indeed in this deduction the imagination becomes a 'function of the understanding' (B151). The original description of imagination as an intermediary between sense and thought is replaced by a description of imagination rendering a secondary, spontaneous synthesis, after the intellectual synthesis (compare apperception) has taken place.

Thus, in the second version of the Transcendental Deduction, the link between consciousness and self-consciousness is further emphasized. Since the transcendental form of all conscious knowledge is that its representations are

13 For an overview see for instance McMullin[1996] on the history of theories of imagination and philosophical (dis)approval; for a discussion of the historical innovative value of Kant's theory of imagination see Mörchen[1970]; and finally, for its innovative potential for philosophy in our time, see Strawson[1971].
related to one mind, there cannot be any conscious representation of (empirical) knowledge that is not related to the objectivizing, categorizing subject.

It is only in the Schematism Chapter, that Kant addresses the intermediary role of the imagination in detail, with respect to how the categories apply to appearances. He describes the form the imaginative mediation must take with regard to specific concepts, through the transcendent analysis of the formal properties of appearances in imagination, that allow them to be recognized as belonging under a concept. The status of this description is a subject of much discussion. Some interpretations insist on its being superfluous after the Deductions, and even that by it, the pure transcendental deduction is set into a dangerously psychologistic daylight. Others claim it is the place where the objective of the Deductions is finally realized, and where the relation between the two stems of knowledge is finally established.134

3.3 The Schematism Chapter: the intermediating imagination

In the Schematism Chapter Kant describes how the categories are brought to bear upon the intuitive presentations in the inner sense. He calls the procedure of application of pure concepts the 'schematism of pure understanding' (A140/B179), and the formal conditions of sensibility to which the employment of the concept is restricted the 'schema' of the concept. Schematizing is a crucial part in the process of empirical judging, since it connects the pure a priori concepts to intuition. Further 'the schema of sensible concepts [...] is a product and, as it were, a monogram of pure a priori imagination' (A142/B181). Thus concepts are applied to intuitive representations through the use of imagination.

The argumentation is as follows. Kant has analysed the transcendental form of the synthetic unity of manifolds in imagination. The pure form of all concepts has also been deduced in the previous chapters. He can now go on to deduce the formal conditions of sensibility insofar a concept of understanding may be applied to it. The goal of the Schematism Chapter is then to describe how the transcendental categories can be translated in transcendental forms of intuition, and thus, how the 'affinity', or the objective ground of all association of appearances mentioned in the Transcendental Deduction can be explained (A122) as a condition of sensibility itself.

As we saw in the previous section, the association of appearances in the manifold was performed by the faculty of imagination. Also, understanding, or

134 For an overview and discussion, see Allison[1983].
rather, the synthetic unity of apperception, was deduced as providing the necessary form of all empirical knowledge, even if the logical order is that the synthesis in imagination precedes that in apperception. The Schematism Chapter now explains how it is possible that understanding actually can be the lawgiver to this synthesis. It explains, in other words, how the pure synthesis of imagination already contains the pure forms of the concepts.

In order to do this, Kant argues that the pure form of the concepts should \textit{a priori} be applied to, or determined in, the pure form of imagination: time. Every representation in imagination is connected through time. Furthermore, time is transcendentally determined: it is both universal and \textit{a priori}. Thus the transcendental form of concepts can be translated into the \textit{a priori} possible temporal form, and thereby any representation will be determined through the concepts. Consequently Kant analyses the temporal, schematic form of the categories. The transcendental schema of quantity, for instance, is analysed by giving the possible divisions into homogeneous parts of intuition in time; the schema of modality is the way an object belongs to time, determining its persistence; and so forth.

The schemata of empirical concepts are derived from these transcendental forms of sensibility, just as the concepts are derived from the laws of understanding. The degree of abstraction of a schema can vary, as it does for a concept. Be it the concept of 'dog', 'triangle' or 'time', each receives its content through schematic imagination or there would be no objective meaning to it. Thus Kant defines the schema of a concept as a 'representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept' (B179/A140).

The image that a schema can provide for a concept can never be the representation of the 'sensible concept' itself, since an image could never attain the universality of a concept (A141/B180). For instance, in order for me to recognize a dog, I must have some general, schematic procedure appending to my concept of dogs, which allows me to 'delineate a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent in concreto, actually presents' (B180/A141).

Thus, the schema is not the image represented. Kant writes: 'This schematism of our understanding [...] is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze' (A141/B180). The schema of a pure concept, that is, devoid of objective content, can never be brought into any image: It is 'simply the pure synthesis [...] to which the category gives expression. It is a transcendental product of imagination, a product which concerns the determination of inner sense [...]’ (A142/B181). And hence a
schema is 'only the phenomenon, or the sensible concept, of an object in agreement with the category' (A146/B186).

Schemata are the conditions the subjective mind brings to intuition; they determine the form of our possible experience, and therewith of our possible knowledge. In the Deduction all representations were related to self-consciousness; the possibility of consciously having an intuitive, non-conceptualized representation was denied. In the Schematism Chapter this restriction is consolidated by attributing conformity with the rules of understanding to the synthesis in imagination. Furthermore in the same chapter the rules of understanding are themselves restricted, insofar as they are to bring objective knowledge about, to where they can be schematically applied.

Thus, Kant here denies that pure concepts have any objective content. Concepts without the possibility of sensible form are pure logical form, and have no objective meaning whatsoever. The possibility of knowledge (in opposition to that of understanding) is limited by the possibility of application to experience. Thus objective concepts are subjected to restricting conditions. These are the schemata, which are not part of understanding, but are due to sensibility. The limited space of schematized representations is then the only possible source of objective knowledge.

Interestingly, he claims that a pure concept without any possible sensible determination would retain a meaning; however: it would 'acquire no meaning which might yield a concept of some object' (A147/B186). He continues with the example of the concept of substance: this concept, 'when the sensible determination of permanence is omitted, would simply mean a something which can be thought only as subject, never as a predicate of something else. Such a representation [...] tells me nothing as to the nature of that which is thus to be viewed as a primary subject'. In this passage, a concept of an object is directly equated to meaningful predication- and thus it suggests that the meaning of a predicate in language is the same as that of a determinative concept.135

Taking into consideration only the synthetic account of the A-Deduction the synthescoses would appear as different stages in the conceptualization of sense-impressions. We could speculate that imagination had a different, autonomous position in producing intuitive presentations in inner sense, and that in imagination pre-conceptual representations could be contained. Kant excludes the possibility of such representations by attributing them to an 'empirical consciousness', separate from the self. Speculatively, this formulation leaves open the possibility of unconscious representations. Indeed, it seems all but a

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135 Cf. the discussion in section 4.4 below.
necessary assumption that imagination unconsciously maintains associations of appearances in order to allow for the synthesis of apperception that introduces the possibility of conscious awareness. With the description of the schematic function of the concepts this speculation is rendered senseless: the conformity with understanding is already produced in the transcendental imagination itself.

Following the Schematism Chapter we must then interpret the synthesis in imagination in such a way that the schematized form of representations is conform to the transcendental categories. Time itself is not of the conceptual order, nor is it an intuitive concept. It is a product of pure transcendental imagination, and the categories can be expressed in terms of temporal order. However, in view of the conformity of pure imagination with understanding, why maintain that understanding is of an independent nature? If the transcendental categories can be described in terms of productive imagination, then could the faculty of understanding not be described as an extrapolation of the faculty of imagination? The argument that pure concepts do have some meaning, even when they do not have objective content, illustrates what understanding brings to intuitive presentation such that it may result in empirical knowledge: it provides all possible logical forms of concepts. And even if we can deduce such forms only from our empirical concepts, that we can do so, and not otherwise, shows that they are a priori conditions of representation.

We can view the Schematism Chapter as placing the faculty of imagination at the core of the transcendental doctrine. It at once restricts imagination's form of representation, and the meaning of pure concepts. Nevertheless since pure imagination produces the necessary a priori form of appearances imagination seems to have acquired a determinant task that is not fully attributable to imagination alone. Hence, imagination merely renders representations with 'conformity' to the categories, and not with conceptual determination. The second version of the Deduction that regards the 'figurative synthesis' as a spontaneous agreement of appearances to the categories then seems to capture the role of imagination in the Critique of Pure Reason best: it simply postulates its schematizing function, indeed as 'an art concealed'.

3.4 Reproductive imagination and metaphorical interpretation

Now that the roles of imagination that may be interpreted from the Critique of Pure Reason have been differentiated, it is time to return to the initial problem, and see if Kant's understanding of reproductive imagination could help explain imagination's role in the process of metaphorical interpretation.
First of all, we saw that intuition, and the resulting representations in imagination, for Kant are vital for any type of knowledge. Thus, although the conceptual organization of the categories determines the possible form of any representation, imagination plays a role in each and every conscious thought we may have. However, it is inconceivable without conceptual form. Further, imagination remains a 'blind force', and is 'hidden in the depth of the human soul'. Kant's understanding of imagination as the faculty that brings content to concepts, and is thus active in each conceptual act is not a usual contemporary understanding of the word 'imagination', since mostly it is taken to imply the occurrence of imagery, or of creative thinking. In the first Critique, then, it is used to indicate a fundamental, but invisible faculty.

The invisibility of imagination is in essence brought forward in the Transcendental Deduction, where consciousness or awareness is tied to self-consciousness and objective determination. Any representation that I am aware of, is necessarily part of a structured whole of conceptual knowledge, and I can only become aware of any representation in such conceptualized form. Thus, the possibility of becoming aware of representations in imagination is ruled out, and imagination's functions can thenceforth only be deduced from conceptually determined representations.

Kant thus investigates the conditions under which intuitive content can be conceptualized, and therewith establishes to what extent the intuitive presentations are consciously accessible. However, certain questions remain unanswered in this investigation. The first of these is how empirical concepts can be created and then revised, that is, how it is possible that representations that are objectively determined in understanding according to a priori laws can be altered consciously, after reconsideration. This point is of course highly relevant for progress in science: how can scientists discover new empirical laws and correct old ones, if these are merely the instantiation of a priori universal understanding? Kant addresses this issue in the Critique of Judgement; and I consider his answers in the following section.

