Knowledge and Cognition in Kant

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted, for any degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

Kant's legacy, according to contemporary epistemology textbooks, is a theory about the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge and the status of our experiential knowledge. Much of Kant's moral philosophy is similarly concerned with the possibility of practical knowledge. Thus, claims about various types of knowledge and their conditions of possibility are central to Kant's philosophy and its contemporary influence. Until recently, however, commentators paid relatively little attention to what "knowledge" means for Kant. This period of complacency has come to an end. Commentators such as Eric Watkins and Marcus Willaschek have raised awareness, showing that Kant uses two distinct terms that can reasonably be translated as knowledge: cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*). This work has established a new branch in Kant scholarship that seeks to clarify the meaning of Kant's epistemic concepts.

Despite minor disagreements, a new consensus about Kant's "knowledge terms" has emerged. First, Kant's concept of knowledge (*Wissen*) is likened to our concept of knowledge. Specifically, it is explained as a propositional attitude (namely, *Fürwahrhalten*) that must satisfy certain justification conditions. Second, it is argued that cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is unlike our contemporary concept of knowledge, describing some lower or prior epistemic achievement that need not be true. Very roughly, cognition is seen as a concept of Kant's transcendental psychology, whereas knowledge is taken to be a properly epistemic concept.

In this thesis, I challenge this new interpretive consensus. I argue that Kant's usage of the two "knowledge terms" of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* is best explained as reflecting two distinct frameworks of epistemological norms. On the one hand, some of Kant's epistemological claims are based on an account of our cognitive capacities conceived in abstraction from their concrete application. Kant's concept of cognition (*Erkenntnis*) expresses the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities in this abstract, non-concrete sense. This allows Kant to ignore certain complexities, or "causes of error," that must be considered in concrete cases. I call this the Capacity Framework. On the other hand, once an *in-abstracto*-theory of our cognitive capacities is established, questions arise about their concrete application. Here, epistemic norms must reflect complexities and "causes of error" in concrete situations. Kant's concept of knowledge (*Wissen*) must be understood as part of a theory of epistemic rules and norms for this sense of real-world, concrete judging. I call this the Concrete Framework.

My interpretation reverses the current consensus on the relation of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* to each other and to our contemporary concept of knowledge. Kant's concept of cognition is most thoroughly and purely "epistemic" in the sense that it is exclusively defined by the principles of our cognitive capacities. Therefore, it plays a similar role in Kant's philosophy as our contemporary concept of knowledge. Moreover, and in contrast to recent scholarship, I argue that Kantian cognition satisfies contemporary

conditions of knowledge, such as justification, truth, and belief.

Conversely, Kant's concept of knowledge (*Wissen*) is a concept of "real-world cognition." In concrete contexts, we aim for the same epistemic standard of success as in cognition: objectively real and, thus, true judgement. However, in concrete judging, there is an ineliminable chance of failure, and we lack criteria to rule out the possibility of error. Thus, a different set of norms is needed to decide whether a concrete judgement (*Fürwahrhalten*) counts as knowledge (*Wissen*). These norms are not justification conditions but conditions of the strength of individual and public acceptance of a judgement. Knowledge, for Kant, requires both strong individual and public acceptance (individual conviction and universal certainty) of a judgement.

My proposal clarifies the value of cognition, explains why Kant talks about cognition more frequently, and shows that Kant has a powerful background framework of epistemic normativity. For rival accounts, it is sometimes unclear why Kant would spend so much time and effort talking about cognition. My proposal shows that cognition is Kant's term for successful judgements, satisfying the epistemic standard of objective reality. This explains why cognition is epistemically valuable and, thus, why Kant devotes so much ink to explaining its possibility. Kant's two normative frameworks enable him to bracket certain features of real-world judging that are irrelevant to a theory of our cognitive capacities. So, my account offers a new and systematic explanation for Kant's use of *Wissen* and *Erkenntnis* across his critical work, including Kant's moral philosophy, as motivated by two distinct but related epistemological frameworks.

My account should also be interesting for contemporary philosophers. Kant's distinction between two "knowledge terms" enables him to commit to an infallibilist concept of cognition whilst acknowledging the messiness of real-world epistemic efforts. The separate concept of knowledge (*Wissen*) allows Kant to develop something like an "ethics of belief." Concrete judging (*Fürwahrhalten*) is guided by the epistemic ideal of cognition. At the same time, Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* (and thereby *Wissen*) allows him to take pragmatic and moral considerations into account. Thus, Kant's dual-framework approach is an attractive tool to accommodate conflicting intuitions, such as about the fallibility of knowledge or about pragmatic encroachment.

Contents

for my parents

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Citations

References to Kant's works are in in-text brackets. All references to Kant's works are to the volume and page number of the Academy Edition, edited by the Royal Prussian (German) Academy of the Sciences (1900-, Berlin: de Gruyter), with the exception of references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where I follow the *usance* of referencing the standard A and B pagination of the first and second edition respectively. For ease of reference, I include short titles or acronyms for Kant's works. These follow common usage (see: Table 1). Translations are my own, aided by the online translation tool DeepL and informed by existing translations, such as Werner Pluhar's translation of the three *Critiques* (1996, Indianapolis: Hackett) or *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (1992-, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Translations of student notes of Kant's Logics are taken from *Lectures on Logic*, trans. by Michael Young in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (1992, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). I usually follow conventions of the *Cambridge Edition* in translating technical terms, with the exception of the term *Vorstellung*, in which case I tend to follow Pluhar's translation as "presentation." Original emphases are formatted in text with wider space, my emphases are formatted in **bold text**. All other references are in the footnotes.

KrV	Critique of Pure Reason
KpV	Critique of Practical Reason
KU	Critique of the Power of Judgement
Groundwork	Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals
MAN	Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science
Logik Jäsche	The Jäsche Logic
Logik Dohna-Wundlacken	The Dohna-Wundlacken Logic
Logik Blomberg	The Blomberg Logic
Logik Vienna	The Vienna Logic
Logik Hechsel	The Hechsel Logic
Prolegomena	Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science
Was ist Aufklärung?	What is Enlightenment?

Table 1: References to Kant's Works

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Conceptual Knowledge-Challenge

Knowledge differs from what is known. For instance, your knowledge that a cow is brown differs from the cow being brown. Other epistemic states, such as judgements or beliefs, differ similarly from what they are about. This difference is sometimes called the "mind-world gap," the "problem of the world's intelligibility,"[1] or the "problem of intentionality."[2] The difference between "knowing" and "what is known" exercises philosophers because the concept of knowledge seems to require some relation between knowledge and what is known. One of the tasks of philosophy is to clarify this relation.

Explaining the correspondence between knowledge and what is known is challenging because "knowledge" and "what is known" are non-identical. This non-identity is naturally associated with another key distinction: that between the subject and the object. Your knowledge that the cow is brown belongs to you; it is subjective. The cow's being brown belongs to the cow; it is objective. *Prima facie*, subjectivity and objectivity seem different, even opposed. So, the required correspondence between "knowledge" and "what is known" is puzzling because it demands that something subjective (knowledge) be, in some sense, objective.

The distinction between subject and object introduces two challenges for understanding knowledge. On the one hand, there is an *explanatory challenge*. Meeting the explanatory challenge requires explaining how overcoming the subject-object divide might be possible. For instance, an account of how my perception of the brown cow can secure a correspondence between my knowledge that the cow is brown and the cow's being brown might meet the explanatory challenge. On the other hand, there is a *sceptical challenge*. An explanation of how knowledge can be possible may still leave

[1] Gerson 2009, 18; Rosenberg 2005, 9.
[2] McDowell 2009, 4.

room for deception and other epistemically unfortunate scenarios. Even if we can explain how overcoming the subject-object divide is possible, the divide persists. The sceptic can exploit this divide to describe a possible situation in which what is taken to be knowledge only appears to be objective. For instance, a scenario in which I merely appear to perceive a brown cow, but I, in fact, have no perception at all might be such a sceptical challenge. Meeting this sceptical challenge would require some account of why my perception of a brown cow is indeed the perception of a brown cow.

Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is still studied today because readers take it to say something interesting about the problem of knowledge (among other things). Kant's views are interesting not least because they concern the heart of the problem of knowledge: explaining its possibility in light of the difference between "knowing" and "what is known," given the subject-object gap and sceptical challenges.[3] And since, in Strawson's words, '[t]he theory of being, the theory of knowledge, and the theory of statement are not truly separable,' Kant's account of the possibility of knowledge also presents a theory in metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and many other philosophical sub-disciplines.[4]

Today's readers can be divided into two groups. Some are interested in Kant's system, which concerns at minimum Kant's so-called "Copernican Revolution"[5] or full-blown Transcendental Idealism.[6] Others are interested merely in some aspects of Kant's arguments, such as the method of Transcendental Argument,[7] the method of critique, or the "humility" some see as characteristic of Kant's metaphysical commitments.[8] Ultimately, all of these projects are related to Kant's overall project of explaining the possibility of knowledge. Therefore, to accurately understand and learn from Kant, having a good grasp of what Kant means by "knowledge" is essential.

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to a clearer grasp of what Kant means by "knowledge." However, my contribution here will differ from accounts of Kant's transcendental idealism. Above, I mentioned two challenges for philosophical accounts of knowledge: the *explanatory* challenge and the *sceptical* challenge. Accounts of Kant's transcendental idealism or parts of his arguments typically reconstruct his response to these two challenges. However, to assess whether an answer to the explanatory and sceptical challenges is successful, we must first clarify what we mean by "knowledge." Therefore, there is a third challenge, which could be called the *conceptual* challenge. To see why this is an independent challenge and why answering it is instrumentally important for explanatory and sceptical challenges, consider the following example.

[3] See, e.g.: Guyer 2008, 11; Langton 1998, 41–3; Sacks 2000, 43 ff; Greenberg 2001, 31–2, 57–9; Allison 2004, 12–9; Dicker 2004, 6; Stang 2016, 158 ff.

[4] Strawson 1975, 47.

[5] Allison 2004, 36; Hogan 2010.

[6] Bader 2010.

[7] Stroud 1968; Stern 2000; Lockie 2018.

[8] McClelland 2012; See Langton's work for the original expression of this idea as an interpretation of Kant: Langton 1998, 41–3.

Imagine you and your friend Karl want to find out who can bake a better Sacher cake. You invite some friends over for coffee and cake for a blind tasting to determine the winner. Imagine, further, that on the day your friend Karl shows up with a completely different type of cake, say an apple strudel. You will probably argue that you can still do a blind tasting to see who baked the better cake. However, the results will not show who can bake a better *Sacher* cake. Maybe your friend Karl does not know what a Sacher cake is. To determine who is better at baking Sacher cakes, you will have to agree on a common definition for a Sacher cake.

The cake-baking competition can be an analogy for theories of the possibility of knowledge. Imagine you are a transcendental idealist, like Kant. You want to find out if you have a better theory of the possibility of knowledge than your friend David. Perhaps David is what Kant would call a transcendental realist, someone who thinks that we can have knowledge of mind-independent objects (*KrV* A369, A386, A490/B518).[9] To decide who has the better theory of knowledge, you will have to agree on some definition of "knowledge." Just as one would need a shared conception of a Sacher cake for a fair comparison, one would need some degree of agreement on minimal conditions of knowledge to see who has the better theory. As this example illustrates, there is a difference between the *conceptual* challenge (What is the concept of knowledge?) and the *explanatory* and *sceptical* challenges (How is knowledge possible? Is knowledge possible?). This thesis aims to clarify what answer to the *conceptual* challenge would work for Kant's theory.

In this thesis, I will present a new account of what Kant means by cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*). Both concepts can be described as knowledge-concepts because they can reasonably be translated as "knowledge" into English. By studying the meaning of cognition and knowledge in Kant, I hope to contribute to an answer to the conceptual challenge. That is, I aim for an account of the meaning of the core epistemic achievements whose possibility the *Critiques* are intended to explain. Given that the possibility of knowledge is Kant's central concern in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, one might suppose that satisfactory interpretations of Kant's knowledge-concepts already exist. Yet, Kant's knowledge concepts have only started to attract serious academic scrutiny fairly recently.[10] And, as I will argue, there is still much to be learned. By remedying what I take to be a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature and relation between knowledge and cognition in Kant, I hope this thesis

[9] Here, I understand transcendental realism in the minimal sense as the thesis that we can know things in themselves. For a general account in these terms, with specific reference to Hume as an example of a transcendental realist, see: Beiser 2002, 43–7; There are various competing interpretations of the distinction between transcendental realism and idealism, which is partly an implication of competing accounts of Kant's transcendental idealism. My use of transcendental realism in this thesis remains neutral between these interpretive options. For an epistemic account of the distinction between transcendental realism and idealism, see: Allison 2006; For a metaphysical reading of this contrast, see, e.g.: Guyer 2008, 413–5; Cleve 1999, 222–5.

[10] Most significantly with Stevenson's work on *Fürwahrhalten* and, later, Watkins' and Willaschek's work on cognition: Stevenson 2003; Watkins and Willaschek 2017.

will contribute to a more accurate understanding of Kant's knowledge-concepts.

1.2 What does "knowledge" mean for the transcendental idealist?

Transcendental idealism is a theory about what we can know, given our cognitive capacities. At its heart is the claim that we can know appearances but not things in themselves. Despite this restriction, our knowledge of the world is of a shared, objective, and empirical reality. So, transcendental idealism is primarily a theory that addresses the first two challenges that I mentioned above (Section 1.1): the *explanatory* and the *sceptical* challenges. Precisely how Kant's transcendental idealism negotiates this problem of explaining knowledge in light of the mind-world gap has been a matter of debate among commentators since the *Critique of Pure Reason* was first published. Transcendental idealism takes a precarious position between the extremes of idealism and (transcendental) realism.[11] This focus on the substantive content of Kant's positive doctrine about the possibility of knowledge has obscured the relevancy of a distinct but equally significant interpretive challenge: the *conceptual* question of knowledge. So, while there is a plethora of interpretations of transcendental idealism, a more basic question has been largely ignored: What can it even mean to speak of "knowledge" in a transcendental idealist framework? On what basis is the meaning of this term to be explained, and how can we justify its usage in asking the question: "How is knowledge possible?"

The reader might object to this way of framing the question. Does transcendental idealism not provide an account of knowledge through a theory and critique of our capacities for acquiring knowledge? There is some truth to this objection. But the objection ignores the distinctness of two related questions:

1. What is knowledge?
2. How is knowledge possible?

As the analogy with the baking example in Section 1.1 shows, these questions are distinct. Moreover, we need an answer to the first question to obtain a standard of success for answers to the second. In this thesis, I aim to answer the first question for Kant's most central knowledge-concepts: *cognition* and *knowledge*. But this introduces the problem of accounting for what "knowledge" can mean for the transcendental idealist prior to a positive doctrine about how knowledge is possible.

Thankfully, we are familiar with the first question (What is knowledge?) from contemporary epistemology. Much of the debate in epistemology today is concerned with the meaning of the concept "knowledge." Familiar debates about whether knowledge

[11] See: Beiser 2002, 48–50.

requires an additional condition to justification, truth, and belief or about whether knowledge is a mental state concern this first question. By contrast, transcendental idealism is primarily a theory answering the second sort of question. It consists of an account and critique of our capacity to know.[12] So, Kant's theory seems to presuppose some answer to the first question, i.e., a response to the *conceptual* challenge. In analogy to the baking example, Kant seems to presuppose that readers understand what cake he is trying to bake. Unfortunately, however, Kant's treatment and usage of knowledge-concepts such as "cognition" contrasts sharply with his treatment of other central epistemic notions, such as "understanding," "sensibility," "intuitions," "concepts," and so on. Kant carefully defines and introduces these latter components of our cognitive capacities. Yet, the very epistemic achievement that these capacities are supposed to enable us to attain is initially used and introduced without an explanation or definition in each of the *Critiques* and in the *Prolegomena*:[13]

> In whichever way or through whichever means **a cognition** may relate to objects, it is still intuition through which it relates to them immediately and at which all thought aims as a means. (KrV A19/B33)

> If one wants to portray **a cognition** as a science, then one must first be able to precisely determine the distinguishing [feature] that it shares with no other [science] and what is, therefore, its distinguishing feature; [...] (Prolegomena IV:265)

> Practical principles are sentences that contain a general determination of the will, which contains several practical rules. They are subjective, or maxims if the condition is regarded as merely valid for the subject's will; but [they are] objective or practical laws if they are **cognised** to be objective, i.e., as valid for every being with reason. (KpV V:19)

> If we wish to decide whether something is beautiful or not, we do not use understanding to refer the presentation to the object so as to give rise to **cognition**; rather, we use imagination (perhaps in connection with understanding) to refer the presentation to the subject and her feeling of pleasure or displeasure. (KdU V:171)

The opening sentences of the main body of the text of the three *Critiques* and the *Prolegomena* (excluding prefaces and introductions) illustrate that Kant uses the term "cognition" without introducing or defining the term. It is treated as a familiar basic concept that does not require a dedicated introduction, definition, or explanation. A definition will vainly be sought in the text or close by. It is only much later, in rather obscure passages and sidenotes, that Kant gives something like an explicit definition or characterisation of cognition and knowledge. This indicates that Kant relies on

[12] For a recent interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism as primarily concerned with our *capacities* for knowledge, see: Schafer 2021.

[13] My bold emphases in each of the following quotes.

the reader to understand what these concepts mean. Their meaning is initially taken for granted, either based on an intuitive understanding or as familiar from existing debates among Kant's contemporaries.

Kant's reliance on some given meaning of "knowledge," i.e., on some assumed answer to the conceptual challenge, has been largely repeated by his commentators. This reliance is problematic. After all, to take up the example of the cake again, it is difficult to assess the success of a theory for baking a cake if it is not fully clear which cake to bake. Similarly, how can we assess Kant's success in explaining the possibility of cognition/knowledge without understanding what cognition/knowledge can mean for a transcendental idealist? Only recently have commentators become more attuned to the fact that it is not at all obvious what Kant means by "cognition" or "knowledge" and that it would be inappropriate to simply interpret them in line with contemporary analyses of these concepts.[14] These recent studies of Kant's most central epistemic terminology are insightful and I will repeatedly refer to them below. However, and aside from minor disagreements I may have with the specific content of these accounts of Kantian "cognition" and "knowledge," none of these existing studies is sensitive to the more general problem of explaining the meaning of "knowledge" within a transcendental idealist system. This problem, which I will now outline, is the overarching problem that motivates the present thesis.

1.2.1 The Meaning of Knowledge and Transcendental Idealism

I will now explain why clarifying the meaning of knowledge is a challenge for transcendental idealism. The problem arises from a combination of two factors: First, the main thesis of transcendental idealism is counterintuitive.[15] Specifically, it is counterintuitive that our knowledge is only of appearances, not of things in themselves. Second, without an explicit response to the conceptual challenge, transcendental idealism would still rely on an intuitive conception of knowledge. In combination, these factors result in the following problem. It is counterintuitive that our knowledge is only of appearances. However, for laypeople unfamiliar with transcendental idealism, knowledge intuitively means knowledge *of things in themselves*. To explain why transcendental idealist knowledge still counts as genuine knowledge, we must explain what the concept of knowledge in transcendental idealism shares with the layperson's intuitive account of knowledge. A more general concept of knowledge must apply to both the intuitive case (transcendental realism) *and* transcendental idealism.

To appreciate this problem, consider again the example of your exchange with your transcendental realist friend David (See: Section 1.1). Imagine trying to convince

[14] E.g.: Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007b, 2017; Pasternack 2015, 2014a; Höwing 2016; Mileti Nardo 2023; Watkins and Willaschek 2017; Willaschek and Watkins 2020.

[15] The complaint that Kant's 'method can never be brought to complete evidence,' i.e., that it is difficult to comprehend and thus counterintuitive has a long tradition and is already present in Kant's earliest reviews, such as Garve's: Garve 2000, 74.

David, a transcendental realist, that transcendental idealism, if true, can support knowledge claims. For your friend David, knowledge claims are supported because we somehow have direct epistemic access to things in themselves, to how the world is independent of our experience of it, whether through empiricist or rationalist means. Consider, for instance, a debate about whether there really is a lake in front of you that both of you see. You both agree that you know that there is a lake and that you know this because you see it. You agree that this lake exists independently of your perception of it. However, when pressed on the epistemic status of your knowledge, you will have to admit that the lake you see is an appearance. By contrast, your transcendental realist friend David will argue that he sees the lake as it is in itself. Debating whether you can really know that there is a lake in front of you as a transcendental idealist, your friend might argue: "Look, it seems like we operate with different conceptions of knowledge. When I say that I know there is a lake, I mean that there is a lake that exists in itself, independently of my experience of it. If I did not see it as it is in itself, I would not venture to claim that I know that there is a lake. You say that you also know that there is a lake. But what you claim to know is different from what I claim to know because your lake is just an appearance. Are you sure that we are using the same concept of knowledge?" As a transcendental idealist, you will now have two tasks. On the one hand, you will need to explain precisely how your knowledge of the lake comes about. Kant's *Critiques* are, in the main, an account of how our capacities for knowledge operate. On the other hand, you will have to explain why your knowledge claim satisfies the same general requirements of the concept of knowledge as the transcendental realist's knowledge claim. To convince your friend, you must offer a general account of knowledge that both of you can agree on and then show how transcendental idealism satisfies this general account.

The conceptual problem of knowledge for transcendental idealism is simultaneously a question about the standard of correctness for a transcendental idealist theory. If transcendental idealism is to have argumentative purchase, it must be able to explain why the judgements whose possibility it licenses are to count as knowledge. This requires an account of knowledge that is intelligible "from without" the theory of transcendental idealism. For instance, this could be the claim that knowledge is justified, true belief.[16] The success of transcendental idealism as a theory could then be measured by assessing whether our knowledge of appearances does indeed count as a justified, true belief. You could explain to your friend why your cognition of appearances can count as a justified, true belief. Yet, as I have already mentioned, Kant is not exactly forthcoming with a clear-cut definition of concepts such as "cognition" or "knowledge" that could serve this purpose. So, why should the transcendental realist agree that the knowledge claims that transcendental idealism licenses are genuine cases of knowledge?

[16]This is just an example. I do not suggest that Kant endorsed a justified-true-belief analysis of knowledge.

Although Kant does not offer a clear-cut account of knowledge that we can use to satisfy our transcendental realist friend, there are frequent implicit commitments to various standards of correctness for knowledge. For instance, certainty (*Gewissheit*) seems to be a requirement for a priori knowledge (e.g.: *Prolegomena* V:26). Objective validity appears to be a requirement for judgements in general (e.g.: *KrV* B142). And the objective validity of the pure forms of intuition is supposed to justify their empirical reality (see: *KrV* A28/B44; A35/B52). Kant also frequently aims to establish the objective reality of some judgement to justify its status as a genuine cognition (e.g.: *KrV* B114). Thus, some conception of objectivity and reality lurks in the background of Kant's usage of terms like "cognition" and "knowledge," albeit inexplicitly. By considering a variety of systematic commitments and requirements for Kant's knowledge terms, an account of their meaning can be inferred.

By attending to these systematic commitments, this thesis will reconstruct an account of Kant's knowledge-concepts (cognition and knowledge). Two lines of inquiry will guide this project. First, it will be necessary to develop an account of how conditions such as objective validity, objective reality, or certainty feature as requirements of Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge. Thus, this thesis offers accounts of Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge, along with associated concepts, such as opinion, conviction, or belief. This first task will occupy the most extensive part of this thesis, spanning Chapters 2 through 5.

Second, we must assess whether the success criterion of cognition – objective reality – can be consistently maintained, given the transcendental idealist framework Kant endorses, and in a way that could satisfy your transcendental realist friend, David. This second question will be taken up only in Chapter 6. There, I will propose one possible account of objective reality as a success standard for cognition in Kant. I hope that this account can work as a neutral success criterion for cognition both for Kant and for your transcendental realist friend David. However, more work will be required to develop this account fully. So, my response to the second question – whether Kant can rely on a concept of cognition that could convince your transcendental realist friend – will conclude with a reflection on the work required to further develop the account of objective reality that I propose.

1.2.2 Cognition and Knowledge

Existing research on Kant's most central "knowledge terms" (cognition and knowledge) does not satisfy my present aims. While there are studies on each of them, their scope is usually too narrow, and their method is too immanent to transcendental idealism. This immanence to transcendental idealism prevents them from offering the concept of cognition or knowledge that we could use as a general account of knowledge in our exchange with the transcendental realist. While enlightening, they do not solve the problem of giving meaning to knowledge in transcendental idealism. My disagreement

with existing accounts of Kant's concept of *cognition* (*Erkenntnis*) is mainly that these accounts fail to offer an account of the standard of correctness for cognition that is intelligible "from outside" transcendental idealism (see: Chapters 3 and 6). Moreover, I disagree with accounts of Kant's concept of *knowledge* (*Wissen*) because I do not think that it should be modelled as a type of propositional attitude (see: Chapter 4). Instead, Kant's concept of knowledge should be understood as the concept of a concrete judgement of which one is convinced and that is universally certain (see: Chapter 5).

Watkins and Willaschek claim that cognition is a representation that satisfies a thought and a givenness condition.[17] I agree with this characterisation, at least as an account of empirical cognition.[18] However, this account does not satisfy my present requirements on two counts. First, it is only applicable to theoretical cognition. Yet, Kant uses "cognition" also in his practical works. So, the scope of this analysis is too narrow. Second, defining cognition just in terms of the givenness and thought conditions fails to explain the epistemic value of cognition.[19] One may wonder why one should care to spend so much effort on a theory that justifies the status of ordinary experience and the categories as cognitions if all that means is that I have a representation of a "given" object in thought. To explain the epistemic value, one would have to explain why givenness and thought are required. While Watkins and Willaschek mention "objective reality" and having a "relation to an object" as explanatory factors, their meaning remains unclear, as other commentators on their account of cognition have already noted.[20] If, as Stefanie Grüne argues, the givenness requirement is really an objective reality requirement, then we must understand what objective reality means for Kant and why it is a requirement of cognition.[21] Part of my task here will thus be to develop an account of objective reality and clarify why it is a requirement for cognition (see: Chapter 6). In contrast to Grüne's proposal, however, I will aim to give an account of objective reality not only for theoretical but also for practical cognition because the requirement of objective reality features just as prominently in Kant's accounts of practical cognition (see: Section 6.3).

An account of objective reality is also a missing component in Schafer's analysis of Kant's concept of cognition, with which I otherwise largely agree.[22] For Schafer, cognition is a conscious representation of an object and of its own standards of correctness.[23] Uniquely (to my knowledge), Schafer's account of cognition extends both to the theoretical and to the practical case. Theoretical cognitions, Schafer argues, 'are accurate in how they represent [...] objects' while practical cognitions 'are

[17] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 84; Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3202.
[18] I disagree with several details, however, such as the claim that cognition can be false. See: Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3202.
[19] For a similar complaint about existing work on cognition, see: Schafer 2023a, 85–89.
[20] Grüne 2017, 115; Chignell 2017, 132.
[21] Grüne 2017, 115.
[22] Schafer 2023a, 56–84.
[23] Ibid., 61–2.

correct only insofar as their objects are things that *ought to be*.'[24] Again, I agree on a general level. But note that this account runs into the same problem as Watkins' and Willaschek's (in light of my present aims). What do the requirements of "accurately representing an object" or "accurately representing objects that ought to be" mean? Is the "object" here an appearance? If so, why should the transcendental realist agree that cognition is genuine knowledge? To consider the example of the lake again, how can the transcendental idealist justify that accurately representing this appearance (the lake) is just as legitimate a knowledge claim as the transcendental realist's purported experience of a thing in itself? To explain this, it will be necessary to go one level deeper, via an account of Kant's notion of objective reality, and beyond a merely immanent characterisation of "cognition" (see: Chapter 6).

My disagreements with existing literature on Kant's notion of "knowledge" (*Wissen*) are stronger. While commentators disagree on details, there is general agreement that "knowledge" is to be analysed as a type of propositional attitude, namely *Fürwahrhalten* (which is usually translated as "assent").[25] Commentators further agree that "knowledge" is to be distinguished from other types of *Fürwahrhalten*, such as "opinion" or "belief" and that this distinction is based on conditions of epistemic and non-epistemic justification. I disagree with both claims. *Fürwahrhalten* is not a propositional attitude, and interpreting it as such is inconsistent with Kant's account of judgement (see: Chapter 4). Moreover, the distinction between knowledge, opinion, and belief is not a matter of criteria of epistemic or non-epistemic justification (see: Chapter 5). Instead, the distinction is based on two factors that measure a judgement's degree of justification only indirectly: first, a subject's conviction of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*, and, second, whether the judgement is universally accepted (or "certain").

I will defend these claims in detail below. However, it should already be clear that this disagreement with existing approaches also entails a new perspective on the relation between cognition and knowledge. The orthodox view of this relation is that "cognition" is less epistemically demanding than "knowledge".[26] It is frequently argued, for instance, that cognition is a term for a mental state in which we merely take ourselves to be representing an object, without a requirement that this representation be accurate. Knowledge, by contrast, is considered to require strong epistemic justification (or "grounds of assent"). My proposal will largely invert this picture. Cognition is a thoroughly epistemic concept that requires epistemic justification and truth. Kant's concept of cognition is thus closest to our contemporary concept of knowledge. By contrast, Kant's concept of knowledge is part of a pragmatic taxonomy of concrete judging. Knowledge, opinion, and belief are distinguished not by appeal to a judgement's epistemic justification but through heuristics that can reliably be

[24] Schafer 2023a, 76.
[25] Stevenson 2003, 77; Chignell 2007b, 33; Pasternack 2014a, 41; Mileti Nardo 2023, 101.
[26] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3209.

employed in concrete cases of judgements. But these heuristics are only imperfectly indicative of a judgement's epistemic justification.

Thus, while "cognition" requires justification and truth (see: Sections 3.4 and 3.5), "knowledge" directly require only individual conviction and universal certainty (see: Chapter 5). Kant's concept of cognition is infallibilist, whereas his concept of knowledge is fallibilist (see: Section 5.4). This inverses the existing picture of the relation between Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge. Cognition, rather than knowledge, is the purely epistemic concept. This distinction between Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge must be drawn in light of a more general distinction between two frameworks of epistemic normativity in Kant: the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework.

1.3 Two Frameworks

To understand the use and meaning of Kant's most central epistemic concepts, we must distinguish two epistemological frameworks, or so I shall argue in this thesis. Kant's most central epistemic concepts are "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*) and "knowledge" (*Wissen*). Less central but also relevant are concepts such as "opinion" (*Meinung*) or "belief" (*Glaube*). I will call the two epistemological frameworks the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework respectively. These frameworks are epistemic in the sense that they are frameworks of the norms that govern judging (*urteilen*) in the sense of *determining judgement*.[27] Judging, for Kant, is an act of understanding that aims at cognition.[28] The frameworks refer to two different levels of epistemic normativity. In the Capacity Framework, we abstract from the conditions of concrete, real-world judging to understand the epistemic norms that govern our judging merely in light of the principles of our capacities for judging. As a result, certain sources of error in judgments that occur only in concrete judging can be ignored here. By contrast, in the Concrete Framework, we aim at understanding the epistemic norms that should govern our concrete epistemic practice, that is, the concrete judgements we make in everyday life. Here, certain sources of error can no longer be ignored.

To illustrate the difference between the two frameworks, consider the following example. Mathematically, we understand how a quantum computer works. So, we can already write algorithms for quantum computers that would work in mathematical theory. However, building actual quantum computers adds some layers of complexity. Maintaining quantum states as a physical reality is quite tricky. As a result, physically

[27]When I use the term "judgement" in this thesis, I exclusively refer to determining judgement, which includes both theoretical and practical judgement, and which is distinguished from reflective judgement in the third *Critique* (*KdU* V:267).

[28]I will say more about judging below. For now, the reader is referred to Kant's account of judgement in *MAN* IV:475 as 'an act through which given representations first become cognitions of an object.'

real quantum computers are prone to errors. So, we cannot use the algorithm that considers only mathematical theory. Instead, other tools and algorithms will have to complement the algorithm to weed out errors and ensure it can run smoothly on a physically real quantum computer.[29]

The distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework is analogous to the difference between the purely mathematical and the real-world way of thinking about quantum computing. On the one hand, we can think about our mental capacities purely as principles and in abstraction from their concrete, real-world application. Here, we can formulate a theory about our cognitive capacities, such as the sensibility, the understanding, or reason overall. This is the Capacity Framework, where norms are comparable to the purely mathematical algorithm for quantum computers. Here, we do not have to deal with sources of errors that only occur in concrete, real-world applications.

On the other hand, we can think about concrete acts of judging. Here, the principles from the Capacity Framework also obtain – as in the case of the quantum computer, the algorithm will still need to be based on the original purely mathematical model. But now we must take additional sources of error and other factors that affect concrete, real-world judging into account. This is the Concrete Framework, comparable with the tools and algorithms needed for the physically real quantum computer.

In Chapter 2, I will introduce this distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework in greater detail. Although Kant did not explicitly draw this distinction, I will argue that it is helpful as an interpretive tool to make sense of the distinction between Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge (See: Chapter 2). Kant's concept of cognition is best understood as part of the Capacity Framework, as I will argue in Chapter 3. This means Kant's concept of cognition is formed by abstracting from concrete acts of judging. The applicable norms here result from Kant's account of our epistemic capacities *as such* and independently of their use by a concrete judging subject. By contrast, Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* – and thereby the taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing – is best understood as part of the Concrete Framework, as I will argue in Chapters 4 and 5. Here, subjective sources of error must be taken into account for a suitable set of norms that govern *Fürwahrhalten* and its varieties of opining, believing, and knowing.

1.4 Sources of Confusion

Before proceeding with the development of my argument, it will be useful to reflect on the reasons that occasion the present investigation into Kant's knowledge-concepts. On the one hand, these reasons include the systematic need to understand Kant's answer to the *conceptual* challenge, as I have argued above (see: Sections 1.1-1.3).

[29]The same is true of conventional digital computers, of course.

On the other hand, the present investigation is necessitated by textual and exegetical factors. I already hinted at the lack of explicit or clear definitions of cognition and knowledge in Section 1.2. In this section, I will briefly summarise the state of the available textual evidence and reflect on why it is not entirely decisive.

One source of confusion is Kant's usage of two distinct terms, cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*), both of which can be translated as knowledge. Old translations of the *Critique* typically obscured this terminological difference by translating both terms as knowledge.[30] While newer translations contributed to an awareness of the terminological difference, some commentators continue to treat the two terms as referring to basically the same - or at least very similar - concepts.[31] This is not entirely unreasonable. Despite the terminological difference, many considerations speak in favour of treating *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* as something very much like knowledge. Some of these reasons will become evident only later in this thesis, as they depend on the content of my argument (see: Chapter 3). Nonetheless, several superficial reasons can be immediately introduced. First, Kant talks about *Erkenntnis* much more frequently than about *Wissen*. *Erkenntnis*, therefore, often has the same function in Kant's texts as the concept of knowledge in contemporary epistemology. Moreover, in some passages, Kant uses *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* interchangeably. Second, several concrete examples of cognition would most likely straightforwardly be described as knowledge by philosophers today. Third, *Erkenntnis* still means something like knowledge in contemporary German, which is shown, for instance, by the German name for epistemology: *Erkenntnistheorie*. I will now expand on the last two of these superficial arguments for equating the two concepts. Although they may carry some weight, they ultimately do not settle the issue.

Various types of cognition in Kant could be understood or translated as types of knowledge. The most important types of *Erkenntnis* include experience (empirical cognition) (*KrV* B147), mathematical and geometrical cognition, or philosophical cognition (*KrV* A713/B742). Empirical cognition concerns ordinary experience, such as seeing a house in front of me and experiencing it as a house.[32] This could plausibly be described as experiential knowledge. With mathematical and geometrical cognition, the association with knowledge is even stronger: Does not my cognition that 7+5=12 constitute knowledge?[33] Even for philosophical cognition, Kant insists that the standard of correctness must be apodictic certainty, although he leaves it to his readers to judge whether his work attains this status (*KrV* Axv).

Although these examples of types of cognition are suggestive of the centrality of *Erkenntnis* in Kant's texts, they do not constitute convincing evidence for equating

[30] An example is Norman Kemp Smith's translation: Kant 1929.
[31] Greenberg 2001; Guyer 2008; Dicker 2004.
[32] This is Kant's example from *KrV* A190/B235-6.
[33] This is an example of a judgement Kant discusses in the B Introduction (*KrV* B15), as an example of the claim that mathematics contains 'only pure cognition a priori.'

Erkenntnis with knowledge. Even if, on some accounts of experience, the experience of a house *eo ipso* constitutes knowledge, other accounts that separate the experience of a house from the judgement that there is a house and from knowledge of the fact that there is a house are conceivable. Similar points can be made about the remaining examples. Thus, the examples of cognition do not allow for a clear classification of *Erkenntnis* as knowledge or something else.

The philological situation is equally ambiguous. German speakers call epistemology "*Erkenntnistheorie*." Epistemology is often described as a "science of knowledge." This seems to recommend a knowledge-reading of *Erkenntnis*. Moreover, contemporary usage of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* in German suggests that the terms' meanings overlap significantly.[34] Given that contemporary English lacks a corresponding duplicity of terms might suggest that the difference – if there is any – might be insignificant.