The second question concerns the status of imaginative representations. According to Kant in the first Critique these representations cannot be consciously maintained unless they have a determinate conceptual identity. The intuitive content of conceptual knowledge was described, in the end, as a result of a 'spontaneous synthesis' of intuition and understanding, where understanding determines the form of all sensible presentations. However, since intuitive content of a concept involves the reproduction of previous intuitions, these must be represented somehow, somewhere, waiting to be

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136 The previously mentioned study Strawson[1971] presents a brief but insightful discussion on the relation between these and other understandings of 'imagination', including Hume's definition.
combined with other representations under a concept. Thus, some understanding of pre-conceptual representation in imagination seems inescapable within Kant's epistemology, even if these remain hidden 'in the depths of the human soul'. From the first Critique a speculation on a 'subconscious' storage of intuitive presentations does not seem far off. I return to this topic later, in the discussion of the third Critique, in which Kant analyses the possibility of subjective imaginative representations. We may note here, how the possibility of maintaining imaginative representations, as escaping objective determination, was presupposed in several of the approaches to metaphorical interpretation discussed in the former chapter.

As we saw, Frege does in no way deny that language expresses subjective thought, feelings and images. He does however deny that these have any importance for conceptual or propositional content that can be meaningfully shared between people. They form the subjective part of meaning. The division between imaginative and propositional content also appears in Davidson[1984] discussed above. Davidson assumes that images, that is percepts, and conceptual thoughts are intrinsically different, since there is a difference in appearance and in the sort of information that both may contain. The line of thought in this article was taken up by Rorty, who claims that in general most of our perceptions concern unsystematic, non-conceptualized noises. Conceptual determination then involves the process of recognizing and identifying such representations under a concept. Both Davidson and Rorty, then, seem to defend a difference between conceptual representation and non-conceptual awareness. This would imply a level of conscious representation in imagination, which is not captured by conceptual thought, and thus not (yet) part of objective knowledge, but part of some other type of conscious representation (which we may not rightly call 'knowledge'). Thus, the subjective mind is held to be capable of representing something other than fully conceptualized, objective representations.

In an encouraging paper, Strawson remarks that the conception of imagination by Kant is one that might well be considered in semantics, as it addresses how words are related to what we perceive by conceptualization of intuitive presentations; hence the strong division between images and words might prove less rigid than semantics usually assumes.137

Indeed, in the more recent cognitive approaches to metaphorical interpretation the notion of schema and of non-conceptualized representation play a role. Indurkhyaa proposes the representation of a 'senso-motoric data set'. Such perceptual data are represented in association with the concepts they

137 Cf. Strawson[1971]. The article, of course, is directed against the type of semantics that was common at the time of publication.
instantiate, and which in turn are associated with terms in language. In the interpretation of metaphor these perceptual representations are evoked, and thus present the basis for a novel conceptualization. The assumption of this basic level of representation is however hardly motivated, since Indurkhya generally refrains from the articulation of conditions of such representation and of its accessibility on whichever level. The relations between words, concepts, and perceptual memory is thus not explained in this model but assumed as primary.

A philosophical account of the relation between words and perceptual representations can be read from the comparison of Ricoeur's theory with Kant's epistemology. Ricoeur is the only author discussed above who explicitly pays attention to the relations between language, mental images and concepts, and how these partake in a view of reality. In his view 'icons', imaginative representations that are half image, half thought, are inherent to the meaning of a word. In metaphorical interpretation these icons are evoked and thereby provide the basis for new combinations of imaginative representations. Thus, a word does not simply express a concept, but it is related to imaginative representations. Other than Indurkhya, Ricoeur does not interpret these representations as some sort of residue from former perceptions, since they may actively be construed on the basis of a newly formed icon.

In his theory Ricoeur emphasises the analogy of metaphorical schematization to Kant's notion of combination of intuitive presentations in a concept, when he speaks of the 'verbal icon'. By this analogy, the icon provides a representational content to words, just as the schema furnishes a concept with images. Thus, although word-meanings are of an abstract, conceptual nature, they are mediated by imaginative representations that are not concrete images themselves. However, the icon functions differently than the schema from the first Critique, since Ricoeur emphasizes how the icon is 'contemplated', and may lead to a novel meaning for the word. Icons, for Ricoeur, are consciously maintained image-like representations that are re-applied in the process of interpreting. As we saw, schemata function as a blind force, mediating between sense and intuition, and only the resulting schematized representations are consciously maintained. The icon then must be something other than the concealed imaginative application procedure of a concept, which the schema is for Kant. Thus, the conscious character of the 'contemplation of the icon' is in conflict with the above definition of schemata in the first Critique.

Furthermore icons are not fully conceptually determined. They become determined in interpretation only insofar as iconic representations are constructed by the interpreter as part of a 'world-vision', that is, a

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138 Cf. 207 and further, Ricoeur[1993]
conceptualization of reality as a whole. Thus the iconic function of imagination produces schematized but not determinate representations, which could then not be the result of determinant judgement. Hence, Ricoeur's proposal of 'iconic meanings' is not captured within the framework of the first Critique. In the following sections, I consider whether the theory of imagination developed in the third Critique may suit this purpose better.

In the third Critique, Kant reconsiders the status of objective judgements as the sole constituents of empirical knowledge. He finds that subjective reflection on both the world with its empirical laws, and on the act of judging itself results in a different type of judgements: reflective judgements. These subjective judgements are not the result of the 'mechanical' application of universal laws that lead to determinant, objective judgements. Instead, they involve the reflective powers of the individual, who in this case designs the laws that apply to his particular experience. These subjectively designed laws are not automatically derived from the a priori universal laws, even if they must conform to them.

The process of iconic contemplation that Ricoeur describes may then better be compared to this process of reflective judgement, which Kant describes only in the third Critique. Here, as we will see below, the representations of the object judged are not fully, conceptually determined, but nonetheless they are the result of an act of schematization. In reflective judgement, representations are determined through 'indeterminate concepts', along rational ideas of the world, the supersensible or the aesthetic. There is a parallel, it seems, between Ricoeur's notion of 'world visions' that are at stake in metaphorical interpretation, and subjective judgements that are formed to organize the multitude of intuitive presentations that are objectively determined.

Below I discuss Kant's analysis of the 'concepts' that are applied in subjective judgements, and more specifically the notion of 'indeterminate concepts' that Kant brings up in the analysis of aesthetic judgements. The relation between determinat judgements as defined in the first Critique and subjective judgements as defined in the third Critique, it will become clear, is sometimes problematic. The notion of imaginative representations as non-conceptual representations recurs in this discussion, as Kant discusses the possibility of an 'internal intuition'. In the conclusion in section 5 I return to the general subject of this investigation, and consider to what extent the discussion of Kant's theory of imagination presented in the Critique of Judgement may help to characterize the process of metaphorical interpretation in terms of cognitive processes and representations.
4 The faculty of judgement and productive imagination in the third Critique

4.1 Systematicity of knowledge in the first Critique

In the first Critique, empirical judgements follow from the recognition of intuitions under a concept. Such concepts are empirical concepts, which are derived from the schematic application of universal laws to particular experiences. In this way Kant attempts to build a bridge between experiential content of knowledge, and its universal, a priori character. As we saw, in empirical judgements, the categories are applied in a concrete way; through schematic combination of intuitive presentations empirical concepts result which are less abstract than the categories themselves. The first Critique thus explains how universal laws can be recognized through the schematic application of the categories. So far, there is no need to postulate any other capability than the recognition and schematization of regularities of nature as experienced.

In addition to the single conformity of particular events to universal laws however, our empirical knowledge also exhibits systematicity: the empirical concepts and laws that we recognize are interrelated and organized. What is then not yet explained, is how empirical laws can be designed and connected with one another into an orderly whole. For if nature would be entirely chaotic, we would still recognize certain empirical laws, but would never be able to connect them in anything other than an arbitrary aggregate. Therefore, in the study of nature we presuppose that it is rule-governed or regular in itself. This regulation of nature cannot be derived from nature itself, for we have no knowledge of nature in itself, i.e. independent from our perception of it. Thus, in judgements, we assign certain regularities and systematicity to nature. That is, when we make judgements about nature, we are guided by the assumption of a regulative principle, and we judge our particular intuitions as conforming to such regularity. In the first Critique, Kant assigns such regulation to reason: 'Just as the understanding unifies the manifold in the object by means of concepts, so reason unifies the manifold of concepts by means of ideas, positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding, which otherwise are concerned solely with distributive unity' (A644/B672). The regulative ideas then form the universal laws of reason (Vernunft), and perform their work on the universal laws of understanding (Verstand).
II Imagination: on Kant’s theory of imagination and understanding

The ideas of reason in question are the idea of the soul, of the world and of God. These ideas, however, have no objective value, and hence do not introduce objects that are to be perceived. Rather, they are 'speculative Ideas', which do not constitute but regulate our understanding of the world. The regulative force of reason is summarized in the assumption of the logical principles that govern the formation of systematic unity: specification, homogeneity and continuity. The combination of these principles ensures that the particular concepts in understanding can coexist (hence specificity) but are combined under more generic laws (hence homogeneity). The principle of continuity then ensures that the concepts are interrelated systematically through gradual increase or decrease of the level of diversity. In other words: 'only through the process of ascending to the higher genera or descending to the lower species do we obtain the idea of a systematic connection in its completeness' (A658/B686).

This completeness however, is no more than a logical presupposition on our part, and has no objective grounds. 'We ought to believe that we have approximated completeness in the employment of the [regulative] principle, only in proportion as we are in a position as to verify such unity in empirical fashion- a completeness which is never, of course, attainable' (A692/B720). However, we necessarily adopt such principles of reason, providing us with the speculative unity of knowledge, since they enable the spontaneous determination of intuition as instances of universal laws.