Nonetheless, most German speakers note a difference in meaning between *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen*. For instance, *Erkenntnis* is ambiguous between a *process* (cognising) and its *result*, an ambiguity that *Wissen* lacks.[35] Some philosophers maintain that *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* must be kept distinct.[36] Others treat them as equivalent.[37] Moreover, the terminological duplicity of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* has a long tradition. The corresponding Latin terms *cognitio* and *scientia* have been continuously used in philosophy since ancient times.[38] While it might be difficult to find consistency in usage across time, Kant did inherit the terminological distinction and retained it. Kant inherited the distinction not only from the Ancients but also from his contemporaries. For instance, Christian Wolff's *Philosophia Prima* presents itself as finding 'the first principles of all human cognition' ('*ita ejus exemplo omnis cognitionis humanae principia prima*'), as opposed to the principles of human knowledge or science.[39] The lack of an explicit discussion on Kant's part about the difference between *cognitio* and *scientia* thus suggests that he expected his readers to be familiar with the distinction. In any case, the philological and etymological status of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* and their various Latin and Greek correlates is far from clear and does not by itself provide a straightforward argument for or against identifying the two terms.[40]

So, the fact of a terminological difference between *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* remains and there is no apparent argument to explain away its significance. The terminological duplicity thus introduces the possibility of a conceptual difference, a possibility that

[34] e.g.: Vollmer 2008, 1; and see: Horster and Jantzen 2010, 134–6.
[35] Horster and Jantzen 2010, 134.
[36] Janich 2000.
[37] E.g.: Vollmer 2008.
[38] For instance in Cicero, see: Bragova 2020.
[39] Wolff 2005, 4–5.
[40] Things are in fact a bit more complicated than the straightforward identification of *cognitio* and *Erkenntnis* that I suggest here. The Latin term *cognitio* is often translated variously as *Erkenntnis* or as *Wissen*. And many other Latin terms, such as *intellegere*, are also often translated as *wissen* or *erkennen*. As a result, one would hope in vain to clarify what Kant means by *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* on merely etymological or philological grounds.

must be investigated. Alas, the textual evidence is not exactly decisive. The term *Erkenntnis* is virtually omnipresent across Kant's work, so there are too many conflicting passages. For instance, there is a passage in the *Stufenleiter*, where Kant defines cognition as an 'objective perception' (*KrV* A320/B376).[41] In other passages, Kant emphasises that cognition requires the givenness of an object in intuition that is then thought under a concept (*KrV* A50/B74).[42] Finally, there are passages where Kant describes cognition in modal terms: '[t]o cognise an object it is required that I be able to prove its possibility' (*KrV* Bxxvi n., cf.: A89-90/B122).[43] So, for *Erkenntnis*, there is lots of conflicting textual evidence and associated conflicting interpretations that must be reconciled.

The situation is only apparently better in the case of *Wissen*. Several commentators have argued that Kant's account of *Fürwahrhalten* in the *Canon* of the first *Critique* and elsewhere furnishes us with an analysis of the justificatory conditions of knowledge comparable to contemporary analyses of knowledge.[44] For instance, Chignell argues that knowledge, for Kant, is an assent to true proposition for which the assenting subject has sufficient objective (i.e., epistemic) grounds.[45] Other commentators disagree about the precise conditions required for knowledge. However, all seem to think that (a) Kant offers a definition of knowledge in the *Canon*, that (b) knowledge is a type of assent and thus a propositional attitude, and that (c) knowledge is defined in terms of justificatory conditions. However, as I will argue in Chapters 4 and 5, this similarity of Kant's account of *Fürwahrhalten* to contemporary epistemology is only apparent. Specifically, I will argue that all three assumptions that commentators currently agree on are not warranted: I do not think that (a) the *Canon* offers a definition of knowledge in the contemporary sense of the term, that (b) knowledge (or indeed *Fürwahrhalten*) is a propositional attitude, or that (c) knowledge and other concepts such as *Opinion* or *Belief* are defined in terms of justificatory conditions. Instead, Kant's theory of *Fürwahrhalten* is a taxonomy of epistemic norms for concrete judging. Accordingly, although there is a more clearly defined set of passages in which Kant offers a theory of *Wissen*, alongside opining and believing, these passages do not support the current orthodoxy among commentators, according to which Kant's concept of *Wissen* resembles our contemporary concept of knowledge. Instead, I will argue for the reversal of this picture, according to which Kant's concept of *Erkenntnis* is closer to the contemporary epistemological concept of knowledge.

[41] Some commentators prioritise this passage in their interpretation of Kant's concept of cognition, including: Tolley 2020; Sommerlatte 2018.

[42] Passages like these are prioritised by Watkins and Willaschek: Watkins and Willaschek 2017; Willaschek and Watkins 2020; Chignell favours a related passage, where cognition is defined as a 'concept and an intuition of an object combined in the same representation' (*Real Progress* XX:273): Chignell 2014, 577.

[43] These passages are prioritised in accounts of cognition by Stang and Grüne: Stang 2016, 161; Grüne 2017, 127.

[44] Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007b,a, 2014; Pasternack 2015, 2014a; Höwing 2016.

[45] Chignell 2007b, 47.

1.5 Summary and Outline

In this thesis, I will offer a new account of Kant's concepts of cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*) and of their normative relation. In Chapter 2, I will lay the groundwork for my interpretation by introducing the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. To draw this distinction, I will also introduce distinctions between various types of cognition in Kant, which will pave the way for my interpretation of Kant's concept of cognition in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Kant's concept of cognition reflects the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities, abstracted from their concrete application. Specifically, cognition is the concept of successfully exercising our cognitive capacities in *determining judgement*. The standard of correctness is objective reality. Thus, cognitions are judgements that have objective reality. Against recent commentaries,[46] I will maintain that Kant's concept of cognition is not entirely different from our contemporary concept of knowledge. Kantian cognition plausibly satisfies the conditions of justification, truth, and belief commonly taken as definitional of knowledge today.[47] Moreover, Kant's concept of cognition has a similar function as our contemporary concept of knowledge. For Kant, cognition is *the* concept for the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities in judgement, whereby these cognitive capacities are conceptualised in abstraction from their concrete employment.

In Chapter 4, I will argue that Kant introduces the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* to address questions about epistemic norms that govern our *concrete* efforts at judging. Accordingly, the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* describes concrete acts of judging, which contrasts with the concept of cognition in which Kant abstracts from the concrete conditions of judging. The concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is thus part of the Concrete Framework, whereas the concept of cognition is part of the Capacity Framework.

Although *Fürwahrhalten* and cognition (*Erkenntnis*) belong to different domains of epistemic normativity, they are not unrelated. In *Fürwahrhalten*, the concept of cognition is still relevant. In *Fürwahrhalten*, we *aim* for judgements that have objective reality. If, counterfactually, we lived in a world where we could determine whether a concrete judgement (i.e., an instance of Fürwahrhalten) has objective reality with absolute certainty, the norms of *Fürwahrhalten* and cognition would be identical. If judging aims at objective reality, and if cognition is a judgement that has objective reality, and if we could always distinguish those judgements that have objective reality from those that do not, we would only have cognitions. You would not "take-to-be-true" (the literal meaning of *Fürwahrhalten*) what you judge not to be true.

Alas, we do not live in a world that is quite so epistemically fortunate. As empirical beings, we not only possess the cognitive capacities that Kant isolates in the Capacity

[46] e.g.: Willaschek and Watkins 2020; Kohl n.d.
[47] See: Dutant 2015.

Framework. We are also empirical subjects with needs, desires, wishes, emotions, and so on. This introduces the possibility of subjective causes of error (See: *Logik Jäsche* IX:53-4; Section 5.2). The concept of cognition abstracts away these sources of error. Thus, an account of the norms for concrete judging (i.e., the Concrete Framework) must complement an account of cognition (i.e., the Capacity Framework). The concept of *Fürwahrhalten* enables Kant to develop a set of epistemic norms specifically for concrete judging, in which subjective causes of error cannot be ignored.

In Chapter 5, I will argue that Kant's taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing is intended to provide criteria for assessing concrete judgements (i.e., *Fürwahrhalten*) that are pragmatically useful. Their aim is to help us distinguish, as far as humanly possible, the degree to which our *Fürwahrhalten* approximates the ideal of cognition. Kant offers two criteria for categorising our concrete judgements.

First, concrete judgements are subjectively sufficient only if the judging subject is convinced of them. Concrete judgements of which we *are not* convinced in this sense are mere opinions. After all, if we are not even subjectively convinced, then there is no reason to assume that it is very likely that this judgement is a cognition. If we *are* convinced of one of our judgements in this sense, this indicates that there is *at least* a strong subjective cause for the judgement.

Second, concrete judgements are objectively sufficient only if everyone is certain of them. This condition requires us to put our private concrete judgements to the test in an arena of public reason to test whether others will agree. Universal certainty, the public agreement about a concrete judgement, constitutes good evidence that the judgement probably has objective reality, i.e., that it is probably a cognition. Thus, concrete judgements that command universal certainty can be regarded as instances of knowledge. They are to be regarded as instances of knowledge for as long as it seems like they are probably cognitions. Of course, if one day it turns out that the universal certainty was mistaken and that public agreement was misplaced because the judgement was false, then we learn that this judgement was a mere persuasion and that it does not constitute an instance of knowledge. Judgements that lack universal certainty but still command individual conviction are beliefs.

The taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing, and thus the Concrete Framework, derives its normativity from the epistemic ideal of cognition, i.e., from the Capacity Framework. The conditions of individual conviction and public certainty are justified as heuristic approximations for the ideal of a judgement that has objective reality. We cannot say beyond doubt whether a given judgement merits the status of cognition because we cannot rule out subjective causes of error. Nonetheless, the combination of individual conviction and public certainty constitutes strong evidence that the judgement is indeed a cognition. This evidence is defeasible, so our concept of knowledge (individual conviction plus public certainty) is fallible. By contrast, the

concept of cognition that justifies this epistemic norm is infallible (see 5.4).

Because the concept of knowledge as a concept of concrete judging is defined through the conditions of individual conviction and public certainty, two other possible types of concrete judgements remain. On the one hand, there are those that only command individual conviction, i.e., instances of belief. On the other hand, there are concrete judgements that command neither individual conviction nor public certainty, i.e., opinions. The taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing thus results from an attempt to formulate epistemic norms that approximate, as far as pragmatically possible, the abstract ideal of the successful judgement: cognition. Accordingly, the norms of the Concrete Framework are justified as pragmatic approximations to the ideal of judgement identified in the Capacity Framework.

So, Kant's concept of cognition must be understood in light of its role in the Capacity Framework as the concept of a successful judgement. In judging, we aim for cognition, a judgement that has objective reality. The Concrete Framework provides us with norms to categorise our concrete judgements based on criteria to determine to what degree our concrete judgements approximate the ideal of cognition. Accordingly, objective reality is the success standard for all determining judgements. In Chapter 6, I will propose a new account of objective reality. I will argue that objective reality should be understood as a nomic concept. Accordingly, objective reality requires that the judgement correspond with relevant applicable laws concerning the judgement and its object.

I hope that this conception of objective reality can complete the account of cognition in Kant in a way that answers the conceptual challenge (Section 1.1) in light of the problem of the meaning of knowledge in transcendental idealism (Section 1.2). That is, I hope that this nomic conception of objective reality could satisfy your transcendental realist friend David. If objective reality is to be understood as a nomic concept, as I suggest, then Kant's concept of cognition would be a judgement that corresponds with relevant applicable laws. Laws would provide the "check" on knowledge-claims required for their objectivity.

An advantage of this nomic conception of objective reality is its domain-neutrality: laws can be moral, natural, physical, transcendental, empirical, and so on. Moreover, this nomic conception of objective reality is not committed to a particular metaphysical account of a mind-world relationship. This is important to avoid a conception of cognition that is already defined in terms that presuppose either transcendental realism or transcendental idealism. With the nomic conception of objective reality, I hope to offer a possible account of a neutral success standard for cognition that can function as a solution to the conceptual challenge that I outlined in Sections 1.1 and 1.2.

Chapter 2

Two Frameworks

2.1 Introduction

This short chapter has two preparatory functions. First, I will introduce textual evidence concerning Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge. In the case of cognition, I will offer a taxonomy of various types of cognition. This should help with keeping track of various cognition-related claims in later chapters. In the case of knowledge, I will show which passages are relevant and where they are located. Second, I will make a *prima facie* case for my overall interpretation of cognition and knowledge in light of the distinction between two frameworks of epistemic normativity, the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. To this end, I will show that we can use this distinction to make sense of Kant's usage of cognition and knowledge. Moreover, I will motivate the distinction between the two frameworks. Although Kant does not explicitly distinguish between the frameworks, I will argue that it is implicit in at least two relevant Kantian doctrines. Kant implicitly relies on the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework in his discussions of the contrast between historical and rational cognition and in his account of the difference between general and particular logic.

The chapter has the following structure. In Section 2.2.3, I will introduce a taxonomy of cognition and Kant's concept of knowledge from the *Canon*. I will argue that distinguishing between two frameworks of epistemic normativity can help us make sense of the contrast between cognition and knowledge. In Section 2.3, I will argue that Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition shows that he distinguishes an "objective" from a "subjective" concept of cognition. I will argue that this distinction corresponds to the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. In Section 2.4, I will argue that Kant's account of general as opposed to particular logic similarly corresponds to the distinction between

the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. Moreover, I will point out that this distinction is reflected by the roles of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements* and the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* (the two parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*), a claim which I will substantiate with an argument in Chapter 5. Accordingly, the *Doctrine of Elements* is a work in general logic and thus situated in the Capacity Framework, whereas the *Method* is a contribution to particular logic and thus situated in the Concrete Framework. Given that the concept of cognition plays a more prominent role in the *Doctrine of Elements* and that Kant's concept of knowledge is only introduced in the *Method*, it stands to reason to associate the concept of cognition with the Capacity Framework and the concept of knowledge with the Concrete Framework.

My overall reading of cognition and knowledge in terms of the distinction between two frameworks of epistemic normativity is here only provisional. Its full defence will depend on my accounts of each concept in later chapters. Several additional caveats should be acknowledged here. First, I do not claim that Kant explicitly or consistently distinguishes these two normative frameworks, nor that he deliberately implied them. Instead, I merely claim that distinguishing the Capacity Framework from the Concrete Framework can help us make sense of Kant's usage of the concepts of cognition and knowledge. Moreover, I will argue that the distinction can be motivated on the basis of Kantian resources, namely his discussion of historical and rational cognition (Section 2.3) and his distinction between general and particular logic (Section 2.4). Second, I do not claim that Kant consistently uses either "cognition" or "knowledge" *only* in the senses of Capacity Framework-cognition and Concrete Framework-knowledge. Indeed, as my discussion of historical and rational cognition will show, Kant also occasionally distinguishes Capacity Framework-cognition from Concrete Framework-cognition. Thus, I do not claim that Kant's usage of terminology is overly consistent. Rather, my claim is that the account of the contrast between cognition and knowledge through the two frameworks works for an account of the roles that these concepts *typically* have in Kant's theory. So, my claim that cognition is a Capacity Framework-concept and that knowledge is a Concrete Framework-concept is systematic rather than exegetical.

2.2 Cognition and Knowledge in the *Critiques*

This section has three parts. First, I will introduce Kant's taxonomy of cognition. Second, I will introduce the textual evidence regarding Kant's concept of knowledge. Third, I will introduce the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework to show how it could apply to the distinction between cognition and knowledge. The present section will have a preparatory function for the remainder of this thesis, as it introduces textual evidence that will remain relevant

throughout.

2.2.1 Cognition (*Erkenntnis*)

The term cognition is used ubiquitously across Kant's work, and it typically describes significant cognitive achievements (for more details, see: Chapter 3). Many of Kant's key doctrines are formulated as claims about cognition. This includes claims such as that '[o]ur cognition springs from two basic sources' (*KrV* A50/B74) or that '[t]thoughts without content are empty', while 'intuitions without concepts are blind', since it is '[o]nly from the fact that they unite [that] cognition can arise' (*KrV* A75/B51). Similarly, Kant's notion of synthesis is defined as the understanding's 'act of adding various presentations to one another and understanding their manifoldness in one cognition' (*KrV* A77/B78). A long list of central passages could be continued. Overall, Kant seems to use cognition to describe the successful employment of our cognitive powers in various contexts. An overview of the types of cognition that Kant distinguishes can help with understanding the scope of Kant's use of the concept of cognition.

Kant uses cognition to describe successful judgements both in *theoretical* and *practical* contexts. Thus, we can distinguish theoretical from practical cognition. (e.g.: *KrV* A633/B661). Kant draws this distinction in various ways. For instance, theoretical and practical cognition are distinguished by the type of object that cognition is about, by the type of relation of the cognition to this object, or by a relevant epistemic standard for this object (truth or moral value).[1] At one place in the first *Critique*, Kant describes the difference between theoretical and practical cognition as that between cognising 'what there is' and presenting to oneself 'what ought to be' (*KrV* A633/B661). For present purposes, it should suffice to note that Kant uses "cognition" to describe a certain sort of cognitive success both in the theoretical and practical domains.

Kant also distinguishes various ways of cognising "what there is," i.e., types of theoretical cognition. Specifically, Kant distinguishes the types of empirical cognition (experience), mathematical/geometrical cognition, and philosophical cognition. I will only offer a very brief overview here. Empirical cognition is experience (e.g.: *KrV* BXVII). It requires the use of given intuitions, and thus perceptions (See: *KrV* A177/B219), thought under concepts to determine a particular object (*KrV* B218).[2] By contrast, mathematical/geometrical and philosophical cognitions do not determine particular objects (See: *KrV* A713/B741). However, they still depend on their applicability to possible particular objects of experience, i.e., objects of empirical cognition, to merit their status as cognitions (*KrV* A712-4/B740-2). As Kant summarises, all theoretical cognition ultimately depends for its epistemic status

[1] Karl Schafer offers an overview of relevant passages here and discusses them in an insightful way that has informed the present discussion: Schafer 2023a, 73–6.

[2] See: Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 89–90, 95–9; cf.: Willaschek and Watkins 2020.

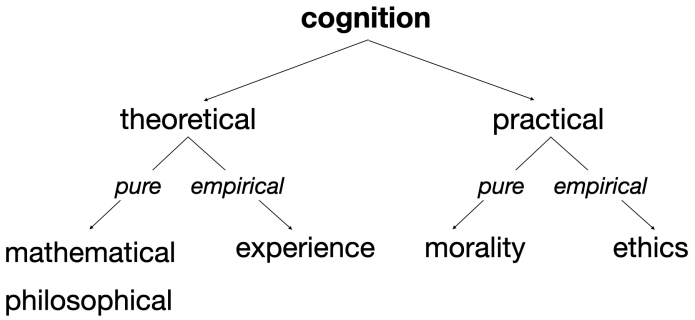

Figure 2.1: Taxonomy of Cognition

on the applicability to possible objects of empirical cognition through intuition:

> All our cognition relates ultimately to possible intuitions: for through these alone is an object given. Now an a priori concept (a non-empirical concept) either already contains a pure intuition in itself, and then it can be constructed; or nothing but the synthesis of possible intuitions, which are not given a priori, and then one can judge synthetically and a priori through it, but only discursively, according to concepts, and never intuitively through the construction of the concept. (*KrV* A719-20/B747-8)

Accordingly, all theoretical cognition 'relates ultimately to possible intuitions' and is thus only meritorious of its status as a cognition because of this relation to empirical cognition and, thereby, to objects of experience. Thus, theoretical cognition concerns 'what there is' (*KrV* A633/B661) in the sense of empirical objects. By contrast, practical cognition concerns 'what ought to be' (*KrV* A633/B661) in the sense of the empirical objects that we should make or bring about through our actions. In short, cognition is Kant's term for cases in which our cognitive capacities are used to successfully represent the world or what we should do. The taxonomy is summarised in Figure 2.1.

2.2.2 Knowledge (*Wissen*)

Kant does not use *Wissen* (noun) or *wissen* (verb) as frequently as cognition-related terms. Nonetheless, claims about *Wisen* and *wissen* occur throughout. In contrast to the dispersed and conflicting textual evidence on cognition (see: Section 1.4), commentators have identified an authoritative passage where Kant offers an account of knowledge. This account is located in the second part of the first *Critique*, in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, and more specifically in the section *Of Opining, Knowing, and Believing* of the *Canon* (*KrV* A820/B848). In this passage, Kant offers

a theory of *Fürwahrhalten*, a term that literally translates to holding-to-be-true (see Chapter 4). Opining, believing, and knowing are types of *Fürwahrhalten*. Kant's account of *Fürwahrhalten* in the *Critique* corresponds – more or less closely – to his account of *Fürwahrhalten* in student notes of various logic lectures.

In the *Canon*, Kant defines knowledge (*Wissen*) as subjectively and objectively sufficient *Fürwahrhalten* (for more details, see: 5). Moreover, Kant's use of the terms *wissen* and *Wissen* suggests that it similarly describes a successful exercise of our cognitive capacities. For instance, at one point in the introduction, Kant argues that it is the aim of the first *Critique* to show to what degree we can judge 'in knowledge or in not-knowledge of objects' and to thereby determine 'certain bounds' of reason (*KrV* B22). Claims about our inability to cognise things in themselves are sometimes expressed as our inability to 'know' what they are (*KrV* A276/B332). Relatedly, in the *Discipline of Pure Reason*, Kant claims that 'through the critique of our reason we finally know so much, that in its pure and speculative use we indeed cannot know anything at all' (*KrV* A769/B797). Given that similar claims are frequently phrased in terms of cognition, it is at least not obvious that the terms cognition and knowledge refer to distinct concepts at all.

However, Kant's usage of cognition and knowledge does point to a difference. As noted, Kant defines *Wissen* only in the *Canon* and there as a type of *Fürwahrhalten*. By contrast, Kant's concept of cognition is more frequently described as a representation or a judgement (see: Sections 3.5 and 3.6). Moreover, we do not find a similar taxonomy of types of knowledge as we do in the case of types of cognition. Instead, knowledge is more closely associated with Kant's concept of science (*Wissenschaft*). Also, cognition is more closely associated with Kant's account of our cognitive powers (*Erkenntnisvermögen*) (e.g.: *KrV* A796/B824). So, there are some differences between Kant's typical usage of *Erkenntnis* and *Wissen* that at least allow for the possibility of conceptual distinctness. I will now introduce my suggestion for explaining this distinctness through two frameworks of epistemic normativity.

2.2.3 The Two Frameworks of Epistemic Normativity

In Kant, we can distinguish a Capacity Framework from a Concrete Framework of epistemic normativity. In the Capacity Framework, Kant isolates our cognitive capacities from their application in concrete contexts. Here, the capacities are conceptualised as principles of various cognitive functions or actions. His *Critiques* are, essentially, critiques of our capacities (*Vermögen*) of cognition.[3] Kant describes the faculties involved in cognition as "capacities of cognition" (*Erkenntnisvermögen*). Sensibility is a 'lower capacity of cognition' (*KrV* A260/B316; A835/B863). The capacities of understanding, judgement, and reason together constitute the 'three

[3]See Karl Schafer's illuminating argument for interpreting Kant's transcendental idealism as a 'capacities-first philosophy' Schafer 2021.

higher capacities of cognition' (*KrV* A67/B92; A130/B169; A835/B863; *KdU* V:177). It is thus possible to understand what Kant means by "cognition" in terms of what these capacities are capacities to do. Clarifying the meaning of "cognition" in this sense means explaining cognition in terms of the successful exercise or proper use of our cognitive capacities. Cognition, so-conceived, would be the concept for when "things go well" in the use of our cognitive capacities, whereby these capacities are conceptualised in abstraction from their concrete application.

The notion of "capacity" describes the 'inner principle of the possibility of action' (*Refl.* 3585, XVII:73). A capacity is thus not the actual, concrete relation of cause to effect through action and power. Instead, a capacity describes the inner principle of the possibility of this relation.[4] One way of thinking of cognition is thus in this abstract sense: which relations, which actions, are *possible* through the cognitive capacities that we find in ourselves? What are the *possible* achievements of the exercise of our cognitive capacities, given their inner principles? In the Capacity Framework, Kant seeks to clarify which cognitive achievements we can attain, given our capacities.

To show for which achievements our cognitive capacities are, in principle, suited, it makes sense to assume away certain complicating factors. Specifically, there are some complicating factors that occur only in concrete cases of judging that do not affect our cognitive capacities as such. For instance, there are some factors that are specific only to some individuals, such as their particular desires or needs, which can lead to motivated reasoning. While these complicating factors can play a significant role in real-world reasoning, they are extraneous to our cognitive capacities as such and thus irrelevant to an account of the cognitive actions of which we are, in principle, capable. Thus, the Capacity Framework develops an account of epistemic norms that abstracts away from factors that might occur in concrete, real-world judging but that are non-integral to the principles of our cognitive capacities as such.

To illustrate the distinction and relation between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework, let me consider a simpler model than Kant's theory of the mind. For instance, consider a thermometer. A thermometer has the capacity to accurately represent the temperature. This capacity can be described in a way that applies to all thermometers, as a principle of accurately representing the temperature. We could then define a successful exercise of the thermometer's capacity as one in which the temperature is accurately represented. This is the type of cognitive success that, as I will argue, Kant expresses with the notion of cognition. This concept of a successful exercise of a thermometer's capacity will be valid as an epistemic norm for all thermometers. A thermometer's exercise of its cognitive capacities will be successful only if it accurately represents the temperature as a result of the exercise of its capacities.

[4] As Schafer argues, it is this *inner principle* that 'determines how that capacity functions:' Schafer 2021, 663.

In addition to thinking about thermometers' capacity to accurately represent the temperature, we can also think about *concrete* thermometers. Here, additional factors might come into play. For instance, a thermometer might have the capacity to accurately represent the temperature *unless* it is placed in direct sunlight. If this particular thermometer is placed in direct sunlight, it will sometimes not accurately represent the temperature, *although it has the capacity to do so*. So, when evaluating a concrete thermometer's representations of temperature, we will have to consider additional factors. This corresponds to the Concrete Framework, where epistemic norms take these additional factors into account.

The contrast between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework applies to cognition and knowledge in the following way. Cognition is Kant's concept for the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities, conceptualised in abstraction from their concrete usage in particular subjects. Kant's concept of cognition is thus analogous to the thermometer's successful representation of the temperature in terms of its capacities. To account for additional factors that become relevant in concrete judging, Kant introduces the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* and, with it, the concept of knowledge. The purpose of *Fürwahrhalten* is to equip us with epistemic norms to assess concrete cases of judgements. This is comparable to the concrete thermometer that is in direct sunlight. If you look at any given concrete thermometer, you might know that it has the capacity to accurately represent the temperature. But it might be impossible to assess whether it does, in fact, accurately represent the temperature. After all, there are many factors that might affect the thermometer's performance, and you may be unable to rule out all of them. However, you can perform some checks to reduce the likelihood of the thermometer inaccurately representing the temperature. For instance, you could ensure that it is not exposed to direct sunlight.

The direct-sunlight-factor corresponds to certain subjective causes of error in judgement in Kant (see: *Logik Jäsche* IX:53-4). These can include, for instance, our desires, needs, or wishes. These can lead to errors in the exercise of the cognitive capacities that we do, in principle, have. For instance, they can cause motivated reasoning. Thus, the Concrete Framework must provide us with epistemic norms that either completely rule out or, if that is not possible, at least help us reduce the likelihood of error due to subjective causes. As I will argue in Chapter 5, Kant introduces two criteria for concrete judgements. Kant thinks that we cannot positively establish that a given, concrete judgement is indeed a cognition (see: Section 5.2). We have no completely reliable criteria to rule out the possibility that a concrete judgement that we make is caused *merely* by subjective causes. Therefore, the concept of cognition remains for us a purely theoretical concept that makes sense only as an account of the successful exercise of our capacities in abstraction from their concrete employment, i.e., in the Capacity Framework. Thus, in the Concrete Framework, we need to identify criteria that help us approximate, as far as possible, the ideal of cognition. The two

criteria Kant introduces to this end are *individual conviction* and *public certainty* (for details, see: Section 5.2). When both criteria are satisfied, our judgement is probably a cognition, in which case it counts as an instance of knowledge. When there is only individual conviction, it is a case of belief. And when neither condition is satisfied, it is a mere opinion.

The two frameworks relate to each other in various ways. First, the Capacity Framework relates to the Concrete Framework by abstracting from it to isolate the principles of our cognitive capacities from their concrete application. Thus, the very distinction of the two frameworks is only cogent in relation to each other. Second, the concept of cognition as an account of cognitive success, given our capacities, is valid for both normative frameworks. Just as the concept of a successful representation of temperature is still valid for a concrete thermometer, the concept of cognition as the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities is still valid in concrete cases of judging. Thus, even in concrete cases of judging, the concept of a successful judgement remains the same: cognition. Third, the norms of the Concrete Framework are necessitated by our inability to determine beyond doubt that a given judgement is, indeed, a cognition. We can never completely rule out the possibility that certain subjective causes of error affect our judgement. Thus, we need an additional set of norms – the Concrete Framework – for concrete judgements. Specifically, we need norms to distinguish those judgements of which we can confidently say that they are very probably cognitions (i.e., knowledge) from those of which we cannot confidently say this (i.e., beliefs and opinions).

The two frameworks are both frameworks of epistemic norms, but they correspond to two different fields of epistemological inquiry. In the first, we are interested in epistemic success *as such*. In the second, we are interested our concrete epistemic practices. These fields are not unrelated. As I have suggested, an account of cognitive success from the first field can be used to inform or justify rules for the second field. However, it is important not to confuse these fields. For instance, it would be a mistake, on Kant's account, to confuse our inability to determine for a concrete judgement whether it is a cognition with our inability to have cognitions at all. We are capable of cognition because we have the cognitive capacities that we do. For instance, we can have empirical and mathematical cognition. However, we cannot assess for every possible *concrete* empirical or mathematical judgement whether it is, indeed, a cognition. Thus, in our concrete epistemic praxis, we need the taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten* (opining, believing, and knowing) *in addition* to the concept of cognition.

The Concrete Framework has a pragmatist flair to it, and I will sometimes use the term "pragmatic" to emphasise this. However, I only use "pragmatic" in a loose sense here, and I do not necessarily imply strong connections with American pragmatism. I also do not use "pragmatic" in Kant's own sense of the term, which may be rather

technical.[5] I will describe Kant's account of *Fürwahrhalten* as pragmatic in two ways. First, it is pragmatic in the sense that it concerns concepts of concrete judgements. So, *Fürwahrhalten* describes concrete actions performed by individuals. *Fürwahrhalten* is thus a pragmatic concept concerning the practice of judging. This corresponds to Kant's wide concept of practical, as having to do with action.[6] Second, *Fürwahrhalten* is pragmatic because its norms are justified as heuristics that are "the best we can *do*" to approximate the ideal of cognition, given the ineliminable possibility of subjective causes of error. So, the concrete norms of *Fürwahrhalten* are pragmatic in the sense that their content partly depends on facts about the concrete practice of judging. However, the ideal of cognition itself is a concept of the Capacity Framework and, as such, not pragmatic. Since it is this concept of cognition that ultimately justifies the norms of the Concrete Framework, the source of the epistemic value of *knowledge* is in no way pragmatist. So, my account does not imply a pragmatist account of epistemic value or of truth.[7]

The task of further developing my reading of cognition and knowledge as concepts of cognitive success that respectively belong to the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework will consume the rest of this thesis. In the present chapter, I merely want to show that the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework is also reflected in two aspects of Kant's thought, namely in Kant's account of historical as opposed to rational cognition and in the distinction between general and particular logic.

2.3 Historical and Rational Cognition

In this section, I will show that the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework lurks in the background of Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition in the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*, the penultimate chapter of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*.[8] To draw the distinction between historical and rational cognition, Kant introduces the distinction between how a cognition is *subjectively* held and its *objective* status as a cognition. The distinction between historical and rational cognition only becomes relevant for an assessment of how cognitions are *subjectively* held, since, *objectively*, a cognition must always be rational.

[5] For detailed studies on Kant's use of the term "pragmatic," see: Rescher 2000; Axinn 2006; Henschen 2013.

[6] See Willaschek's account of the wide sense of "practical," which includes moral-practical but also instrumental-practical thought. Willaschek 2016, 134.

[7] It may be possible to argue that an account of the value of cognition in Kant must ultimately appeal to its practical value, in the wide sense of practical as "having to do with action." Moreover, some have argued that epistemic value and normativity ultimately depends on moral value for Kant, e.g.: Patricia Kitcher 2011, 247; For a critique of this view, see: Hadisi 2022; In any case, I do not argue for or presuppose an interpretation in this sense of pragmatism here. For pragmatist theories on truth and epistemic value, see, e.g.: Peirce 1878; James 1909.

[8] Lea Ypi argues that the *Architectonic* plays a significant role for the entire first *Critique*, see: Ypi 2021.

Thus, to draw the distinction between historical and rational cognition as a feature of how cognition is *subjectively* held, Kant applies the Concrete Framework to the case of cognition. By contrast, when cognition is considered *objectively*, we operate with a Capacity Framework- concept of cognition. The Capacity Framework-concept of cognition is more prevalent throughout the *Critiques*, and it is only in the Capacity Framework that the concept of cognition is given meaning. However, Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition constitutes an informative exception to this that shows that Kant is implicitly committed to the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework.

By "architectonic" Kant means an account of the systematic connection and unity of cognitions, 'which first makes common cognition a science, i.e., from a mere aggregate into a system' (*KrV* A832/B860). The mere accumulation of cognitions does not suffice for them to count as a science; they must be systematically organised (*KrV* A833/B861).[9] For Kant, the 'manifold of cognitions' must be organised 'under an idea' and thus unified in a single system (*KrV* A832/B860). The *Architectonic* chapter of the first *Critique* is then exclusively concerned with the systematic unity of 'all cognition from pure reason' (*KrV* A835/B863). By "reason" Kant here means 'the entire upper capacity of cognition,' i.e., the understanding, judgement, and reason in the narrow sense (*KrV* A835/B863). Accordingly, the *Architectonic of Pure Reason* offers an account of the systematic unity of *Vernunfterkenntnis*, meaning the cognitions of the upper capacity for cognition (*oberes Erkenntnisvermögen*) (*KrV* A835-7/B863-5).

There are two types of pure cognition from reason (*Vernunfterkenntnis*), according to Kant, namely philosophical cognition and mathematical cognition (*KrV* A837/B865; see: Section 2.2.3). Both types are conceptual cognitions (since they only concern the upper capacity for cognition). Philosophical cognition is cognition *from concepts*; mathematical cognition takes place through the *construction of concepts* (*KrV* A837/B856; cf.: *KrV* A724/752). So, both types of *Vernunfterkenntnis* require the conceptual use of reason. However, Kant now introduces a crucial qualification for present purposes: How a particular person "subjectively" comes into possession of a *Vernunfterkenntnis* can differ from that cognition's "objective" status as a *Vernunfterkenntnis* (*KrV* A836/B864).

To illustrate the difference between a cognition's "objective" status and how a reasoner "subjectively" comes to entertain it, consider the following example. Imagine you were to teach a philosophy class merely by reporting some philosophers' conclusions without trying to get students to understand their arguments. You would teach them "what Aristotle said," for instance. In an exam, students would descriptively reproduce Aristotle's views on some topic. In this case, although Aristotle's views might be rational cognitions (for Aristotle or for you). Yet, your students could not claim to have rational cognitions of Aristotle's views. Instead, your students would merely have

[9] See: Ypi 2021, 22.

what Kant calls "historical cognition":

> A cognition may be originally given from whence it will, but it is historical in him who possesses it, if he cognises it only to the degree and so much as he has been given elsewhere, whether this be given to him by direct experience or narration, or by instruction (of general cognition). Thus, he who has merely learnt a system of philosophy, e.g. the Wolffian system, even if he had all the principles, explanations and proofs together with the structure of the whole philosophical edifice in his head, and could recount everything on his fingers, has no other than a complete historical cognition of Wolffian philosophy; he knows and judges only as much as was given to him. If one definition fails him, he does not know where to find another. He formed himself according to another's reason, but the reproductive faculty is not the generative faculty, i.e. the cognition did not spring from reason in his case, and although objectively it was indeed a rational cognition, subjectively it is still merely historical. (*KrV* A836/B864)

Historical cognition is thus the acceptance of other peoples' cognitions through teaching or testimony *without* using one's own reason. Kant's opposition and critique of historical cognition here is not directed at historical cognition as such but at historical *philosophical* cognition specifically (*KrV* A837/B865).[10] Within the context of the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*, Kant's critique of historical philosophical cognition is important because '[t]he system of all philosophical cognition is philosophy' (*KrV* A838/B866). Given that the *Architectonic* concerns the systematic organisation of *Vernunfterkenntnis*, this critique has an important implication for the form that a systematic organisation of philosophy can possibly take: 'One can only learn to philosophise' (*KrV* A838/B866) – not "a philosophy" or "a philosophical system". Thus, philosophy cannot be "architectonic" or "systematic" in the sense that metaphors of a building plan, architect, or construction work suggest, as Paula Manchester convincingly argues.[11] Philosophy is a "system" only in the sense of a goal-directed method, its organisation defined by its questions rather than teachings. Of course, this method is in the first place that of 'propaedeutic' critique (*KrV* A850/B878). Thus, philosophy, 'as mere speculation, serves more to prevent error than to expand cognition.'[12]

Kant's distinction between historical and rational cognition implies that there are two

[10] Michael Albrecht shows how this critique of historical philosophical cognition is a consistent feature throughout Kant's *oevre*: Albrecht 1982, 3–6.

[11] Manchester 2008, 133; For an insightful analysis of the historical context and origins of the notion of an Architectonic and Kant's critique of it, see: Manchester 2003.

[12] Paula Manchester argues that Kant applies this notion of philosophy as consisting primarily in the method of critique also to philosophy itself as its systematic principle: 'Philosophy needs to become its own "censor" instead of attempting to construct temples of wisdom for others who hire them to be guardians of the masses.' Manchester 2008, 147.

epistemological frameworks we can use to think about cognition. Specifically, we can distinguish between a cognition considered *as such*, i.e., "objectively", and a cognition considered *in concreto*, i.e., "subjectively." Kant's distinction between historical and rational cognition is drawn in the subjective consideration of cognition. It is only a concrete cognition that can be historical or rational. Objectively, *Vernunfterkenntnis* is always only rational, as otherwise, it would not be a cognition at all. This becomes clear from the last sentence of the long quote above: a cognition can be subjectively historical even though "objectively it was indeed a rational cognition". Considered as the cognition of a particular thinking subject, a given cognition can be *either* historical *or* rational (*KrV* A836/B864). So, the contrast between historical and rational cognition is only drawn for how cognitions are held *subjectively*, i.e., for how concrete subjects arrive at their cognition. The distinction between a subjective and an objective consideration of cognitions is thus implicitly committed to the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework.

The Capacity Framework corresponds to what Kant means by thinking of cognition 'objectively' but in abstraction 'from all content of the cognition' (*KrV* A835/B863). Cognition is here not the cognition of a particular thinking individual. Rather, it is cognition in light of the normative framework defined through our cognitive faculties. The Capacity Framework abstracts from two factors present in concrete cases of cognitions. First, it abstracts from specific *contents* of cognition. Second, it abstracts from the psychological conditions of specific individual reasoners. Within the Capacity Framework, cognition is defined through an abstract account of our cognitive capacities. The normative content is a matter of the *principles of the possibility* of the possible actions of our cognitive capacities.

The Concrete Framework corresponds to what Kant means by thinking of cognition 'subjectively' — but also in abstraction 'from all content of the cognition' (*KrV* A835/B863). The Concrete Framework does not consider specific cognitions of particular individuals. Rather, it concerns the general conditions under which concrete individuals cognise. The Concrete Framework thus takes psychological and other limitations that we encounter when we "cognise in practice" into account. However, it takes account of these limitations not in the sense of considering particular instances of such limitations but by acknowledging them as general features of real-world cognition. Kant's distinction between historical and rational cognition, which operates within the Concrete Framework, does not consider concrete cognitions in the sense of this or that person's philosophical beliefs. Rather, it considers the general conditions under which particular people make concrete judgements. And it is on this level of general features about concrete cognitions – in light of the psychological and empirical limitations that generally characterise cognising in practice – at which the Concrete Framework operates.

Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition thus exemplifies the two epistem-

ological frameworks in use. The distinction between historical and rational cognition is drawn within the Concrete Framework, which considers cognition as the achievement of particular and concrete thinkers, albeit in general and in abstraction from the specific content of cognition. Kant refers to this as the 'subjective' way of considering cognition, i.e., *as it is entertained by a concrete, specific subject* (*KrV* A836/B864). This contrasts with the 'objective' way of considering cognition, which Kant largely leaves unexplained here (*KrV* A836/B864). It is left unexplained because most discussions of cognition in earlier parts of the *Critique* operate within the objective, or as I call it, Capacity Framework.

Before proceeding to Kant's distinction between general and particular logic, it will be useful to point to a difference between the historical/practical distinction of cognition and the distinction of cognition into various types in the taxonomy of Section 2.2.3. The taxonomy of types of cognition (theoretical vs. practical, pure vs. empirical, mathematical vs. philosophical, etc.) is drawn in the Capacity Framework. The distinctions there are drawn in virtue of the cognitive capacities that are used and how they are used in cognition. By contrast, the distinction between historical and rational cognition is orthogonal to this taxonomy, as it is drawn in the Concrete Framework.

2.4 Pure and Applied General Logic

Kant's distinction between pure and applied general logic bears some similarity to the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. In this section, I will briefly introduce Kant's account of pure and applied general logic. This will show that the reasoning behind the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework would at least be available to Kant. However, I will also show that the distinctions do not overlap precisely. They are not exactly equivalent because Kant's concept of logic excludes the sensibility and thus intuition, whereas the Capacity Framework does include the sensibility and intuition because they constitute cognitive capacities. Moreover, Kant's concept of applied general logic is *too empirically contingent* for the Concrete Framework. The present section will thus help sharpen the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework by contrasting it with the distinction between pure and applied general logic.

Kant distinguishes between *applied general logic* and *pure general logic* (*KrV* A54/B78-9). Kant introduces this distinction in his introduction to the *Transcendental Logic* (*KrV* A50/B74 ff.). For an overview of Kant's account of logic there, see Figure 2.2. There, Kant clarifies the sense of "logic" in the *Transcendental Logic*. Kant first distinguishes the logic of the general use of the understanding from the logic of the particular use of the understanding (*KrV* A52/B76). General logic concerns

'the absolutely necessary rules of thought' for all sorts of objects, whereas particular logic concerns the rules for thinking correctly about 'particular types of objects' (*KrV* A52/B76). I will say more about particular logic in Section 5.5, where I discuss the role of the taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten* in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*. Here, I will focus only on the contrast between pure and applied general logic. The *Transcendental Logic* is only concerned with general logic, which can, in turn, be distinguished into *applied general logic* and *pure general logic* (*KrV* A52/B77). Kant draws this distinction as follows:

> A general but pure logic therefore has to do with nothing but a priori principles and is a canon of understanding and reason, but only with regard to the formal aspect of its use; the content may be whatever it may (empirical or transcendental). A general logic, however, is called applied when it is directed to the rules of the use of reason under the subjective empirical conditions which psychology teaches us. It therefore has empirical principles, even if it is general to the extent that it deals with the use of reason without distinction of objects. (*KrV* A53/B77)

Accordingly, there are two sorts of rules of thought that we can distinguish as different types of general logic. On the one hand, we may abstract from the particular empirical conditions of concrete judgements and concern ourselves with the rules of thought in light of the (formal) capacities for judgement. On the other hand, we can consider the 'understanding and the rules of its necessary use *in concreto*, namely under the arbitrary conditions of the subject, [...] which altogether can only be empirically given' (*KrV* A54/B78-9). That is, applied logic considers the rules of thinking *in concreto*. This does not mean that a specific individual or a specific (type of object) is considered in applied logic. Rather, applied logic takes the psychological and other empirical limitations that limit our capacity for judging in practice into account. These empirical limits can include limits in time and resources, individual cognitive limits, or simply a lack of interest.

My distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework roughly corresponds to Kant's distinction between *pure logic* and *applied logic*. "Cognition" acquires its meaning from the Capacity Framework in the sense that it is defined in terms of the rules of judging that obtain in abstraction of concrete cases. "Knowledge" is defined in light of the limitations that we encounter in judging as concrete, empirical persons. Accordingly, when Kant talks about "cognition," he is primarily interested in the satisfaction of the pure general conditions of our capacities for judging. Contrariwise, when he talks about "knowledge," the emphasis is on the satisfaction of certain epistemic standards in light of the psychological limitations we encounter in our attempts at judging. So, there is at least some overlap between the two distinctions and in how they are drawn.

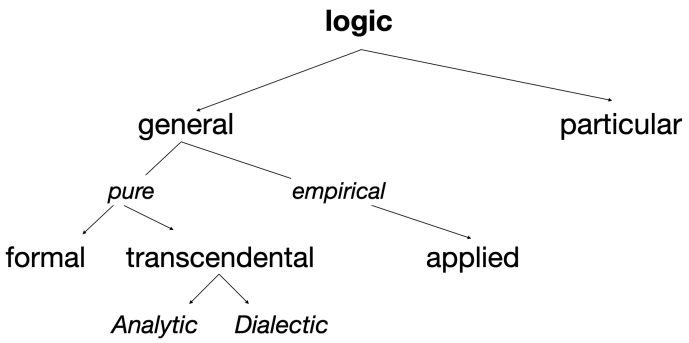

Figure 2.2: Disciplines of Logic

Although there is some overlap here, the distinctions are not exactly equivalent. First, logic for Kant excludes the 'science of the rules of the sensibility as such, i.e., Aesthetic' (*KrV* A52/B76). By contrast, the Capacity Framework includes both the *Aesthetic* and the *Transcendental Logic* because both disciplines offer an account of our cognitive capacities, considered in abstraction from their concrete application. Second, the Concrete Framework is not fully psychological in the sense of applied logic. Although judging the Concrete Framework is conceptualised as an act of a concrete individual subject, the Concrete Framework does not yet consider specific empirico-psychological facts. An example of facts that are relevant for applied logic in Kant's sense would be certain psychological biases in the assessment of risks or evidence, such as risk aversion or loss aversion.[13] Kant mentions examples such as 'attention [...], the cause of error, the state of doubting, skruples, conviction, etc.' (*KrV* A54-5/B79). For the Concrete Framework, these detailed psychological facts that can be known only through psychology are not relevant. Instead, the Concrete Framework conceptualises concrete judging still on the basis of facts that do not depend on *specific* facts about human psychology. The Concrete Framework merely *makes space* for these facts in an account of judgement. Specifically, in the Concrete Framework, judging is conceptualised as being possibly affected by psychological factors. *Which specific* psychological factors will affect judgements is still left open, however. So, in the Concrete Framework, judging is conceptualised as being possibly affected by psychological factors, whereas applied logic offers specific rules for judging, given the specific psychological factors that affect human judging.

Given the imperfect overlap, the distinctions between types of logic and the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework are not synonymous. The distinction between pure and applied general logic shows that Kant's resources permit of an

[13]See, e.g., Kahneman's and Tversky's work on certain psychological biases in the assessment of evidence and risk or Gigerenzer's work on the use of heuristics in psychologically real judging: Kahneman and Tversky 1984; Tversky and Kahneman 1992; Gigerenzer 2008.

abstraction from concrete judging. This is useful to show that the abstraction required for the concept of the Capacity Framework and the contrast with concrete circumstances is consistent with Kant's methodological repertoire. However, the contrast between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework is not a contrast between two types of logic. Instead, it is a contrast between two frameworks of epistemic normativity. The Capacity Framework cuts across both the *Aesthetic* and the *Transcendental Logic*, as both develop parts of Kant's theory of our cognitive capacities. Moreover, the Concrete Framework does make space for empirico-psychological facts about judging but does not depend on specific psychological facts. So, the Concrete Framework still conceptualises judgement in a way that abstracts from contingent psychological facts about judging. This is important for the status of the epistemic norms defined within the Concrete Framework. Although they are norms for concrete judging, they are still sufficiently general to not depend on specific empirical facts. Thus, the epistemic norms of the Concrete Framework do not have the status of an empirical science but are still part of philosophy proper. This is an important contrast with applied logic, which does not have the status of a proper science for Kant (*KrV* A54/B78).

2.5 Conclusion

I pursued two aims in this chapter. The first aim was to introduce some basic textual evidence on Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge to prepare for a more detailed discussion of each of them in subsequent chapters. The second aim was to introduce the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework to show how this distinction can be used to explain the relationship between Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge. The two frameworks are distinct but related frameworks of epistemic normativity. The Capacity Framework develops epistemic norms on the basis of an account of our cognitive capacities, conceptualised in abstraction from their concrete application. The concept of cognition is the concept of cognitive success in the Capacity Framework. By contrast, the Concrete Framework makes room for additional subjective factors ("causes of error") that must be considered in an account of epistemic norms for concrete judgements. Since it is impossible for judgers to rule out that their judgement was caused by a merely subjective cause, it is impossible to determine beyond doubt whether a given concrete judgement really is a cognition. Nonetheless, in the Concrete Framework, we still aim for the ideal of cognition defined in the Capacity Framework. Thus, the Concrete Framework aims for epistemic norms that help us, as far as pragmatically possible, to approximate the ideal of cognition. Kant's concept of knowledge as a type of *Fürwahrhalten* is defined through norms of the Concrete Framework that aim to approximate the ideal of cognition. A concrete judgement counts as knowledge (*ceteris paribus*) only if the judger is individually convinced and the judgement is

universally certain. The combination of these conditions is a strong indicator that the judgement is probably a cognition. As I will argue in Section 5.4, this means that Kant has an infallibilist concept of cognition but a fallibilist concept of knowledge.

Chapter 3

Cognition

3.1 Introduction

Cognition (*Erkenntnis*) stands out as *the* most significant epistemic concept in Kant. Kant is notorious for his claims about 'synthetic cognitions a priori' (*KrV* B18). His intricate account of experience is an account of 'empirical cognition' (*KrV* B147, cf.: B161, B165-6, A176/B218). The pure categories of the understanding have 'no other use than for the cognition of things' (*KrV* B147). Philosophical and mathematical knowledge is 'rational cognition (*Vernunfterkenntnis*)' (*KrV* A837/B865). And it is the function of practical reason to 'cognise' those laws that are 'objective, i.e., valid for the will of every being with reason' (*KpV* V:19). Moreover, the overall project of Kant's first two *Critiques* can be framed as an account of the possibility of theoretical and practical cognition respectively. Given the central role of the concept of cognition in Kant's critical *oeuvre*, accurately grasping its meaning is crucial for appreciating Kant's most significant philosophical claims.

In this chapter, I will offer an account of Kant's concept of cognition (*Erkenntnis*). As the previous chapters have already indicated, Kant's notion of cognition denotes an epistemic status. Here, I will argue that "cognition" is the epistemic status of a judgement that has objective reality. My reading has two implications. First, cognition being a judgement means that it results from a mental act directed at an epistemic standard of success.[1] Second, this success standard is objective reality. Thus, cognition is Kant's concept for a judgement that meets its epistemic success standard.

Although I will argue that objective reality is a success standard of cognition, I

[1] I therefore agree with Schafer's claim that cognition must meet a 'standard of correctness'. My account differs from Schafer in identifying objective reality (rather than real possibility and determinate content) as this standard of correctness. However, I do agree with Schafer that real possibility and determinate content are consequences of a wider standard of 'material truth,' which I identify with objective reality. My account here also differs from Schafer's because Schafer describes cognition merely as a representation, whereas I identify it with a judgement. Schafer 2023a, 59–64.

will only operate with a general and superficial concept of objective reality here. I will, therefore, restrict positive claims about the condition of objective reality to the minimum necessary for the present account of cognition. There are three reasons for operating with only a general notion of objective reality here. First, the features of the notion of objective reality that I outline in the present chapter suffice to make sense of my account of cognition. Second, I will offer a detailed new interpretation of Kant's concept of objective reality in Chapter 6, so it is possible to fill in the details then. Third, since I expect that my account of objective reality from Chapter 6 will be somewhat contentious, I hope that the minimal account I offer in this present chapter will be acceptable to a wider audience. As a result, my account of cognition should be acceptable even to those who might have reservations about my detailed account of objective reality in Chapter 6. For instance, those who agree with Ralf Meerbote that objective reality is equivalent to truth should still find my account of Kant's concept of cognition in this chapter acceptable.[2] Thus, my account of cognition here does not depend on the details of my account of objective reality in Chapter 6.

My reading will challenge recent claims according to which Kant's concept of cognition ($\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$) differs substantially from our contemporary concept of knowledge ($\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$).[3] Against this position, I will argue that a long-standing view in Kant scholarship – namely, that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ is knowledge – is justified.[4] That is, I will defend the orthodox approach of reading Kantian cognition as knowledge – with some caveats.

I will argue that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ largely corresponds to $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$. More specifically, I will argue that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ plausibly satisfies a sufficiently liberal contemporary conception of knowledge, such as that of knowledge as justified, true belief. This leaves open the possibility that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ is more restrictive than $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$. Thus, the set of possible instances of $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$ might be greater than the set of possible $\text{cognitions}_{\text{Kant}}$. Nonetheless, all possible $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ satisfy a sufficiently permissive conception of $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$. So, all $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ should count as $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$. Moreover, Kant's *concept* of $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ is defined in terms of similar epistemic requirements as $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$ in the sense of justified, true belief. So, the concepts of $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ and $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$ are relevantly similar.

The orthodox reading, according to which $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ is $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$, is *prima facie* attractive. It is attractive because, if accurate, it enables us to commune with Kant as a participant in contemporary epistemological debates. For instance, we

[2] Meerbote 1972, 57; Similarly, those who interpret objective reality as actuality (e.g.: Guyer) or those who favour a real possibility reading (e.g.: Grüne) should still be able to follow my account of cognition here. See: Guyer 2006, 376; Grüne 2017, 116.

[3] E.g.: Willaschek and Watkins 2020; Tolley 2020, 3240–2; Chignell 2014; Rudolf A. Makkreel 2018; Schafer 2022, 2023a, 69–73; Kohl n.d.

[4] Paul Guyer's seminal *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* is exemplary for the practice of reading Kant's claims about cognition as claims about knowledge: Guyer 1987.

could understand Kant's claims about a priori cognition as claims about the possibility of a priori knowledge. If, by contrast, recent critics of this orthodox practice are right, much of what Kant says about cognition would appear to be largely infertile material for today's epistemological discourse.

While I will endorse the orthodox approach of reading Kant's concept of cognition as largely equivalent to our concept of knowledge, I will not argue that Kant's concept of cognition is equivalent to *Kant's* own concept of knowledge. My analysis of Kant's accounts of *Fürwahrhalten* and, thereby, of knowledge$_{\text{Kant}}$ will follow in Chapters 4 and 5. My view on the relation between cognition$_{\text{Kant}}$ and knowledge$_{\text{Kant}}$ will be developed there.

Kant described much of what we would now call experiential, mathematical, philosophical, or moral knowledge as cognition. The previous chapter's overview of different types of cognition illustrates this: theoretical cognition encompasses experience, mathematics, and scientific inquiry, all of which must ultimately apply to objects of experience. Practical cognition, by contrast, has pure reason in its autonomous capacity as its standard of correctness. Thus, there are strong *prima facie* grounds for understanding Kant's concept of cognition simply as knowledge. The types of claims Kant describes as cognitions align closely with what we would describe as knowledge claims today. Accordingly, my argument will start from a presumption in favour of this most intuitively plausible reading - that cognition is knowledge. I will then assess to what extent this interpretation holds and where adjustments are needed.

This is a slightly longer chapter, so some remarks that help with orientation should be useful. The chapter is structured into three parts. In the first part (Sections 3.2-3.6), I will show that the argument against the orthodox knowledge-reading of cognition fails. In developing my argument against the no-knowledge reading, I will show that cognition is a judgement that has objective reality. In the second part (Section 3.7), I will summarise the results of my reading of cognition and extend it to cognition in the wide sense, covering all types of cognition of the taxonomy introduced in Section 2.2.3 above. In the third part (Section 3.8), I will sharpen my account of cognition by contrasting it with alternative interpretations of Kant's concept of cognition.

3.2 The Argument Against the Knowledge Reading

In this section, I will introduce the argument against the knowledge-reading of cognition. By knowledge-reading of cognition, I mean the claim that cognition$_{\text{Kant}}$ could count as knowledge$_{\text{contemporary}}$.

The argument against the knowledge reading of cognition is most clearly expressed in Eric Watkins' and Marcus Willaschek's comparison of cognition and knowledge in

Kant.[5] This study is based on Watkins' and Willaschek's account of cognition[6] and the reading of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* and knowledge Kant as a propositional attitude defined through justification criteria.[7] I will discuss Watkins' and Willaschek's reading of cognition in greater detail in Section 3.8. My critique of their views on Kant's concept of knowledge is located in Chapters 4 and 5. Here, I will focus only on the claim that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ could not count as $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$.

Eric Watkins and Marcus Willaschek argue that $\text{cognition}_{\text{Kant}}$ should not be equated with $\text{knowledge}_{\text{contemporary}}$.[8] Watkins' and Willaschek's argument against the knowledge reading of cognition has the following structure:

(1) On the contemporary account of knowledge, knowledge requires justification, truth, and belief.

(2) Kant's concept of cognition requires neither justification, nor truth, nor belief.[9]

C Therefore, Kant's concept of cognition cannot be understood as knowledge in the contemporary sense of knowledge.

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge some ways in which this claim is correct. Attributing the contemporary concept of knowledge as justified, true belief to Kant would be anachronistic. Kant did not think of himself as engaged in the project of analysing the concept of knowledge.[10] Moreover, as Dutant argues, the very idea of analysing knowledge specifically as justified true belief was only popularised by Gettier's critique of this analysis in the 1960s.[11] Thus, Kant's account of cognition is based on methodological presuppositions distinct from much of late twentieth-century thought on knowledge.

Nonetheless, the methodological gap is not insurmountable. As Timothy Williamson's account of knowledge demonstrates, one can reject the idea that knowledge is analysable into more basic components while still agreeing on other tenets of contemporary epistemology, such as knowledge's dependence on truth or safety.[12] Thus, to see whether Kant's concept of cognition can be understood as knowledge in the contemporary sense of the term we need not necessarily show that cognition is analysable as un-Gettiered justified, true belief. Instead, it may suffice to show that cognition plays a role in Kant's epistemology similar to that of knowledge today. For instance, one could demonstrate that some contemporary intuitions about what characterises knowledge also obtain for cognition. In Section 3.3, I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition does

[5] Willaschek and Watkins 2020.
[6] Watkins and Willaschek 2017.
[7] Examples of this type of reading of knowledge are: Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007b; Höwing 2016; Kohl n.d.
[8] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3209.
[9] Ibid., 3196–7, 3204, 3209–10.
[10] For an overview, see: Jenkins Ichikawa and Steup 2024.
[11] Dutant 2015.
[12] Williamson 2000, 34, 126.

indeed satisfy an intuitive account of knowledge. Specifically, the sorts of epistemic achievements that Kant calls cognition and its various types would intuitively be described as knowledge today. I take this point to be relatively uncontentious since most commentators agree that cognition can be understood as knowledge in *some sense*.[13] However, I still think this is a useful starting point for an analysis of Kant's concept of cognition because it shows that a knowledge-reading of cognition is in principle attractive and consistent with our intuitions about knowledge.

Although it is possible to argue that Kant's concept of cognition is knowledge in some intuitive sense of the concept, I will also show that Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the conditions of justification, truth and belief. Thus, Watkins' and Willaschek's argument against the knowledge reading of cognition cannot be sustained. My argument has the following form. I will show that Watkins' and Willaschek's conception of the conditions of justification, truth, and belief are *too narrow* and *restrictive*. There is wide disagreement in contemporary philosophy about what precisely the conditions of justification, truth, and belief require. Indeed, much of contemporary epistemology is occupied with debates between proponents of different theories about each of these conditions. Once the breadth of possible accounts of justification, truth, and belief is acknowledged, it is hard to sustain the claim that Kant's concept of cognition fails to satisfy any possible interpretation of these conditions.

In Section 3.4, I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the requirement of truth because it requires objective reality, which entails the factivity of cognition. By "factivity," I mean the requirement that the cognition of p entails p.[14] I will argue that the condition of objective reality plausibly entails factivity in this sense. In Section 3.5, I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition requires justification because it is the concept of a successful judgement. Kant's account of judgement in terms of the proper functioning of our cognitive capacities entails a sort of reliabilism. Thus, cognition requires justification in the sense of resulting from a reliable process of using our cognitive capacities. In Section 3.6, I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition also involves a sort of endorsement of the judgement that is similar to the condition of belief in contemporary epistemology. Although the concept of belief in our contemporary sense of the term was not available to Kant (as I will argue in greater detail in Chapter 4), Kant's concept of a judgement does entail the force-component that contemporary epistemology identifies with positive propositional attitudes, such as belief (for further details, see also: Sections 4.3 and 4.4). In Section 3.7, I will draw together the results of this analysis, showing that Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the conditions of justification, truth, and belief. The results will also be extended to cognition in the wider sense, including theoretical and practical cognition.

[13] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3196; Schafer 2023a, 57; Kohl n.d.
[14] This definition of factivity is taken from: Hannon 2013, 350.

3.3 The Intuitive Argument for the Knowledge Reading of Cognition

In this section, I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition corresponds to our intuitive concept of knowledge. What Kant paradigmatically describes as cognition is what we would describe as knowledge. So, in the present section, I take our intuitive usage of the concept of knowledge rather than a particular philosophical theory about knowledge as a starting point. Given how we usually talk about knowledge, I will describe some cases that I consider uncontentious examples of knowledge. In contemporary philosophy, our usage of the concept of knowledge in ordinary contexts is often taken as a relevant piece of evidence for theories about knowledge. Hence, my argument here should provide at least a *prima facie* defence of the knowledge reading of cognition.

Historically, understanding and translating cognition as knowledge was the standard position in Kant scholarship.[15] This orthodox position is well-founded, as Kant's concept of cognition aligns closely with what people would intuitively describe as knowledge. Consider the following examples of knowledge-claims. Carla knows that there is a house that she sees in front of her. Charles knows that 2+2=4. Gunnar knows that appearances are not things in themselves. Henrietta knows that she should not lie. Henrietta knows that she ought not to lie. These examples correspond to the types of cognition I introduced in Section 2.2.3. Experiencing a house is empirical cognition. Knowing that 2+2=4 is mathematical cognition.[16] Knowing that appearances are not things in themselves is philosophical cognition. And knowing that you ought not to lie is practical cognition.

Accordingly, the types of epistemic achievements or states that we would intuitively describe as knowledge are paradigmatic cases of cognition for Kant. Consider again the example of empirical cognition: you cognise a house if you see a house and think that there is a house (*KrV* A190/B235). Intuitively, this would count as an example of experiential knowledge. That is, Kant's concept of empirical cognition seems to correspond to a case of empirical knowledge.[17] Both, empirical cognition and experiential knowledge, are committed to some epistemic standard that entails that there is indeed a house if my epistemic state is to be legitimately described as empirical cognition or as experiential knowledge. This also implies that Kant's concept of cognition goes beyond a merely justified belief: cognising a house is not merely having a defeasible justified belief that there is a house.

Similarly, if you think that $2 + 2 = 4$ because you understand that two plus two truly

[15] For an overview, see: Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3196.

[16] If it is learned only from testimony, it would be historical mathematical cognition. If it is understood first-hand, it is rational mathematical cognition.

[17] This does not mean that a perception of a house is necessarily a sufficient justification for cognising a house. After all, we could be in fake-house country. Rather, it means that if a perception-based cognition of a house genuinely constitutes a cognition, then this state is comparable in its epistemic value and implications to the state we describe as experiential knowledge. See: Gettier 1963.

equals four, you cognise that 2 + 2 = 4 (See: *KrV* B15; cf. A713/B742). And even if you do not understand this, you can acquire the knowledge that 2 + 2 = 4 through reliable testimony, i.e., as a cognition that is – for you – historical and not rational (*KrV* A835/B863 ff.). This seems to correspond closely to what one would ordinarily describe as mathematical knowledge.

In the case of philosophical cognition, there is a strong case for understanding instances of philosophical cognition as knowledge. After all, the claims of transcendental philosophy are instances of philosophical cognition. For Kant, philosophy is 'the system of all philosophical cognition' (*KrV* A838/B866). And, as we have seen in Section 2.2.3, philosophical cognition is cognition of reason (*Vernunfterkenntnis*) from concepts (*KrV* A837/B865). Thus, Kant's critical transcendental philosophy itself has the status of a system of philosophical cognition. At least intuitively, it seems natural to identify Kant's philosophical claims as knowledge claims. For instance, it seems natural to describe Kant's claim that we cannot cognise things in themselves as a knowledge-claim, in the sense that we *know* that we cannot cognise things in themselves. Similarly, it seems that our philosophical cognition that the categories have objective validity and reality (*KrV* B129 ff.) constitutes *a priori* knowledge. Indeed, Kant's claims about the categories have traditionally been understood as claims about the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge (*KrV* A10/B12-3, B18). Revising this intuitive reading of philosophical cognition as knowledge-claims would have serious implications for this traditional line of reading.

This last point concerns the status of Kant's philosophical claims, not his account of synthetic a priori judgments as such. Kant's claims about synthetic a priori judgements themselves are also typically understood as claims about the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge.[18] Consider, for instance, Dieter Henrich's canonical account of the *Transcendental Deduction* as consisting of two parts, ' the one demonstrating the possibility of a systematic knowledge of experience and the other the impossibility of knowledge beyond the limits of experience.'[19] Watkins and Willaschek attack this reading with their new account of cognition, according to which cognition is not knowledge. Specifically, they argue that Kant's 'main focus in the *Critique* is not primarily epistemic, but semantic, since it concerns the conditions of the semantic features of our representations rather than what is specifically required for knowledge.'[20] As this passage demonstrates, revising the knowledge-reading of cognition would have far-reaching implications for understanding Kant's overall project in the *Critique*. In my reading of cognition below, I will disagree with this purely semantic reading. Presently, I merely want to point out that this claim about a semantic reading of cognition would not only apply to the content of Kant's theory of the possibility of

[18] Indeed, this is the textbook reading of Kant's aims in the first *Critique*. E.g.: Philip Kitcher 2006, 30; Anderson 2010, 76–7.
[19] Henrich 1969, 640.
[20] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3211.

synthetic a priori judgements but also to the status of Kant's philosophical claims themselves.

If Watkins and Willaschek are right, then Kant's account of philosophy ('the system of all philosophical cognition' (*KrV* A838/B866)) does not provide us with knowledge, but merely with objective representations that may well be false.[21] Thus, abandoning the intuitively appealing knowledge-reading of cognition comes at a great cost not only for Kant's theory of a priori judgement but also for the status of philosophy itself. After all, if philosophy is a system of philosophical cognition and if 'cognition requires neither justification, nor belief, and perhaps not even truth,' then it is somewhat hard to see why we would spend so much effort on pursuing philosophy in the first place. At the very least, Watkins' and Willaschek's attack on the knowledge reading of cognition would entail a substantial revision of the epistemic standard at which philosophy aims.

In this section, I have tried to show that characteristic cases of cognition in Kant's work could plausibly be described as knowledge on an intuitive case of knowledge. These cases cover ordinary experience, mathematical and philosophical knowledge, and moral knowledge. I also argued that revising this intuitive knowledge-reading of cognition would come at a particularly high cost for Kant's conception of philosophy. If, as Watkins and Willaschek suggest, cognition is merely an objective representation that requires neither justification, nor belief, nor truth, then Kant's conception of philosophy as a system of philosophical cognition seems at least quite foreign to us. Below, I will argue that we do not need to follow Watkins and Willaschek here. On a sufficiently liberal conception of truth, justification, and belief, it is at least possible to argue that Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the conditions of knowledge. Thus, the intuitively appealing knowledge-reading of cognition can be sustained.

3.4 Factivity

In this section, I will consider whether Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the truth-requirement of knowledge. On most accounts of knowledge, knowledge must be true.[22] The intuition behind the truth-requirement can be expressed in more general terms, however. Truth is only one possible epistemic standard that is intended to secure the factivity of knowledge. By factivity, I mean that knowing that p entails p.[23] I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition requires factivity because cognition requires the objective reality of a judgement. I will argue that objective reality entails truth, in the sense that cognising p entails p (factivity). This general account of factivity is consistent with various possible interpretations of transcendental idealism and thus

[21] Watkins and Willaschek do not rule out the possibility of false cognitions: Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3209.

[22] See, e.g.: Armstrong 1973, 137–8; The requirement of factivity is rarely challenged. For an overview of recent work on knowing falsely, see: Bricker 2022.

[23] This definition is taken from: Hannon 2013, 350.

with either metaphysical or purely epistemic accounts of factivity.

3.4.1 False Cognition

Before proceeding with my argument that cognition requires factivity, I must address textual evidence that seems to rule out this possibility. One reason why commentators are sometimes led to argue that cognition does not require truth is that Kant occasionally talks about 'false cognition' (e.g.: *KrV* A709/B737). If Kant's account of cognition would indeed permit cognitions to be straightforwardly false, this would be a strong reason not to identify cognition with knowledge. In any case, most commentators are not *convinced* that Kant uses the term false cognition in such a literal way. For instance, Watkins and Willaschek formulate the claim rather carefully, saying that 'it is at least not obvious that cognition [...] must always be true.'[24]

While it is indeed not obvious, there are good reasons to think that by "false cognition," Kant means an apparent cognition that is not a cognition precisely because it is false. A false cognition is a representation that is mistaken for a cognition. Kant would have been familiar with this use from Meier's *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*:

> A false or incorrect cognition (cognitio falsa) is **a cognition that is not a cognition** but which **appears to be a cognition**. A false erudite cognition (cognitio erudita falsa) merely appears to be an erudite cognition, and is either no cognition at all, or at least no erudite cognition. For instance, those who assume that plants have a soul of growth and who explain the plants growth by appeal to this soul have a false cognition. A true or correct cognition (cognitio very) does not only appear to be a cognition but it is also in actuality a cognition. A true erudite cognition (cognitio erudita vera) does not only appear to be an erudite cognition, but it also actually deserves this name.[25]

On occasions where Kant uses the term false cognition, it is thus not implausible that he uses the term in Meier's sense: a false cognition is only an apparent cognition; it is not a cognition precisely because it is false. There are also good systematic reasons for Kant not to allow literally false cognition. Key examples of cognition for Kant include, for instance, empirical cognition or mathematical cognition. If our experience, i.e., empirical cognition, could be false and still count as cognition, the value of having empirical cognition would be dubious. For instance, if my experience of a red ball in front of me could be false, how could this be a representation of a really existing object, as even Watkins' and Willaschek's account requires? Similarly, in mathematical cognition, if my cognition that 7+5=12 might just as well be false, despite being a cognition, what would be the value of having cognition in the first place? Moreover,

[24] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3209.
[25] Meier 1752, §§92-3, 23 (my bold emphases).

there are strong reasons to think that cognition is governed by a norm of factivity, as I shall now argue.

3.4.2 Cognition is Factive

The first *Critique* can be understood as a rich and detailed account of how we can attain cognition. This account only acquires plausibility and interest if cognition is factive, or so I shall now argue. This claim is contentious. And establishing it securely is challenging not least because there are so many competing interpretations about what exactly Kant is trying to achieve in various parts of the *Critique*. I hope, however, that some observations about claims about Kant's ambitions in the *Critique* that I take to be relatively uncontentious should suffice to show that cognition is factive.

The type of cognition of primary interest in the early parts of the *Critique* is empirical cognition. It is uncontentious that cognition is achieved by cooperation of the 'two basic sources,' sensibility and understanding (*KrV* A50/B75, cf. A19/B33, B146). The former, sensibility, provides the 'content of cognition, i.e., [the] relation [of cognition] to the object' (*KrV* A55/B79). Kant also calls this 'content of cognition' its 'matter,' as distinguished from its logical or conceptual form (*KrV* A59/B83). So, the matter or content of cognition consists in some relation to an object.[26] This matter must, in turn, be processed by the understanding to comprehend (*begreifen*) it as an object (*KrV* A77/B103). According to Kant, there are *three* prerequisites for the possibility of cognising any object that must be 'given' a priori:[27]

> The first thing that must be given to us a priori for the purpose of cognising all objects is the manifold of pure intuition; the synthesis of this manifoldness through imagination is the second, but does not yet give any cognition. The concepts, which give unity to this pure synthesis and consist purely in the presentation of this necessary synthetic unity, are the third thing for the cognition of an occurring object and are based on the understanding. (*KrV* A78-9/B104)[28]

Kant here argues that the manifold of pure intuition, the synthesis of this manifold through imagination, and the pure concepts of the understanding (i.e., the categories) must be given prior to experience to be able to perform the task of cognising an

[26] I will remain neutral here between various contentious issues regarding the content/matter of cognition. For instance, matter is typically associated with appearance or intuition, whereas content is associated with cognition, but nothing here depends on this. What precisely the matter of intuition or the content of cognition consists of, is contentious. For instance, Rosenkoetter argues that content concerns reference: Rosenkoetter 2009, 205; And there is, of course, a debate about whether empirical cognition contains non-conceptual content. For an overview, see: McLear 2014; Tolley 2013.

[27] This requirement of "givenness" is an essential aspect of Watkins' and Willaschek's account of cognition: Watkins and Willaschek 2017; This requirement of givenness has also motivated critiques of the "Myth of the Given" in twentieth-century philosophy, such as: Sellars 1997, 15; McDowell 2009, 40, 90–1, 110; For a comparative assessment in relation to Kant, see: Watkins 2008.

[28] This structure corresponds roughly to the A-Deduction's account of the 'triple synthesis' through the three 'subjective sources of cognition' of (1) apprehension of intuitions, (2) reproduction in imagination, and (3) recognition in the concept that 'necessarily occurs in all cognition' (*KrV* A97).

empirical object. These a priori conditions are justified because they are necessary for the possibility of cognising empirical objects. This is the familiar structure of Kant's transcendental argument. This structure, however, only makes sense if empirical cognition is a factive concept. Here is one way of summarising the structure of Kant's overall transcendental argument for the presuppositions of the possibility of cognition:

(1) Experience is possible.