The three ideas mentioned above, then present the unity that reason necessarily assumes in the fields of psychology (the soul), cosmology (the world), or theology (God). Thus, for instance, we view nature as if it was designed by a higher intelligence, and as such as if it has an end (Zweck). To assume however that the Ideas are not merely hypothetical, but constitutive (i.e. that nature in fact received its purpose from God), Kant argues, is evidence of either perverse or lazy reasoning. I will not go further into this argumentation; however, it does have many important consequences, questions about the existence of God being among the foremost. A consequence that interests us here, lies in the understanding of universality of conceptual laws. Parallel to the absolute unity of knowledge, the universality of concepts can only exist in reason, and never be attained through the understanding of intuition. Universals, then, have no objective status. Hence reason is the ultimate legislator of understanding, since it dictates the universals under which the conceptual unity in apperception is subsumed— which leads to the problematic notion of empirical laws as 'synthetic a priori'.

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136 Cf. Gibbons[1994]. I often draw on Gibbons' analysis, which is discussed in section 4.5 below.
4.2 Knowledge of contingency in the third Critique

In the third Critique, Kant returns to the regulative principles governing the systematic unity of knowledge. Here however, he is not satisfied with the mere necessity of a systematic unity in our conceptual understanding as provided by reason. In our experience there are many particular intuitions that do not meet the described spontaneous conceptualization, for nature has a greater contingency than we can analytically determine.

We can conceive, for instance, of a systematic description of organisms in which grass is conceived as the means through which cows can sustain, so that they can serve humans as a meal. On the other hand, we can follow Linnaeus' order, in which herbivores serve to allow a greater diversity of weeds to grow, while carnivores serve to regulate the number of herbivores. The two systems position humans at a different point in a chain of causality. The 'mechanics' of nature, which understanding allows us to determine, cannot settle the differences between the two systems. Rather, the choice between the two depends upon our conception of nature as a whole.

In order to meet this type of cognizing, Kant distinguishes between two types of judgement: determinant and reflective judgements. The first type is the one encountered in our discussion of the first Critique: determinant judgements, in which universal laws are spontaneously met by intuition. These involve determination along such formal relations as 'all change has its cause', which amount to something Kant calls the 'mechanics' of nature. Determinant judgements are made under 'universal laws apart from which nature in general (as an object of sense) cannot be thought. These rest on the categories as applied to the formal conditions of all intuition possible for us' (183). In concrete empirical judgements, objects then have the capacity of 'being causes in an infinite variety of ways; and each of these modes must, on the concept of a cause in general, have its rule, which is a law, and, consequently, imports necessity' (183). However, due to our limited faculties of cognition, we may entirely fail to see this necessity and thus the 'infinite variety' delivers us with a confusing amount of specific empirical contingencies.

The way we try to find consistency in these empirical contingencies is by adopting the a priori principle of objective finality', that is, the principle that an object's possibility can only be intelligible for us by the assumption of its being designed according to a certain represented rule. That is: in service of our gaining knowledge, we assign a purpose to what we encounter. Since we are not capable of any objective knowledge of nature's purposes, we make empirical judgements on the basis of a subjective assumption of such finality.

This second type of judgement then is reflective judgement. Here the subject reflects on the particular in order to conceive of a universal under which it may
be subsumed. Through the assumption of a principle of 'finality of nature' as a
guideline in our empirical judgements, we can make meaningful distinctions
and generalizations in judgements on nature. Nonetheless, these rest upon
nature itself, in other words: nature specifies itself. For instance, Kant mentions
that when Linnaeus classified a lump of stone as 'granite', he could expect that
the next similar lump would not exhibit different properties.
On the basis of subjective reflection, then, a principle such as that 'humans are
in service of nature's diversity' mentioned above can be developed. But it is
only in the light of the explanatory system of herbs-herbivores-carnivores (in
whichever order of purposiveness) that the general concept of 'herbivore'
makes sense.
Thus, Kant writes 'We may and should explain all products and events of
nature, even the most purposive, so far as in our power lies, on mechanical
lines [...] But in so doing we must never lose sight of the fact that among such
products there are those which we cannot even subject to investigation except
under the conception of an end of reason' (415).
An important difference between this approach and the one in the first Critique
lies in the role of reason. The third Critique makes a distinction between
subjective reasoning, which is the reflection on a possible general law that
captures a given representation, and objective judgement, where the
representation is judged as an instance of a given universal. Kant analyses two
types of subjective judgements. The first is where the subject is concerned with
the systematic unity of empirical concepts, which he had already touched upon
in the discussion in the first Critique. The second type is where the subject is
concerned with its own cognitive powers, in aesthetic judgements. They are
each elaborated in the two books of the Critique of Judgement: the Critique of
Aesthetic Judgement and the Critique of Teleological Judgement. In the first
book, Kant analyses aesthetic judgements as a type of judgement that only
involves the subject's capacity to deal with the sensible form of intuition. In
aesthetic judgements the subject is only concerned with the pleasure of
entertaining a certain representation, and not with the determination of an
object represented. The representation, then, is judged only on the grounds of
its suitability for our cognitive faculties.
In the second book, Kant investigates the teleological explanation of nature,
and how the principle of finality is used in relation to determinant
understanding. Thus, the object is determined only with respect to the
subjective reflection on its purpose.
The two types of judgement are related through the subjective powers of
representation, since neither determines the representation objectively.
Reflection upon these representations, both in aesthetic and teleological
judgements, is guided by the principles of reason. In teleological judgements,
reason provides the assumption of necessity of contingent appearances, through the *a priori* assumption of purposiveness of objects of nature. In aesthetic judgements, reason provides the *a priori* purposiveness of the form of representations with respect to our cognitive faculties. Reason, then, in the third *Critique*, is more than mere legislator of understanding, since in reflective judgement reason itself provides the laws to subjectively determine intuitive representations.

### 4.3 Reflective Judgement

So far, three types of judgement were presented that appear in the third *Critique*. First there are the determinant, or objective, judgements that are the result of the schematic application of the categories. These, as was put in the previous paragraph, appear now as judgements on the 'mechanics' of nature, involving mainly the formal application of the categories to intuitions, which cannot be thought in another form. They are a matter of recognizing certain representations as an instance of a necessary law. The second and third types of judgement are both instances of reflective judgement: teleological and aesthetic judgements. Teleological judgements involve subjective representations of the object as belonging to a certain empirical concept. The representations are subjective, since the empirical concept has only come into being on the basis of reflection on its place in the presupposed systematicity or organization of nature. An example was given above in the carnivore-herbivore-herbs system (which Kant discusses in §82). In such classification, a cow is judged as if it were designed for the purpose of holding this place in the classification, which allows us, for instance, to meaningfully distinguish cows from humans (and not merely 'mechanically'). Next to its subjective character, teleological judgement is also objective in a sense, since it is concerned with the determination of objects. However, this 'subjective objectivity' is speculative, and may be revised in the light of new empirical material. Generally, in reflective judgement, intuitive presentations are judged in such a manner that the judgement is in harmony with the whole of knowledge. Since the need for this harmony is but a subjective presupposition, such judgements are subjective.

The second type of subjective judgements stems from the faculty of *aesthetic* judgement, and so far these have remained largely undiscussed. Aesthetic judgements are merely concerned with the fact whether a representation is pleasant or not. If it is pleasant, this pleasure must be the result from a felt harmony between the faculties of understanding and imagination. That is, the representation is judged *as if* it were made for our faculty of judgement. If it
'fits' our possible conceptualization, a feeling of pleasure results. Thus, the harmony of our faculties is crucial in this type of judgements even more than in teleological judgements, since here the only goal of the judgement is to establish whether the representation 'fits' our cognition. In the aesthetic judgement we are merely concerned with the effect of the intuited object on our faculty of cognizing, and are in no way concerned with the determination of the object itself. Hence the intuitive presentation is never finitely determined in the judgement and receives no objective content. The subject is not concerned with what the object is, but is interested only in the effect of its representation.

Kant distinguishes between the judgements of the beautiful and those of the sublime. The latter do not interest us much here, since they do not deal with the relation between understanding and imagination, which is the topic of our discussion. They are in fact analysed as the result of the failure of such relation, a failure that prompts us to see the sublime as the manifestation of a possible greater mind or imagination, and that is where subjective finality comes in. Only the principles of reason (i.e. the idea of the supersensible) can explain the representation of something we cannot determine. The sublime is 'absolutely great', that is too big for our imagination and hence formless. The feeling that the sublime arouses is a sense of awe.

Judgements of beauty however lead to a pleasant feeling, based on the harmonious interplay between imagination and understanding that results from the representation of the beautiful object. Thus Kant speaks of a formal 'subjective finality' (221) or a finality of the object as perceived in it 'apart from the representation of an end' (236). The subject experiences the 'bare form of finality' (221): it looks upon the representation as if it were designed for the subject's representative powers. In other words, the subject reflects on the possibility of assigning an end to the representation, as a form we can cognize, and not on the end of the represented object. In judgements of the beautiful then, understanding does not dictate the law to imagination's representations. Rather, imagination is engaged in free play to try out different possible laws on the representation. Since the subject is not interested in determining the object, but merely in its formal representation, imagination exhibits 'only a conformity to law without a law' (241).

Judgements of taste, whether of the sublime or of the beautiful, are the third type of judgement that Kant discerns. They are the subjective judgements with no objective content whatsoever. The role of imagination here is extended from the reproductive role of answering to concepts, to a productive imagination
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'exerting an activity on its own (as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions)' (240). 140

We can illustrate this productive role of imagination with Kant's appreciation of wild nature. In the same section (General Remark, §22), Kant explains why a neatly organized pepper-garden easily becomes boring, while the 'wilderness of Sumatra' would be of interest for a longer time. The reason is that imagination encounters a wealth of material in Sumatra to represent in its 'arbitrary forms', while the garden, made according to rules of understanding, runs out of different possible forms very quickly. Thus, the more possible forms can be recognized in intuitive presentations, the longer imagination may run free, and the greater our aesthetic interest in the presentation will be.