(2) Experience is empirical cognition.

(3) In experience, we present objects in time and space.

(4) To present objects in time and space, time and space must be given a priori as forms of intuition.

(5) To present intuitive content (from the sensibility) as a (unified) object, this content must be synthesised by the imagination and synthesised conceptually by the understanding.

C The understanding's conceptual synthesis of intuitive content presupposes the pure categories.

Of course, this is a simplification and there are wildly different interpretations of Kant's transcendental argument's precise structure (getting us from 5 to C).[29] Whatever its precise argumentative structure, the *Transcendental Deduction* would be irrelevant or at least uninteresting unless empirical cognition were factive.

My argument for the factivity of cognition is very simple. To see why cognition must be committed to at least some sense of factivity, consider the alternative of cognition not requiring some sort of factivity. Assume, for the sake of argument, that cognition is not factive. This would mean that cognising p does not entail p. (Or, to be more precise, cognising p does not necessarily entail p. Thus, it is possible to cognise p and it is not the case that p.) Why would Kant be interested in demonstrating, with the *Transcendental Deduction*, that the categories are necessary presuppositions for the possibility of experience unless experience were a factive state? (Recall, again, that experience is empirical cognition.)

That cognition is factive is most obvious if the first premise is indeed that experience is possible, as suggested by this structure.[30] After all, the concept of experience is that of a factive state. Were experience not factive, the very first premise would already

[29] For an influential account of Kant's concept of a deduction, see Henrich, who has argued that the argumentative aim of the deduction is legitimate usage of the categories in analogy to a legal justification: Henrich 1989; Henrich also introduced the classic reading of the deduction as consisting of two parts, one positively establishing a priori knowledge (cognition) of the categories, the other negatively limiting reason's ability to knowledge (cognition) of noumena: Henrich 1969; A classic account of the deduction as a regressive argument of the sort I outline above is offered by: Ameriks 1978; For overviews and assessments of various interpretations of the *Transcendental Deduction*, see: Pereboom 2006; Guyer 2010.

[30] As in: Ameriks 1978.

be dubious. We can see this by using a concrete example, such as the experience of seeing a house in front of you. Saying that experience is possible in this case would mean that it is possible to have an experience of a house in front of you. But this does not entail that there is a house in front of you. (Recall: The factivity of cognition means that cognising p entails p. That is, cognising a house entails that there is a house.) This would clearly constitute a misuse of the concept of experience. In any case, the factivity of experience is also necessary for other possible accounts of Kant's core transcendental argument.

For those who do not read Kant as starting with the premise that we do have experience, the situation is similar. Perhaps we should replace premise one with the claim that we merely appear to have experience, i.e., that we have presentations that we take to be experiences. This does not affect my claim that empirical cognition is factive. This is because a non-factive concept of empirical cognition would leave Kant's transcendental argument unmotivated. To put it bluntly, why should I care about the necessary presuppositions of the possibility of representing a house in front of me as a unified, spatiotemporal object unless there is a house in front of me when I experience it? Even on the less ambitious premise, what justifies the necessity of the further premises must ultimately be that they are required for the possibility of empirical cognition as a factive state. This becomes clear once we remind ourselves of the function of each component of Kant's account of empirical cognition. All empirical cognition starts with the direct affection of our mind by objects through the sensibility, resulting in sensation (*KrV* A19-20/B33-4). Intuitions are empirical when they 'relate to the object through sensation' (*KrV* A20/B34). The necessary first stage in Kant's account of the process of cognition is thus a relation to an object, which constitutes the matter and content of cognition. But a cognition can only relate to an object if there is an object.[31] So, the concept of empirical cognition and its role in Kant's overall transcendental argument is only cogent as a factive concept.

It is this sort of factivity of empirical cognition, namely the basic function of relating to an object, that also explains why non-empirical judgements, such as the pure categories, can count as cognitions:

> Since experience, as empirical synthesis, is the only kind of cognition that gives reality to all other synthesis, so this, as a priori cognition, has truth (agreement with the object) only in that it contains nothing more than what is necessary for the synthetic unity of experience in general. (*KrV* A157-7/B196-7)

In this passage, Kant explains why and to what extent the a priori principles of synthesis, i.e., the categories, can count as cognition. Their status is indirectly justified

[31] As Nick Stang argues, Kant is concerned with the problem of how we can relate to and represent objects that are really possible, and that, in the case of empirical objects, this requires a relation to an object that is not merely logically possible but really instantiated: Stang 2016, 158–66.

by their necessity for experience, which 'gives reality to all other synthesis.' That is, the pure categories count as cognitions only because they are necessary for experience and, thus, for a state that relates to objects through sensation. The passage also illustrates that the notion of truth in the sense of 'agreement with the object' for the categories is coextensive with 'what is necessary for the synthetic unity of experience.' This shows that synthetic a priori cognition is also committed to a standard of factivity, which consists in truth in the sense of a correspondence conception of truth as 'agreement with the object' (see: Subsection 3.4.3). The possibility of a priori synthetic cognition is limited to the necessary presuppositions of experience because only what is necessary for experience corresponds to the objects of experience, i.e., is true. Were Kant's concept of cognition not committed to a standard of factivity, such as correspondence to objects or truth, this limitation of possible a priori synthetic cognition only to judgements that are necessary for the possibility of experience could not be explained.

This review of the most familiar aspects of Kant's account of empirical cognition and synthetic a priori cognition shows that Kant's concept of cognition must be factive in some sense. The exercise can easily be repeated with other types of cognition. The relation to empirical objects, i.e., to objects to which we relate through sensation, is the ultimate factivity requirement for all kinds of theoretical cognition. The status of mathematical, geometrical, and philosophical cognition as cognition depends on their applicability to empirical objects through their relation to 'possible intuitions' (*KrV* A719/B747). Two plus two is four because two apples plus two apples are four apples. For practical cognition, the situation should be even clearer. Our cognition of the moral law is a cognition only because the moral law is, in fact, a law for us.[32] Instead of establishing this general point for each specific type of cognition, I will now consider whether Kant's concept of cognition requires factivity in the sense of truth.

3.4.3 Truth

Empirical cognition is factive, at least in the sense that it relates to an object.[33] As I have noted, Kant conceives of this relation as sensible affection. We can only relate to an object through sensation if there is an object. Thus, our empirical cognition of object O entails that there is object O.[34] I will now assess whether this means that cognition, like contemporary accounts of knowledge, is factive in the sense of requiring truth.

[32]Of course, this leaves open various possible accounts of the metaphysical status of objects of practical cognition. See: Rauscher 2015.

[33]Kant operates with various concepts of an object. Nick Stang helpfully distinguishes "object" in the sense of the content of cognition from "thing" in the metaphysically rich sense of a really existing something. Cognition requires relation to an object in the latter sense of something that entails existence in some sense. See: Stang 2022; Below, in Chapter 6 I will argue for a nomic account of this objectivity as an interpretation of Kant's concept of objective reality. On Kant's concept of an object, see also: Stang 2021; Boer 2023; Baum 2019.

[34]In Chapter 6, I will argue that this need not be interpreted metaphysically. Instead, the condition of of objective reality requires that the cognition correspond to relevant applicable laws.

A first objection against using the truth standard for cognition might be that (empirical) cognition does not have a fully conceptual or propositional structure (since at least the intuitive component, providing the matter, might not be fully conceptual).[35] I will here not take a stance on whether intuitive content is conceptual.[36] The matter can be settled more easily. Kant clearly introduces the concept of truth as a standard for cognition.[37] More than that, the very definition of truth – at least its 'nominal definition' – is phrased in terms of cognition: 'What is truth? The nominal definition of truth, namely that it is the correspondence of cognition with its object, is here granted and presupposed [...]' (*KrV* A58/B82). So, for Kant at least, cognitions can clearly be true. A passage from the *Jäsche Logik* confirms this in similar phrasing:

> One of the main perfections of cognition, indeed the essential and inseparable condition of all perfection of cognition, is truth. Truth, it is said, consists in the correspondence of cognition with the object. According to this mere explanation of the word, therefore, my cognition, in order to be considered true, must agree with the object. (*JL* IX:49-50)

Another worry might arise from the way in which Kant discusses this nominal definition of truth immediately after introducing it. Specifically, Kant proceeds to argue that this definition of truth cannot function as a general and sufficient *criterion* of truth, i.e., as a criterion that could be used to determine, for any given cognition, whether it is indeed true (*KrV* A58-60/B82-6, cf. *JL* IX:50-1). Such a general criterion will be sought vainly, Kant argues, because the truth of at least some cognitions depends not only on correspondence with principles that are discoverable a priori but also on the (potentially empirical) content of the cognition. So, Kant endorses the nominal definition of truth as the correspondence of cognition with its object but denies that this (or any other possible) criterion is sufficient to determine for all possible cognitions whether they are indeed true.

Although Kant is here critical of a general and sufficient criterion of truth, this discussion of the notion of truth at the beginning of the *Transcendental Logic* is nonetheless noteworthy. First, as evidenced by Kant's general endorsement of the nominal definition of truth, truth consists for Kant in the correspondence of cognition with its object.[38] This shows that the standard of truth can aptly be used and applied to cognition.[39] Cognition *can* at least be true. Second, Kant's discussion

[35] For the view that Kantian cognition contains non-conceptual content (because intuitions are non-conceptual), see: Hanna 2005; Allais 2009; Tolley 2013.

[36] For an overview of the debate, see: McLear 2014.

[37] Thus, I agree with Sher that 'truth [for Kant] is primarily a *standard* for cognitions.' Sher 2017, 179.

[38] I agree with commentators like Sher, Rosenkoetter or Hanna that Kant's nominal definition of truth is to be taken literally, and thus as a correspondence theory of truth. See: Sher 2017, 183; Hanna 2000, 234; Rosenkoetter 2009, 197.

[39] Consider also Kant's description of "truth in light of its consequences" as the second perfection of cognition: 'The more true consequences follow from a given concept, the more marks of its objective reality.' (*KrV* B114).

of truth has a programmatic function for the entirety of the *Transcendental Logic*. Although sufficient criteria of truth are unattainable, logic can and must provide us with necessary conditions of truth:

> But as far as cognition according to its mere form is concerned (setting aside all content), it is just as clear that a logic, insofar as it presents the general and necessary rules of the understanding, is obliged to expound criteria of truth in these very rules. For anything that contradicts these rules is false, because in doing so the understanding contradicts its general rules, and thus itself. (*KrV* A59/B83-4)

Kant here argues that the rules of logic are necessary criteria of truth. Indeed, they are the rules of logic precisely *because* they are criteria of truth. The task of the first part of the *Transcendental Logic*, i.e., the *Transcendental Analytic* is to expound these criteria of truth. These criteria of truth include Kant's account of pure synthesis using the pure categories, as outlined above. The categories, as part of Kant's account of the possibility of empirical cognition, thus have the status of laws of logic, that is, they are part of Kant's account of the necessary criteria of the truth of cognition. The *Transcendental Analytic* is thus justified as a 'negative touchstone of truth' of cognition (*KrV* A60/B84). In other words, the a priori principles of cognition of the *Transcendental Analytic* are necessary presuppositions for the possibility because they are necessary (but insufficient) conditions *of the truth* of cognition.

Kant's justification of transcendental logic more generally as necessary criteria of truth suggests that Kant's concept of cognition is factive in the sense of requiring truth. That is, the relation of cognition to its object is a relation of correspondence. This is confirmed by Kant's characterisation of the function of the *Transcendental Analytic* at the end of the *Introduction to the Transcendental Logic*:

> That part of transcendental logic, then, which presents the elements of pure cognition of the understanding, and the principles without which no object can be thought anywhere, is the transcendental analytic, and at the same time a logic of truth. For no cognition can contradict it without at the same time losing all content, i.e. all relation to any object, and therefore all truth. (*KrV* A62-3/B87)

Kant here reiterates that the *Transcendental Analytic* expounds principles that are necessary for the cognition of objects because they are necessary to think objects, which is required for cognition. Because these principles are necessary, 'no cognition can contradict [them] without at the same time losing all content.' This might initially sound as though it would be possible for a cognition to contradict these laws - it would simply be an empty cognition. But this is impossible, of course. A cognition, as we have seen, consists of matter (content) and form. And the matter is the relation of cognition to its object (*KrV* A55/B86, A59/B83). Thus, a cognition without content

is not a cognition. But this implies that no cognition can contradict the 'logic of truth' precisely because it would thereby lose its content. Truth, after all, consists in having content, i.e., a relation (of correspondence) to its object. All this suggests that a requirement of truth in the sense of correspondence to the object of cognition is implicit in Kant's concept of cognition. Cognition is factive in the sense of requiring truth, i.e., its correspondence to its object.

Overall, on Kant's account, the rules of logic – including transcendental logic – are rules of truth-preservation of cognition. Truth is preserved by, on the one hand, non-violation of the rules of general formal logic and, on the other hand, proper use of our cognitive capacities to relate to objects through our cognitive capacities, which provides the content of cognition. This content of cognition must correspond to its object for the cognition to be true. Kant's account of cognition describes the conditions under which this successful correspondence is possible. Timothy Rosenkoetter argues that this means that Kant does, in fact, provide us with a new general criterion for the truth of cognition that provides content to the nominal definition of truth.[40] I am sympathetic to this reading but it is not necessary for my claim here. Even if a general criterion of truth remains unattainable, Kant's concept of cognition can still be committed to a truth requirement. In the *Transcendental Logic*, Kant develops the principles of our capacities for cognition as principles of truth-preservation.

Although cognition requires truth, I do not think that the truth-requirement is essential to Kant's concept of knowledge. One indicator of this is the fact that Kant rarely talks about truth. Instead, talk about objective reality, objective validity, certainty, universality, or necessity is much more prominent across the *Critiques*. There are various reasons for this. Although cognition must be true, the notion of truth is not essential to Kant's concept of cognition. Instead, the truth of cognition is only a consequence of a more central feature of cognition, namely that cognition requires a specific type of relation of cognition to its object that Kant calls objective reality. I will shortly develop this claim in greater detail. Accordingly, cognition requires truth because cognition requires objective reality. Thus, although cognition is necessarily factive in the sense of being true, it is the notion of objective reality rather than the notion of truth that is essential to the meaning of cognition for Kant.

My view that the standard of truth is only of secondary relevance to cognition has several interpretive advantages. As I will argue below, objective reality is the proper standard of factivity for cognition because this standard most directly reflects Kant's conception of cognition's relation to its object. Although objective reality entails truth, it goes beyond the merely logical notion of truth. This way of accounting for the role of truth in Kant's account of cognition can help resolve a dispute that has emerged over which type of account of truth Kant endorses. Some argue that Kant endorses a correspondence account of truth, based on the clear textual evidence of

[40] Rosenkoetter 2009, 195.

Kant's agreement with the nominal definition of truth.[41] By contrast, others claim that Kant must endorse a coherence theory of truth for systematic reasons.[42]

The main argument for the coherence theory is typically that a correspondence theory can only work on the metaphysical realist assumption that there is a mind-independent world to which our concepts can correspond, which would be inconsistent with Kant's transcendental idealism.[43] The main argument for the correspondence theory is Kant's explicit endorsement of a correspondence theory of truth as its nominal definition (*KrV* A58/B82). This dispute can be resolved if we accept Kant's endorsement of truth as correspondence at face value and, at the same time, acknowledge that this account of truth is, for Kant, an insufficient standard of factivity for cognition. Truth as correspondence is an insufficient standard because it is merely a logical concept. A metaphysically rich interpretation or application of this logical concept to cognition might indeed conflict with Kant's transcendental idealism. On such a metaphysical application, the concept of truth might indeed require a correspondence to a mind-independent transcendentally real object.

By contrast, as we will see below, Kant applies the criterion of objective reality not to mind-independent objects themselves but directly to judgements. Successful judgements 'have objective reality' (*KrV* A155/B159). This suggests that objective reality is a property of judgements. Judgements have objective reality in virtue of the right sort of relation to their object, and the object in this relation need not be a mind-independent object to which the cognition corresponds (see: Chapter 6). My reading can thus explain why we can take Kant's endorsement of the correspondence reading of truth at face value: because it is insufficient as a standard of factivity for cognition in a transcendental idealist framework. Nonetheless, objective reality can *entail* the truth of cognition. Thus, even if the concept of objective reality is not directly defined in terms of a truth criterion, the condition of objective reality still secures factivity in the sense of truth.

3.4.4 Objective Reality

When Kant explains why some putative cognitions (presentations, concepts, judgements) amount to genuine cognitions whereas others do not, he typically does not appeal to their truth status. Instead, the possibility of cognition (directly) depends on their having *objective reality*.

The condition of objective reality explains why, for Kant, an 'object must be capable of being given in some way' for cognition to be possible (*KrV* A155/B195, cf. *KU* V:342). This can be seen quite clearly in the deduction of the categories (*KrV* A95/B129 ff.). The objective reality of ordinary empirical cognition, i.e., ordinary experience, can

[41] E.g. Sher 2017; Hanna 2000; Rosenkoetter 2009.
[42] E.g. Mensch 2004; Vanzo 2010.
[43] A version of this critique of the correspondence reading can be found in: Prauss 1969.

be explained by the givenness of the material content of cognition in intuition. The situation is much more difficult with regard to the categories. As a priori concepts it is *prima facie* difficult to see how they could have objective reality since they are not given in intuition. To show that the categories amount to genuine cognitions, Kant must establish their objective reality. Again, my point does not depend on any specific reading of how precisely the deduction of the categories works. Instead, I merely wish to draw attention to two aspects of the deduction. First, in the deduction, Kant aims to establish that the categories amount to genuine cognitions. Second, to establish that the categories are genuine cognitions, Kant must establish their objective reality.

Here is evidence for the first claim, that Kant's *Transcendental Deduction* aims to establish that the categories are genuine cognitions:

> In the metaphysical deduction, the origin of the categories a priori was demonstrated by their complete coincidence with the general logical functions of thought; in the transcendental [deduction], however, the possibility of the same [i.e., of the categories] as a priori cognitions of objects of an intuition as such was demonstrated. (*KrV* B159)

As this passage shows, Kant takes the deduction to have shown the possibility of the categories as a priori cognitions of objects, i.e., that the categories are genuine cognitions. The following passages show that achieving this aim involves establishing the categories' objective reality:

> But because there is a certain form of sensible intuition a priori in us [...] the understanding [...] can determine the inner sense[...] and thus think the synthetic unity of apperception of the manifold of sensible intuition a priori, as the condition under which all objects of our (human) intuition must necessarily stand, **whereby the categories**, as mere forms of thought, **acquire objective reality**, i.e., application to objects that are given to us in intuition but only as appearances [...]. (*KrV* B150)

> It is the possibility of experience that gives **all our cognitions** a priori **objective reality**. (*KrV* A156/B195)

As these passages show, to establish the categories' status as cognitions, Kant must show that they have objective reality. On a general level, this is explained by the basic features of cognition we have already encountered: cognition must have a relation to its object:

> The understanding is, to talk in general terms, the capacity of cognitions. These [cognitions] consist in the determinate relation of given presentations to an object. (*KrV* B137)

> Concepts of the understanding must as such at all times be demonstrable [...], i.e., the object that corresponds to them must always be

> capable of being given in intuition (pure or empirical); for it is only thus that they can become cognitions. (*KU* V:342)

Cognition is achieved by the understanding. The understanding is a conceptual faculty and Kant describes the mental contents that the understanding generates as presentations (*Vorstellungen*). To count as a cognition, the understanding must generate presentations that have a 'determinate relation [...] to an object' (*KrV* B137). Given Kant's aim to establish the objective reality of the categories, the specific type of "determinate relation" that is required seems to be that of objective reality. And it is this requirement for cognition to have objective reality that explains why the object of cognition must be 'capable of being given in some way' (*KrV* A155/B195):

> If a cognition should have objective reality, i.e., if it should relate to an object and have in this object signification and meaning, then the object must be capable of being given in some way. (*KrV* A155/B195)

Although this passage sounds as though it would be optional for a cognition to have objective reality, this optionality is only apparent. The sentence is phrased as a conditional, which seems to imply that it is possible for some cognitions to lack objective reality. As I have already shown above, however, a cognition without the right sort of relation to its object would be empty. As Kant's formulation in this passage also clarifies, a cognition that lacks objective reality fails to have its 'signification and meaning' in its object; it is thus not really a cognition at all.

The passage also shows that the 'givenness condition' that Eric Watkins and Markus Willaschek take to be essential to Kant's concept of cognition is derivative of the objective reality requirement.[44] Watkins' and Willaschek's argument for the givenness condition is that givenness secures (i) that the object exists and (ii) that it can be (re)presented (*vorgestellt*) in the mind.[45] Cognition requires givenness because it must '"latch onto"the world.'[46] However, as Stefanie Grüne points out, this just means that the givenness requirement is ultimately justified by a requirement that cognition refer 'to existing particulars.'[47] If this is indeed the case, would it not be more appropriate to directly define cognition as a representation of an object that exists? If so, the givenness requirement would be derivative. I agree with Grüne that this is indeed the case: the givenness requirement derives from the objective reality requirement.[48]

Like the truth requirement, the givenness requirement of cognition is derivative and a consequence of some deeper, more essential aspect of Kant's concept of cognition. Moreover, this deeper and more essential aspect is not the relation to existing par-

[44] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 86; For a critique of Watkins' and Willaschek's account of givenness, see: Chignell 2017, 132–7.
[45] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 90.
[46] Ibid., 100.
[47] Grüne 2017, 115.
[48] Ibid., 115.

ticulars, as Watkins' and Willlaschek's account of Kantian cognition suggests.[49] As Stefanie Grüne shows, Watkins' and Willaschek's claim that cognitions must must refer to a determinate and really existing object, is not backed as such backed up by evidence:

> To my knowledge, Kant never claims that cognitions have to latch onto the world in the sense of referring to existing objects, and he never claims that this is the reason why cognition requires that objects are given. Instead, whenever he explains why we have a cognition only if an object is given by intuition, he claims that objects have to be given because otherwise concepts would not have "objective reality."[50]

I agree with Grüne. At least textually, the primary requirement for cognition is objective reality, not real existence. To be sure, it might be possible to interpret objective reality as a requirement of real existence. (I discuss and reject this option in Section 6.4.) However, this will depend on an account of what exactly Kant's concept of objective reality requires. *Prima facie*, it seems unlikely that it is synonymous with real existence, given that objective reality is an essential condition not only for theoretical but also for practical cognition (e.g.: *KpV* V:47). Moreover, although Kant clearly aims to establish the objective reality of the categories, it is dubious whether this would entail their real existence as particulars.

So far, I have considered evidence to show that cognition is achieved by the activity of the understanding and that the differentiating factor why some judgements count as cognitions – whereas others do not – is that the former have objective reality. That objective reality is the essential requirement for a presentation to count as cognition can also be seen by considering Kant's account of problematic concepts, such as Kant's concept of the noumenon:

> I call a concept problematic that does not contain a contradiction, that also connects with other cognitions as a limit of given concepts, but whose objective reality can in no way be cognised. (*KrV* A254/B310)

For Kant, there are certain concepts, such as the concept of the noumenon, that we can entertain as concepts because they relate to cognitions that are possible as their limit or border (*Grenzbegriff*) (*KrV* A255/B310-1). However, and in contrast to the categories, these problematic concepts cannot attain the status of cognition because they lack objective reality. So, the condition that appears to be truly essential to Kant's concept of cognition is the condition of objective reality. I will now argue that this condition of objective reality entails factivity.

[49] I develop this claim more fully in my review of various possible accounts of Kant's concept of objective reality in Section 6.4.
[50] Grüne 2017, 115.

3.4.5 Objective Reality as a Standard of Factivity

For Kant, cognition must have objective reality. To establish that a putative cognition counts as a genuine cognition, its objective reality must be demonstrated. The standard of objective reality is not the same as that of truth in contemporary accounts of knowledge. It must also be distinguished from truth in the sense of cognition-object correspondence that Kant endorses as the nominal definition of truth.

So, objective reality and truth are not synonymous. Nonetheless, I think that the standard of objective reality is comparable to general factivity requirements in contemporary conceptions of knowledge for two reasons. First, as we have seen, objective reality entails truth. Second, the requirement of objective reality restricts the scope of possible cognitions to only those (types of) objects to which we can have the right sort of epistemic access.

Although I will leave the precise meaning of objective reality open in this chapter, it is clear that, for Kant, a cognition has objective reality only when it determinately relates to its object. This implies that for any genuine cognition of object O, there is an object O, to which the cognition of object O corresponds. This satisfies at least Kant's own correspondence account of truth. So, the objective reality requirement of cognition implies a truth requirement for cognition.

In addition to securing truth, the objective reality requirement ensures that we can only call those representations cognitions that relate to objects to which we can have the right sort of epistemic access. This is important in the context of Kant's transcendental idealism, since it explains why cognition of some sorts of objects, such as things in themselves, is unattainable for us. The objective reality requirement goes beyond the truth requirement by ensuring not only that our judgement is true but also that it corresponds, in some way, to an object to which we can claim the right sort of epistemic access.

Objective reality as a factivity requirement might be attractive precisely because it goes beyond mere truth. If Kant is right, then truth is a merely logical concept that can, at best, serve to formulate some minimal formal criteria for successful judgements. By contrast, the requirement of objective reality is more substantive in that it directly concerns the relation of a judgement (or presentation or concept) to its object. Thus, the requirement of objective reality can constitute a robust factivity condition for cognition. Cognition is clearly and robustly factive.

3.4.6 Taking Stock

In this section, I have argued that Kant's concept of cognition is committed to a factivity requirement. Specifically, cognition is committed to the requirement of objective reality. For a judgement to count as cognition, it must have objective reality.

Although objective reality is not synonymous with truth, it entails truth. Thus, cognition must be true. Therefore, Kant's concept of cognition satisfies the truth requirement characteristic of contemporary accounts of knowledge. However, it should be noted that the condition of objective reality might be more demanding than truth, such that the size of the set of judgements that can be true may be greater than the set of judgements that can have objective reality.

To achieve my aims in this section, I first argued that Kant's concept of "false cognition" must not be taken literally. For Kant, there cannot be genuine cognitions that are false; it is a term for judgments that are mistaken for cognitions and that are, in fact, false and, therefore, not cognitions. Next, I argued for the general claim that cognition is factive because a non-factive concept of cognition would fail to motivate Kant's account of the possibility of cognition. On this basis, I enquired whether cognition requires factivity in the sense of truth, concluding that cognition does indeed require truth but that the truth-requirement is not essential to the concept of cognition. In place of the truth-requirement, we found that the condition of objective reality is essential to Kant's concept of cognition. Thus, cognition is factive and true because it must have objective reality.

3.5 Justification

In addition to factivity, contemporary accounts of knowledge typically require justification.[51] In this section, I will enquire whether Kant's concept of cognition also requires justification. I will argue that it does; Kant's concept of cognition requires justification. I will first consider Watkins' and Willaschek's argument against the claim that Kant's concept of cognition requires epistemic justification. I will then show that this argument relies on an implausibly narrow conception of justification and of what makes justification "epistemic." Finally, I will again use the example of Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition (compare: Section 2.3) to argue that cognition requires justification in a reliabilist sense: cognition must result from a reliable process of successfully and properly using our cognitive capacities.

3.5.1 Cognition Requires Justification

Watkins and Willaschek claim that Kantian cognition does not require justification.[52] This argument is based on a contrast with their reading of Kant's concept of knowledge. On their reading, Kantian knowledge is defined in terms of epistemic justification criteria, according to which the knowing subject must be in possession of subjectively

[51] Cohen 1984, 279; Not everyone agrees. For instance, Roessler argues that perceptual experience directly furnishes us with experiential knowledge, i.e., that we do not need to appeal to the notion of justification to explain why we can come to have knowledge through experience: Roessler 2009, 1014, 1025, 1039.

[52] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3209–10.

and objectively sufficient grounds. This, they argue, contrasts with cognition:

> Another aspect worth mentioning is that cognition in the narrow sense, as such, does not require epistemic justification. This is not to deny that cognition may, in some indirect way, require *philosophical* justification. For instance, for a representation to qualify as cognition, it must satisfy the thought condition, which requires the objective reality of the concept(s) employed in that representation. In case these concepts are "pure" (a priori) concepts (such as the categories or ideas of reason), they require a "transcendental deduction," that is, proof of their objective reality (or, equivalently, of the real possibility of their object). This is what we take to be Kant's point when he says that "[t]o cognise an object, it is required that I be able to prove its possibility (Bxxvi fn.)." In this way, cognition does involve a normative dimension ("quid juris"). But such a proof is obviously different from the epistemic justification of a particular belief that is required for knowledge - a justification that does not consist in showing a concept to have objective reality (or an object to be "really possible"), but in showing a belief to be true.[53]

So, according to Watkins and Willaschek, the only sort of justification involved in cognition is the philosophical justification that is required to establish the objective reality of the categories. But this, they argue, is not equivalent to the *epistemic* justification involved in Kant's concept of knowledge (or in contemporary accounts of knowledge).

I disagree with Watkins' and Willaschek's assessment on three counts. First, I reject the claim that a justification that shows a cognition to have objective reality cannot count as an epistemic justification. Second, cognition does require the subject to be in possession of epistemic grounds. Third, even if the possession of epistemic grounds is not conceptually essential to Kantian cognition, this is not the only possible model for epistemic justification. Justification need not be conceptualised in terms of the possession of epistemic grounds but can also, for instance, consist in the requirement of a reliable process, which is the case for Kantian cognition. I will now develop these three points in turn.

First, a justification that shows a particular cognition to have objective reality *can* count as epistemic justification. To begin with, some, such as Ralf Meerbote, think that objective reality and truth are equivalent.[54] On this analysis of objective reality, justification of a cognition's objective reality just *is* justification of its truth. But even for those who think that truth and objective reality are distinct concepts (as I do; see: Chapter 6), it is not clear why objective reality should not count as a legitimate epistemic goal that can be used in lieu of truth. Admittedly, it is a popular

[53] Ibid., 3204.
[54] Meerbote 1972, 57.

view in epistemology that what ultimately makes something "epistemic" or what has "epistemic value" is only and exclusively truth.[55] However, this is by far not the only available view.[56] To see why, consider the following example.

Imagine you are about to enter a virtual reality environment. You are given two choices. Either your virtual reality glasses will display an environment in which you can identify objects, such as trees, cars, or houses in a spatiotemporally structured environment. Alternatively, you can choose to experience these objects as what they "really are:" You will be shown the computer code that realises these objects for those who choose the first option. Imagine, further, that this is a game in which you need to safely cross a street in order to gain points. Which option would you prefer? One could argue, of course, that the latter option is more epistemically valuable because you will be presented with what the objects truly are. One could, however, also make the argument that option one gives you better epistemic access to the information relevant to the game. After all, the first option enables you to perceive the objects as they are, one might be tempted to say, *real for you*.

An important feature of this example is that your experiences will give you *true* information in both cases. It is not possible to adjudicate which of these options is better by insisting that one of them is "truer" than the other. So, in this situation, the epistemic standard of truth does not necessarily help us adjudicate between the choices. One way out would be to appeal to practical values instead. After all, there seems to be some practical value in successfully crossing the street.[57] Another option would be to use a *different epistemic standard* than truth. For instance, you could use the epistemic standard of objective reality.

In Chapter 6, I will propose an account of objective reality as a nomic concept. According to this account, objective reality requires that your judgement correspond to relevant applicable laws. With this epistemic criterion, we could ask which sorts of laws are relevant in the situation of crossing the street. On this account of objective reality, the first option of seeing the virtual environment as an animated spatiotemporal environment would equip you with the relevant information. Thus, the condition of objective reality would speak in favour of option one, without appealing to practical value.

The purpose of this comparison is to show that not only truth can be a legitimate epistemic value. It is possible to gain *true* beliefs (or cognitions) in either scenario. According to the standard of truth, both options might be equally desirable, as they offer us an equal opportunity to acquire true beliefs. By contrast, on the standard of objective reality, only option one would be attractive, since it is the only option in

[55] E.g.: Sosa 2003; Pritchard 2021; For an overview, see: David 2001.
[56] E.g.: Elgin 2004; Gaultier 2017.
[57] This is not a case of pragmatic encroachment but simply a case of adding deciding what to do on practical grounds. For an overview on pragmatic encroachment, see: Roeber 2018; Kim 2017.

which I can acquire cognitions of objects. That cognising these objects is useful for my practical goals is not incidental, of course, but it does not mean that the epistemic value of objective reality reduces to its pragmatic value. As the example illustrates, it is conceivable for there to be epistemic standards that are of greater epistemic value than truth in the right circumstances.

So, even if objective reality and truth turn out to come completely apart, this is not a reason to reject the idea that the justification of a cognition's objective reality can count as an *epistemic* justification. In any case, I think it is implausible for Kant's account of truth and his account of objective reality to come apart in this way. I argued above that objective reality entails truth for Kant. But even if I am wrong about this, it is still possible for objective reality to be a properly epistemic standard for cognition, and perhaps even more epistemically attractive as a normative standard than the notion of truth.

Second, although Kant does not talk about cognition in terms of requiring epistemic grounds, it is clear that cognition does require the subject to be in possession of epistemic grounds. For instance, empirical cognition of an object requires the subject to have intuition of the object based on sensation. For those who want to construe epistemic justification in terms of being in possession of epistemic grounds, there is no obvious reason why having an intuition of an object should not constitute a suitable epistemic ground for cognising that object. Moreover, having this intuition is essential to Kant's account of cognition.

Third, epistemic justification need not take the form of having reasons or grounds for one's cognition. Instead, it could also involve a requirement that cognitions be achieved by the right sort of process, for instance by a reliable process. There are many different theories of what exactly epistemic justification consists in. As a minimum condition, Richard Fumerton proposes that epistemic justification 'must make *probable* the truth of the proposition believed.'[58] This description can be adapted to Kant's terminology as follows: an epistemic justification must make probable the truth (or objective reality) of the cognition.

Kant's account of cognition satisfies this general account of epistemic justification. Kant's account of cognition describes precisely why it is probable that in exercising our cognitive capacities appropriately we attain cognitions that have objective reality. For Kant, my cognition that there is a house in front of me is justified precisely because I cognise that there is a house in front of me since cognising is a reliable method for attaining cognitions that have objective reality and are thus true. Note that Kant's *philosophical* justification by means of the *Critique* is not required for the method of cognition itself to confer justification on my judgement; it is merely an explication of *why* cognition is epistemically justified. In other words, for Kant, my seeing a house

[58] Fumerton 2009, 205.

is epistemically justified because seeing (i.e., experiencing) is the sort of method of cognition that makes it probable that there is indeed a house.

3.5.2 Historical Cognition

Further evidence that cognition, for Kant, requires justification can be based on a reflection on Kant's discussion of historical and rational cognition in the first *Critique*. There, Kant argues implicitly that all cognition must originally be rational cognition to count as genuine cognition. This is equivalent to the requirement that all cognition must result from epistemic labour, which means that it must result from someone's use of their understanding. Since the understanding is governed by the laws of logic, all cognition must be arrived at in a process that is consistent with the laws of logic. Since the laws of *Transcendental Logic* concern not only the form but also the content of cognition, this means that Kant requires that all cognition must result from the proper exercise of our cognitive capacities. This is equivalent to a condition that requires that all cognitions be arrived at by the right sort of process, namely a process that makes it probable that the cognition is true (or objectively real). Thus, cognition requires justification because it is the concept of a judgement that results from properly using our cognitive capacities, which is a reliable method for attaining judgements that have objective reality.

Kant's discussion of historical cognition shows that cognition must result from epistemic labour, in addition to having objective reality. This condition amounts to an epistemic justification condition. In the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes historical from rational cognition (*KrV* A836/B864; See also: *Logik Jäsche* IX:22). This distinction, however, only applies to cognition considered 'subjectively' (*KrV* A836/B864). This means that we consider how a particular reasoner psychologically came to have this cognition. Considered in this subjective sense, 'all cognition' is 'either historical or rational' (*KrV* A836/B864). By 'historical cognition,' Kant effectively means cognition that is *not* acquired through one's own epistemic labour. Examples include testimony or reading books. In the *Architectonic*, Kant is specifically interested in historical cognition of philosophy and contrasts it with rational philosophical cognition. Although it is possible to learn a philosophical system historically, the resulting cognition will not amount to genuine philosophical cognition.[59] This is because genuine philosophical cognition requires that the cognition be subjectively *rational*, i.e., that it result from one's own epistemic labour (see: Section 2.3).

A cognition can be *subjectively* historical but it only has the status of a cognition because it is *objectively* non-historical.[60] As Kant explains in the *Jäsche Logic*, when

[59] For an insightful discussion of the historical roots of Kant's concept of historical congition, see: Albrecht 1982.

[60] Meerbote seems to think that Kant also distinguishes cognition objectively into historical and rational cognition. However, I do not see the evidence for this claim in the passage Meerbote cites (A836/B864). In this passage, Kant argues that 'when I abstract from all content of cognition,

we consider cognition *objectively*, i.e., not in terms of how it is psychologically acquired by a specific reasoner, 'all cognitions are either rational or empirical' (*JL* IX:22). This implies that cognition, considered objectively (or, we might say, epistemically, or in the Capacity Framework) must result either from the exercise of reason or of the understanding. Cognitions are either *pure*, in which case they are cognitions of reason (such as moral cognition) or the pure categories of the understanding or mathematical/geometrical cognition. Alternatively, the understanding is responsible for conceptualising intuitive content and thus for empirical cognition. But this means that all cognition must ultimately result from epistemic labour, i.e., from the exercise of reason or of the understanding.