The definition of these imaginative representations in judgements of taste seems in conflict with the identification of consciousness and self-consciousness with objectivity in the first Critique. For according to the first Critique there are no conscious representations that are not fully determined through the schematic function of the categories. Now, in aesthetic judgements, we consider intuitive presentations under the aspect of form. Such considerations can hardly be conducted without conscious access to the representations that possess such form. Thus, here we find a type of conscious representations that lack objective determination.

The problem, then, is how in aesthetic judgement we can have a conscious representation that is at once subjected to the a priori conditions of conscious representation, as analysed in the first Critique, and is not conceptually determined, as defined by the third Critique. This question is directly addressed in the first General Remark (§22), where Kant explains the free imagination's 'conformity to law without a law', and hence the determination according to an 'indeterminate concept' (341). The conditions for conscious representation are fulfilled, since the representations are represented conform to understanding generally. Thus, Kant says that 'the freedom of imagination consists precisely in the fact that it schematizes without a concept' (287). But what does a representation schematized through an indeterminate concept amount to? Is such a representation mere material of imagination, and could it thus be identified with the notion of imaginative meaning that we encountered in Ricoeur's theory of iconicity? Does an indeterminate imaginative representation play any role in our understanding, in that it, for instance, at a later point may be determined conceptually? And, finally, does an indeterminate representation bear any connection to the yet unexplained

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140 'arbitrary' is the translation of 'willkürlichen'; which is sometimes also translated as 'chosen' (e.g. by Pluhar).
availability of former intuitions, the assumption of which we recognized as a consequence of Kant's analysis in the first Critique?

Some answers to these questions can be found in the third Critique itself. Otherwise, much depends on the interpretation of various remarks and on the reconstruction of Kant's intentions. In the next section, I first consider the relatively clear passages on both status and content of the representations in the free imagination. After that, I turn to two interpretations of the role of the free imagination in the whole of cognitive faculties. Finally, I speculate on a more radical theory of imagination, which, although starting from Kant's account of reflective judgement, turns the whole building designed in the Critical Philosophy upside down.

4.4 Free imagination and the formation of concepts

In the second Introduction Kant stresses that in aesthetic judgement a representation is merely judged upon the feeling of harmony (or discord) that it arouses, and not on its cognitive (i.e. objective) content (VIII).\textsuperscript{141} It is thus only the effect of the representation that is judged. However, as Kant writes in the Analytic of the Beautiful, the feeling that a representation arouses is not arbitrary. The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept is 'cognized as object of necessary delight' (240). This necessity is deduced from the common ground of aesthetic judgements, which lies in the common sense (as in common sensibility, not common understanding) of individual cognitions. Furthermore, the judgements that result on the basis of feeling are themselves universal, that is, in the judgement 'this is beautiful' we claim a necessary agreement with others. In the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgement Kant analyses the grounds for such a claim.

'The judgement of taste', he writes, 'applies to objects of sense, but not so as to determine a concept of them for the understanding [...]. [It] does depend upon a concept (of a general ground of the subjective finality of nature for the power of judgement), but one from which nothing can be cognized and nothing proved, because it is in itself indeterminable and useless for knowledge' (340). This indeterminable concept then is 'the supersensible substrate of phenomena' (341).

In other words, we assume that a world that we cannot understand as an object in intuition, must underlie our intuitive presentations. This assumption is

\textsuperscript{141} The Introduction to the Critique of Judgement is called the 'second Introduction', since it is a replacement of another, much longer previously written introduction, that is referred to as the 'First Introduction'. The First Introduction has been published separately from the Critique of Judgement.
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inherently subjective, since such a world can never be determined in intuition, but it is a necessary common ground between individuals since the assumption of finality is an a priori principle of reflective judgement.

What Kant has achieved now, is that the presentations in the free imagination are universal and necessary, since they are grounded in the assumption that imagination represents a non-phenomenal world as if it were made for our capacity of imagining (that is, the assumption that there is a world that causes the phenomena which we represent). Thus, representations in aesthetic judgement are 'indeterminately determined' by an idea of reason: the supersensible substrate of nature.

Kant continues this paragraph with a remark on the nature of ideas of reason. He opposes the aesthetic idea to the rational idea: 'Just as the imagination, in the case of a rational idea, fails with its intuition to attain the given concept, so understanding, in the case of an aesthetic idea, fails with its concepts ever to attain to the completeness of the internal intuition which imagination [in its free play] conjoins with a given representation' (343, my italics). Imagination's aesthetic ideas then, are 'inexponible', i.e. they cannot be reduced to concepts.

The term 'completeness' as unattainable in conceptual understanding occurred previously in the first Critique. There it was the completeness of empirical knowledge that understanding strives to obtain, but which is, in fact, never attainable. The thought of such completeness however was prompted by the ideas of reason (the ideas of the world, God, and the soul).142

Here, reason provides an aesthetic idea of completeness in the 'internal intuition'. That is, at some level we have a complete representation of our intuitions, but as soon as we try to understand (i.e. to determine) the representation, this completeness is lost. Understanding can only determine representations with respect to a certain interest, that is, it chooses and isolates those parts of intuition it recognizes.

In this passage some light is shed on one aspect of our earlier problem, the assumption of cognitively retaining undetermined, non-conceptualized representations. Here a faculty of representation is described that exceeds the representation of objective knowledge. However, the completeness of aesthetic ideas at this point only indicates that our intuitions are larger than what understanding makes of them. We still cannot see how such undetermined intuitions are recalled, and whether they could play a role in later conceptualizations.

Previous to the above quoted passage, Kant explicitly mentions that aesthetic ideas can be called up, but only through the work of 'genius'. In the making of

142 See section 4.1 above.
art, an aesthetic idea can be captured, in that the artwork can evoke representations with the same intuitive completeness.

In this context (§49) Kant defines the aesthetic idea as 'that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. a concept, being adequate to it' (314). He continues: 'The imagination is a powerful agent for creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. [...] We even use it to remodel experience, always following, no doubt, laws that are based on analogy, but still also following principles which have a higher seat in reason [...]. By this means we get a sense of our freedom of the laws of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of the imagination), with the result that the material can be borrowed by us from nature in accordance with that law, but be worked up in something else -namely what surpasses nature. Such representations may be termed ideas. [...] [These] seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts (i.e. intellectual ideas), thus giving to these concepts the semblance of objective reality' (314).

Such representations then, as provided by the free and creative imagination, can be laid hold of and unified in a concept: a concept which 'is original and reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from previous examples or principles' (317), but is universally communicable nonetheless. The production of such new, subjective but universally communicable concepts from the free use of imagination is attributed by Kant to the genius. The genius then is capable of rendering expressive some part of imagination that is not captured by the determinate concepts of understanding, be it in art, i.e., 'language or painting or statuary' (317).

The free imagination is captured in words and communicated by genius. The genius is capable of presenting new concepts, by expressing an undetermined part of imagination, that is, an aesthetic idea. The notion of 'genius' is

143 'Laws of association' throughout the present investigation are called laws of combination (under a concept), which is the terminology introduced in the first Critique. A specific characterization of the former however does appear in §59, where Kant describes how with imagination's laws of association concepts may be reinvoked through symbols. Hence, in its subjective role, imagination allows for concepts to be intuited indirectly, in a symbolic presentation. Some concepts are intuited through analogy: the concept is applied to intuition (e.g. a hand-mill) and then 'the mere rule' in reflection upon that object is applied to another object (the monarchical state). (352). Symbols (in this case the hand-mill) may be used to evoke concepts, which are then transferred to another domain; hence the account of reflective judgement seems to imply an account of metaphorical interpretation. Kant delimits the notion of analogy from that of similarity, for in symbolic presentations there is no likeness between the presentations themselves (e.g. between a living body and a despotic state), but 'there surely is [a likeness] between the rules of reflection upon both [representations] and their causality' (352) (that is, in the example, both are seen as a mere machine, driven by a single source of power).
confusing nowadays, since we only use it to indicate excelling individuals. Kant says that 'genius properly consists in the happy relation, which science cannot teach nor industry learn, enabling one to find out ideas for a given concept, and, besides, to hit upon the expression for them' (317). Thus, genius is more of a property individuals may exhibit, something, maybe, which today we would be inclined to call 'creativity'. Understanding 'genius' thus as a property that 'enables one' to do something, certainly helps us to think of it as less exclusive or rare. In fact, one could argue that the people in whom art evokes a free imagination, are at least capable of recognizing art as the expression of otherwise undetermined parts of imagination. We could say that they, in a way, are re-doing the process, and thus lay claim to a similar faculty of creative imagination.

The new concepts or rules produced by genius are inherently subjective, since they follow from subjective representation, and find a universal means of expression only on the basis of the common ground of judgement. These concepts are not cognizable (since they express no knowledge). Nonetheless they play a role in cognizing. Kant mentions how the concepts of the free imagination sharpen the use of cognitive faculties at several instances, for instance:

'In a word, the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a concept, with which, in the free employment of imagination, such a multiplicity of partial representations are bound up, that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it -one which on that account allows a concept to be supplemented in thought by much that is indefinable in words, and the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, as a mere thing of the letter, binds up the spirit (soul) [Geist] also.' (316).

One function of expressing aesthetic ideas then is that it quickens the faculties (of understanding and imagination). Thus, although we obtain no knowledge from artistic expression, we do learn how to use our faculties of understanding and imagination. Interestingly, the above quotation is one of the few occasions where Kant mentions language. Language ties Geist to the concepts that are expressed. Geist is defined as 'the animating principle in the mind' (313), or 'the faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas' (314). Thus, language should not be perceived solely as the vehicle of determinate concepts, but also as a means of presenting a 'completeness of internal intuition'. Language, or at least language in its literary use, is capable of calling up parts of imagination that are not conceptually determined. We may infer that, for Kant, linguistic expression does not equal the expression of determinate concepts. Language may express imaginative representations, insofar as far as it is the product of human creativity. Thus, we have finally found a Kantian basis for Ricoeur's notion of
iconicity: it is the property of words to induce imaginative representations, in other words, it is the Geist that is tied to poetic language. Nevertheless, nothing has yet been said about the possible role of these undetermined, imaginative representations for understanding. So far, free imagination has appeared only in non-objective representations, and its import for knowledge of the world was limited to the quickening of the faculties, that is, a facilitation of the relation between imagination and understanding. In the next section, two interpretations of the role of free imagination are discussed. The first allows free imagination only to operate within the limits of aesthetic judgement, whereas the second presents it as the preliminary of any type of judgement.