To exemplify, imagine your friend telling you that squirrels sometimes forget where they hide their food. Subjectively, you now have a historical cognition that squirrels sometimes forget where they hide their food. And the cognition might also be subjectively historical for your friend unless she is a biologist who studies squirrels. However, your historical cognition only counts as a cognition because someone at some point directly observed squirrels, i.e., because someone had an experience of squirrels. The status of subjectively historical cognitions as cognitions presupposes that the cognition is objectively a cognition. And objectively, all cognition must be either rational or empirical. But this means that the exercise of reason and/or the understanding is a necessary condition for cognition's status as a cognition. Epistemic labour is a necessary condition for cognition (when we are interested in cognition as an epistemic concept).

That cognition must result from epistemic labour (at least originally) is effectively a justification condition. More specifically, it is an *epistemic* justification condition. We can generalise this into a condition that makes probable the truth of a judgement. In the first *Critique*, Kant explains how, why and to what degree the understanding and reason are capable of judgements that have objective reality. So, the condition that cognition must originally result from the proper exercise of reason or the understanding amounts to a condition that makes it (at least) probable that the resulting presentation has objective reality. Cognition is justified because it must originally result from the proper exercise of the appropriate epistemic powers, securing (or at least making probable) the objective reality of the judgement.

considered objectively, then all cognition is, subjectively, either historical or rational.'This means that we *abstract from* cognition considered objectively and instead consider it subjectively. It does not mean that cognition, considered objectively, is either historical or rational. Meerbote's suggestion also conflicts with the Jäsche Logic (IX:22), where Kant says that 'according to their objective origin ... all cognitions are either rational or empirical.' Meerbote 1979, 252.

3.6 Belief

In addition to being true and justified, it is a widely held view that knowledge is a belief.[61] It has been argued that Kantian cognition is not knowledge in the contemporary sense because it does not involve assent or belief.[62] My response in this section will be somewhat complex. On the one hand, I think that the contemporary notion of belief is inapplicable to Kant's concept of cognition because Kant's theory of cognition and judgement predates the Fregean force-content distinction (see: Section 4.3). On the other hand, it is precisely because Kant's theory predates this distinction that the act of judging, which, if successful, constitutes cognition, is forceful and thus entails belief. Therefore, Kantian cognition is not analysable into belief and proposition but describes a forceful act of a subject endorsing the cognised judgement.

Here are the steps of my argument in this section. First, I will say a few things about the contemporary notion of belief and why it's challenging to apply it to Kant. Second, I will argue that, for Kant, cognition results from successfully using the understanding to make a judgement that has objective reality. Third, I will argue that Kant's account of judging entails the sort of forceful endorsement of the judgement that characterises contemporary accounts of belief.

3.6.1 The Contemporary Notion of Belief

By "belief," contemporary philosophers mean an attitude we can take towards a proposition. Thinking of knowledge as a belief we have towards a proposition has its origin in Frege's force-content distinction. The basic idea of the force-content distinction is that we can isolate the subject's act in a judgement from the (objective) content of a judgement. So, the claim that knowledge entails belief is supposed to express the idea that knowing requires an act of a subject, and in this act the subject somehow endorses or adopts some sort of positive stance to the content that is taken to be known.

The force-content distinction that underlies the very idea of using the notion of belief as a carrier state for knowledge is an anachronism if applied to Kant. In Chapter 4, I will argue in greater detail that the force-content distinction cannot be applied to Kant's concept of judgement (see: Sections 4.3-4.5). Since, as I will argue now, cognition is, for Kant, a judgement, it would be inaccurate to characterise Kant's notion of cognition in terms of belief. Nonetheless, I think that the claim that Kantian cognition is not knowledge because it does not entail belief is mistaken. Although Kantian cognition is not analysable into a mental state of belief in the contemporary sense of the term, it is clear that Kant's concept of cognition entails the endorsement of the judgement that contemporary philosophers refer to by the concept of belief.

[61] For an early expression of this view, see: Braithwaite 1933, 130; For a critique of the claim that knowledge entails belief, see: Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel 2013.

[62] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3197.

3.6.2 Cognition and the Understanding

For Kant, cognition results from using the faculty of understanding. The 'understanding,' for Kant, 'is, generally speaking, the capacity of cognitions' (*KrV* B137). So, the cognitive capacity responsible for cognition is the understanding. It is through the exercise of the understanding that we can acquire cognitions. Now, Kant also characterises the understanding as the 'capacity to judge' since it is a 'capacity to think' and '[t]hinking is cognition through concepts' (*KrV* A69/B94). Indeed, there is 'no other use' one can make of concepts than 'to judge by means of them' (*KrV* A68/B93). We always need both intuition and concept for cognition, so there is no cognition without concepts. Thus, the understanding is the faculty responsible for cognition. When using the understanding, we judge. Therefore, cognition results from the act of judging with the capacity of the understanding.

As we have seen, cognition requires objective reality. This means that the judgement achieved by the understanding must be successful in establishing that the resulting judgement, the cognition, has the right sort of relation to its object. Thus, the understanding's use in judgement must be successful in the sense of achieving objective reality.

Cognition is thus to be distinguished from other types of judgements, such as those achieved by the power of judgement in aesthetic judgements:

> A judgement of taste is not a judgement of cognition [*Erkenntnisurteil*] and so is not a logical judgement but an aesthetic one, by which we mean a judgement whose determining basis cannot be other than subjective. (*KU* V:203, cf.: V:209, V:214-7)

Aesthetic judgements differ from judgements of the understanding as Kant describes them in the first *Critique* not only in that they are associated with a different capacity (the power of understanding) but also in that they need not satisfy the same epistemic standard. As Kant clarifies already in the introduction to the third *Critique*, the power of judgement gives concepts 'through which no thing is actually cognised' (*KU* V:169). So, Kant's concept of cognition is specifically associated with the understanding. Cognition is the concept of what results from successfully attaining a representation that has objective reality through the understanding's judging.

Given that cognition results from the understanding's act of judging, assessing whether Kantian cognition entails something like belief will depend on Kant's account of judgement. Specifically, it will depend on whether, for Kant, successfully judging that something is the case does or does not entail the sort of positive "force" contemporary philosophers associate with belief.

3.6.3 The Force of a Judgement

In this sub-section, I will argue that, for Kant, judgement is forceful. My argument here will be a very brief version of the more extended argument for this point in Chapter 4, where I argue against the propositional attitude reading of Fürwahrhalten.

For Kant, judgement is forceful because it is the act of a subject. That is, for Kant, to judge that p is not merely to entertain the proposition p but to endorse or accept this proposition. This usage is not at all uncommon. As Jonathan Cohen noted in 1989, some 'fifty years ago the term "judgement" was often used by philosophers to cover much of what I am calling "acceptance."'[63] While Cohen intends to draw a sharp distinction between belief and acceptance in that paper, it should be sufficient to allow that some sort of positive, affirmative "force" comparable to belief should reasonably qualify Kantian cognition as an approximate equivalent to our notion of knowledge.

Frege's force-content distinction was celebrated as an innovation precisely because it was taken to keep separate what philosophers before him mistakenly amalgamated: the content of a judgement and its force.[64] Walter Ott, for instance, argues that '[p]hilosophers of the modern period as diverse in metaphysical and epistemological doctrine as John Locke and Antoine Arnauld stand in a broadly Aristotelian tradition that takes propositions to be judgements.'[65] Smalligan Marušić calls this the 'Judgement Account,' according to which full judgements that include both force and content are proper truth bearers and building blocks in logic for the Port-Royalists and Locke.[66] It would have been a remarkable feat of Kant being ahead of his time had his account of judgment stood outside this Aristotelian tradition and aligned with a proto-Fregean view.

For Kant, judging is an act of the subject. It is not merely entertaining a proposition. It is a relation, for Kant, between the object and the understanding (*KrV* A293/B350). Achieving this relation constitutively involves the *apperception*, a term that denotes something like self-consciousness (*KrV* B141, see: Section 4.6). Self-consciousness is part of judging. Judging is thus a conscious, mental act. When I judge that there is a tree in front of me, I am conscious that there is a tree in front of me. It is only through self-consciousness that I can cognise the tree as a unified object. And, in the case of genuine cognitions, it would not only be psychologically absurd but also logically absurd to judge consciously in this sense in a forceless manner. After all, cognitions are conscious judgments that have objective reality. And it would be absurd to imagine a self-consciousness that establishes the objective reality of some fact or object without in some way endorsing it or assenting to it. As a judgement, cognition is, therefore, a forceful notion - it entails at least something like belief.

[63] Cohen 1984, 368.
[64] See: Section 4.3.
[65] Ott 2002, 551.
[66] J. S. Marušić 2014, 256.

3.7 Cognition

My analysis in the previous parts of this chapter has two results that I will now draw together. First, Kant's account of cognition resembles our contemporary concept of knowledge much more closely than some recent commentaries suggest. If this is right, the older orthodoxy of translating and thinking of Kantian cognition as knowledge is vindicated. Second, a new interpretation of Kant's concept of cognition emerges, according to which cognition is a determining judgement that has objective reality. Objective reality functions as a hard and demanding epistemic standard comparable to that of truth in contemporary epistemology. The standard of objective reality, as an alternative epistemic success standard to truth, is necessitated by the peculiarities of Kant's transcendental idealism. For those who disagree with Kant's transcendental idealism, his concept of cognition might thus boil down to our contemporary notion of knowledge even more clearly. I will now consolidate the results of the previous sections.

3.7.1 Cognition is a Judgement that Has Objective Reality

Cognition, for Kant, is a determining judgement that has objective reality. This means that cognition results from the successful exercise of the understanding, a conceptual cognitive faculty. The understanding determines objects or facts; its successful exercise results in presentations or concepts that have objective reality.

Summarising these results, we can note several features of cognition:

- Cognition is a determining judgement.
- For a judgement to count as cognition, the judgement must have objective reality (Section 3.4).
- Cognition is true. Cognition is true because objective reality entails truth (Section 3.4).
- The objective reality requirement explains the givenness condition of theoretical cognition. For Kant, objects must be 'given' in pure or empirical intuition for the relation between understanding and object that characterises objective reality to be possible.
- Cognition is forceful. Cognition is forceful because a judgement p involves some sort of endorsement or affirmation of p on the part of the conscious judged (Sections 3.6 and 4.4).

Expanding the Account: Cognition in the Wide Sense

In contrast to most existing accounts of cognition, my account can explain Kant's usage of cognition not only in a narrow sense of theoretical cognition but in a wide

sense spanning both theoretical and practical cognition. As I have shown in Section 2.2.3, theoretical cognition includes empirical cognition (experience), mathematical cognition, geometrical cognition, and philosophical cognition. Practical cognition concerns moral reasoning. Cognition in what I call the "wide sense" thus concerns the entirety of epistemic achievements of what Kant calls our 'power of cognition:'

> Our entire power of cognition has two domains, that of the concepts of nature and that of the concept of freedom; for through both it is a priori law-giving. Now, philosophy divides itself also in accordance with this in theoretical and practical [philosophy]. [...] The lawgiving through concepts of nature happens through the understanding and is theoretical. The lawgiving through the concept of freedom happens from reason and is merely practical. (*KU* V:175)

The wide sense of cognition does not cover *every* usage of the term cognition across all of Kant's works. Instead, by cognition in the wide sense I mean cognition in the sense of both theoretical and practical cognition. I will now assess (a) to what degree the account of cognition I have developed so far can cover cognition in the wide sense and (b) what adjustments have to be made to generalise the account to all types of cognition in the wide sense.

To begin with, a positive feature of my account is that it can explain the givenness condition as proposed by Eric Watkins and Marcus Willaschek.[67] However, this givenness condition only obtains for theoretical cognition (and it is debatable whether it applies to *all* types of theoretical cognition, such as philosophical cognition). While my account can explain this givenness condition for theoretical cognition, it only explains it as an application of the wider requirement that cognition must have objective reality, which applies also to practical cognition. Thus, my account can explain how theoretical cognition is a species of cognition in the wide sense, where Kant thinks about our capacity for cognition more generally.

The claim that cognition is always achieved by the understanding only holds for theoretical cognition but not for practical cognition. Thus, cognition in the wide sense is not always only the product of the understanding. Theoretical cognition is a product of the understanding and concerns nature (*KpV* V:19). By contrast, practical cognition is a product of reason and concerns the will (and thus our agency) (*KpV* V:19). This is a feature of Kant's account of the hierarchy of our cognitive faculties. The relation of the cogniser to the object of cognition is somewhat reversed in practical cognition. In theoretical cognition, we cognise 'what is' and thus *nature* (A633/B661; See: V:167-9; V:174). In practical cognition, we cognise what 'ought to be' and thus what we should *do* (*KrV* A633/B661). It is thus unsurprising that different faculties are responsible for each type of cognition.

[67] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 85.

Although practical cognition is not achieved by the understanding, it is still useful to characterise it as a judgement, since Kant does use the locution of a 'moral judgement,' which is a conceptual cognitive act (*KU* V:301).

Summing Up

Including some adjustments to account for cognition in the wide sense, Kant's concept of cognition can be characterised as follows: Cognition results from a successful conceptual cognitive act to determine objective reality. The relevant sort of conceptual cognitive act is a judgement, which is performed either by the understanding (in theoretical cognition) or by reason (in practical cognition). To achieve objective reality, further requirements might need to be satisfied. For instance, in the case of empirical cognition, empirical intuition is required; it must be "given." In other cases of theoretical cognition, only indirect applicability to such intuitive content is necessary.

3.7.2 Cognition is Knowledge

Although Kant's concept of cognition is not equivalent to contemporary conceptions of knowledge, I think it is reasonable to consider it sufficiently similar to treat it as near-synonymous. To be sure, cognition does not analyse into justified true belief for Kant. Nonetheless, the main criteria of cognition are relevantly similar.

Cognition is a justified belief of sorts. That cognition is a judgement entails that it must be justified and that it is is held with some force of endorsement that is relevantly similar to contemporary notions of belief. Although Kant's account of judgement cannot be analysed into the content of a belief and an attitude towards it, it still contains both force and content and so satisfies this requirement. Given the disagreement of contemporary philosophers about what exactly belief is (or about what propositional attitudes more generally are), it seems reasonable to say that a minimal conception of belief or a basic pro-attitude is satisfied. The same is true of its justification status.

Moreover, the requirement of objective reality might be equivalent to truth; at the very least, it entails it. As mentioned, the distinction between objective reality and truth is only may only be relevant for transcendental idealists. For those who reject transcendental idealism, the conditions of objective reality and truth may well coincide. The degree to which there is an overlap between contemporary notions of truth and Kant's account of objective reality depends on the details of which specific contemporary account of truth and which specific reading of objective reality one subscribes to. In any case, it seems more reasonable to require factivity as a minimal criterion, according to which the cognition of p entails p. The standard of objective reality ensures that this factivity condition is satisfied.

3.8 Alternative Views

In this section, I will sharpen the account of cognition that I have proposed by comparing and contrasting it with other accounts in the literature.

3.8.1 Watkins and Willaschek: Givenness and Thought

In two influential papers, Eric Watkins and Marcus Willaschek argue that, for Kant, 'cognition is a mental state that determines a given object by attributing general features to it.'[68] One of their central claims is also that Kant's concept of cognition is 'not only distinct, but even disjunct' from Kant's own and from the contemporary concept of knowledge.[69] I have already presented my argument against their view that Kantian cognition differs very much from our contemporary concept of knowledge above. Although I agree with the general point that Kant's concept of knowledge is distinct from his concept of cognition, I offer a different account of this distinction and of its reasons below. Here, I will only focus on the content of their account of Kantian cognition and elucidate some differences and commonalities.

Here are the central features of Watkins' and Willaschek's account of Kantian cognition. First, they argue that the mental state of cognition is a representation (which corresponds to the Kantian term *Vorstellung* that I normally translate as "presentation").[70] Second, they argue that, in cognition, an object is determined by attributing general features, 'i.e., features it has in common with other objects.'[71] The example given is that of a red ball: 'Thus, my awareness of a red ball in front of me as red or as a ball qualifies as cognition.'[72] Third, to count as a cognition, the object that is determined must be 'given,' meaning that 'the object is present to mind so as to guarantee that one's representation refers to it.'[73] This is called the 'givenness condition.'[74] Fourth, to represent this given object as having general features, the object must be thought by the understanding, thereby making 'the cognised object intelligible, satisfying the thought condition.'[75] So, for Watkins and Willaschek, Kantian cognition is a representation of an object in terms of some general features (i.e., concepts), whereby the object is somehow given to and thought by the understanding.

I will not here discuss Watkins' and Willaschek's first claim, that cognition is a representation. This claim is based on Kant's discussion of cognition as part of a series of representations in the so-called *Stufenleiter* passages. These passages are the primary textual evidence for Clinton Tolley's reading of cognition.[76] I will therefore

[68] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 83; c.f. Willaschek and Watkins 2020.
[69] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3195.
[70] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 84–5.
[71] Ibid., 86.
[72] Ibid., 84.
[73] Ibid., 89.
[74] Ibid., 89.
[75] Ibid., 102.
[76] Tolley 2020.

discuss this claim below, in my comments on Clinton Tolley's account (Section 3.8.2).

There is much to agree with and to learn from Watkins' and Willaschek's account. I largely agree with their account as a processual description of Kant's theory of how we come to have empirical cognition. However, I am sceptical about its applicability beyond empirical cognition. And there are significant methodological differences between Watkins' and Willaschek's as opposed to my proposal. These methodological differences largely explain differences in the content between my account and theirs.

An important contrast between my account of cognition and Watkins' and Willaschek's account is that their focus is slightly narrower. Watkins and Willaschek focus on theoretical cognition in a narrow sense.[77] By contrast, my account is supposed to explain Kant's use of the notion of cognition across both practical and theoretical cases. Insofar as cognition in a very narrow sense is concerned – namely empirical cognition, i.e., experience – I agree with Watkins' and Willaschek's analysis, and I think that it is, to a large degree, consistent with my account of cognition in a wider sense. For empirical cognition, the givenness of an object to the mind is clearly required. This is an implication of the objective reality requirement in cases of empirical cognition. However, I am doubtful that this model – in terms of the givenness condition – can be extended to all types of theoretical cognition, as Watkins and Willaschek seem to suggest. My scepticism here has its ground in the metaphysical commitments that Watkins and Willaschek attribute to the givenness condition.

Givenness, for Watkins and Willaschek, has a strong metaphysical implication: existence.[78] Objects can be given, they argue, in one of two ways, either through intuition or through the construction of an object in pure intuition.[79] 'In both cases,' they claim, 'the givenness of an object implies that the object exists.'[80] As others have already noted, this claim seems metaphysically overcommitted, as at least some cases of construction in intuition imply merely real possibility rather than real existence. Watkins and Willaschek might have successfully addressed this worry in a footnote on mathematical cognition, where they argue that the relevant object of existence in, say, mathematical cognition may merely be an abstract object. As an abstract object, a triangle that is constructed in intuition may still be said to exist. While I agree that abstract objects may be said to exist in this sense, it introduces a new problem. What really matters for successful cognition is not whether the abstract object does or does not *exist*. Instead, what matters is whether it can successfully apply to experience, i.e., to empirical cognition. But the mere construction of an object in intuition does not guarantee this, as Kant clarifies in the following passage:

> It seems as though the possibility of a triangle can be cognised from its

[77] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 86.
[78] Ibid., 89.
[79] Ibid., 89.
[80] Ibid., 89.

> concept in itself (it is certainly independent of experience); for we can indeed give it an object entirely a priori, that is, construct it. But because this is only the form of an object, it would always remain only a product of the imagination, the possibility of whose object would remain doubtful, as something more is required for this, namely, that such a figure be conceived under the same conditions as all objects of experience. (*KrV* A223-4/B271)

Here, Kant argues that it 'seems as though' one could cognise the possibility of a triangle by constructing it, i.e., from it *being given*. But he argues that the givenness is *insufficient* to establish what really matters, that it is consistent with 'the same conditions as all objects of experience,' i.e., that it is *really possible*. Hence, mere givenness, in the sense of construction in intuition, may be sufficient to establish the existence of a triangle as an abstract object but not for its applicability to objects of experience. Yet, it is precisely this applicability to objects of experience that is required for a 'cognition of reason (*Vernunfterkenntnis*),' such as mathematical cognition, to count as genuine cognition (*KrV* A713/B741).

So, in the case of mathematical cognition, the givenness condition misses its own target. The givenness of a triangle through construction might secure that it exists as an abstract object. However, this is insufficient to show that this abstract object exists in a way that is valid for objects of experience. As Kant clarifies in the passage above, 'something more is required for this, namely, that such a figure be conceived under the same conditions as all objects of experience' (*KrV* A223-4/B271). Conceiving objects in this way 'under the same conditions as all' empirical objects refers to the role of the understanding in cognition. But this means that givenness, by itself, is insufficient to establish the existence of the triangle in the relevant way. The understanding – and thus the thought condition – is also required to secure the existence of the object of mathematical cognition. But this means that, at least in the case of mathematical cognition, Watkins' and Willaschek's account of givenness as implying 'that the object exists' is inaccurate.[81]

The failure of the givenness condition in the case of mathematical cognition points to a wider problem with Watkins' and Willaschek's account. While Watkins' and Willaschek's account of Kantian cognition is informative and while there certainly is a sense in which empirical cognition requires the givenness of an object in intuition and that it be thought by the understanding, I think the applicability of this analysis of cognition is even narrower that Watkins and Willaschek had intended. Specifically, it applies – if at all – exclusively to empirical cognition. For mathematical cognition, the givenness condition does not secure existence of the corresponding object in the way intended. In the case of philosophical cognition, it is doubtful whether givenness plays a role at all. This failure of the givenness condition in an account of cognition in the narrow sense, as intended by Watkins and Willaschek, reveals, I believe, a deeper

[81] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 90.

problem with their approach. Their analysis of cognition, while accurate in many ways, is primarily *genetic* or *processual* rather than *epistemic* in its approach. It is genetic or processual in the sense that it explains cognition in terms of Kant's model of the mind, i.e., of how we *come to have cognition* instead of explaining cognition *as an epistemic state or achievement*. While both approaches constitute legitimate methods for thinking about what Kant means by cognition, there are significant methodological differences, and it is crucial to be aware of them.

Let me illustrate the distinction between a genetic/processual account of cognition and an epistemic account of cognition by taking the example of knowledge. On an epistemic account of knowledge, we might analyse knowledge as justified true belief, i.e., in terms of an epistemic state and one or more epistemic standards this state must satisfy. A genetic/processual account of knowledge is different. Here, we need a model of the mind to explain how our mind works to attain a justified true belief. For instance, we might argue that we need perceptions of a mind-independent world. Or we might say that we need to be given some material or content in intuition that is then discursively processed. Each method – genetic/processual or epistemic – will result in a different type of account of knowledge. The analogous claim obtains for cognition.

Watkins' and Willaschek's account of Kantian cognition fits the genetic/processual method more closely. They explain cognition in terms of processual requirements that correspond to Kant's model of the mind. The givenness condition corresponds to the role of intuition (or of construction in intuition) in cognition. The thought condition corresponds to the role of the understanding in cognition. Taken as a genetic/processual model, this account of cognition is apt and informative. However, it is not equivalent to an epistemic account of cognition and has several drawbacks.

While a genetic/processual account of cognition depends on a specific model of the mind, an epistemic account can be more neutral here. Moreover, the genetic/processual account is in a certain sense secondary to an epistemic account. To explain why a certain process is required or why certain mental processes are necessary to attain cognition, one would first need an epistemic account of cognition. For instance, one could argue that it is because knowledge requires truth that one needs perceptions of a mind-independent world. Similarly, and applied to the current case of Kantian cognition, it is only because cognition (epistemically) must have objective reality that (processually) an object must be given to the mind.

As a genetic/processual account, Watkins' and Willaschek's proposal has two drawbacks. First, it obscures the motivation or reasons for certain processual aspects of cognition by presenting processual conditions as primary and definitional of Kant's account of cognition. Representing a given object and its general features is what we *do* to cognise an object. However, this is not why the object counts as a cognition.

Second, a consequence of prioritising the processual realisation of cognition over its epistemic analysis is an exaggeration of the apparent difference between Kant's concept of cognition and our concept of knowledge. This is because Watkins and Willaschek present their genetic/processual account *as if* it were an epistemic account. It seems as though the very concept of cognition is primarily defined as a determination of a given object through thought. This obscures, however, that determining a given object through thought is only the psychological model by which Kant explains our ability to make judgements that have objective reality. By contrast, my account of cognition as a judgement that has objective reality analyses Kant's concept of cognition in epistemic terms first, which can then be used to explain why, given Kant's model of the mind, some types of cognition require a process that satisfies the givenness and the thought conditions.

3.8.2 Tolley: The *Stufenleiter*

Like Watkins and Willaschek, Clinton Tolley offers a developmental or genetic account of cognition. It takes the *Stufenleiter* ("step-ladder"), a passage where Kant describes various 'steps' or stages of representation or cognition, as the key for understanding Kant's transcendental psychology of cognition in other parts of the *Critique* (*KrV* A320/B376-7).[82] In contrast to Watkins and Willaschek, Tolley's account is explicitly a 'genetic account' based on 'Kant's background *psychology* (or what we might now call his *philosophy of mind.*'[83]

Taken as an account of Kant's psychological model of cognition, Tolley's account is insightful and instructive. It includes, for instance, a detailed explanation of the roles of apperception and the understanding in securing the objectivity of cognition. However, I disagree with Tolley's view that it is in light of Kant's 'background framework of psychology and philosophy of mind (representation, consciousness) rather than epistemology (justification, evidence)' that we must understand Kant's concept of cognition.[84] Tolley offers a successful account of this background psychology. But he offers no argument demonstrating that this is the only way of analysing Kant's concept of cognition, nor that this developmental approach takes priority over the epistemic analysis. Moreover, as my analysis of cognition above illustrates, it is possible to understand Kant's genetic account as a consequence of his epistemic concept of cognition. Therefore, my comments on Tolley's account in this section will focus on how some aspects of Tolley's developmental account can be explained in light of my epistemic account of Kantian cognition.

I will discuss four aspects of Tolley's account. First, I will discuss the issue of what type of mental state a cognition is. As mentioned above, Watkins and Willaschek

[82] Tolley 2020, 3216.
[83] Ibid., 3216, 3223.
[84] Ibid., 3242.

argue that cognition is a representation. This claim is based on Kant's discussion of cognition as one step on the step-ladder (*Stufenleiter*) of representations. As I will argue here, Kant's inclusion of cognition in the *Stufenleiter* does not imply that cognition is merely the mental state of a representation. Rather, it signifies that cognition is a judgement about a representation that has objective reality. Tolley's analysis confirms this view. Second, this discussion of the mental state of cognition will involve a deeper analysis of the role of the understanding in cognition. Third, Tolley's account provides further evidence for the essential role of apperception in cognition. Fourth, Tolley's analysis also provides further evidence for the necessity of intuition for cognition, which corresponds roughly to what Watkins and Willaschek discuss in terms of the givenness requirement.

To begin with, let me introduce the primary textual evidence, the *Stufenleiter*. I will merely present the version of the *Stufenleiter* from the first *Critique* here. Other presentations of the *Stufenleiter* that differ slightly from this presentation can be found in Kant's logic lectures (e.g.: *Logik Jäsche* IX:64-5).[85]

> The genus is a presentation in general (*repraesentatio*). Below it is the presentation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception that refers only to the subject, as a modification of its state, is sensation (*sensatio*), an objective perception is cognition (*cognitio*). This is either intuition or concept (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former refers directly to the object and is singular; the latter indirectly, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things. The concept is either an empirical or a pure concept, and the pure concept, so far as it has its origin in understanding alone (not in the pure image of sensibility) is called notio. A concept consisting of notions, which transcends the possibility of experience, is the idea, or a concept of reason. (*KrV* A320/B376-7)

While this passage introduces cognition as a type of presentation, the *Stufenleiter* is not inconsistent with my claim that cognition is a judgement. In fact, it supports this claim. As the passage itself indicates, Kant's concept of presentation is highly general - it ranges from perceptions and sensations over intuitions to concepts and ideas. The highest of these – ideas – do not even have an experienceable object corresponding to them. Kant's concept of a presentation is thus best thought of as that of an intentional mental state in general, i.e., of a mental state that relates to some object or content. It is therefore possible for a judgement – in the sense of the result of the act of the understanding – to be one type of presentation. We learn more, however, by noting *what specific type* of presentation it is – namely a judgement – than by using the more general term of a presentation, which can be anything from a mere perception to an idea.

[85] For references to more passages, see: ibid.

The essential role of the understanding in cognition is also borne out by Tolley's analysis of the *Stufenleiter.* Tolley associates the first three steps of the *Stufenleiter* (perceptio, sensatio, cognitio) with the triple synthesis of Kant's A-Deduction: (1) apprehension in intuition, (2) reproduction in imagination, and (3) recognition in the concept (*KrV* A98-103). All three syntheses are required for cognition, and they correspond to the first three steps on the *Stufenleiter.*[86] I agree with this analysis as an account of empirical cognition. It shows that cognition is an act of the understanding, i.e., a judgement. Tolley offers an insightful explanation of why judgement is required for cognition. The first two syntheses merely present us with (1) a simple consciousness of appearances and (2) a complex image of these appearances as combined in various ways. So, the first two stages get us from simple perceptions to complex sensations. But in this complex sensation we are not yet conscious of the sensation as an experience *of an object.* To get from complex sensations to experience of an object, the understanding is required:

> We are not, as of yet, conscious of whatever it is that causes and determines these sensations as effects in the first place, i.e., whatever *thing* causes our intuitions to contain just such-and-such material. Our minds achieve this further consciousness **by using our understanding** to think of these sensory representations [...] as effects as related to this further thing as their cause, thereby thinking of this thing as, e.g., a substance with the requisite power to bring about just these sensations in us. [...] In this third step, we become conscious of appearances, not just as *objects* themselves (as occurs in perception) but as 'representations which in turn have their object (A109)' [...][87]

As Tolley argues, it is the understanding that performs the crucial mental act, in a judgement, to convert 'intuition as mere *representation*' into 'experience as *cognition* of the object.'[88] The resulting *mental* state is still a representation in the sense of being an intentional mental state. However, from an *epistemic* perspective, the specific act that is required to first qualify it as a cognition is that of a judgement. By clarifying that cognition is a judgement, we can distinguish it from presentations at lower steps on the *Stufenleiter,* such as mere perception. This is important because presentations that are on lower steps can also count as representations of objects. In line with this, it is at least conceivable that the standard of objective reality might also be applied to perceptions. To ensure that a mere perception, even if objectively real in this sense, cannot count as a cognition, it is important for an epistemic account of cognition (like mine) to indicate that a cognition is more than a mere perception, i.e., that it is a judgement.

[86] Tolley 2020, 3225.
[87] Ibid., 3226, my bold emphasis.
[88] Ibid., 3228.

There are several additional ways in which Tolley's analysis of Kant's genetic account of cognition supports some of my claims. For instance, Tolley emphasises the necessary role of apperception in cognition and thereby its nature as the conscious act of a judging subject.[89] Another example is Tolley's explanation for why intuition is required for cognition. Intuition is required not, as Watkins and Willaschek suggest, to secure the givenness of the object. Instead, argues Tolley, intuition furnishes us with a 'consciousness of a *real relation* that obtains between one of our representations and its real object.'[90] This psychological requirement – the requirement to be conscious of a real relation to a real object – could be an implication of the epistemic requirement that cognition must have objective reality, depending on the account of objective reality and the specific reading of Kant's psychological model one endorses. Overall, then, Tolley's reading as a genetic account of cognition seems largely compatible with my epistemic account. I merely disagree with the view that the genetic account ought to be prioritised over an epistemic reading or that it is the only game in town, as Tolley suggests.[91]

3.8.3 Schafer: Consciousness of Objects

Like Clinton Tolley, Karl Schafer takes the *Stufenleiter* passage as indicative of Kant's concept of cognition.[92] In this passage, Kant defines cognition as 'an objective perception' and as a species of the genus 'presentation' (*KrV* A320/B376-7). Schafer argues that this means that, in cognition, we have a presentation in which we are conscious of two things: First, we are conscious of the object that is cognised. Second, we are conscious of our presentation *as* a presentation of an object.[93]

According to Schafer, the characterisation of cognition as consciousness of an object in which we are conscious of our presentation as a presentation of an object entails a commitment to 'a "material" standard of correctness.'[94] This material standard of correctness differs from a merely formal standard. A merely formal standard consists, for instance, of the rules of logic. Whether a presentation or judgement conforms to formal rules can be assessed independently of the content of cognition, i.e., its relation to the object. By contrast, a material standard of correctness refers to the content of the cognition, i.e., to its object, as a standard of correctness. Moreover, since we are conscious of our cognition as cognition of an object, we are also conscious, in cognising, of the material standard of correctness of a cognition.[95]

Schafer adds two further requirements: in cognition, we must be conscious of the real

[89] Ibid., 3223.
[90] Ibid., 3233.
[91] Ibid., 3242.
[92] Schafer 2023a, 57.
[93] Ibid., 58–9.
[94] Ibid., 60.
[95] Ibid., 61.

possibility and the determinate content of the object of cognition.[96] These further requirements are implications of the requirement that cognition be consciously governed by a material standard of correctness.[97] Only objects of which we are conscious as really possible and of which our presentations are determinate can qualify as satisfying a material standard of correctness.[98] So, these further requirements are implications of and secondary to the more general material standard of correctness requirement.

I generally agree with Schafer's account and it is consistent with my description of cognition. As I have already argued in my discussion of Clinton Tolley's account above, it is true that cognition is, generally speaking, a representation. Moreover, Kant's notion of objective reality is a material standard of correctness in Schafer's sense. So, I can generally go along with Schafer's account.

However, I have two worries about the specific setup of Schafer's account. First, Schafer centres the account of cognition specifically as the cognition *of objects*. Yet, the notion of "object" is far from unproblematic.[99] Chignell raised this worry in a discussion of Watkins' and Willaschek's account of cognition. The main worry is that it is unclear whether "object" here refers to appearances, to things in themselves, or to something else entirely.[100] Chignell's worry can, I believe, be extended to Schafer's account. In particular, I think that the problem is that neither option really works. Appearances are not yet fully objects (but merely appearances), since it is only in cognition that the material content of an appearances is cognised (and thus recognised) as an object. Things in themselves, on the other hand, cannot be cognised. So, it remains unclear what precisely "object" refers to as a component part of a definition of cognition. In other words, the worry is that, in Kant's framework, we cannot identify objects that come "before" cognition that can function as a standard of reference for a material standard of correctness.

The worry about Schafer's use of the notion of "object" also occurs on a different distinction of two senses of objects suggested by Nick Stang. According to Stang, we can distinguish between two ways in which Kant uses object-terms, the first of which Stang calls 'object' and the second he refers to as 'thing.'[101] The concept of object is based on Kant's account of 'the concept of an object in general' (*KrV* A290/B346) and refers to the general concept of that which corresponds to a presentation of an object as its ground.[102] So, the notion of an object is a relative concept, as it conceptualises the object as relative to an intuition, presentation, or cognition.[103] The notion of a thing, by contrast, is ontological and 'refers to a being that has a force,

[96] Schafer 2023a, 63.
[97] Ibid., 63.
[98] Ibid., 63–4.
[99] See: Stang 2021.
[100] Chignell 2017, 135.
[101] Stang 2022, 296.
[102] Ibid., 301.
[103] Ibid., 303.

that is, an intensively determinable degree of causal power.'[104] Again, neither concept can be convincingly used in an account of cognition. On the one hand, the highly general concept "object"is simply *too general*: it is merely the concept of an object of cognition as such, not the concept of a specific object. It thus lacks the material content that would be required for a material standard of correctness. On the other hand, the concept of a "thing" requires use of the category of the reality.[105] But the category of reality is used only *in* a judgement of cognition and only valid of an object as a category that is successfully used in cognition. So, the ontologically thick and contentful notion of a "thing" is only available after cognising that thing.

These worries about using the concept of an object in an account of cognition point to a more general problem. For Kant, it is only in cognition and through cognition that we become conscious of an object as an object. (And this is indeed the starting point of Schafer's account.)[106] As we have seen in the Stufenleiter, in presentations that are prior to cognition, we are not conscious of an object *as* an object. So, the notion of an object can only properly enter our theory post-cognition. It is precisely the function of a judgement, through conceptualising intuitive content by means of the categories, to furnish us with a presentation that can properly refer to an object as an object.[107] So, although I generally agree with Schafer's description, I believe that my account avoids these ambiguities and problems surrounding the use of the concept of an object in the definition of cognition.

On my alternative view, there is also a standard of correctness (objective reality). But this standard of correctness applies directly to the judgement. It is the judgement that has objective reality. Therefore, my account avoids a potentially threatening commitment to a mind-world relationship that depends on an independently existing object that can serve as the standard of correctness prior to cognition, as Schafer's account might do. For a judgement to have objective reality, we need not posit a mind-independent object prior to cognition that can serve as its material standard of correctness. So, I hope that my account can avoid this dangerous terrain by defining a specific standard of correctness (objective reality) that is not necessarily committed to a notion of objecthood whose ontological status is dubitable in a transcendental idealist setup.