4.5 Two interpretations of the role of free imagination

In the literature, many different interpretations of the free imagination occur regarding its relation to determinate understanding. Here I limit the discussion to two authors. The first, Cassirer, gives an interpretation that remains close to the letter of the Critique of Judgement. As an interpretation, it is well known, and it aims at understanding Kant’s motivations in the light of the whole Critical Philosophy. The second interpretation, by Gibbons, is more recent, and in many ways a daring one. She, too, interprets Kant’s theory of imagination with a focus on the possible consistency throughout his writings, but focuses thereby on the understanding of subjective imagination in the Critique of Judgement.

Cassirer distinguishes three roles for the faculty of imagination:
'I think that, although Kant does not use the term "aesthetic imagination", we may distinguish between three functions of the imagination, namely, (a) reproductive imagination, which is not free since it depends on empirical laws, (b) productive imagination, which is not free either since it depends on the a priori laws of the understanding, and (c) aesthetic imagination, which is the principle that underlies our judgements of taste. It is both productive, not merely reproductive, and free, for it is independent of any determinate laws of the understanding'.144

Productive imagination then is for Cassirer imagination as it incorporates a priori laws of reason in intuition. This notion of productive imagination is the one that Kant describes in the Schematism chapter, which is concerned with the production of time, and which identifies the recognition of different temporal properties of intuitions with the subsumption under the categories.

144 Cassirer[1970] p 15
'Aesthetic imagination' is equally productive, but is not subsumed under a specific categorical law. It acts merely in conformity with the laws of understanding, without tying the perceived object down to a determinate empirical concept. This conformity is the only limit of freedom in 'aesthetic imagination'. Yet even in aesthetic imagination, Cassirer emphatically quotes Kant: 'The understanding alone gives the law.' (241). Even if, for instance, the free imagination might project a form onto a given object that coincides with the conceptual understanding of that object, this free imaginative representation of that object cannot be referred to a definite law of the understanding, 'for the judgement which is made is a subjective and not an objective judgement'.

Thus whichever representations are formed in free imagination, they contribute nothing to knowledge, other than the above-mentioned 'quickening of the faculties'.

Aesthetic judgements then are an entirely separate type of judgement. The only reason that they occupy a prominent place in the *Critique of Judgement* is that from their analysis a new transcendental principle can be inferred, and with it a faculty of judgement, separate from the respective faculties of reason and of understanding. The principle in question is the principle of purposiveness, or the *a priori* assumption of the supersensible. Since this assumption turns out to be necessary for the possibility of such entirely subjective judgements as aesthetic judgements are proven to be, the assumption of the same principle for teleological judgements is justified, even though these contain an objective aspect as well. The analysis, in Cassirer's view, merely serves to justify that, regarding empirical judgements, the view Kant took of the regulative function of the Ideas in the first *Critique*, is now replaced by the assumption of a regulative principle belonging to an entirely new faculty: the faculty of judgement.

Thus, Cassirer sees a theoretical need for the analysis of aesthetic judgements, but denies any connection between the way these judgements are formed and the way empirical judgements are made. In his view the *Critique of Judgement* is essentially directed at teleological judgements, and the analysis of aesthetic judgements is merely a preliminary theoretical step.

By contrast Sarah Gibbons stresses the similarities between aesthetic judgements and other reflective judgement. She compares the act of schematizing with the act of the genius, i.e. the creation of new rules in free imagination:

'In art rules (broadly speaking) are created and discovered not abstractly, but in *concreto* through a singular intuition which exceeds conceptual analysis. Artworks understood as 'rules' differ from mathematical constructions or

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Imagination: on Kant's theory of imagination and understanding

schemata [...] by expressing an indeterminate number of ideas rather than by constructing or exhibiting specific concepts. None the less the similarities between these activities are significant: in all cases, productive imagination innovates by exhibiting 'new rules' in intuition, rather than by following recognized rules and simply subsuming intuition under concepts. Imagination creates and exhibits order and coherence in intuition, which then makes concept-application and rule-following possible. This capacity will be common to all judging under its reflective aspect. Thus, genius may be thought of as a heightened capacity for judgement'.

Thus, Gibbons identifies the productive imagination of the first Critique with what Cassirer calls 'aesthetic imagination'. The consequence is that the form of imaginative representations can only be a matter of subjective judgement, which means that schematizing is not a conceptual (i.e. objective) act. Gibbons indeed infers that reflective judgement is always inherent to determinant judgement. She quotes the first Introduction: '[reflective judgement] seeks concepts for empirical presentations, qua empirical, [and] must make for this [end] this further assumption: it must assume that nature, with its boundless diversity, has hit upon a division of this diversity [...] that enables our judgement to find accordance among the natural forms it compares, and [so] enables it to arrive at empirical concepts'. Thus, empirical judgements are not possible with the faculty of determinant judgement alone, they necessarily involve a moment of subjective reflection. Gibbons continues: 'Here, the distinction between reflective and determinant judgement rests on whether the judgement involves only reflection on appearances (and/or cognitive powers) or whether it includes, in addition, the application of a determinant concept which gives the judgement its claim to objectivity. In the latter case, the subjective function is not eliminated; it is only masked by the subsumptive act of the understanding'.

She notes that Kant does not maintain this account consistently, but concludes that although Kant refrained from actually giving imagination a central role in the functioning of cognition, he 'consistently returns, however cautiously, to the examination of the connection between reason and imagination'.

Reason, then, is stimulated by the 'extra-conceptual' function of imagination, that is, where imagination is only involved with the formal suitability of intuition for thought, and not (yet) with its conceptual determination. This 'pure' function of imagination is revealed in aesthetic judgement, where

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146 Gibbons[1994] p 110
147 First Introduction 212 quoted from Gibbons[1994] p 82
148 Gibbons[1994] p 83
149 Gibbons[1994] p 87

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imagination is merely concerned with possible forms of intuition conform to understanding’s laws. In aesthetic judgement intuitive presentations are compared with the subject’s cognitive powers themselves: ‘In this case, we are not concerned with the determination of an object, even though the same capacities are involved as in schematizing’.150

The rigid separation of the three functions of imagination that Cassirer presents is then one that Gibbons rejects. In her interpretation, although formulated cautiously in consideration of Kant’s hesitance on the point, imagination has one main function: that of presenting intuitions in a manner suitable for our faculties of cognition. Imagination then interacts with reason and understanding in different ways, accounting for the different status of its representations in different types of judgement. Its representations may be determined through application of the categories, in determinant judgements. Primarily, however, intuitions acquire form through subjective reflection. Reflection consists of comparison of representations with either the subject’s own powers or with other representations. It always involves a priori ideas of reason (i.e. the assumption of a supersensible substrate), and may lead to the production of unifying concepts in reason. Imagination, then, first exhibits concepts of reason, and secondly, possibly, demonstrates the laws of understanding.

The differences with Cassirer’s reading are clear. For him, conceptualization is a different process than reflection, and requires a different type of imagination. The latter assumes only a priori ideas of reason, whilst the former also employs a priori concepts of understanding. Aesthetic and determinant judging thus form two separate types of judgement, based on the legislation of different faculties, either understanding or reason. A third type of judgement, teleological judgements, stands somewhere in the middle, since it combines the laws of these two faculties.

Gibbons is inclined to assume a gradual transition between the types of judgement, in which the faculty of applying determinant concepts is dependent on the recognition of regularities discovered in the productive imagination in reflection. Aesthetic judgements are directed towards a different purpose than determinant judgements. They are not concerned with the determination of the form of the intuitive presentation at hand, but instead they are solely concerned with the process of recognizing form itself. As such, this activity must be performed by a joinder of imagination and reason, and should then precede each and every type of judgement.

The two interpretations, further, assign a different status to the act of schematizing. For Cassirer, the fact that the free imagination only represents

150 Gibbons [1994] p 84
conform to indeterminate laws of understanding implies that its representations are not properly schematized, since schematized representations are objective. For Gibbons, the fact that imagination produces representations without determinate concepts implies that schematizing is an extra-conceptual function of imagination. Therefore any schematized representation contains a subjective element.

As a consequence of this difference, the two authors assign a different role to aesthetic judgement in cognition, and accordingly a different place to the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement in the Critical philosophy. In Cassirer's interpretation, aesthetic judgements are performed without our having a clue what they are about. They are some sort of by-product of our striving for harmony between the different cognitive faculties, since in aesthetic judgements the search for harmony becomes the purpose of the judgement. The only goal we have in performing such judgement is the experience of a sense of pleasure, derived from the satisfaction that an intuitive presentation suits our cognitive faculties. Thus, the mere existence of aesthetic judgements seems to carry some evidence that we are concerned with such harmony in cognizing throughout. Cassirer finds this sufficient explanation for the question why Kant devoted the first half of the third Critique to the faculty of aesthetic judgement. Cassirer's interpretation gives aesthetic judgement a marginal position, as it occurs only when the subject is as it were absorbed in the process of his own cognizing, without the least concern for the object that provided the occasion to the process. All that the subject seeks, is to experience some cognitive pleasures. This activity is hard to relate to the practice of aesthetic interpretation of art, and it seems to have little bearing upon the interpretation of metaphors that occur outside a narrowly defined poetic context.

This marginality is somewhat resolved in Gibbons' reading. Here the capacities used in aesthetic judging prove constitutive for the whole building of empirical knowledge. The faculty of imagination produces the regularities we need for the design of a systematic whole of empirical knowledge. In reflective judgements, imagination produces unity through the comparison of particular experiences. In aesthetic reflection we have the freedom of discovering, testing and reconsidering any such formal unity, without the need to stop at some point to arrive at a definite determination of the objects we reflect upon. Thus, to engage in aesthetic judgement is still to engage in creative thought for the mere pleasure of it; however, such creativity is indispensable as it is fundamental for the whole of knowledge that mankind possesses. Thus, Kant's remarks on the 'training of the faculties' in aesthetic judging fall into place as it employs and sharpens the very same skill that is needed for reflective judging,
and, as such, is a preliminary for understanding. Thus, any judgement involves the same cognitive skills as aesthetic judgement. From my perspective, Gibbons' interpretation presents an interesting juxtaposition of objective and subjective elements in conceptual understanding, especially since the subjectively employed free 'aesthetic' imagination is revealed as the preliminary of any application of concepts. As we saw, Ricoeur postulated at once the subjective character of imaginative meanings of metaphors, and the possibility of their gradual transition into conceptual, i.e. 'objective' meanings. On Gibbons' reading of Kant's theory of imagination, we can undertake an explanation of such transition in a Kantian vein, and explain in which respect Ricoeur's suggestions for a theory of imagination appeal to Kant's understanding of imagination. However, in doing so, we leave the realm of Kant's own articulated thought. The speculation on a dominant role of imagination, such that concepts depend upon it, cannot be attributed to Kant all the way, as will become clear shortly. Nonetheless, for the articulation of an epistemological account of metaphorical interpretation, it proves a fruitful exercise.
5 Cognition and metaphorical interpretation

5.1 Imagination and concepts

In a way, Cassirer's reading of the third Critique remains close to the whole of Kant's Critical philosophy, because we need not reconsider, upon his account, how the first Critique dealt with imagination. The texts on which Gibbons bases her interpretation are mainly texts which Kant did either not publish himself, such as the First Introduction, or texts which he revised at a later stage, such as the A-version of the Transcendental Deduction. Nevertheless, her reading makes it plausible that Kant at least was not entirely certain about the application of objective concepts in empirical judgements, and proposed his theory of productive imagination as an alternative. However, the suggestion that this additional account of imagination implies that all judgements, even the determinant ones, contain a moment of reflective judgement is not one that many interpreters will agree with.151 Indeed, the lack of this assumption is sometimes seen as the cause of Heidegger's criticism that Kant lacked the courage to think through a more 'radical' account of imagination.152

The greatest innovation of the third Critique may well be the introduction of the notion of 'subjective universality', next to that of objectivity. In this section I argue that with the introduction of this notion, together with the extended role of imagination in the third Critique, Kant paves the way for an understanding of cognition that uproots the foundations of the epistemology laid out in the first Critique.

As we saw, the necessary and universal character of subjective judgement is ultimately based on the rational idea of common ground. The notion of common ground receives different descriptions in the third Critique. It involves not only the assumed substratre of the phenomenal world (340), but also the assumption that humans have similar faculties of intuition, imagination and thought, that is, that the effect of intuiting a certain object is similar for everyone (238, 293). If the latter would not be the case, of course, an assumed supersensible substrate would not ensure a similar representation between individuals. Thus, although essentially subjective, empirical laws are universal in the sense that others cannot intuit differently. Subjectively universal knowledge then, may change over time due to the consideration of different particular experiences, and in the context of different rational presuppositions

151 Makkreel, for instance, opposes the theory of imagination in the first Critique to that in the third Critique. For his view and further discussion, see Makkreel[1990].
152 Cf. Mörchen[1970]
regarding the finality of the phenomena experienced. The notion of 'subjective universality', then, seems translatable into a more contemporary notion of intersubjectivity.\(^{153}\)

The introduction of 'subjective universality', next to the 'objectivity' of the first *Critique*, further reflects the increase of the importance of imagination. The *Critique of Pure Reason* exhibits a fundamental distrust of the faculty of imagination, ultimately assigning to it no more than a spontaneous obedience to the conceptual mind, and denying the possibility of a separate 'empirical consciousness'. Representations are not consciously accessible without understanding's determination. Imagination, the faculty of representing intuitions, only furnishes understanding with images for its concepts. In this role, it is entirely dominated by understanding. The dominance of understanding results on the one hand in a securely objective domain of knowledge; on the other hand, it fares badly in explaining the systematic connections by which we organize empirical knowledge, since it cannot explain the creation of universal concepts on the basis of subjective experience and reason alone.

In the *Critique of Judgement* the faculty of imagination has acquired greater responsibility. Here imagination presents a reliable factor among humans, in the form of an assumed conformity of their faculties of imagination. This faculty of imagination exhibits not only a conformity to the faculty of understanding, independent of its specific laws, but it even represents an 'internal intuition' of a completeness never attainable in understanding. This internal intuition provides a basis for reflection, that is comparison and analogical reasoning, which in turn may lead to the creation of rational concepts. In this process, understanding does not play its determinant role. Hence, imagination has become capable now of representing beyond understanding's ruling: conscious representations do not necessarily presuppose conceptual determination. Furthermore, with the recognition of an internal intuition, the role of imagination as the faculty of representation is not limited to reproduction in service of the determination of the intuited object or scene, since it can be evoked by symbols that are used in art.

Thus, with the notion of an internal intuition a kind of consciously accessible reservoir of imaginative representations 'associated' to the concepts is introduced. In the third *Critique* the faculty of imagination has thus gained the capacity to represent independently of conceptually determinate form. Its

\(^{153}\) Intersubjectivity, that is, as the minimal requirement for communication: the assumption that other people are capable of understanding a speaker's utterances through the sharing of a language in a speech community (and hence a common 'form of life' (Wittgenstein) or a common 'frame of reference' (Quine)).
extra-conceptual representations are the basis for the creation of concepts in subjective reflection. Thus, the assumption of accessible imaginative representations has a price, and it is paid in the form of the loss of objectivity of those concepts that result from reflection on imaginations' representations.

5.2 Speculations on the nature of concepts

Speculatively, after reading the *Critique of Judgement*, we may ask what remains of the initial dominance of the objective laws of understanding. The whole process of empirical judgement can be summarized without reference to 'objective universals' as follows. The formal limitations of intuitive presentations (i.e. conformity to understanding in general) are realized in the presentation in imagination. The creation of concepts is assigned to subjective reflection. The systematic organisation of empirical concepts in knowledge is provided by reason's subjective assumption of finality, and the universality of subjective judgements is provided by reason's assumption of common ground (intersubjectivity).

We may ask then, whether this description necessarily involves at some point an independent role for the objective laws of understanding. Is understanding's role not limited to the determination of mechanically processed representations? And is the determination of these not prepared in the schematic imagination with its 'conformity to understanding generally', and which, according to Gibbons' interpretation, is *extra-conceptual*? Is objective determination therewith not just a mere confirmation of what imagination already presents us with?

On the model of productive imagination, we could speculate that imagination presents such regularities in intuition as to give rise to comparison and unification, resulting in subjectively universal concepts. We could further speculate that all universals ultimately are the product of a process of reflection and hence a product of *abstraction* over the presentations in imagination, rather than that some of imagination's representations are the *instantiation* of the *a priori* laws of understanding. Speculating thus, we would conclude that the foundation of our concepts originates in productive imagination.

The application of determinate concepts, in this speculation, is thus understood as a 'facilitated' processing of representations in imagination. That is, any intuitive presentation that exhibits a familiar form, a form that has been encountered intuitively and processed in imagination previously, is recognized as similar to that previous representation in a 'reflective moment', and thus acquires the same conceptualization. This process of conceptualization is based on two capacities: first the capacity of recognizing similarity, and second the
cognitive representation of such conceptual identities that are constituted by the generalization of similarities. In this speculative model we would necessarily have to assume, in line with Kant’s argumentation, something like a faculty of reason, by which unifying concepts are developed and employed in relation to each other, in order to preserve the possibility of a consistent and systematic collection of concepts, that is, an organized whole of empirical knowledge.

Understanding the conceptual system in this way, namely as based on the faculty of reflective and not on that of determinant judgement, we could also explain the three functions of imagination that Cassirer sums up. First, the reproductive function of imagination could be regarded as the combining of previously cognized representations with a new representation, under a given aspect of similarity. Second, the productive function of imagination as the faculty that brings forth the a priori form of representations could be taken to indicate that the faculty of imagination itself imposes the form of representation, inherent to the structure of our perceptual and conceptual faculties. Any representation is thus bound by the possible forms imagination is capable of representing. Third, the productive ‘aesthetic’ function of imagination could be understood as the function of imagination that searches for a generalizable form of representations. In this function, through analogy and reasoning, new similarities are determined in such a way that a new concept, as a generalization of such similarities, may result from it.

In our speculative model then, every concept must be the result of productive imagination, that is, it must be the result of some repeated formal determination. That means that a concept cannot be understood as a static abstraction, but only as a generalization that, each time it is applied to a specific representation, may be adapted somewhat, since different aspects of the general similarity between the representations captured under a concept may be more or less prominent in any specific representation.

Such speculation has dramatic consequences for the hierarchic structure of mind as it is presented in the Critical Philosophy. The whole system of categories would be turned upside down, since categorical laws would be considered as the products of reflection on regularities in imagination. The system of categories itself would be regarded as a result of subjective reflection on the work of our own cognitive faculties, and would, in principle, be open for revision: they would not be a priori laws, but more flexible generalizations over experience. In other words, the categories would acquire themselves the status of subjective universals. The origin of objectivity is thus speculatively placed in the productive imagination. Objectivity, in this line of thought, is nothing but subjective universality with a well-established status.
The primary objection to this understanding of objectivity is, of course, that it assigns an intuitive origin to each and every concept. Besides the categories, other *a priori* universal laws would be deemed the result of reflection on intuitive presentations as well, such as mathematical laws.