Second, I am somewhat sceptical about Schafer's contrast between formal and material standards of correctness, as applied to cognition. This contrast can surely be drawn on the basis of Kantian resources, as Schafer shows.[108] However, I do not agree that, in the case of cognition, the 'material standards of correctness' clearly extend 'beyond the

[104] Ibid., 306.
[105] See: ibid., 306.
[106] Schafer 2023a, 57–9.
[107] Indeed, Kant at one point describes the categories, whose use is required for empirical cognition, as 'the concepts of an object as such' (*KrV* B128).
[108] Schafer 2023a, 60.

requirements of logic.'[109] Recall that Kant completes his account of empirical cognition in the *Transcendental Logic* (*KrV* A50/B74 ff.). As I have argued in greater detail in the section on truth above (Section 3.4.3), Kant there distinguishes general logic that abstracts from all content of cognition from transcendental logic (*KrV* A76/B102). And 'transcendental logic has a manifold of sensibility lying a priori before it' (*KrV* A76/B102). And it is the task of transcendental logic to 'determine' not only the correspondence of the categories with the formal criteria of correctness of general logic but indeed 'the objective validity of such cognitions' (*KrV* A57/B81). Although it is true that, for Kant, logic alone does not suffice for successful cognition (*KrV* A60/B85), this does not mean that the standard of correctness for cognition – such as objective reality – cannot itself be a basic concept of transcendental logic.

Timothy Rosenkoetter's reading of the *Transcendental Logic* offers one possible argument according to which the standard of correctness of cognition could be a logical notion (not in the sense of general logic but in the sense of transcendental logic).[110] Rosenkoetter draws attention to Kant's introduction of the concept of transcendental truth, as opposed to empirical truth, in the *Transcendental Logic*:

> But in the totality of all possible experience lie all our cognitions, and in the general relation to this totality consists the transcendental truth, which precedes all empirical [truth] and makes it possible. (*KrV* A146/B185)

On Rosenkoetter's interpretation, the *Transcendental Logic* provides us with a criterion of material truth.[111] In the *Transcendental Logic,* Rosenkoetter argues, Kant develops a new and 'real definition of the [concept of] the *object as such.*'[112] This is the general concept of an object I mentioned in my first criticism of Schafer's account above (see: *KrV* A290/B346, cf. A105, B128).[113] This new concept of an object, so the argument goes, provides us with a concept of objectivity (or truth) that empirical cognition must satisfy. (Thus, 'transcendental truth [...] *precedes* all empirical [truth].') This general concept of an object is the concept of something *spatiotemporal* that corresponds to the categories. Kant arrives at this concept in the *Transcendental Logic*, so it is a logical concept. It is not, however, a concept of general logic, which deals only with conceptual rules. By contrast, *Transcendental Logic* can (and indeed must) specify not only the conceptual role of the understanding but also the role of the sensibility and intuition in cognition.[114] So, Kant's general concept of an object is logical in nature but at the same time a material criterion of truth since it requires the content of empirical cognition to be provided (or "given") in intuition by the sensibility. So, on this reading, the apparently sharp contrast between logical and material standards

[109] Schafer 2023a, 61.
[110] Rosenkoetter 2009, 206–7.
[111] Ibid., 211, 213.
[112] Ibid., 222.
[113] Rosenkoetter links this to Kant's concepts of the transcendental object and the "object X". See: ibid., 222.
[114] Ibid., 234.

of truth breaks down.

Rosenkoetter's argument is surely contentious. Regardless, the argument demonstrates that one must be careful to avoid an overly naïve construal of the relation of cognition to its object. Specifically, it is important to avoid commitments to transcendental realism. Accounts of cognition that define it simply as a representation of "an object," such as Schafer's but also Watkins' and Willaschek's account, fail to appreciate the difficulty of spelling out *what exactly* the "object" of reference is supposed to be. The motivation for including a reference to the "object" in an account of cognition is to secure that, in cognition, we have a representation that has material content whose origin is somehow mind-independent. However, thinking of this as a robustly mind-independent "object" would commit Kant to transcendental realism of sorts. Conversely, less robustly mind-independent conceptions, such as that of appearances, fail to provide a secure basis for the objectivity (or reality, or correctness) of cognition. Moreover, it is only in cognition that we become conscious of objects *as objects*. The threat of a vicious circle thus looms over accounts of cognition in terms of a relation between an "object" and some mental state.

3.9 Conclusion

Cognition, for Kant, is a judgement that has objective reality. *Qua* judgement, cognition is a cognitive achievement that results from properly using our cognitive faculties, meaning that cognitions are justified. Moreover, judgements are, for Kant, "forceful" mental acts, meaning that they entail endorsement of the content of a judgement. Cognitions are therefore endorsed in a way by the subject that resembles what we today mean by "believing" a judgement. At a minimum, the epistemic standard of objective reality entails the truth of cognition. Cognitions, therefore, satisfy, roughly at least, our contemporary account of knowledge as justified true belief.

Nonetheless, there are, of course, semantic differences between Kant's concept of cognition and our concept of knowledge. Kant's concept of cognition cannot be analysed in terms of the three conditions of justification, truth, and belief. Instead, the satisfaction of these conditions is entailed by the conditions that *are* primary to Kant's account of cognition: that it is a judgement and that this judgement has objective reality. Being a judgement, cognition must result from epistemic labour, and specifically as an epistemic achievement of a discursive cognitive faculty, such as the understanding or reason. The requirement of objective reality might well go *beyond* truth as a correspondence between mind and world. Having an alternative epistemic standard to truth may be important in light of Kant's wider transcendental idealist commitments, which, as we have seen in the discussion of the notion of an "object" in Section 3.8, render a naïve construal of a mind-world relationship to undergird a

correspondence conception of truth implausible.

Acknowledging the semantic differences between Kant's conception of cognition and our concept of knowledge, it is important not to overstate these differences. For one thing, and as I have alluded to in Section 3.3, there is not really such a thing as "our contemporary conception of knowledge" or"*the* contemporary account of knowledge." What Kant means by cognition is continuous with what laypeople and philosophers call knowledge today: experiential knowledge, mathematical knowledge, scientific knowledge, moral knowledge, and so on. Thus, there is no reason to think that Kant's concept of cognition is fundamentally inconsistent with conditions such as truth, justification, or belief. Given the short lifespan of particular theories of knowledge, it should be a better idea to consider whether the types of cases Kant thinks of as cognition can be described as knowledge. I think they can be so-considered.

In this chapter, I defended the orthodox knowledge reading of cognition. In the course of doing so, I developed a new account of Kant's concept of cognition. This account is novel in two ways. First, it explicitly defends cognition as a demanding epistemic achievement comparable to our concept of knowledge. Second, my account of cognition is applicable to cognition in a wider sense than most existing readings: it covers both theoretical and practical cognition. While this gives us a clearer picture of the notion of cognition, I have so far left out the relation between cognition and another prominent set of Kantian epistemic terms – specifically its relation to opinion, belief, and knowledge. In the next chapter, I will discuss a Kantian concept that underlies these three epistemic achievements: the concept of *Fürwahrhalten*.

Chapter 4

Fürwahrhalten

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* should not be interpreted as a propositional attitude. Instead, *Fürwahrhalten* is Kant's concept for a concrete judgement. That is, by *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant means concrete judgements that people make. For instance, if you judged on Tuesday that the cat was on the mat, your judgement would have been an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*. Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is thus specific to the Concrete Framework (see: Chapter 2). This contrasts with Kant's general account of judgement, which refers to the concept of a judgement in abstraction from its concrete application. For Kant, judgement in this abstract sense is defined by the principles of our cognitive capacities. Thus, judgment in this general sense is specific to the Capacity Framework (see: Chapter 2). One way to think about *Fürwahrhalten* is thus as judgement-PLUS. It is a judgement (in the capacity sense) but with some added complexities that arise in concrete acts of judging but that can be ignored in the Capacity Framework. My account of *Fürwahrhalten* challenges the widely held view in secondary work on Kant's distinction between opinion, belief, and knowledge that *Fürwahrhalten* should be understood as a propositional attitude. Thus, my argument in this chapter will pave the way for my account of Kant's concepts of opinion, belief, and knowledge in Chapter 5.

This chapter relates to the previous chapter on Kant's concept of cognition in the following way. In Chapter 3, I proposed a new reading of Kant's concept of cognition, arguing that cognition is a judgement that has objective reality. According to my proposal, cognition is an epistemically demanding and valuable state, comparable to our contemporary concept of knowledge. With this view, I challenge a recent trend in Kant scholarship that has cast doubt on the orthodox "knowledge reading of cognition." This challenge to the orthodox reading has two prongs. The first challenges

the claim that Kantian cognition is knowledge in the contemporary sense of knowledge. I discussed this in Chapter 3. By contrast, the second prong challenges the claim that Kantian cognition is knowledge in accordance with Kant's own concept of knowledge. In this chapter and in Chapter 5, I will turn to this second part. This present chapter lays the groundwork for a new account of Kant's distinction of opining, believing, and knowing in the *Canon of Pure Reason*, a passage that commentators have sought out as a key source for understanding Kant's concept of knowledge. My account of the section on opining, believing, and knowing is then developed in Chapter 5. Here, I will focus on the genus epistemic state of which opining, knowing, and believing are taken to be species: *Fürwahrhalten*, which literally translates as "holding-for-true."

In the Canon of Pure Reason and several logic lectures, Kant distinguishes opining, believing, and knowing as different stages of *Fürwahrhalten* (*KrV* A820/B848 ff.; *Logik Jäsche* IX: 66 ff.; *Logik Blomberg* XXIV:227 ff.; *Wiener Logik* XXIV:849 ff.; *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:731 ff.). This distinction has become the go-to place for recent attempts at interpreting Kant's concept of knowledge.[1] The *Fürwahrhalten*-passages are typically taken to differentiate knowledge among other epistemic states as a species of *Fürwahrhalten*. It is typically thought that these species are distinguished by epistemic and nonepistemic justification conditions. Accordingly, Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is taken to be something like a mental state, similar to our contemporary notion of belief. This "carrier state" is then thought to be the basis for a variety of epistemic states that are of particular importance to Kant, such as opinion or belief. As a result, interpretations of *Fürwahrhalten* serve as the basis for recent discussions on the relationship between Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge.[2]

Commentators disagree significantly about the exact epistemic and non-epistemic conditions that Kantian knowledge requires.[3] Disagreement on how precisely to distinguish between opining, believing, and knowing is just as severe.[4] Yet, there is surprisingly little debate about Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten*. At least since Leslie Stevenson's treatment of the *Fürwahrhalten*-section in the *Canon*, there appears to be virtually universal agreement that *Fürwahrhalten* should be understood as a propositional attitude, similar in its function to that of belief in contemporary epistemology.[5] *Fürwahrhalten* is typically translated as "assent" and it is argued that it is some sort of positive attitude towards a proposition.[6] This is a substantive interpretive assumption, as it commits Kant to a proto-Fregean model of epistemic states, including knowledge. Because *Fürwahrhalten* underpins key epistemic concepts like opinion and belief, this interpretive assumption has major implications for our understanding of

[1] Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007b, 2014; Pasternack 2015; Höwing 2016; Schafer 2023a, 69.
[2] E.g.: Chignell 2014; Willaschek and Watkins 2020; Schafer 2023a, 69.
[3] Stevenson 2003, 88; Chignell 2007b, 47; Pasternack 2015, 61–4; Höwing 2016, 217–9.
[4] Stevenson 2003, 82; Chignell 2007b, 49; Pasternack 2015, 61; Höwing 2016, 219.
[5] Stevenson 2003, 73, 77.
[6] Stevenson 2003, 73, 77; Chignell 2007b, 35, 2007a, 324–5; Pasternack 2014a; Höwing 2016, 202; Mileti Nardo 2023, 99; Kohl n.d.

Kant's epistemic framework. Yet, there has been surprisingly little discussion of this interpretive assumption. In this chapter, I seek to remedy this oversight.

I will argue that *Fürwahrhalten* is not a propositional attitude because the Fregean force-content distinction cannot be applied meaningfully in the Kantian context. Instead of a propositional attitude, *Fürwahrhalten* is Kant's concept for *concrete* judgements. Recall the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework from Chapter 2. *Fürwahrhalten* is situated within the Concrete Framework. To explain this claim, consider the following example. Consider Karl, who judges that it is two o'clock. On the one hand, we can be interested in the epistemic act of judging completely in abstraction from its concrete instantiation. Here, we might say that a judgement is successful when it is true or when it has objective reality. On the other hand, in the Concrete Framework, we can be interested in the judgement as part of the epistemic practice and epistemic life of concrete people, such as Karl. When interested in the judgement as a concrete act, a success standard of truth or objective reality might be too demanding. Or it might be insufficient. Differences can exist between the concept of an epistemic act in abstraction from, and the same act as part of, an epistemic practice. In this chapter, I will argue that Kant uses the term *Fürwahrhalten* to single out and discuss the act of judging within the Concrete Framework.

Apart from its indirect relevance to the debate about cognition, my account of *Fürwahrhalten* is valuable in its own right. For one thing, my discussion of *Fürwahrhalten* fills a gap in the literature. Specific forms of *Fürwahrhalten*, which include persuasion, conviction, opinion, and belief, are extensively examined within the scholarly literature.[7] By contrast, *Fürwahrhalten* itself has suffered from comparatively neglectful treatment.[8] Moreover, if my analysis here is right, then Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* plays a crucial role in Kant's distinction of two normative frameworks in epistemology – the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. This distinction and Kant's separate concept for concrete judgments (i.e., *Fürwahrhalten*), could offer new ways for resolving long-standing debates in contemporary epistemology, such as those in the ethics of belief (see: Section 4.6.3). So, in addition to its instrumental significance for my objectives in this thesis, the present account of *Fürwahrhalten* might also interest contemporary epistemologists, and it paves the way for a new understanding of Kant's theory of opining, knowing, and believing.

The present chapter is structured as follows. In Section 4.2, I will present textual evidence to support my claim that *Fürwahrhalten* is a concrete judgement. This textual evidence supports my *prima facie* case that *Fürwahrhalten* is not a propositional attitude. In Section 4.3, I will describe the propositional attitude reading in greater

[7] See, e.g.: Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007a; Rudolf A. Makkreel 2018, 2022; Höwing 2016.

[8] One exception is Mileti Nardo's modal account of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten*: Mileti Nardo 2021.

detail. I will also explain what propositional attitudes are and that their purpose is to introduce a force-content distinction with the ultimate aim of explaining the possibility of objectivity in judgements. The section concludes with some reflections on what would have to be true of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* for a propositional attitude reading of the term to be cogent. In Section 4.4, I will discuss and reject one possible argument for the propositional attitude reading, the JUDGEMENT AS CONTENT option. This option would require that Kant's concept of a judgement plays the role that propositions play in epistemology today. In Section 4.5, I will discuss and reject an alternative possible argument for the propositional attitude reading, the FÜRWAHRHALTEN AS ABSTRACTION option. This latter option would require Kant to introduce the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* to insulate, by means of abstraction, the force component in a judgement from its content. After rejecting both possible arguments, I return to my positive proposal in Section 4.6. There, I will explain in greater detail what it means for *Fürwahrhalten* to be a concrete judgement. I will also reflect on the wider systematic purpose of this distinction and on how the notion relates to the contemporary debate about the ethics of belief. The chapter will conclude in Section 4.7.

4.2 *Fürwahrhalten*

In this section, I will explain the context of Kant's treatment of *Fürwahrhalten*. By focusing on the textual evidence of Kant's introduction to this topic in the first *Critique* and transcripts of logic lectures, I will show that *Fürwahrhalten* is introduced as a concrete judgement. It is clear that *Fürwahrhalten* is not synonymous with judgement but only picks out judgement in the specific sense of a psychologically real, concrete judgement. We can make sense of this distinction between judgement as such and *Fürwahrhalten* by means of the distinction between the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK and the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK from Chapter 2.

The third section of the *Canon of Pure Reason* in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* is entitled *Of Opining, Knowing, and Believing*. Recent scholarship on Kant's epistemological concepts takes this section and passages corresponding to it in records of Kant's logic lectures as a starting point for reconstructions and analyses of Kant's concepts of belief, opinion, knowledge, and related notions. The section's first sentence already illustrates the centrality of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten*:

> The *Fürwahrhalten* [lit.: "the holding-for-true"] is an event in our understanding that may rest on objective grounds but that also requires subjective causes in the mind of him who there judges. (*KrV* A820/B848)

Kant here takes the meaning of *Fürwahrhalten* very much for granted and immediately embarks on a distinction between objective grounds and subjective causes of *Fürwahrhalten*. This distinction is frequently taken to refer to different (types of)

justification conditions. Below, I will propose a different reading. Kant here does not distinguish objective and subjective justification conditions. Rather, he introduces the basic distinction between the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK and the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK. An instance of *Fürwahrhalten* can be assessed through both Frameworks. On the one hand, in a CAPACITY FRAMEWORK assessment, the epistemic standards that are relevant are those that obtain in virtue of the type of epistemic achievement the instance of *Fürwahrhalten* constitutes. For instance, if the instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is a cognition, the relevant epistemic standard in the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK would be objective reality. On the other hand, in a CONCRETE FRAMEWORK assessment, the instance of *Fürwahrhalten* could be assessed in light of different criteria, having to do with how it is subjectively entertained. For example, one could assess how convinced one is in one's *Fürwahrhalten*. So, instead of reading Kant's distinction here as referring to two types of justification conditions, we can also understand the passage as distinguishing two frameworks of epistemic normativity. To see why this is a plausible alternative interpretation, it will be important to first discuss what Kant means by *Fürwahrhalten*.

The passage above contains a hint as to what *Fürwahrhalten* means. Kant describes *Fürwahrhalten* as an 'event in our understanding' and refers back to an instance of this event as taking place in the 'mind of him who there judges.' I propose to take both of these indications literally. First, by *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant means something that actually happens in someone's mind, it is the concept of a concrete mental event. A concrete mental event takes place in specific, particular people's minds. *Fürwahrhalten* is thus a concept of concrete mental happenings. Second, Kant's referring back to this mental event as an action of 'him who there judges' indicates that this mental event is – epistemologically speaking – a judgement. Taking these two aspects together, Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is the concept of concrete, psychologically real judgements.

We can make sense of Kant's introduction of the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* by reminding ourselves of the distinction between the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK and the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK (See: 2). The notion of *Fürwahrhalten* is needed to distinguish judgement as a *merely* epistemological concept (i.e., judgement in the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK) from judgement as a psychological reality in the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK. Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is intended to draw our attention to factors that go beyond mere epistemological considerations in light of the principles of our cognitive capacities; in talking about judgement as a psychological reality, i.e., about *Fürwahrhalten*, we must factor in our epistemic limitations as concrete, empirical beings. Perhaps we are capable of attaining truth or objective reality in our judgements *in principle*; but can we assess whether we have successfully done so for any given, concrete, psychologically real judgement? By introducing a new term to shift our attention to judgement as a psychological reality, Kant enables us to expand our epistemic normativity to take account of the complexity and the challenges of real-life judging.

My reading – the outlines of which I have now presented – is not only consistent but indeed confirmed by Kant's treatment of *Fürwahrhalten* in various logic lectures. Consider, for example, a relevant passage from the *Jäsche Logik*:

> Truth is an objective property of cognition; the judgement through which something is represented as true, the relation to an understanding and thus to a particular subject is, subjectively, *Fürwahrhalten*. (*Logik Jäsche* IX:65-6)

We can again make sense of this passage with the distinction of the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. Truth is a hard epistemic standard. By "hard epistemic standard," I mean criteria for the assessment of epistemic states that are purely epistemic and not vague. Truth is typically taken to be an example of this sort. In the Kantian context, objective validity and objective reality might be similarly hard epistemic standards. These purely epistemic criteria contrast with pragmatic, moral, or psychological criteria. For instance, one could assess a judgement on its pragmatic value by determining how useful it is for attaining certain ends. Or one could assess it for its goodness in light of certain moral criteria. Psychological criteria might consist in a person's degree of conviction or their attachment to some judgement. Importantly, non-epistemic criteria, such as utility or conviction, can also be indirectly related to epistemic criteria. For instance, a judgement that is useful will often be a true judgement. Therefore, it is possible to use some psychological and pragmatic criteria as useful, albeit imperfect, heuristics or indicators of epistemic criteria. This will be an important feature of the psychological (or psychologically accessible) criteria that Kant uses to distinguish opining, knowing, and believing, as I will argue in Chapter 5.

As the passage above indicates, Kant presents the hard epistemic criterion of truth as a relevant criterion for assessing cognitions. This situates the concept of cognition in the Capacity Framework. An assessment of this sort is clear-cut: the cognition is either true or not. More importantly, this sort of epistemic assessment (true or not?) takes place irrespective of psychological factors. For instance, for a cognition's truth, my subjective level of certainty in entertaining that cognition is irrelevant. (My subjective level of certainty might nonetheless be an imperfect indicator or heuristic for the truth of a concrete judgement.) By contrast, when we turn to *Fürwahrhalten*, we also turn to the Concrete Framework for assessing 'the judgement through which something is represented as true.' Again, Kant refers to an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* as 'the judgement' and here specifically says that it concerns a 'relation to [...] a particular subject.' This account in the *Jäsche Logik* thus specifies very clearly that *Fürwahrhalten* is a concept for psychologically real, concrete judgements.

A similar contrast between truth as an 'objective' epistemic standard for judgements that is to be distinguished from an evaluation of the concrete, psychological act of

Füwahrhalten can be found in the *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*:

> Here the talk is not of truth but of *Fürwahrhalten* [lit.: "holding-for-true"]. (Objectively, all propositions are certainly true or certainly false.) This [i.e., *Fürwahrhalten*] is judgement in relation to the subject. We want in this case to know not the grounds of the truth but those of the *Füwahrhalten* [lit.: "the holding-for-true"]. (*Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:731-2)

In continuity with the other passages considered above, Kant here calls *Fürwahrhalten* a judgement and distinguishes it as a concrete, psychological concept from a purely abstract-epistemic concept of judgement. This concrete-psychological meaning of *Fürwahrhalten* is also confirmed by Kant's 'general' distinction of *Fürwahrhalten* into 'two kinds' in the *Jäsche Logik*:

> *Fürwahrhalten* is in general of two kinds, certain or uncertain. Certain *Fürwahrhalten*, or certainty, is combined with consciousness of necessity, while uncertain *Fürwahrhalten*, or uncertainty, is combined with consciousness of the contingency or the possibility of the opposite. (*Logik Jäsche* IX:66)

Here, being 'certain' or 'uncertain' is a psychological phenomenon. To be sure, certainty can be a psychological or an epistemic predicate.[9] However, Kant here clarifies that it is used in its psychological sense because it 'is combined with consciousness of necessity.' Being conscious of necessity is a psychological phenomenon, suggesting that certainty or uncertainty is here meant as a psychological distinction: The person who holds something for true can be certain or uncertain of their holding-something-for-true. *Fürwahrhalten* is thus the concept of psychologically concrete judgements, and these can either be entertained with certainty or with uncertainty.

The textual evidence so-far considered is, I believe, quite clear: *Fürwahrhalten* is the concept for a psychologically real, concrete judgement. However, this reading conflicts with accounts of *Fürwahrhalten* that currently dominate the literature on Kant's concepts of opinion, knowledge, and belief. According to this dominant view, *Fürwahrhalten* is not a full-blown concrete judgement but instead a propositional attitude. In the next section, I will introduce the general features of this propositional attitude reading and explain its possible motivations and implications.

4.3 *Fürwahrhalten* as a Propositional Attitude

This section is composed of two parts. First, I will introduce the propositional attitude reading as a key interpretive assumption underlying much of recent commentary on Kant's distinction of opining, knowing, and believing. Second, I will summarise what propositional attitudes are. On this basis, I will explain what it would mean for

[9] Klein 1998.

Fürwahrhalten to be a propositional attitude reading. The section will therefore explain what would have to be true of *Fürwahrhalten* for the propositional attitude reading to be plausible.

4.3.1 The Propositional Attitude Reading

Contemporary interest in Kant's treatment *Of Opining, Knowing, and Believing* in the first *Critique* was ignited by Leslie Stevenson's 2003 paper on this section.[10] It is already there that the original sin of the propositional attitude reading was committed.[11] Stevenson begins his treatment by noting that Kant introduces opining, knowing, and believing as species of 'the genus, the basic concept that is assumed and not defined.'[12] So, Stevenson is aware of the lack of a suitable definition. But instead of taking up this task of defining the meaning of *Fürwahrhalten*, the problem is then swapped for one of how to translate the term into contemporary English in the sentence that follows:

> Here we come up against a first possibility for confusion, for it is common for philosophers writing in English to use the word "believe" (or "assent") in this wide sense, meaning *any* sort of holding a proposition to be true, however confident or hesitant, rational or irrational, justified or unjustified, that holding may be. [...] But if we are to translate *fürwahrhalten* as believing in this wide sense, we cannot also translate *glauben*, a species of it, in the same way; we must use another term, or qualify the believing as of some special kind.[13]

By rendering the question about the meaning of *Fürwahrhalten* as a question about translation, Stevenson makes two substantive assumptions. First, Stevenson assumes that *Fürwahrhalten* should be translated by terms reserved in contemporary epistemology for *attitudes*. Second, he assumes that the holding-for-true in *Fürwahrhalten* is a holding-for-true *of propositions*. Neither of these assumptions is justified by any reference to primary material. It is simply assumed that this "translation" seems cogent to the contemporary epistemologist, given the literal meaning of *Fürwahrhalten*. Stevenson proceeds to work from this assumption to develop his theory of Kant's 'trio of propositional attitudes.'[14]

Chignell similarly assumes the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten* without much explicit argument in several papers. For instance, in *Belief in Kant*, Chignell stipulates that *Fürwahrhalten* is the 'genus of which most other positive propositional

[10] Stevenson 2003.
[11] I could only locate one other and earlier account of a putative 'theory of propositional attitudes' in Kant but this is a reconstruction of Kant's account of judgement, rather than of his theory of opining, knowing, and believing. See: Mattey 1986.
[12] Stevenson 2003, 73.
[13] 73 ibid.
[14] Ibid., 77.

attitudes are species' without argument or textual evidence to explain why these Kantian concepts should be understood as propositional attitudes:

> Up to now I have been speaking of "judgement" or "belief," but the relevant Kantian concept is "*Fürwahrhalten*" – that is, "assent" or, more literally, "holding-for-true." Assent is the genus of which most other positive propositional attitudes are species.[15]

A similar passage can be found in Chignell's *Kant's Concepts of Justification.*[16] Although much is assumed without textual evidence or justification here, Chignell is unique to my knowledge in this body of literature in providing at least some, albeit very short, justification for the propositional attitude reading further below.[17] I will discuss Chignell's justification for the propositional attitude reading in Section 4.4. Other commentators seem to accept Stevenson's and Chignell's propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten* without qualms.[18]

As this brief overview of the current literature on *Fürwahrhalten* demonstrates, there is much discussion about the specific putative justification conditions that *Fürwahrhalten* is taken to have to satisfy to count as opinion, or knowledge, or belief. This debate is premised on the claim that *Fürwahrhalten* as a genus and its species of opinion, knowledge, or belief should be understood as propositional attitudes. Yet, there is comparatively little explicit discussion of the notion of *Fürwahrhalten* itself. I have already sketched the outlines of a rival interpretation to the propositional attitude reading in Section 4.2 above. To assess which of these alternatives is more plausible, it will be useful to understand exactly what it would mean to interpret *Fürwahrhalten* as a propositional attitude. Therefore, I will now take a look at the notion of propositional attitudes and explore what its application to Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* could mean.

4.3.2 The Notion of Propositional Attitudes and its Application to *Fürwahrhalten*

Let me begin with a brief recap on the concept of propositional attitudes. The purpose of the concept of propositional attitudes is to separate epistemic states, mental states, or speech acts into a force component and a content component. The terminology of propositional attitudes was first introduced by Bertrand Russell.[19] 'Towards an indicative idea,' Russel claims, 'we may have various attitudes: assertive, interrogative, optative, or negative.'[20] Accordingly, we can separate judgements and other epistemic states into a content component that remains constant and adopt different attitudes

[15] Chignell 2007a, 324–5.
[16] Chignell 2007b, 34.
[17] Ibid., 35.
[18] Höwing 2016, 201; Pasternack 2014a, 41, 2011, 290; Kohl n.d.
[19] Oppy 1998.
[20] Russell 2009, 98.

towards this content. Russell thereby expresses a philosophical innovation commonly attributed to Frege: the separation of judgements into force and content.[21] While Frege introduced this distinction to analyse specifically *scientific* judgements,[22] the scope of the distinction was later extended, for instance by Geach, to cover judgements and other epistemic states more generally.[23] The separation of force and content expressed in the terminology of propositional attitudes is thus referred to as the *Frege-Geach Point*.[24]

The purpose of the separation of force from content is to distinguish what can be true from the act of regarding as true in judgements.[25] The force-content distinction is thus motivated by a threat of subjectivism: judgements are acts of subjects, yet they are to be objectively valid.[26] By analysing judgements into two components, one subjective (force), the other objective (content), the purpose of the Frege-Geach point is to explain the objective validity of judgement despite the judgment's being the act of a subject.[27]

This general account of propositional attitudes can now be applied to understand Stevenson's and Chignell's reading of *Fürwahrhalten* as a propositional attitude. If propositional attitudes have the purpose of separating force from content, then *Fürwahrhalten* would be the concept of a force towards some content. This force would have to be completely contentless, given that the very purpose of separating force from content is to secure the objectivity of judgement by insulating a forceless content component in it. So, in assessing the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*, we have to assess whether *Fürwahrhalten* really can and should be interpreted as a contentless attitude towards some proposition (or some other content-notion).

I can identify two possible arguments for the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*. The first argument has explicitly been expressed by Chignell and consists of the claim that *Fürwahrhalten* is an attitude towards a judgement, whereby Kant's concept of a judgement is taken to be equivalent to our contemporary notion of a proposition.[28] I will call this the Judgement as Content reading and discuss it in Section 4.4. The second argument has not yet been proposed in the secondary literature as a defence of Kant. But I have come across an argument in defence of the force-content separation in contemporary epistemology and will try to see whether a version of it can be formulated in defence of the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*. According to this second argument, it suffices to be able to isolate a force and a content component in judgement when thinking about it in abstraction.

[21] Schmitz and Mras 2021, 1.
[22] Textor 2021, 228.
[23] Recanati 2013, 626.
[24] Schmitz and Mras 2021, 1; cf. Geach 1965.
[25] Travis 2021, 17.
[26] Rödl 2018, 19.
[27] Ibid., 23.
[28] Chignell 2007b, 35.

In Section 4.5, I will evaluate whether this *Fürwahrhalten* AS ABSTRACTION reading could be used to salvage the propositional attitude reading. I will argue that both arguments fail.

Before proceeding, it might be useful to reflect on how it might be possible to situate the Fregean force-content distinction within the distinction between the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK and the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK. One might initially be tempted to associate the content component with the former and the force component with the latter. However, the entire force-content distinction is situated firmly within what in Kant's system would be associated with the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK. The force-content distinction assumes judgement as primarily a logical concept, in the sense that we are interested in evaluating a judgement purely in terms of an epistemic standard of truth. What matters is that we can explain how a judgement can be true (and thus objective) despite requiring a mental act. This mental act, i.e., the attitude, is not thought of as a psychologically concrete act but as a logical function. So, if my general reading of *Fürwahrhalten* as expressed in Section 4.2 is correct, then the Fregean force-content distinction at the basis of the notion of propositional attitudes is not directly applicable to *Fürwahrhalten*.

The force-content distinction might be relevant in Kant's account of cognition and in Kant's account of judgement, insofar as these are normatively localisable in the CAPACITY FRAMEWORK. By contrast, *Fürwahrhalten* and its normative location in the CONCRETE FRAMEWORK is situated outside this purely abstract and logical assessment of judgements. For if *Fürwahrhalten* is a *psycho*logically real, concrete judgement, then questions about the *logical* possibility of a judgement – i.e., questions about how a judgement can be objective or true – must already be settled in a prior normative framework. In short, there can be no concrete instance of a judgement, and thus no concept of it (i.e., *Fürwahrhalten*), without the epistemological possibility of a judgement. Yet, the purpose of the force-content distinction, namely explaining the possibility of objectivity in judgement, concerns only the latter but not the former. Thus, if I am right, the force-content distinction would solve a problem (the possibility of *objectivity* in judgement) that does not directly arise for *Fürwahrhalten* but – if at all – only for Kant's concepts of cognition or judgement.

4.4 Judgement as Content

In this section, I will assess whether the *Judgement as Content* option is viable. According to this interpretive option, *Fürwahrhalten* would be a propositional attitude in the sense that it is an attitude to a judgement. This would be the most straightforward defence of the propositional attitude reading. It identifies two Kantian terms that allegedly correspond to "force" and "content," to "attitude" and "proposition," respectively. According to the *Judgement as Content* option, *Fürwahrhalten* is an

attitude and judgement (*Urteil*) that corresponds to our contemporary notion of "proposition." Chignell proposes this argument here:

> In the strict sense, however, *Urteil* for Kant (as for others in the 18th-century German context) plays a role similar to that played by "proposition" in contemporary English-language philosophy. It is the logical object of an attitude, and for Wolff, Meier, Kant et al. (as for Aristotle) it always has a subject-predicate structure. So although Kant speaks loosely of "forming" or "making" judgements, what he really means is forming assents, which have a subject-predicate judgement as their object [...].[29]

On Chignell's reading, judgements correspond to present-day propositions and *Fürwahrhalten* as a propositional attitude of "assent" is separate from judgement. Chignell justifies this interpretation of *Fürwahrhalten* as an attitude with the claim that judgement (*Urteil*) has a function comparable to that of propositions in epistemology today. Chignell makes the additional claim that in some places, where Kant talks of making judgements, Kant should be read to mean forming assents. This allows Chignell to ameliorate Kant's text in service of the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*. Kant sometimes refers to opining, believing, or knowing, as judgements.[30] Taken literally, this would conflict with the claim that these epistemic states are attitudes towards a judgement. A conviction cannot be both a judgement and an attitude towards it on the propositional attitude account that Chignell proposes here. Yet, this is precisely what would be implied by various passages in Kant's text if Chignell was right to claim that judgement (*Urteil*) occupies the role of propositions and that *Fürwahrhalten* is assent in the sense of propositional attitudes (*KrV* A820/B848 ff.). Thus, Chignell not only claims that *Fürwahrhalten* is an attitude external to and towards a judgement but also that Kant's text frequently obscures this.

So, Chignell's justification for the propositional attitude reading consists in the claim that *Fürwahrhalten* is best understood as an attitude to judgements and that Kant's concept of judgement is essentially equivalent to our contemporary notion of propositions. I will now explain why this suggestion is implausible. I will argue that the *Judgement as Content* option fails because Kant's account of judgement is not that of a forceless proposition, but rather of a forceful epistemic act.

Judgement[31] cannot single out the force-less content of judgement characteristic of the present-day notion of propositions because Kant's account of judgement is not force-less. Let me first consider Chignell's motivation for the claim that Kantian

[29] Chignell 2007b, 35.

[30] For instance, in *KrV* A820-1/B848-9 Kant repeatedly refers to both persuasion and conviction as judgements. In *KrV* A822/B850, Kant refers to believing, opining and knowing as judgements.

[31] Here, I refer to the concept of judgement that is dominant in the first *Critique*, sometimes called "determining judgement." In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant expands his notion of judgement to include reflective judgements, which differ from determining judgements. What I say about judgement here does not apply to the relfective sort. See: KrV: B141, A69/B94, MAdN: IV:475, KdU: V:267.

judgement is equivalent to our notion of propositions from historical context (specifically Aristotle and modern philosophers).[32] In some sense, it is possible to agree with Chignell's claim about historical continuity. Kant plausibly fits in a 'broadly Aristotelian tradition,' as Ott clarifies with regard to Locke and Arnauld, 'that takes propositions to be judgements.'[33] So, there is some sense in which Kantian judgements plausibly occupy the role held by propositions in contemporary philosophy (namely as truth bearers).[34] However, neither Aristotle nor Kant's modern predecessors and contemporaries viewed either judgement or propositions as force-less in the Fregean sense. Aristotle's concept of a proposition is forceful.[35] In the modern context, Locke and Arnauld have been attacked for confusing judgements with propositions precisely because their accounts of propositions entail assertion.[36] Although Ott attempts to salvage Locke and other Moderns from the implausible claim that they viewed all propositions as entailing assertion, he does so by proposing an account of Lockean judgements as sub-propositional, not as non-assertoric.[37] So, the Aristotelian tradition of treating judgements as propositions, at which Chignell hints, does not license the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*. This is not merely a point about terminology but a substantial claim: Aristotle's and the moderns' conception of judgement differs from our contemporary notion of propositions because, in contrast to our notion, it is forceful: judgement *includes* some sort of endorsement or negation, i.e., an attitude.

Instead of validating the propositional attitude reading, a consideration of Locke and the Port-Royalists points to a theory of judgement (and propositions) that is opposed to the force-content distinction. According to Jennifer Smalligan Marušić, Locke and Arnauld defend a forceful (assertoric) account of propositions because they 'explain proposition formation in terms of judgement.'[38] Two aspects of this 'Judgement Account' are relevant for present purposes.[39] First, judging consists of forming affirmatory or denying propositions, i.e., judging is forming *forceful* propositions.[40] Second, the resulting affirmatory or denying (i.e., forceful) judgements (or "propositions") are the proper bearers of truth values.[41] Given that this model of judgement was at least available to Kant,[42] it might at least constitute a useful starting point for analysing

[32] Chignell 2007b, 35.
[33] Ott 2002, 551.
[34] J. S. Marušić 2014, 259.
[35] For Aristotle, propositions are not merely forceful in the sense of entailing affirmation or denial but also in the sense of entailing existential (metaphysical) commitments. See: Cataldo 1982, 15.
[36] Ott 2002, 552; J. S. Marušić 2014, 255.
[37] Ott 2002, 555.
[38] J. S. Marušić 2014, 256.
[39] Ibid., 256.
[40] Ibid., 263.
[41] Ibid., 260.
[42] It is not known whether Kant owned a copy of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. See: Warda 1922, 52; And there is disagreement on the degree of Locke's influence on the German Enlightenment. See: Fischer 1975; However, some commentators do claim that Locke's influence on Kant was significant, such as: Guyer 2008; And several of Kant's references in the *Critique* and other works indicate that he was acquainted with Locke's work (A86/B119; A94/B127; A854/B882; IX:21;

Kant's official definition of judgement.

Kant's most explicit account of judgement for the first *Critique* can be found in the *B-Deduction*. There, Kant first criticises his predecessors and contemporaries for defining judgement merely as 'a relation between two concepts' (*KrV* B141). For Kant, this definition is insufficient because it fails to specify 'whereof this relation consists' (*KrV* B141). Kant then proceeds to specify this relation: judging consists in 'bringing given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception' (*KrV* B141). The resulting judgement is 'a relation that is objectively valid' (*KrV* B142).

So far, so cryptic. We can begin to make sense of Kant's claims here by supposing that the account of judgement Kant criticises is that with which he is familiar from his contemporaries and predecessors - i.e., the Aristotelian "tradition" of a forceful account of propositions as judgements. To exemplify, consider the judgement that the train is fast. This judgement consists of two concepts ("train" and "fast") and a relation between them "is." Kant agrees that a judgement combines two concepts in this way. However, he argues that previous accounts of judgement paid insufficient attention to the relation (i.e., to "is"). The insufficiency cannot consist in a lack of attention to the forceful nature of the relation since Kant's predecessors already had a forceful account of propositions (i.e., a Judgement Account of propositions, as we have seen). So, there must be something else, besides the notion of force, that Kant misses in this description of a judgement.

Kant goes beyond his predecessors' forceful account of judgement in his clarification that the relation (in the example, "is") in a judgement requires 'bringing given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception' (*KrV* B141). This account of judgement explicitly states two crucial features of Kant's account of judgement. First, judgement is a cognitive *act* and thus not merely a proposition that can be conceptualised independently of a thinking subject. Second, it is this very cognitive act – the contribution of the subject in judgement – that makes the objectivity of judgement possible. Both aspects are a feature of Kant's explicit introduction of 'apperception' in his account of judgement (*KrV* B141). I will discuss the role of apperception in Kant's account of judgement in greater detail in Section 4.5 below. For now, it should suffice to see that Kant's concept of apperception refers to a sort of consciousness in perception (perceiving oneself as perceiving). Thus, the subject – in the form of apperception – is an integral part of Kant's concept of judgement. But this is inconsistent with the forceless concept of a proposition.

Kant's concept of judgement shares with the tradition a forceful account of judgement. Judging entails endorsement or negation. Moreover, Kant's account of judgement

etc.). Moreover, Brandt argues that both the very project of the *Critique* as a delimitation of human cognition and several of its positions, including the relevancy of personal identity for judgement (which I discuss extensively in the passages on apperception below) are relevantly influenced by and developed in response to Locke. See: Brandt 1981, 54, 57; Guyer 2008.

goes beyond this traditional account in assigning a constitutive role to the subject in judgement. But this account of judgement is incompatible with Chignell's claim that Kant's concept of judgement is equivalent to our concept of a proposition. In our concept of a proposition, there is neither space for the affirmatory or denying force of a judgement nor for the subject. After all, it was the very purpose of the force-content distinction to insulate an "objective" component in judgement from the subject's act of judging. By contrast, Kant's account of judgement clearly and constitutively involves the content, the force, the act, *and* the subject. As a result, Kantian judgement cannot be regarded as content in the way Chignell suggests.

4.5 *Fürwahrhalten* as Abstraction

If the *Judgement as Content* option fails, do any alternative justifications of the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten* remain? I think that one other argument is available: Instead of claiming that *Fürwahrhalten* is an attitude towards a judgement, one could argue that the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is intended to isolate the force component *in* a judgement. To illustrate an argument of this sort, consider Charles Travis' defence of the force-content distinction in the context of a debate within contemporary epistemology:

> Where there is an instance of *holding* true, there is that which is held true; that which *is* the truth if truth there is, or falsehood if there is not. An identifiable, countable *that-which*. And being held true is not part of being *it*. Where content is something one might *hold* true, force is not part of that whose content it is. Anyway, thus Frege.[43]

Travis here summarises what he takes to be the motivation for Frege's force-content distinction: wherever something is held to be true, we can distinguish, at least in abstraction, that which is held to be true (content) from the holding to be true (force). The critics of this distinction, Travis argues, fail to realise that this is a philosophical abstraction that is always open to us, regardless of our specific account of what it might (psychologically) take to make a judgement. This abstraction is always possible because it abstracts and thereby isolates those parts of judgement that are relevant for its truth assessment (content):

> Wherever there is truth or falsehood, that which *is* either true or false, i.e., the relevant truth or falsity, is always detachable from any force (in particular assertive force) which may attach to some particular expression of it.[44]

A similar argument could be made with regard to Kant's account of judgement. Perhaps judgement is a forceful notion for Kant, as I will argue in Section 4. But this

[43] Travis 2021, 1.
[44] Ibid., 3.

leaves open the possibility for introducing another term, such as *Fürwahrhalten*, to refer exclusively to the force component of judgement, thereby isolating force from content. Accordingly, one might argue that Kant introduces the notion of *Fürwahrhalten* to perform the abstraction of referring to the force-only component of judgement.

This *Fürwahrhalten* as Abstraction argument differs from Chignell's Judgement as Content argument in the following way. Chignell's argument requires that Kant's concept of a judgement is forceless, like a contemporary proposition. By contrast, the *Fürwahrhalten as Abstraction* argument does not require a forceless concept of judgement. Instead, it merely requires that we be able, by means of abstraction, to think about a force component and a content component *in* a forceful judgement. The concept of *Fürwahrhalten* could, in accordance with this option, express the force component of a judgement isolated from the rest of the judgement in abstraction.

To assess this *Fürwahrhalten as Abstraction* option, I will investigate if there is a systematic *need* within Kant's epistemology to perform a force-content separation. Recall from above that the purpose of a force-content separation is to explain the possibility of objective judgement. Frege perceived a threat to objectivity by analysing judgement based on psychological conditions. The insulation of content from force is intended to, as Travis agrees, insulate what is objective and thus truth-relevant in judgement from any merely subjective factors. I will argue that there is no systematic need for this sort of separation within Kant's account of judgement. For, Kant explains the objectivity of judgement not through an insulation of an objective component within judgement but through an account of how subjectivity is capable of objectivity, specifically by means of the notion of transcendental apperception.

The ultimate purpose of the force-content separation, as Rödl explains, 'is to underwrite the objectivity of thought [. . .] by locating objectivity and universality in the content, as opposed to the act, of judgement.'[45] Thus, to see whether Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* can be interpreted as an abstraction similar to the force-content separation, we need to assess whether there is any need, within Kant's account of judgement, to perform a separation of this sort to explain the objectivity of judgement.

Kant does not secure objectivity by isolating an objective component from a subjective component in judgement. Instead, Kant secures objectivity by introducing a novel notion of subjectivity that is capable of objectivity: transcendental apperception. Recall from above that judgement, for Kant, consists in 'bringing given cognitions to the *objective* unity of apperception' (*KrV* B141). It is precisely Kant's innovative account of transcendental apperception that has the function of explaining how thought can be objective. And this solution is diametrically opposed to the Proto-Fregean separation of force from content by abstraction.

Kant copied the term *apperception* from his intellectual predecessors but developed

[45] Rödl 2018, 19.

it further. "Apperception" terminologically includes "perception" because it had historically been developed in contrast with, in relation to, and in analogy to perception (e.g. by Locke, Leibniz, Baumgarten, and many others).[46] When we perceive something, we can be conscious of doing so. So, in a sense, we perceive ourselves perceiving something. Apperception is thus different from, but in some ways similar to, perception, and occurs in perception.[47] Apperception is the consciousness of ourselves as perceiving subjects. Thus, in the current context, apperception is the consciousness of oneself as the judging subject in making a judgement.

Bringing cognitions to the objective unity of apperception secures a judgement's objective validity. Kant's concept of objective validity requires that the judgement be both necessary and universal, in the sense that it is not merely valid for my empirical consciousness but for the consciousness of a judging subject *as such*.[48] The objective unity of apperception is not the unity of a particular empirical subject's consciousness but the unity of the consciousness of a judging subject as such, i.e., the unity of the 'logical I.'[49] Therefore, Kant's concept of judgement provides for objectivity in a different way than the Fregean separation into force and content. The Fregean strategy aims to secure objectivity by removing the subject from the content of the judgement. By contrast, Kant introduces a non-empirical and universal concept of subjectivity, the logical subject of the synthetic or transcendental unity of apperception.[50] This concept of a subject is the same for all particular empirical subjects and thus is consistent with a conception of objectivity as necessary and universal for all subjects, that is, with objective validity in Kant's sense.

As Manfred Baum explains, the objectivity of judgement 'rests precisely not on the object that is thought through the judgement but on a conscious act by the subject to connect [the concepts].'[51] The role of the – transcendental (!) – subject is thus ineliminable not only from judgement as a whole but specifically from an explanation of judgement's objectivity. The *Fürwahrhalten as Abstraction* option is implausible because the very purpose of the abstraction is undercut by Kant's view of how the objectivity of thought ought to be explained.

Kant's concept of judgement aims to explain the possibility of objective judgement with an account of how subjectivity is capable of objectivity. The "I" of transcendental apperception is not a particular subject but the principle of subjectivity that is common to all subjects. This universal subjectivity does not fall prey to any damaging sort of subjectivism, as it is the same in all subjects. It is, in Dennis Schulting's terms, a 'neutral placeholder for thoughts that are being thought, by whoever thinks them.'[52]

[46] Euler 2022; Lorini 2022; Patricia Kitcher 2011, 64.
[47] See: Ameriks 1983, 177.
[48] B139-40. See: Baum 2022, 335; Bunch 2010, 73.
[49] Baum 2022, 329, 334.
[50] See: Schulting 2021, 72.
[51] Baum 2022, 334 (my translation).
[52] Schulting 2021, 72; see: Schulting 2017.

This conception of subjectivity explains the possibility of objective judgement. Indeed, for reasoners like us, objectivity consists in the very act of bringing cognition to the unity of this impersonal "I." There is thus no systematic need, within Kant's epistemology of judgement, to introduce a force-content separation by way of abstraction. The *Fürwahrhalten as Abstraction* option is unmotivated.

To be sure, it is possible to doubt whether Kant's proposed solution to the problem of objectivity in judgement is successful. Moreover, Kant's account of judgement as involving an objectified subject clearly entails a revision of the notion of objectivity. However, assessing the cogency of this strategy is beyond the scope of this chapter. For present purposes, it should suffice to see that Kant's strategy to account for the objectivity of judgement differs radically from the Fregean strategy. In Frege's strategy, the act and force of judgement are separated from its content to warrant objectivity. By contrast, in Kant's strategy, it is precisely the subject's act of judging that can ground objectivity because the subject itself is conceptualised in terms of a universal capacity for objective thought.

4.6 *Fürwahrhalten* as Judgement in Concreto

In this section, I will propose an alternative to the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*. My proposal consists of two claims. First, *Fürwahrhalten* is – in some sense – just another term for judgement. *Fürwahrhalten* is judgement. It is not merely one component of judgement, such as force or content. Instead, *Fürwahrhalten* describes the entirety of an act of judgement. Second, *Fürwahrhalten* is a judgement only in a specific sense, namely as the concrete act of a judgement by human beings (or other beings like us). So, when Kant uses the term *Fürwahrhalten*, he considers judgement only *in concreto*, as opposed to judgement considered *in principle*, a use more dominant in other parts of the *Critique*. Thus, *Fürwahrhalten* is situated in Kant's Concrete Framework and to be distinguished from the abstract-epistemic concept of a judgement of the Capacity Framework.

4.6.1 The Concept of *Fürwahrhalten*

Fürwahrhalten is not an attitude. It is not merely the force *in* a judgement. According to the contemporary model of propositional attitudes, the notions of attitudes or force describe only one part of a judgement. Yet, for Kant, *Fürwahrhalten* refers to judgement in its entirety. There is plenty of textual evidence for this. In the section *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* in the first *Critique*, Kant first distinguishes conviction and persuasion as types of *Fürwahrhalten*. After introducing this distinction, Kant explains that '[p]ersuasion is a mere semblance because the ground of the judgement, which lies merely in the subject, is regarded as objective' (*KrV* A820/B848). Kant here refers to persuasion, a type of *Fürwahrhalten*, with the term "the judgement."

This treatment of *Fürwahrhalten* and judgement (*Urteil*) as interchangeable terms is ubiquitous throughout *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* as well as in corresponding sections in logic lectures, as we have already seen in Section 4.2 (See: *Logik Jäsche* IX:65-6; *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:731-2).

So, the textual evidence is clear: Kant frequently refers to *Fürwahrhalten* as judging. Given that the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten* is implausible, as I have argued in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 above, there is little reason not to take Kant literally here. *Fürwahrhalten* is judging. That is, *Fürwahrhalten* describes the entirety of an act of judgement – including force and content if we apply the contemporary framework. Thus, without a propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten*, the most straightforward interpretive option is to take Kant literally and understand *Fürwahrhalten* to mean judgement.

Although *Fürwahrhalten* is a full-blown judgement for Kant, the terminological difference between *Fürwahrhalten* and *Urteil* still requires explanation. *Fürwahrhalten* may be *a* judgement. Nonetheless, the two terms are not synonymous and do not refer to the same concept. There are two options to explain this terminological difference. First, *Fürwahrhalten* might refer to only a specific type of judgement, similar to the distinction between determining judgement and reflective judgement. However, this option is implausible because *Fürwahrhalten* lacks a corresponding alternative type against which we could distinguish it. Second, *Fürwahrhalten* might be the concept of a judgement in a specific normative context. I propose this latter option as the most plausible explanation for the terminological difference between *Fürwahrhalten* and *Urteil*.

In Chapter 2, I argued that there are two normative frameworks in Kant's epistemology, the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework. And it is in light of this distinction that Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* makes sense. In the Capacity Framework, we can think about the concept of a judgement *in principle* or *in abstracto* in light of our epistemic capacities. In the Concrete Framework, we can think about judgements as the concrete acts of embodied human beings. Depending on the framework in which we operate, different normative standards apply.

To illustrate the difference between the two concepts of judgement, consider a sports game, such as tennis. On the one hand, we can talk about tennis *in abstracto* as a game defined by certain rules. These rules may specify the size and markings of a tennis court, what players may do, and so on. On the other hand, we can talk about tennis *in concreto*, when we discuss a specific tennis game. In this *in concreto* assessment, additional factors to the rules of the game come into play. For instance, it might matter whether it is a grass court or a sand court. The specific behaviour of the players, as well as their physical capabilities and limitations, will play a role. The general rules of tennis of our *in abstracto* consideration still play a role. But we also

need to consider additional factors that do not necessarily play a role in a purely *in abstracto* consideration.

Additionally, a third option is talking about *in concreto* games in general. We can, for instance, consider the effects of lawn courts versus sand courts in general. Similarly, we can talk about the general factors relevant to tennis players' physical condition and skills.

Kant uses the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* to consider judgement *in concreto* in general, i.e., in a way that is analogous to the third way of talking about tennis. When using *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant considers the general rules for judging in practice. *Fürwahrhalten* and its varieties of opining, believing, and knowing describe the concrete activities of particular individuals, considered in general. Kant's reflection on *Fürwahrhalten* describes the general rules that determine whether a particular individual's judgements should count as opining, as believing, or as knowing. This should be distinguished from a purely *in-abstracto* account of judgement. The difference lies in the fact that humans (and other reasoners alike) encounter epistemic limitations in practice. For instance, we often make judgments based on insufficient evidence and background knowledge. We are rarely able to prove the truth of our judgements, if at all. Yet, in practice, we still need to make judgements in service of our (and reason's) practical and theoretical ends.

To explain Kant's usage of *Urteil* and *Fürwahrhalten*, I thus suggest the following tripartite distinction:

(a) determining judgement *in abstracto*

(b) determining judgement *in concreto*

(c) determining judgement *in concreto* in general

The first concept of judgement (a) refers to judgement as a possible epistemic achievement in light of the principles of the cognitive capacities that we have. Judgement in this sense is an 'act of the understanding' (*Prolegomena*: 4:323) to achieve objective cognition (*MAdN*: 4:475; *KrV*: A68/B93). Judgement, in this sense, is defined in terms of a hard epistemic standard at which it aims, such as truth or objective reality. In many parts of the *Critiques*, Kant discusses judgement in the Capacity Framework, in which this abstract sense of judgement features most prominently. The abstraction at play here is two-fold. First, the conception of our cognitive capacities is an abstraction from their psychological and empirical instantiations. Kant defines our cognitive capacities in terms of principles that define their functioning exclusively in epistemic rather than psychological or biological terms. So, Kant's conception of our cognitive capacities is an abstraction that defines them purely as epistemic principles. Second, the concept of judgement itself is an abstraction from this abstract epistemic model of the functioning of our cognitive faculties as principles. Kant's concept of

judgement emerges from an account of the proper functioning of our cognitive faculties, conceptualised as abstract epistemic principles. So, the concept of determining judgement *in abstracto* is a purely epistemic, capacity-based concept of judgement.

The second concept of judgement (b) refers to a specific, psychologically real instance of judgement. This concerns, for example, Heinz's judgement that there are twelve fish in the pond. In some cases, Kant talks about specific or concrete judgements of this sort. It is important, however, to distinguish this notion of one particular concrete judgement (b) from talking about such judgements in general. For instance, I might wish to talk about judgements in a way that includes both Heinz's judgement that there are twelve fish in the pond and Janette's judgement that the road is slippery as particular instances of concrete judgements in general. This is the third concept of judgement (c), and Kant's discussion of *Fürwahrhalten* is a discussion of judgement in this third sense. Specifically in the *Canon*, Kant is interested in the general rules that should be used to distinguish various types of judgement in concreto, i.e., to distinguish opining, believing, and knowing.

Thus, judgement *in abstracto* (a) is characterised in purely epistemic terms as an act of the understanding that furnishes us with objectively valid cognitions. Considered in this purely abstract way, a judgement is thus supposed to satisfy a hard epistemic standard, such as truth, objective reality, or objective validity. Yet, when we consider our efforts at judging *in concreto*, it becomes clear that this (epistemically demanding!) standard of objective validity is too demanding in practice. My analysis of Kant's distinction between persuasion and conviction in Chapter 5 below will confirm this. As I will argue, the distinction of persuasion and conviction tracks, quite closely, the abstract-epistemic account of judgement. Specifically, whether an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* counts as a mere persuasion or as a conviction depends on whether the judgement satisfies an objective epistemic criterion: interpersonal validity. A judgement is only guaranteed to be interpersonally valid if it is true. However, as my argument below will show, this standard – guaranteeing truth – is too demanding to be practicable. While we can abstractly and conceptually distinguish between true and untrue judgements, Kant is sceptical about our ability to *guarantee* the truth of concrete judgements that humans make. That is, when we speak about *Fürwahrhalten* – concrete judgements – as opposed to judgements in the Capacity Framework, hard epistemic standards such as truth or objective reality may not be useful.

4.6.2 The Purpose of the Concept *Fürwahrhalten*

The purpose of introducing the notion of *Fürwahrhalten* is thus to develop different sets of epistemic norms for judgement in the Concrete Framework as opposed to the Capacity Framework. Having different sets of norms is justified by the different purposes of each framework. In the Capacity Framework, we are interested in what epistemic achievements we are capable of attaining in light of our cognitive capacities.

By contrast, in the Concrete Framework, we are interested in evaluating those judgements that we actually make. It might be preferable to evaluate our judgements on the basis of hard epistemic standards, such as truth or objective reality. However, when doing so is not pragmatically possible, we need a different set of norms for evaluating *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework than what we obtain by merely considering judgement abstractly in the Capacity Framework.

The relation between judgement in the Capacity Framework and *Fürwahrhalten* can be compared to one possible construal of the relation between accounts of knowledge in epistemology and theories of scientific knowledge. Perhaps the concept of knowledge in pure epistemology requires truth, justification, and belief. Yet, not everyone thinks that science always offers us pieces of knowledge that fully satisfy this condition. For instance, one could argue that pieces of scientific knowledge are subject to revision and so cannot be finally described as true.[53] For instance, I think that I know that the universe is about 14 billion years old. But that piece of knowledge might be revised in light of future theories in physics. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that current physics will indeed be revised and that we will someday find out that the universe is really only 12 billion years old. This means that it might turn out that I did not after all know that the universe was 14 billion years old, since that would not have been true. However, this does not change the fact that today I think I know that the universe is 14 billion years old. By considering only the definition of knowledge as a justified true belief, this claim seems odd. How can I simultaneously say that I think that I "know" that the universe is 14 billion years old (implying that it is true that the universe is 14 billion years old) while simultaneously acknowledging that some scientist might come along tomorrow and prove me wrong? Kant's distinction between judgement in the Capacity Framework and *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework can enable me to maintain these commitments without contradiction.

I can maintain that I know that the universe is 14 billion years old if knowledge in the Concrete Framework is governed by different epistemic norms than knowledge in the Capacity Framework. In the Capacity Framework, knowledge requires justification, truth, and belief. The standard of truth might be pragmatically too demanding, however. So, in the Concrete Framework, I might look for epistemic standards that can feasibly be satisfied, given my cognitive limitations as a human being. These limitations do not mean that I can never get hold of the truth or that I have to subject all my beliefs to radical scepticism. Rather, it suffices to acknowledge that there will be some beliefs that I take to be knowledge that will turn out to be false. Perhaps just one per cent of my beliefs that I take to be knowledge is false. Crucially, however, I do not know *which* of my beliefs that I take to be knowledge are false.[54] Does that mean that I have to suspend all claims to knowledge? Not

[53] Popper 1963, 215, 225, 228–9.

[54] Compare Clayton Littlejohn's example of believing one knows all phone book entries even though one knows that one of them is false: Littlejohn 2015, 217.

if I allow a different, more readily satisfiable epistemic standard than truth in the Concrete Framework. For instance, I could require that, to count as knowledge in the Concrete Framework, my belief has to be shared by a significant share of members in a suitable epistemic community. In the case of my knowledge that the universe is 12 billion years old, it might suffice that this belief is shared by a suitable group of astrophysicists.[55]

The purpose of the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* is not to permit false knowledge. All judgement aims at truth, and once a judgement is found to be false, it would be inappropriate to still entertain it. Instead, the purpose of a dual normative framework here is to allow us to describe some instances of *Fürwahrhalten* as knowledge despite our inability to rule out all possibility of error. I can know although I am fallible.

This example shows that different sets of epistemic norms can be appropriate for considering epistemic achievements and capacities on their own (in abstracto) and human epistemic practice in real-life contexts (in concreto). The notion of *Fürwahrhalten* enables Kant to discuss norms to regulate our judging in practice, where it might not always be possible to tell, beyond any degree of doubt, whether what we judge to be true is indeed true. In the absence of a pragmatically potent criterion or method to test whether a given instance of a judgement satisfies its own standard of correctness, we need an alternative set of norms to decide whether we can regard this judgement as an instance of opinion, of belief (in Kant's sense of the term), or as knowledge.

4.6.3 *Fürwahrhalten* and the Ethics of Belief

If my account of *Fürwahrhalten* is right, then the purpose of introducing this notion is to enable the development of a set of epistemic norms similar to those of the contemporary debate about the ethics of belief. If the ethics of belief, broadly construed, is a debate about the (epistemic) norms that govern what we should believe,[56] then Kant's discussion of *Fürwahrhalten* is a thesis about the norms that govern our concrete judgements. Judging, from the perspective of the person who judges, consists in holding-for-true, i.e., in *Fürwahrhalten*. However, there are important differences between the contemporary debate about the ethics of belief and Kant's discussion of *Fürwahrhalten*. The contemporary debate does not typically distinguish between belief *in abstracto* and belief *in concreto*. Instead, intuitions about the concept of belief as such, i.e., *in abstracto*, are frequently taken as indicative of the norms that should govern belief *in concreto*.[57] Kant's approach of using separate concepts to discuss judgement in the Capacity Framework and *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework might have several advantages over the contemporary practice. I will

[55] Note that this is different from merely having a justification for one's belief. My justification might be that I have read about this in a science magazine and that I believe that the magazine is properly edited.

[56] B. Marušić 2011.

[57] E.g. Shah 2003; For a critique of this approach, see: Côté-Bouchard 2016.

now give a brief indication of where I think some advantages could be found.

First, Kant's approach has the potential to offer new avenues for resolving the debate between epistemic purists and more pragmatist approaches in the ethics of belief. Having a separate concept of *Fürwahrhalten* could allow us to accommodate both veritist or evidentialist intuitions and pragmatic constraints. Reflections on the very concepts of judgement (or, in the contemporary context, belief or knowledge) often result in demanding epistemic norms. Veritists might argue that we ought to believe only the truth.[58] Evidentialists argue that we ought to believe only what is justified by sufficient evidence.[59] These positions have strong intuitive support based on reflections on the very concept of judgement or of belief. At the same time, there are strong reasons to think that, sometimes, more practical, pragmatic, or moral reasons should also be taken into account in the normative assessment of one's judgements or beliefs.[60] Kant's approach has the potential to accommodate both intuitions. In the Capacity Framework, Kant can think about the concept of judgement and what it requires as an epistemic concept completely in abstraction from the pragmatic hindrances or needs we encounter as concrete, empirical human beings. That is, Kant can maintain an epistemically purist view of judgement. However, in the Concrete Framework, Kant can discuss the practice of judging with the concept of *Fürwahrhalten* and acknowledge that the applicable epistemic norms can differ from those of judgement in the Capacity Framework. This enables Kant to account for both epistemically purist and pragmatist/moralist intuitions about judgement.

Second, Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* can also offer a new approach to dealing with the issue of doxastic voluntarism. Doxastic voluntarism refers to the idea that we can control what we believe. Whether we have control of this sort has been disputed for a long time.[61] The debate about doxastic voluntarism is connected to the debate about epistemic norms.[62] After all, if we cannot choose what to believe, then how can we be judged for our beliefs according to some norm? Yet, there is severe disagreement about whether and how we can control what we believe. Here, too, Kant's distinction of judgement in the Capacity Framework and *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework offers ways out. For assessments in the Capacity Framework, doxastic control does not matter since judgement here is not conceived as the psychologically actual judgement of a concrete person. Here, judgement is evaluated *qua* judgement and not as the psychological act of a concrete individual. So, a judgement falling short of an epistemic standard of the Capacity Framework does not translate into blame of an individual for failing to adhere to this norm. For instance, if Alice mistakenly judges that the universe is 20.000 years old, then we can criticise her judgement for failing to satisfy a norm of truth; but this assessment does

[58] Shah 2003.
[59] Feldman and Conee 1985; Feldman 2000.
[60] Reisner 2009; Dougherty 2014; C. Howard 2020.
[61] At least since: James 1896; Boespflug and Jackson 2024.
[62] See: Steup 2000; Bondy 2015.

not, by itself, constitute an assessment of Alice. Perhaps Alice grew up in a religious sect, or 1200 years ago, and blaming her for an unfortunate epistemic environment would be inappropriate.

At the same time, we need norms to assess judgements not only *qua* judgements but also to assess the person who judges. David Owens calls this the *authority* of epistemic norms: 'In calling a belief rational or irrational, justified or unjustified, we are judging not just the belief but also the believer.'[63] Kant allows us to maintain this commitment to epistemic norms to assess the person who judges while divorcing these epistemic norms, at least to some degree, from the epistemic norms that govern a judgement as such. The norms of *Fürwahrhalten* do not require doxastic control. In all instances of *Fürwahrhalten*, we already judge something to be true – we "hold-it-for-true." Kant's discussion of epistemic norms for *Fürwahrhalten* enables us to sort our judgements into opinions, beliefs, and items of knowledge. In Kant's treatment of *Fürwahrhalten*, the question is not about whether we *should judge* (for instance, that the universe is 20.000 years old) but about whether we *should classify* our judgement as an instance of opinion, belief, or knowledge. When discussing *Fürwahrhalten*, we consider concrete judgements where we already hold something for true. At issue is the classification of our holdings-for-true into instances of opining, knowing, and believing. And while we may not be evaluated as persons for failing to satisfy the demanding normative standard of the Capacity Framework (not least for lack of doxastic control), we may be evaluated for inaccurately classifying an opinion as an instance of knowledge. Whether blame is due will, of course, depend on the specific content of the norms that govern Fürwahrhalten that I will discuss in Chapter 5 below.

4.7 Conclusion

Fürwahrhalten is not a propositional attitude. Kant's account of judgement is thoroughly forceful. Moreover, Kant's solution to the problem of the objectivity of judgement is unlike the Fregean distinction between force and content. For Kant, the objectivity of judgement is not explained by a force-neutral content nucleus in judgement. Rather, it is explained by a capacity of subjectivity for objectivity, which Kant expresses with the notion of transcendental apperception. Applying the model of propositional attitudes to Kant's concepts of judgement and *Fürwahrhalten* is thus not only anachronistic but also a failure to recognize the difference between the Fregean and the Kantian strategy for addressing the problem of the objectivity of judgement. Therefore, the propositional attitude reading of *Fürwahrhalten* is mistaken.

The propositional attitude reading is not based on direct textual evidence but instead on the assumption that the Kantian term *Fürwahrhalten* can be translated with our contemporary notion of a propositional attitude, such as assent. Despite its

[63] Owens 2003, 284.

far-reaching implications, the propositional attitude reading is based only on very rudimentary suppositions and the claim that Kant's concept of judgement is equivalent to our concept of a proposition. As I have shown in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, Kant's concept does not sufficiently resemble our concept of a proposition to justify the propositional attitude reading. Moreover, a closer look at Kant's concept of judgement shows that his strategy for securing the objectivity of judgements substantially differs from the Fregean force-content distinction. As a result, Kant has no systematic purpose for a concept of *Fürwahrhalten* in the sense of a force-only attitude to a proposition. Therefore, neither textual evidence nor a systematic argument support the propositional attitude reading.

The textual evidence suggests that Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* describes a concrete judgement, considered in general. This reading is cogent in light of the two frameworks – the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework – that constitute the background of Kant's epistemological method. If judgement as understood within the Capacity Framework is defined in terms of epistemic norms that are not necessarily useful as norms for concrete judgements, it makes sense to introduce a separate vocabulary to pick out concrete judgements specifically. This approach of introducing a separate terminology for concrete judgements might also be interesting for debates in contemporary epistemology, as it might allow us to reconcile apparently contradictory intuitions concerning epistemic normativity.

The following chapter on Kant's treatment of *Knowing, Opining, and Believing* will lend further indirect support to my account of *Fürwahrhalten*. The liberation from the propositional attitude reading opens up new avenues for making sense of Kant's claims about knowing, opining, and believing that are, I believe, more consistent with his overall aims in the *Canon*. As I will argue below, the *Canon* must be considered in its context and thus as a part of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*. With my new account of *Fürwahrhalten* at its basis, we are in a better position to understand how precisely the distinction of knowing, opining, and believing helps Kant achieve the purposes of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*. This context has been largely ignored by existing readings of Kant's distinction of knowing, opining, and believing; once it is taken into account, we will see that the present reading of *Fürwahrhalten* as a concrete judgement is better suited to make sense of this passage.

Chapter 5

Opinion, Belief, and Knowledge

5.1 Introduction

In the *Canon of Pure Reason* and corresponding sections in various logic lectures, Kant introduces the taxonomy of opinion, belief, and knowledge as three types of *Fürwahrhalten* (*KrV* A820/B848 ff.; *Logik Jäsche* IX: 66 ff.; *Logik Blomberg* XXIV:227 ff.; *Wiener Logik* XXIV:849 ff.; *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:731 ff.). Kant differentiates these varieties of *Fürwahrhalten* by means of the conditions of *subjective* and *objective sufficiency*. Opinion lacks both; belief is subjectively sufficient but objectively insufficient, and knowledge satisfies both conditions. Commentators disagree about what subjective and objective sufficiency precisely require. However, there is universal agreement that they express epistemic and nonepistemic justification conditions that the propositional attitude *Fürwahrhalten* may satisfy.[1] In Chapter 4, I contested the view that *Fürwahrhalten* is a propositional attitude. In the present chapter, I will argue that the conditions of subjective and objective sufficiency do not express epistemic or nonepistemic justification conditions.

Opinion, belief, and knowledge are not defined by justification conditions because the taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing serves a different purpose than the conceptual analysis or definition of epistemic concepts. Specifically, this taxonomy has the purpose of providing us with a method for categorising our judgements in the *absence* of our ability to fully assess the justification status of our judgements. The conditions of subjective and objective sufficiency express heuristics that help us categorise our concrete judgements (i.e., *Fürwahrhalten*) through indirect and imperfect indicators of their epistemic justification. In short, since we are fallible, the

[1] Chignell 2007b, 33–4; Pasternack 2014a, 43, 2015, 57; Höwing 2016, 203–4.

taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing provides us with pragmatically actionable criteria to categorise our concrete judgements.

My reading is motivated by the following thought. I will argue that Kant's discussion of conviction and persuasion shows that we cannot determine the truth of concrete judgements, i.e., of instances of *Fürwahrhalten*, with absolute certainty. In *Fürwahrhalten*, there are not only objective grounds but also subjective causes of our judgement. We can never entirely discount the possibility that our judgement is caused *merely* by a subjective cause, i.e., that it lacks an objective ground. Thus, we can never eliminate the possibility of judging falsely. In other words, we are fallible. The concept of cognition, defined in the Capacity Framework, requires the objective reality and thus the truth of our judgement (see: Section 3.4). Given that we cannot confirm the truth of any concrete judgement with absolute certainty, we cannot confirm that a given judgement is a cognition with absolute certainty. Thus, we need a different taxonomy, appealing to conditions different from truth or objective reality, to categorise our judgements.

The taxonomy of opinion, belief, and knowledge has a pragmatic purpose. It aims to provide criteria that are the best we can pragmatically do to approximate the ideal of cognition, given our fallibility. With subjective and objective sufficiency, Kant offers two conditions that, if jointly fulfilled, indicate that our concrete judgement is probably a cognition. I will argue that subjective sufficiency means individual conviction, i.e., a strong subjective sense of confidence in one's judgement. Objective sufficiency requires universal certainty, i.e., public acceptance. Accordingly, an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* counts as knowledge only if the judging subject is individually convinced and the judgement is publicly certain. This account of knowledge leaves two possibilities for instances of *Fürwahrhalten*: those that command only individual conviction but not public certainty and those that satisfy neither condition.[2] The former are beliefs; the latter are opinions.

If my account is correct, then Kant distinguishes opinion, belief, and knowledge through what could be called *phenomenal* conditions rather than criteria of epistemic justification. They are phenomenal conditions in the sense that they are features of how the concrete judgement is entertained by the subject and by an epistemic community. For Kant, opinions are those judgements that lack individual conviction and universal certainty. Beliefs are those judgements that command a strong sense of individual conviction but that lack universal certainty. And knowledge describes concrete judgements of which we are convinced and that are publicly established as certain.

[2]My reading also solves a puzzle raised by Thomas Höwing, according to which Kant's tripartite distinction neglects a fourth option: subjectively insufficient but objectively sufficient *Fürwahrhalten*. This option is unavailable on my account because if I am not certain, then the judgement is also not universally certain because I would have to be part of the public group of reasoners who must be certain. Höwing 2018, 1244.

To exemplify, consider the following cases. When Carla went shopping this morning, she judged that there was still milk in the fridge. However, she was unsure, so she decided to buy some more anyway. Thus, Carla was not convinced of her judgement. Accordingly, this would count as an opinion. In a discussion with a friend later in the day, Carla expressed her judgement that the value-added tax rate should be lowered. Carla is strongly convinced of this judgement, but she has to acknowledge that her friend has a different view, so she cannot presume the judgement to be universally certain. Thus, on Kant's distinction, Carla's view about value-added tax is a belief (she is subjectively convinced, but it is not universally certain). Even later in the day, Carla goes shopping again and buys two apples and two sandwiches. When judging how many items she bought, she adds two plus two and realises that this equals four. Carla thinks that everyone will agree with her judgement, so she thinks that she is not only convinced that there are four items in her shopping basket but even that this is universally certain. Thus, Carla's judgement that she has four items in her basket counts as an instance of knowing.