So far, we only considered imagination's role in empirical and aesthetical judgements, which involve reflection on objects presented in intuition, and for these cases, we saw, concepts are formed in the process of reflection. For non-empirical, objective judgements, one might argue, the case should be different. These judgements may require a schematic presentation, as Kant tells us in the Schematism Chapter that for a thought to be meaningful, i.e. not mere logical form, it needs an intuitive presentation. But this intuitive content is constructed according to the laws of understanding. Thus, for Kant, mathematical objects for instance can only be conceived as the demonstration or instantiation of a concept of understanding. In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant illuminates this point with an example. If we landed on an island that seemed uninhabited, but where we then encountered a regular hexagon drawn in the sand, we would revise our opinion on the island's habitation. The chance that nature produces a figure that suits our laws of understanding so well is too small, and therefore we would think it more likely that a human being produced it. Thus, from the drawn figure, we would conclude that the island is inhabited (370).

There is an analogy, then, between mathematical and aesthetic judgements, as far as in both the subject is interested in mere form. The subject is not concerned with an actual object that underlies the mathematical object, as it would be in empirical judgements; rather, it is concerned with the object's possibility for our understanding only (367n.).

Furthermore, presumably other than in aesthetic judgements, the cause of our reflections is not given by the perception of an object. Rather, the recognition of a mathematical object is deemed a result of our conceptual understanding, and cannot be conceived as a starting-point from where a concept could be created. Thus, mathematical objects would present a different case than empirical objects: they presuppose a law of understanding, whereas the latter may give rise to the creation of a concept in conformity to such laws. The role of imagination in mathematical concepts then seems limited to that of providing the object to the law, as was described in the B-version of the Deduction. Thus, the argument runs, at least in the case of non-empirical concepts, the objective laws of understanding are necessarily *a priori*.

In the case of mathematical objects then, the concept would be the *raison d'être* of the demonstrative representation. However, that we use such concepts, and as a result construe their objects, does not imply that these concepts are entirely independent from productive imagination.
Imagining metaphors

Without going into the case of mathematical concepts specifically, we can ask whether imagination played a role in the origin of such concepts. That is, just as we did in the case of empirical concepts, we can ask whether a previous process of reflection, of comparing representations in imagination and further reasoning on the basis of these comparisons, can account for the existence of such concepts. Concepts of mathematical objects would be understood as the product of such a process of abstraction over forms that we tend to recognize easily, in much the same way as above we conjectured that categorical laws must be the result of the abstraction over repeated recognition of representations.

The question of origin of objective concepts is not addressed by Kant, because he deduces them from the way we actually cognize. Nevertheless, we could speculate how 'objective' concepts could emerge in the same way as we create concepts for empirical objects: through analogical reasoning, generalization and abstraction. In our speculative model, they could be explained as the result of reflection on the most suitable form for our imagination, to paraphrase Kant's characterization of mathematical objects as being suitable for our understanding.

But that is only one part of a possible explanation of the origin of presumably a priori concepts. For most people do not come into the habit of applying such concepts on the basis of subjective reflection. Not every subject has the capability of creating, for instance, all mathematical laws. The factor that should be taken into account here is the process of learning to form and use abstract, objective concepts. In the process of learning, the individual becomes acquainted with conceptualizations that his teachers (parents, peers etc.) make. Thus, the individual does not invent ways to conceptualize the whole world by himself, but learns to proceed as others do. In the process of learning then, the subject is presented with regularities, with combinations and generalizations that come under his attention much the same way as objects do. Our first experiences of the world are guided, and we stand corrected if we respond in ways that indicate conceptual combinations that are not part of society's systematic knowledge. In other words, the individual is taught to think the same way as others do. Laws in the subjective mind, then, are not only the result of private subjective imagination's combinations, but also of society's enforcement to combine representations under a given law.

154 To go into this matter specifically would mean to enter a discussion of theories diverging from Platonism to Intuitionism, which falls beyond the scope of the present investigation.

155 In fact, this is a problem for any a priori account of concepts: the problem that not all subjects are capable of producing scientific laws, whereas these must be accessible to each of them. Even Socrates' slave, who could calculate the lengths of the sides of a triangle, did not invent this on his own initiative: he had to be guided into the problem before he could solve it.
We may conclude that some concepts in this way have acquired an abstract status to the extent that they can no longer be related to subjective reflection on intuitive presentations. The existence of such concepts however, need not be derived from the a priori nature of human cognition per se, but can be attributed to the relation of subjective minds to a historically grown, collective system of knowledge. The process of learning that each individual undergoes within a society ensures the continued existence of certain laws in the minds of these individuals. The above speculation on the subjective nature of universal laws could thus be extended by consideration of the latter's history.

Objective knowledge is therewith understood as an intersubjective body of knowledge that is adopted by the individual in his education. The subject's knowledge of the world then is not only dependent on the individual's mind, but also springs forth from the individual's dependency on other individuals in society. The assumption of common ground would not only be legitimized by the (assumed) fact that all individuals have the same faculties, but also by the assumption that they have taught us to use the same system of concepts. These remarks resound the thoughts of more contemporary philosophers, such as Quine's naturalized epistemology, or Wittgenstein's notion of 'form of life'. However appealing a discussion of these distinctive echoes is, a more extensive discussion of these sketchy remarks lies beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Another perspective that is opened up by the present discussion, which I will not go into here, concerns the normative role of existing classifications in a general body of knowledge. Some conceptual laws are so fundamentally embedded in the structure of all knowledge that they function as a paradigm for new insights. Only after a 'revolution' in thought, sustained by undeniable experimental evidence and what is recognized as thorough reasoning, can such paradigmatic insights be opposed, as we know from abundant examples given in philosophy of science.

The normative function of existing concepts also plays a role in our use of language. Through the learning of definitions and cultural taboos, through being corrected or praised when first learning to speak, we develop strong ideas on how words ought to be used. The use of words is then subjected to general normative rules in a speech community. We may recall here how Davidson separates semantics and the practice of understanding natural

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156 Cf. Quine[1975], and Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (241)
157 I do discuss norms in use of language in sections 2 and 4 of the next chapter.
158 An instance of such paradigmatic changes could be found in the development of quantum mechanics, where, the category of 'modality', according to which an object either persists or not, makes no sense. The status of an electron here is indeterminate: one moment it appears as a particle, and at another as energy.
language. Meaning, as a property of a word or sentence, reflected in a concept, can be said to be a theoretical ideal or an 'objectification' of the many different uses of a word. In actual use of language, often no general law can be formulated that applies to each and every instance of the word. In other words, the rules that were abstracted from previous usage, do not necessarily cover new uses. Thus, objective word meanings, or propositional meanings of sentences as sought after in the type of semantics discussed in section 2 of chapter 1, present the most perfect generalization of word uses possible: those that could enter into the dictionary. However, these cannot be fully identified with the practice of conversation. Word meanings, insofar they are concepts that are derived from the practice of language, then may at best provide an instance of what Kant calls the 'normal idea' of an empirical concept. It functions as an example, a standard of what may be recognized, but in itself need not be found in reality.159

To develop a full perspective on these matters from these speculations on the nature of imagination is, as said, beyond the scope of this discussion. Here, I am primarily interested in imagination's role in conceptual understanding and its relevance for metaphorical interpretation, the discussion of which we will take up again below. These remarks however do serve as a preliminary warning against identifying general concepts that arise from reflection with linguistic meaning, the possibility of which is again considered in the next chapter.

Thus, I have speculatively outlined a model of cognition that departs from Kant's writings of productive imagination and reflective judgement. In the suggested model, concepts are the result of reflection on imaginative representations, stemming from either perception or 'internal intuition'. Through analogical reasoning, and comparison of different representations under the aspect of similarity, conceptual identities are developed in the subjective mind, enforced by the availability of linguistically expressed concepts in a learning environment.

With such a model, it is possible to distinguish different ways in which a judgement regarding the conceptual identity of an intuitive presentation can be

159 Kant mentions 'normal ideas' in the context of whether it could serve as a concept of beauty (which it cannot). He mentions, for instance, how an idea of an average sized, or normal man can be formed in imagination, on the basis of experience: 'if the mind is engaged upon comparisons, we may well suppose that it can in actual fact, though the process is unconscious, superimpose as it were one image upon another, and from coincidence of a number of the same kind arrive at a mean contour which serves as a common standard for all' (234). This normal idea is 'an intermediate between all singular intuitions of individuals, with their manifold variations -a floating image for the whole genus, which nature has set as an archetype underlying those of her products that belong to the same species, but which in no single case she seems to have completely attained' (234 Col).
formed. First, we combine the given presentation with certain representations because we learned to recognize their similarities, either through education, or through personal experience. That is, we recognize the given intuitive presentation as having a familiar conceptual identity. In this way we might recognize, for instance, a person as one we met before. Second, we combine representations because we recognize them as an instance of some previously construed or learned generalization. That is, we can construe a conceptual identity for a given presentation on the basis of analogy with previous conceptualizations, such as recognizing someone to be a human. Third and last, there is the instance where we have no previous similarly processed experiences to rely on, but where we determine the representation through an active process of combination and comparison with other representations. In this way, for instance, we could newly form the concept of a mammal, as applied to a whale. However, this process would basically be the same as that underlying all generalizations on the basis of intuitive presentation, whether of a given person, or of humans. It is the procedure of combination and comparison, which leads to the formation of a synthetic concept.

This process of conceptualization describes the working of productive imagination. The first type of concept application, that is, recognition of an intuitive presentation under a familiar concept, then could be understood as involving a reproductive function of imagination: a routine recognition on the basis of a previously produced conceptualization. The second instance of concept application lies somewhere in between recognition and production: the conceptualization is available, but was never applied to this instance. Hence, the productive aspect here lies in the recognition of similarity, which, as a general concept, was already available.

With these speculations then, we have definitively left the realm of Kantian epistemology, since in the above understanding of concepts, there is no place for a priori laws of understanding, and all understanding is attributed to the work of productive imagination. Although this understanding of the central role of imagination is foreign to the Critical philosophy, it is not entirely unfounded. Following Gibbons’ interpretation, and her emphasis on the writings that were either not published or revised, we could interpret Kant’s understanding of productive imagination as one of which he could himself not fully see the consequences through, since it was such a radically new conception in his time. Evidence for this interpretation we found in the dualistic nature of imagination’s representations, which at one place in the Critical philosophy necessarily involve conceptual determination (the B-Deduction, Schematism), and at another may be taken to precede conceptualization (A-Deduction, First Introduction CoJ) or even are maintained independently from determinant understanding (CoJ 35, 49, 57).
There are several instances, where Kant indicates relations of transitivity between concepts of reason and of understanding, and between reflection and determination. In the Analytic of the Beautiful Kant writes on the possibility that a judgement of taste, when compared to other judgements of similar objects becomes a logical or universal judgement (215, 285). At another instance, Kant implies that determinant judgements can be withheld at will: a subject may distance himself from the conceptual determination of a familiar object, in order to reflect on its beauty (231). Thus, it is possible to abstract over the objective content of a determined representation, and to reflect on the representations it evokes.

These remarks, as Gibbons interprets them, point towards a primacy of reflective judgement, and may thus have resulted from Kant's reconsideration of certain parts of the first Critique. It should however be emphasized that the third Critique is not presented as a revision of former insights; it could be taken as a revision only in so far as it adds a separate faculty of judgement. Thus, the status of objective universals is not questioned in the Critique of Judgement, but it is complemented by the notion of subjective universality.

Whichever insights in Kant's own thought are revealed by Gibbons' interpretation of Kant's theory of imagination is not really of concern here. The radical understanding of productive imagination as underlying all concepts I proposed is certainly not one that I would want to attribute to Kant. That his work, and a contemporary interpretation of it, should give rise to the understanding of understanding here proposed, should then not be taken as an attempt at exegesis, but as the liberal appropriation of some of the notions proposed in his philosophy.

On the basis of my discussion of the Critique of Judgement, then, I have proposed a gradual transition between understanding as routine conceptualization and as the result of productive imagination with respect to the degree of creativity involved in the processing of a given intuitive presentation. I have further assumed imagination as the faculty of representation that allows us to recognize and conceptualize similarity of appearance and form. Further, I adopted such notions as 'representation', 'internal intuition' and the 'faculty of imagination', but have not explicated, as yet, how they are to be understood in my use. Thus for instance the understanding of imagination, which in the above speculations is identified as the central drive behind concept formation, is still based on Kant's description of the, ultimately, 'blind force' within cognition. I will attempt to explicate the notions thus adopted from Kant in the next chapter. However, before moving on to a new discussion, one issue remains to be illuminated in the light of my suggestions here, namely the one that led to the previous discussion in the first place: metaphorical interpretation of poetic text.
5.3 Metaphor and productive imagination

We may now distinguish between two different orientations of the process of reflection, as far as it involves productive imagination. Reflection, we learn from the two books of the *Critique of Judgement*, can be geared towards the determination of an experience at hand, with the purpose of finding a concept under which it fits; but it can also serve the mere pleasure of engaging in such a process. To arrive at a concept that captures the relevant aspects of an experience is thus one possible goal of the process of reflection. Another such goal is to engage the productive use of imagination *because we want to do so*.

In the first case, the novelty, that is singularity of the experience, is crucial. If we can generalize over the singular experience, that is if we can abstract over some aspect of similarity with previous experiences, then that allows us to conceptually determine the experience. Further repetition of the experience could even lead us to develop a routine conceptualization of the experienced phenomena, as described above. Here, reflection is oriented towards the comparison with other experiences, and thus concentrates on finding and fixing relevant similarities.

In the second case singularity is not of great importance, since we are not so much concerned with capturing the content of the experience, as with its meaning for us. That is, we reflect on the possible relevance it could have for our other conceptualizations, on its impact on our mode of representation, and on the sensations it evokes in us. Here reflection is concerned with production in imagination and reflection itself, and hence does not stop at the production of a common general concept. It is as much interested in possible contrasts, differences and extensions of any possible conceptual combinations. Thus, in the 'self-interested' reflection, the process consists of questioning previous conceptualizations and distancing oneself from them. The process of re-conceptualization in this sense does not end since it has no end, that is, it is not aimed at finding a final, useful determination of the experience.

This understanding of a self-interested reflection is a generalization of Kant's understanding of aesthetic reflection, in which the notions of 'subjective finality' or 'purposiveness without end' now recur as reflection for reflection's sake. Thus, in my understanding of self-interested reflection I do adhere to Kant's definition of the productive imagination insofar as it describes the
ongoing process of distancing from former conceptual determinations, of newly comparing, reasoning and combining representations.\textsuperscript{160}

I cannot follow Kant in the idea that the productive imagination has no direct relation to conceptual understanding. On the contrary, I claim that this process is the very origin of all understanding, and that the only difference between conceptual understanding and self-interested reflection is the directedness towards the application of the produced concepts, versus the directedness towards mere conceptual productivity.

The process of applying a concept to some experience, then, is in essence the same as inventing a concept such that it fits the experience. Only in the first case, a routine processing of the experience in question is possible, since it is understood in a familiar way. However, in the case where we experience something new, and in the case where we are set upon newly experiencing something old, we consciously turn to the process of embedding the experience among other imaginative representations. The process of reflection need not end if we find pleasure in it, until we either settle on a definite concept, or find something else to direct our attention to.

The productive role of imagination, I suggested, consists of the presentation of material from perception or from an 'internal intuition' such that the subject may reflect upon it, construe new combinations of representations and generalizations of these. The subject may construe analogies with other representations, and represent these similarities in a unifying concept. A representation that is thus generalized exceeds the concept that is derived from it: the imaginative presentation is necessarily richer than the abstraction under an aspect of similarity or analogy. Thus, the representation cannot be understood as the mere demonstration of a concept, since it may underlie different concepts, under different aspects of similarity.

Language, we saw, was for Kant not strictly tied to concepts. Rather, words could function as symbols, recalling the imaginative representations that underlie the concepts that are expressed. This property of language, I concluded, could be interpreted as the iconic function of meanings that Ricoeur postulates. Through the words in a metaphor, then, representations from something like an 'internal intuition' are evoked in imagination, and serve as the material for renewed combining and comparison, that is, for the formation of new concepts.

\textsuperscript{160} Kant mentions the possibility of a distancing oneself from former determinations as one possible attitude allowing for aesthetic judgement of a familiar, conceptually determined object: 'In respect of an object with a definite internal end, a judgement of taste would only be pure where the person judging either has no concept of this end, or else makes abstraction from it in his judgement.' (231 CoJ)
In chapter 1 however, I argued that there is no such thing as a metaphor to the extent that it guarantees a metaphorical interpretation. Hence I concluded that 'metaphoricity' is a property assigned to an utterance or text in interpretation, which may be triggered by formal or contextual aspects of the utterance, but also as a result of the interest on the part of the interpreter. The above description of concept creation on the basis of evoked representations, coincides with this insight that metaphors are the result of a manner of interpreting. The interpreter has to engage in reflection on evoked representations, and actively combine them in order to arrive at an interpretation.

This description of metaphorical interpretation in terms of concept formation cannot distinguish between concept formation generally and metaphorical interpretation: it simply treats either as an instance of the search for a new concept on the basis of representations in imagination. As such, then, this description does not account for a special use of cognitive faculties in either poetic or metaphorical interpretation. However, treating poetic interpretation as a form of aesthetic interpretation, we may now characterize it as a form of self-interested reflection, that is, as the very same process as conceptual understanding with a different orientation. Poetic interpretation need not be directed towards the end of finding a new conceptual determination of some representation. Rather, it consists of reflection on a representation for the sake of reflecting itself, and for the sake of the pleasure that results from the engagement in reflection. Poetic interpretation, then, involves in essence the same cognitive processing mechanisms as conceptual understanding. Only the goal of the process is different: we do not use the tools of conceptualization as a means to find our way among the world, but we use it as a means to explore our own thoughts and representations.

5.4 Conclusion

As the outcome of the above speculations, I suggested an epistemological model that unifies aesthetic interpretation with conceptual understanding. The difference between the two is not considered to be an essential difference between processes of conceptualization, since in either case it is based on recognition of similarity and reasoning on the basis of analogy. Rather in aesthetic interpretation the use that is made of the faculty of conceptualization serves a different end: here recognition of similarities and analogies in imagination generates more thoughts than fit in a single, familiar concept applying to an intuitive presentation.
To arrive at this conclusion, I adopted a notion of concepts as conceptualizations, that is, as adjustable abstractions of imagination's representations, resulting from reflective combination and comparison. In recent psychology and philosophy, several theories on concept formation agree in some respects with the above speculations. As these present far more developed models of cognition than the above speculations, they may add plausibility and substance to the understanding of concepts as based on experience and recognition of similarity suggested above.

In the next chapter two theories are discussed that present a perception-based model of cognition and representation. I relate these models to the suggested understanding of productive imagination and subjective reflection, and conclude with a further elaboration of the speculative model of interpretation and understanding suggested above. I will sometimes appeal to some of Kant's notions as they are analysed here, such as the assumption of common ground, the reproductive and the productive roles of imagination, and the notion of subjective universality. Further, the discussion that follows should clarify the sense in which I can make use of some of the concepts derived from Kant in the speculations above, such as those of internal intuition, imaginative representation and aesthetic ideas.

At this point, poetic interpretation is now characterized as an aesthetic process in a somewhat traditional, Kantian fashion, that is, as a process with a certain orientation, namely the interest in reflection for its own sake, and the pleasure that results from it. We still need to get a clearer view of what this orientation consists of, and of how metaphorical interpretation can be characterized in terms of it. In a larger perspective, we need to reconsider what aesthetic interpretation, as a process of (re)conceptualizing in which the interpreter engages himself at will, has to do with aesthetic interpretation under a more common description, namely the interpretation of art or of poetic text. These topics will be discussed in the final chapter. But first, I turn to the discussion of how the above speculative understanding of productive imagination may be considered the central drive in concept formation in experience.