Note that this taxonomy solves a problem that arises specifically in the Concrete Framework: How are we to categorise our concrete judgements, given that they all aim for cognition, and acknowledging that we cannot assess, beyond doubt, whether our judgement is, indeed, a cognition? The taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing enables us to categorise our concrete judgements based on two phenomenal criteria that, if jointly satisfied, indicate that the judgement is probably a cognition. Moreover, the concept of a belief enables us to be conscious of the fact that our judgement does not satisfy this standard of probably being a cognition despite our firm individual conviction. In the case of opinion, we are conscious of the lack of individual conviction, so we cannot regard it as a cognition.

My proposal contrasts with existing readings in the following way. By justification conditions, Chignell means 'conditions under which a propositional attitude is rationally acceptable.'[3] It is argued that subjective and objective sufficiency describe justification conditions of this sort. Whether an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* counts as knowledge would thus depend on whether it satisfies conditions of rational acceptability. By contrast, I argue that Kant distinguishes opinion, belief, and knowledge through conditions of *factual acceptance*, rather than rational acceptability. Whether an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is a case of opinion, belief, or knowledge depends on the degree of how factually accept*ed* that judgement is on an individual and on a public level. Individual conviction shows that the judging subject firmly accepts the judgement; universal certainty shows that a relevant public epistemic community accepts the judgement.

Although the taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing is situated in the Concrete Framework and although it is not directly formulated in terms of justification

[3]Chignell 2007b, 33.

conditions, its criteria are motivated by the epistemic ideal of a judgement from the Capacity Framework. This epistemic ideal is the concept of cognition, i.e., a successful and thus objectively real judgement (See: Chapter 3). *Fürwahrhalten*, i.e., "taking-to-be-true," aims at being-true. The specific criteria of individual conviction and universal certainty are justified as those conditions that help us approximate the ideal of a successful judgement, i.e., of cognition, as far as possible, given the epistemic limitations (and thus possible causes of error) that we cannot rule out in the practice of judging in the Concrete Framework. Kant's concept of cognition from the Capacity Framework thus provides justification for the normative pull and value of a successful judgement, i.e., cognition. At the same time, Kant acknowledges certain limits to our cognitive powers in the Concrete Framework.

The limits of our cognitive powers that become relevant are different in kind and in addition to the limits of reason of Kant's account of our cognitive capacities in the Capacity Framework.[4] In the Capacity Framework, Kant investigated the limits of reason. These include, for instance, reason's inability to cognise things in themselves (e.g.: *KrV* A30/B45), reason's inability to attain complete systematic unity in science (e.g.: *KrV* A309/B365, A663/B691), or reason's inability to cognise the unconditioned (e.g.: *KrV* A621/B649). These are limits of our capacities and thus a matter of the Capacity Framework. These limits also apply, of course, in the Concrete Framework, since we still operate with the same capacities. However, in the Concrete Framework, additional limits to our cognitive powers must be conceded. These limits result not from our cognitive capacities but from the fact that we are concrete, empirical human beings with feelings, desires, and needs. These empirical factors can also cause judgements, in addition to our cognitive capacities. For instance, in wishful thinking, motivated reasoning, or ideological thinking, we are arguably motivated by what Kant describes as 'subjective causes' of *Fürwahrhalten* (*KrV* A820/B848). In the Concrete Framework, space must be made for this 'unnoticed influence of sensibility upon the understanding,' which 'brings it about that in judgement we take merely subjective grounds to be objective' (*Logik Jäsche* IX:53-4). As a result, we must acknowledge our ineliminable fallibility in the Concrete Framework as an *additional* limiting factor.

My argument has two parts. The first part, covering Sections 5.2 to 5.4 of this chapter, constitutes a close reading of the first few paragraphs of the section *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* in the *Canon*. My argument there will be based on an analysis of Kant's text in these paragraphs, taking into account further evidence from various logic lectures, to present my interpretation of Kant's distinctions between conviction and persuasion and between opining, believing, and knowing. In Section 5.2, I will argue that Kant's distinction between opining, believing, and knowing is not based on

[4] I do not here use Kant's technical distinction between limits and boundaries. For an insightful account of this distinction and how it applies to the limits and boundaries of our cognitive capacities, see: S. Howard 2022.

justification criteria. Instead, Kant uses indirect indicators of a judgement's justification status that are imperfect but pragmatically useable: individual conviction and universal certainty. This distinction is thus specifically a taxonomy for *Fürwahrhalten*, understood as a concrete judgement. Though motivated by an epistemic ideal of cognition from the Capacity Framework, Kant aims to enable a reliable categorisation of our concrete judgements despite our fallibility and inability to rule out subjective causes of error. In Section 5.3, I will explain why this taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing is not primarily based on the *grounds* of a judgement. Kant's appeal to grounds is explained by the fact that individual conviction and universal certainty are indirect indicators of the grounds of our judgements. In Section 5.4, I will explain the sense in which this taxonomy commits Kant to fallibilism about knowledge. I will argue that Kant's concept of cognition in the Capacity Framework is infallibilist but that Kant's acknowledgement of possible and ineliminable causes of error in our concrete judgements commits him to a fallibilist account of knowledge as a type of *Fürwahrhalten* in the *Canon*.

In the second part, covering Sections 5.5 and 5.6, I will support my textual analysis with contextual evidence. Specifically, I will argue that my reading is cogent in light of the wider function of *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* as part of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*. In Section 5.5 I will argue that with the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, Kant shifts from the Capacity Framework to the Concrete Framework. My interpretation of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* as the concept of a concrete judgement reflects this shift. In Section 5.6, I will show that my interpretation helps us understand Kant's overall argument in *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* as part of the *Canon of Pure Reason*. The *Canon* is supposed to solve the problem of how we can entertain the concrete judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife. Maintaining these judgements is problematic because we cannot attain cognition about them. Yet, at the same time, the universality and necessity of reason's practical interests make it seem as though these judgements, though grounded on a practical interest, are necessary and universally certain. In other words, it appears as though practical reason could equip us with theoretical knowledge. Kant resolves this threat with the introduction of the notion of moral certainty, which – in contrast to other types of certainty – is not an indicator of truth but merely of individual conviction.

5.2 A Close Reading of *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing*

In this section, I will develop my interpretation through a close reading of the first four paragraphs of the section *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* of the *Canon of Pure Reason* of the first *Critique*.

Here is what I take to be the structure of the first four paragraphs. There are three steps in Kant's argument in these four paragraphs. In the first step, Kant introduces the distinction between conviction and persuasion. In the second step, Kant argues that we do not have a reliable method to use the conviction-persuasion distinction in the Concrete Framework. As a result, the conviction-persuasion distinction is ultimately only useful in the Capacity Framework but not in the Concrete Framework. Thus, we need a different distinction or method for categorising our judgements than the conviction-persuasion distinction. In the third step, Kant introduces an alternative method for categorising our judgements (*Fürwahrhalten*) with the distinction of opining, believing, and knowing.

5.2.1 Part One: The Conviction-Persuasion Distinction

Kant introduces the distinction between conviction and persuasion right at the beginning of the section as follows:

> The Fürwahrhalten is an occurrence in our understanding that may be based on objective grounds, but also requires subjective causes in the mind of the one who judges. If it is valid for everyone, so far as they have reason, the ground for it is objectively sufficient, and the Fürwahrhalten is then called conviction. If it has its ground only in the particular nature of the subject, it is called persuasion. (*KrV* A820/B848)

The first contrast Kant introduces here is one between the potential 'objective grounds' and 'subjective causes in the mind of the one who judges.' The former may be – but need not – be present in *Fürwahrhalten*. The latter are always present because *Fürwahrhalten* is a subjective act of judging something to be the case.[5] This already indicates that Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* describes concrete judgements, as per my argument in Chapter 4. In *all* instances of *Fürwahrhalten*, there must be some 'subjective causes' responsible for the *Fürwahrhalten* because it is a concrete mental phenomenon in a concrete subject.

Next, Kant distinguishes conviction from persuasion. *Fürwahrhalten* is a conviction only if 'it is valid for everyone,' since this implies that it is based on objective grounds – it is in this sense 'objectively sufficient (*objektiv hinreichend*).' By contrast, if the *Fürwahrhalten's* ground lies 'only in the particular nature of the subject,' then it is an instance of persuasion.

The distinction between persuasion and conviction is drawn in terms of a hard epistemic standard or criterion: intersubjective validity ('valid for everyone, so far as they have reason').[6] This condition goes beyond processual requirements, such as having good

[5] This is not contentious. See, e.g.: Chignell 2007b, 39.

[6] Meerbote argues that Kant's concept of intersubjective validity means the same as objective validity. I am sympathetic to this reading but nothing here depends on it. More important for present purposes Kant's explanation that intersubjective validity requires truth. Meerbote 1972, 55.

evidence or having followed a reliable process. It is not sufficient for the judgement to fulfil purely formal principles of judging. Instead, the requirement of intersubjective validity effectively amounts to a requirement of truth, as Kant clarifies in the following passage:[7]

> Persuasion is a mere semblance, because the ground of the judgement, which lies solely in the subject, is mistaken for being objective. Therefore, such a judgement has only private validity, and the *Fürwahrhalten* cannot be communicated. But truth is based on agreement with the object, in light of which the judgements of each understanding must consequently be unanimous [...]. (*KrV* A820/B848)

Here, Kant clarifies that, in persuasion, subjective causes are mistaken for objective grounds. As a result, persuasion 'has only private validity'. This again confirms that the crucial distinction between persuasion and conviction is the validity of the judgement: persuasion is only privately valid; conviction is intersubjectively valid, or 'valid for everyone'. Kant also claims that the mere private validity of persuasion has as its consequence the incommunicability of the *Fürwahrhalten*. By communicability, Kant must here mean one's ability to reliably and predictably convince others of one's judgement.[8] It would be implausible for the content of the judgement not to be communicable. For instance, we can imagine a flat-earther being able to communicate their judgement that the earth is flat to us. The flat-earther's judgement is incommunicable in the sense that they will not find ways to reliably persuade others. This indicates, at least negatively, that the belief that the earth is flat falls short of the standard of universal validity and is thus not a conviction but instead a persuasion.

Importantly, Kant uses this passage to explain the connection between truth and universal validity. In the third sentence, Kant argues that 'truth is based on agreement with the object.' This is essentially a repetition of the nominal definition of truth (*KrV* A58/B82; see: Section 3.4). Thus, Kant here argues that the universal validity required for conviction implies the truth of *Fürwahrhalten*. Truth, and thus intersubjective validity, obtains when the ground of *Fürwahrhalten* is objectively sufficient. Unfortunately, as we shall see below, we are unable to finally determine for any given instance of *Fürwahrhalten* whether it indeed has a sufficient objective ground.

The crucial distinction between persuasion and conviction is thus that only the latter, but not the former, must be true. To count as a genuine conviction, universal validity, and thus truth, is required. The persuasion-conviction distinction is thus defined in

[7] Accordingly, I agree with Chignell that objective grounds are connected to truth and objective validity (Chignell 2007b, 39). However, like Lawrence Pasternack, I believe that this connection is stronger than mere probability (Pasternack 2014a, 55–9). Specifically, I agree that possession of an objective ground entails the truth of the judgement. However, in contrast to both Chignell and Pasternack, I will argue that we cannot become aware, with full confidence, whether our judgement is indeed based on an objective ground, as opposed to resulting from a merely subjective cause.

[8] I take Kant here to be referring to the public use of reason and will elaborate on this below. On the public use of reason, see: Pasternack 2014b; McQuillan 2018.

terms of a hard epistemic standard. In the course of the following sentences, Kant evaluates how far we can get with this sort of distinction in pragmatic terms.

5.2.2 Part Two: Methods for Distinguishing Conviction from Persuasion

In this part of the section (*KrV* A820-1/B848-9, second to fourth paragraph), Kant introduces three methods to distinguish conviction from persuasion in concrete judgements. The first method is the communicability of the *Fürwahrhalten*, the second method is the sharing of one's grounds of one's *Fürwahrhalten*, and the third method is revealing the subjective nature of the causes of one's judgement. Let me begin by considering the passage in which Kant discusses the first method:

Method 1: Testing for Communicability

> The touchstone of *Fürwahrhalten*, whether it be conviction or mere persuasion, is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating the same and of finding the *Fürwahrhalten* valid for every person's reason; for then at least there is a suspicion that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, notwithstanding the diversity of the subjects among each other, will rest on the communal ground, namely the object, with which they will therefore all agree and thereby prove the truth of the judgment. (*KrV* A820/B848)

Here, Kant again clarifies that by communicability, he means something like the ability to reliably and predictably convince others of one's judgement. What is required is that we 'find' it 'valid for every person's reason.' So, communicability here means that we can expect all reasonable people to agree with our judgement.[9] Importantly, however, Kant immediately cautions that this method is not perfect. Communicability in this sense of universal *agreement* does not imply truth or universal *validity*.[10] At most, this method can furnish us with a 'suspicion that the ground of the agreement [...] will rest on the object [...] and thereby prove the truth of the judgement.' So, this first method can, at best, function as a useful and plausible but ultimately fallible indicator of *Fürwahrhalten's* status as a conviction. Kant confirms this in the first sentence of the next paragraph, in which he then introduces a second potential method for identifying convictions.

Method 2: Sharing One's Grounds

If communicability does not enable us to reliably distinguish persuasion from conviction, then can we perhaps share the grounds of our reasoning to identify clear cases of

[9] As Jens Timmermann argues, communicability for Kant means something like 'impartibility.' Timmermann 2018, 685.

[10] Truth or universal validity imply communicability but not vice versa, since factual agreement might still be caused by widely shared subjective causes of *Fürwahrhalten*.

persuasion? We may not be able to positively establish the truth of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* and thus its status as a conviction. But there are methods to discover the merely subjective nature of the causes of our *Fürwahrhalten* that we may mistake for objective grounds:

> Persuasion, therefore, cannot be distinguished subjectively from conviction when the subject has before his eyes the *Fürwahrhalten*, merely as an appearance in his own mind; but the attempt to convince others with our reasons, which are valid for us, whether they have the same effect on someone else's reason, is nevertheless a means, albeit only a subjective one, not of achieving conviction, but of discovering the mere private validity of the judgement, i.e. something in it that is mere persuasion. (*KrV* A821/B849)

So, persuasion cannot be distinguished from conviction 'subjectively.' By 'subjectively,' Kant here means that it is an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*, which is 'merely an appearance in [one's] mind' for the judging subject. Accordingly, Kant's use of 'subjective' here resembles the distinction between subjective and objective cognition that I discussed in Section 2.3 on historical and rational cognition. *Fürwahrhalten* only exists as a concrete and thus subjective act. Conviction cannot be distinguished from persuasion because we cannot positively confirm the truth of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*. At best, we can test for communicability, which provides us with evidence to think it plausible that the instance of *Fürwahrhalten* has the status of conviction. This test is imperfect, however, leaving open the possibility that our *Fürwahrhalten* is still just a persuasion. Thus, although we can draw the distinction between persuasion and conviction *conceptually*, we cannot use it as a taxonomy for our concrete judgements.

While it is impossible to finally positively confirm the conviction-status of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*, there are also methods for negatively ruling out some persuasions. For instance, as Kant argues in this passage, we can express what we take to be our reasons in an 'attempt to convince others.' This method can help us discover 'the mere private validity of the judgement' and thus its status as a 'mere persuasion.' Thus, the method of sharing our reasons can help us rule out some would-be convictions and reveal that they are merely persuasions. This negative approach to excluding some candidates for conviction can be supplemented by the third method Kant introduces in the following paragraph.

Method 3: Revealing the Subjectivity of Causes

In a third method, Kant encourages us to reveal the subjective nature of the causes of our judgement to uncover mere persuasions:

> If we can develop the subjective causes of judgement, which we take for objective reasons of the same, and thus explain the deceptive Fürwahrhalten

> as an event in our mind without needing to consider the nature of the object, we expose the appearance and are no longer deceived, although we are still tempted to a certain degree if the subjective cause of the appearance is inherent in our nature. (*KrV* A821/B849)

Kant here describes a method for showing that a judgement is merely a persuasion in which we need no knowledge of the content (or 'object' of the judgement). All we need is to assess the actual 'causes' (rather than reasons) of the judgement. In some cases, these causes might be recognisably subjective. For instance, if you judge that your friend Nathan will win the tennis game just because you like Nathan (and even though Nathan is a lousy player), the cause of your judgement is merely subjective. Other examples could include cases of motivated or biased judging. Causes of judgements that are clearly *only* subjective and bear no relation to what the judgement is about can thus be revealed and 'we expense the appearance', i.e., the *Fürwahrhalten's* status as a mere persuasion. Nonetheless, Kant acknowledges that subjective causes might still have a strong purchase on us 'if the subjective cause' of the judgement is an essential element of our personality. For instance, if you really like Nathan you might still judge that he will win even after having found out that your *Fürwahrhalten* is technically a mere persuasion.

5.2.3 Part Three: The Opining-Believing-Knowing Distinction as a Useful Alternative

Up to this point, Kant has introduced the conviction-persuasion distinction, and he has shown that we have no reliable method for positively establishing that a given concrete judgement, i.e., an instance of Fürwahrhalten, is indeed a conviction. At best, we can have some evidence that makes it plausible to think that this judgement is a conviction. And we have some tools at our disposal to uncover mere persuasions. As a result, the distinction between persuasion and conviction is of limited practical value. Importantly, and as I will argue further below, the conviction-persuasion distinction is of no value for the overall problem with which Kant is concerned in the *Canon of Pure Reason*. Thus, Kant needs a *different* metric for categorising instances of *Fürwahrhalten*.

In the next step, Kant introduces an alternative and parallel schema for categorising instances of *Fürwahrhalten*: the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing. Unlike the conviction-persuasion distinction, this distinction does not depend on facts about the relation between the judgement and its object, such as truth. Instead, Kant introduces two new conditions, the subjective sufficiency and the objective sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten*. The distinction between opining, believing, and knowing is modelled in terms of the subjective and objective sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten*:

> *Opining* is a *Fürwahrhalten* that is consciously insufficient both subjectively

> and objectively. Is the latter only held to be subjectively sufficient and at the same time objectively insufficient, then it is called *believing*. Finally, *Fürwahrhalten* that is both subjectively and objectively sufficient is called *knowing*.(*KrV* 822/B850)

Here, Kant presents his distinction between opining, believing, and knowing. In the case of opining, the *Fürwahrhalten* is 'consciously' subjectively and objectively insufficient. In believing, the *Fürwahrhalten* is subjectively sufficient but objectively insufficient. Finally, in the case of knowing, the *Fürwahrhalten* is subjectively and objectively sufficient.

Before proceeding, it is useful to note two features of this account. First, in this official definition, Kant describes the *Fürwahrhalten* itself and not its grounds or causes as subjectively and objectively sufficient or insufficient. So, we do not here find an obvious appeal to reasons, grounds or other justification-concepts (I elaborate on this point in Section 5.3). Rather, it is the *Fürwahrhalten* itself that bears the property of (in)sufficiency. Given that this definition is also consistent with Kant's formulations in several Logic Lectures, I suggest taking it literally: it is indeed the *Fürwahrhalten*, i.e., the entire judgement as the judging subject is conscious of it, that can be subjectively or objectively sufficient.

Second, although some commentators complain that Kant fails to define subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency,[11] we can in fact find a definition of both conditions in the sentence that follows: 'The subjective sufficiency is called *conviction* (for myself), the objective [sufficiency is called] certainty (for everyone)' (*KrV* A822/B850). Accordingly, subjective sufficiency refers to one's subjective or personal conviction. I can ask myself: Am I really convinced of my judgement? Similarly, objective sufficiency refers to universal certainty. I can ask myself: Will everyone agree with my judgement?

If we understand the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing as drawn in terms of psychologically and pragmatically accessible features of the instance of *Fürwahrhalten*, rather than in terms of justification conditions, we can use Kant's explanation here to make sense of objective and subjective sufficiency. If subjective sufficiency simply means that one is convinced and if objective sufficiency refers to factual universal certainty, then we can also understand why Kant says that he will not bother with 'a further elucidation of such easily comprehensible concepts [so fasslicher Begriffe]' (A822/B850). Objective and subjective sufficiency do not describe complex sets of justification conditions for the grounds of judgements, as commentators currently suggest.[12] Instead, Kant's definition here suggests that subjective and objective sufficiency are phenomenal features of concrete judgements. We can test for individual conviction and public certainty by considering whether we are, in fact, individually convinced or publicly certain of that judgement. There is further textual

[11] Stevenson 2003, 77; Höwing 2016, 202.
[12] E.g.: Chignell 2007b, 47.

evidence for my reading of objective and subjective sufficiency as phenomenal features of *Fürwahrhalten* instead of as justification conditions in the remainder of the section *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing*, as I will now show.

Subjective Sufficiency

Subjective sufficiency requires that the person who makes the judgement is convinced of her judgement. As a test for conviction in this sense, Kant proposes high-stakes betting. This suggests that the criterion of subjective sufficiency is not *directly* about the quality of one's grounds or about one's justification. Rather, it means that *whatever* one's grounds for one's *Fürwahrhalten*, the judgement is a belief only if I am subjectively convinced of it although I cannot deem the judgement universally certain. Kant's example of betting illustrates a method for testing whether one's conviction in a judgement is sufficient for the judgement to count as a belief rather than a mere opinion:

> The usual touchstone: whether something is mere persuasion, or at least subjective conviction, i.e. firm belief, which someone asserts, is betting. Often someone utters his propositions with such confident and imperturbable defiance that he seems to have completely discarded all concern of error. A bet makes him suspicious. Sometimes it turns out that he has enough persuasion to be worth a ducat, but not ten. For he still dares to bet the first, but at ten he realises what he had not realised before, namely that it is quite possible that he was mistaken. (*KrV* A824-5/B852-3)

In this passage, Kant first confirms the reading of subjective sufficiency as subjective conviction, since he contrasts 'mere persuasion' with 'subjective conviction, i.e., firm belief'. This setup also shows why and how the distinction between persuasion and conviction becomes relevant for the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing. In his discussion of the persuasion-conviction distinction, Kant argued that we have some tools available to discover that a given instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is a mere persuasion. Specifically, the methods of sharing one's grounds and of revealing the subjectivity of the causes of one's judgement can be used to show that an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is a mere persuasion. If a given instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is consciously a mere persuasion, then I am not fully convinced of it myself. In this passage, Kant argues that we can use the method of betting for a similar end: we can make ourselves realise that we might not be as convinced even of some 'propositions' that we endorse with 'confident and imperturbable defiance.' At least, if the stakes of the bet are high enough, we might realise 'that it is quite possible that' we were 'mistaken.' To ensure that the stakes are high enough to test whether we really believe rather than merely opine in our judgement, we can perform a thought experiment in which we bet 'the happiness of our whole life:'

> When we present to ourselves the thought that we should bet the happiness of our whole life on something, our triumphant judgement fades very much, we become extremely shy and discover for the first time that our belief does not go that far. (*KrV* A825/B853)

This passage also clarifies why Kant introduced the section *Of Opining, Believing and Knowing* with a discussion of the distinction between persuasion and conviction. Although we cannot positively confirm a judgement's status as a conviction *objectively*, we can still identify some judgements as mere persuasions. This leaves us with two types of judgements from the point of view of the judging subject. First, there are judgements that are consciously mere persuasions. Second, there are judgements that are not consciously mere persuasions. Judgements of the latter kind are, from the point of view of the subject, convictions. This is what Kant means by 'conviction (for myself)' (*KrV* A822/B850) or 'subjective conviction' (*KrV* A824/B852) in his explanation of subjective sufficiency. This contrasts with a judgement's objective status as a conviction, which, as we have seen, would require universal validity (*KrV* A820/B848). Accordingly, Kant's distinction between opining, believing, and knowing utilises the distinction between persuasion and conviction as a subjective rather than an objective metric. The metric is "subjective" in the sense of the Concrete Framework: subjective conviction is a psychological fact about the concrete judgement that a person takes. Whether I am willing to bet all the happiness of my life on a judgement is not in itself a fact about (the quality of) my justification for my judgement. However, it *is* an indicator of the strength of my commitment to the judgement, i.e., it is an indicator of *individual conviction*.

Although individual conviction is a psychological fact, it is indirectly indicative of the quality of one's grounds. As the thought experiment of betting illustrates, the distinction between judgements of which I am properly convinced and those in which I lack full individual conviction aims at a distinction in clearly epistemic terms. The instances of *Fürwahrhalten* that fall short of the threshold of individual convictions are judgements in which I could realise that it is 'quite possible that' I 'was mistaken.' In other words, opinions are those judgements in which I am conscious that my judgement may fail to be true. So, by defining opining as a *Fürwahrhalten* that is 'with consciousness simultaneously subjectively and objectively insufficient,' Kant singles out those judgements where I am conscious that my judgement may not be true. As the example of betting illustrates, I might not be conscious that my judgement may not be true in the very moment of judging. Rather, what Kant seems to require is that it must be possible for me to become conscious of the fact that my judgement may not be true. Whether I am individually convinced of my judgement may only become transparent to me after performing something like a thought experiment with high-stakes betting. At least, this method can be used to positively confirm the belief-status of a given instance of *Fürwahrhalten*.

For cases of belief (Glauben), Kant's requirement of subjective sufficiency constitutes a high bar. As the betting example shows, Kantian believing requires a strong sense of conviction in one's judgement. Indeed, the conviction needs to be so strong that one would 'bet the happiness of our whole life on' it. What distinguishes opining from believing is thus the degree of conviction: in believing, we do *not* think that our judgement could not be true. Thus, believing is for Kant 'an expression of modesty in an objective intention, but at the same time the firmness of trust in a subjective one' (*KrV* A827/B853). In believing, we trust that our judgement must be true, even though we are conscious of a lack of universal certainty (i.e., objective sufficiency).

One might worry that this threshold for believing might be implausibly high. Kant seems to agree, at least in some cases of believing. Specifically, in the case of pragmatic belief, Kant relaxes the requirement: 'Thus, pragmatic belief has only a degree, which can be large or small depending on the differences in interest involved' (*KrV* A825/B853). Pragmatic beliefs are beliefs that are motivated by a specific practical interest. For instance, Kant argues that a doctor might need to have a belief that his diagnosis is correct even in the absence of clear evidence in order to be able to treat the patient. As Kant clarifies here, this belief need not be quite so strong that the doctor would bet his life on it. It might suffice to be strong enough to serve the 'interest involved.'

As this analysis shows, the distinction between opining and believing is not directly based on facts about the justification of our judgement. Rather, the distinction has to do with our subjective degree of conviction. In instances of *Fürwahrhalten* of which we are not fully convinced, we opine. In instances of *Fürwahrhalten* in which we are fully convinced, we believe. In both cases, we are conscious of a lack of universal certainty, i.e., objective sufficiency.

Objective Sufficiency

The condition of objective sufficiency takes us from the individual to the social epistemic realm. Kant defines objective sufficiency as '`certainty` (for everyone)' (*KrV* A822/B850). This condition must be understood in terms of two contrasts. First, it contrasts with the individual conviction of subjective sufficiency. Subjective sufficiency is construed in terms that refer only to the psychological reality of the individual who judges. By contrast, the condition of certainty for everyone requires us to assess the judgement in light of a social reality. It is not only the individual's but everyone's judgement that matters here. Second, the condition of certainty for everyone must be considered in light of Kant's rejection of a reliable method to positively confirm the truth of any given judgement. (Importantly, this does not mean that there are no judgements of which we can confirm the truth. It just means that there is no method for confirming the truth of every possible judgement.) In light of this restriction, objective sufficiency cannot straightforwardly require the truth of the judgement in

question. Rather, we must think of universal certainty (certainty for everyone) as a requirement that indicates that the judgement is most plausibly true. In line with this, Kant's discussion of 'judgements from pure reason' immediately after drawing his distinction between opining, believing, and knowing aptly describes universal certainty as a 'guidance to truth:'

> In judgements of pure reason, it is not allowed to opine at all. For, since they are not based on grounds of experience, but everything is to be cognised a priori, where everything is necessary, the principle of connection requires universality and necessity, and hence complete certainty, lest no guidance to truth be encountered at all. (*KrV* A822-3/B850-1)

Remarkably, Kant here describes judgements of pure reason as universal and necessary and, as a result, completely certain but still not as infallible or true. Instead, the 'complete certainty' that universality and necessity afford us merely provide us with a 'guidance to truth'. *Prima facie.* this is surprising. After all, if a judgement is universal and necessary, how could it fail to be true? The assessment makes sense, however, if we think of universality and necessity here not as logical criteria but as psychological facts about our judgements. If we consider *Fürwahrhalten*, and thus operate in the Concrete Framework, we assess judgements as concrete, psychological realities. Thus, the universality and necessity here are not to be understood as an objective or logical fact about the judgement. Rather, it is what could be described as a consciousness of a judgement's universality and necessity. Understood in this sense as a psychological reality, it makes sense to think of universality and necessity merely as a 'guidance' rather than as a guarantor of the judgement's truth. This way of thinking about universality and necessity as psychological facts makes sense because Kant here discusses not judgement in the Capacity Framework but *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework.

The criterion of objective sufficiency, and thus of universal certainty, must thus be a condition that constitutes some sort of guide to the truth of the judgement that is nonetheless permissive of our fallibility. Here, Kant's earlier distinction between persuasion and conviction plays a role again. Recall that Kant rejected the idea that we could positively confirm the truth of a judgement. However, Kant also introduced a method to check whether it is at least plausible that a judgement is true: communicability. Specifically, Kant argued that we can use 'the possibility of communicating' an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* as a 'touchstone' to support at least 'a suspicion that the ground of the agreement of all judgements [...] will rest on [...] the object [...] and thereby prove the truth of the judgement' (*KrV* A820/B848). Although this method fails as a positive criterion for conviction and as a positive test of the truth, it can nonetheless provide us with strong evidence for the truth of a judgement. This test of the communicability of a judgement can thus be used as a tool to establish its universal certainty. This also seems to be confirmed by Kant's

explanation of why one cannot know that God exists. 'All knowledge (if it concerns an object of pure reason) can be communicated,' Kant argues (*KrV* A829/B857). Yet, Kant thinks that no one could reliably and predictably convince us through reasons that God exists in the sense required for the communicability of a judgement. Instead, one's *Fürwahrhalten* that God exists is a matter of believing, rather than knowing.

The condition of objective sufficiency as a requirement of knowledge thus takes us from a merely private assessment of our individual conviction to a public assessment of the communicability of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*. As Lawrence Pasternack argues in an insightful paper, Kant introduces the notion of the public use of reason because we lack a reliable method for first-personally confirming the truth of many of our judgements.[13] Pasternack, too, points 'to the importance of communication for the achievement of certainty.'[14] Pasternack thereby connects the communicability test as a test for universal certainty with the epistemic practice of public reasoning Kant describes in the essay *What is Enlightenment?* (*Was ist Aufklärung?* VIII:35-42). Universal certainty thus requires a practice of putting one's judgements to the test in a public domain of free debate among a 'world citizenship (*Weltbürgergesellschaft*)' (*Was it Aufklärung?* VII:37). Thus, to deem an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* universally certain, it must have been put to public scrutiny and deemed certain by a suitable epistemic public.

Kant's identification of objective sufficiency with universal certainty and, thus, a public epistemic practice has important implications for Kant's concept of knowledge. The very possibility of knowledge – in the sense of concrete instances of *Fürwahrhalten* that count as knowing – depends on relevant freedoms of thought and expression. Moreover, as Onora O'Neill points out, a suitable arena of public reason requires not only the absence of constraint but also 'possible audiences,' i.e., a group of reasoners with whom one can exchange one's ideas.[15] The possibility of knowledge thus depends on the appropriate social and political conditions to enable the free exchange and testing of one's judgements. Testing for the communicability of one's judgements, i.e., testing whether we can reliably and predictably convince others of our judgement, can only take place in appropriate social conditions. And it requires an actual engagement in public discourse. Knowledge is not attainable alone but only as a social achievement.

Applied to Kant's concept of knowing, the current analysis of subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency implies the following. Knowledge is *Fürwahrhalten* that is both subjectively and objectively sufficient. This means that both individual conviction and public certainty are required. For individual conviction, we can test through high-stakes betting thought experiments. For public certainty, actual engagement with other reasoners in a suitable arena of public reason is required. Only instances

[13] Pasternack 2014b, 83.
[14] Ibid., 84.
[15] As Onora O'Neill points out, Kant's conception of freedom of thought and expression is not O'Neill 2001, 41–2.

of *Fürwahrhalten* that pass both tests can legitimately be regarded as instances of knowing.

Before proceeding, let me address a potential worry. Kant's concept of knowing appears to be overly demanding, at least for low-stakes instances of knowledge. It might seem implausible that I should have to put my judgement that there is milk in the fridge to a public debate to count it as knowledge. I see two ways of dealing with this problem. On the one hand, one might bite the bullet and agree with Pasternack that 'certainty is extremely hard-won for Kant.'[16] As a result, most instances of *Fürwahrhalten* count merely as opinions, some as beliefs, and only very few as knowledge for Kant.[17] There is certainly some truth in this reading. Kant's account of knowledge is indeed demanding. However, it is at least possible to make Kant's model proportional to the epistemic stakes at hand. Kant's model does not require factual agreement with one's judgement with all human beings who have ever existed. Instead, Kant refers to a suitable group or even just one other suitable person whom one must be able to convince in a test of a judgement's communicability. An example of this can be found in Kant's account of knowing in the *Vienna Logic*:

> A bet is a trial through which one tests whether someone else knows what he believes, and holds it to be true with firm belief. [...] He who wagers life and limb is fully convinced subjectively. [...] E.g. [...] He who believes so strongly that he gives his life, for it is as good as the greatest certainty. But one cannot say that he knows this, only that he believes it. E.g., religious secrets. In mathematics there is no belief. Here there must be knowledge. [...] He attains knowledge through his conviction of the understanding with the most disinterested understanding, whereby he becomes capable of making what he knows distinct and certain for others, too. In the case of the very firmest conviction, accordingly, knowledge is not needed. But one knows only when one can give the very same certainty even to the most disinterested understanding. (*Vienna Logic* XXIV:853)

The first sentence here is a bit confusing since it seems as though betting could be used as a criterion for knowing. However, this ambiguity is clarified with Kant's explanation that betting can only reveal that someone is 'fully convinced subjectively.' Moreover, even if one is so-convinced, 'one cannot say that he knows this, only that he believes it.' So, this passage further confirms that believing, and thus subjective sufficiency requires subjective conviction. Moreover, Kant then contrasts this with the further requirement for knowledge. Someone who makes a judgement 'attains knowledge' by convincing 'the most disinterested understanding.' That is, Kant suggests that one should try to convince someone who has no interest, or perhaps even a negative interest, in the truth of one's judgement. This suggests that communicability requires

[16] Pasternack 2014b, 85.
[17] Pasternack 2015, 72.

us to be able to convince the right sort of reasoners, those who have no interest in our judgement. This requirement is cogent in light of Kant's explanation of the 'origin of all error' in our judgement from the *Jäsche Logik*:

> The ground for the origin of all error will therefore have to be sought simply and solely in the unnoticed influence of sensibility upon the understanding, or to speak more exactly, upon judgement. This influence, namely, brings it about that in judgement we take merely subjective grounds to be objective, and consequently confuse the mere illusion of truth with truth itself. (*Logik Jäsche* IX:53-4)

Accordingly, we are prone to false judgements, according to Kant, only because we can mistake subjective grounds for objective grounds. As we have seen, Kant thinks of subjective grounds as related to our motivations, that is, to our *interests*. Thus, if we can find a reasoner who does not share the interests that motivate our judgement, it is likely that they will not similarly mistake a subjective ground for an objective ground (because the interest that causes or constitutes the subjective ground is not present). So, it would be sufficient to find only some suitably disinterested people with whom to put our judgement to the test. The public use of reason only presents us with a tool to *find* these disinterested people, as Kant clarifies a few pages later in the *Jäsche Logik*:

> An external mark or an external touchstone of truth is the comparison of our own judgements with those of others because the subjective [grounds] will not be present in all others in the same way, so that illusion can thereby be cleared up. The incompatibility of the judgements of others with our own is thus an external mark of error and is to be regarded as a cue to investigate our procedure in judgement, but not for that reason to reject it at once. (*Logik Jäsche* IX:57)

This description of the test of communicability as an external albeit imperfect mark or test for a judgement's truth corresponds to Kant's description of the communicability test of conviction in the *Canon* (as discussed above) (*KrV* A820/B848). Communicability – and thus testing for universal certainty – provides us with evidence for the probable truth of a judgement because the causes of error, i.e., subjective interests, are unevenly distributed in a population. In a sufficiently large arena of public reason, there will be at least some who do not share our biases and other interests. Thus, there will be some who are not affected by our causes for error. So, an arena for public reasoning is indispensable for knowledge.

However, Kant's reasoning also implies that the threshold for knowledge can be adjusted in proportion to the epistemic stakes at hand *and* in proportion to the probability of error. Public reasoning is necessary as a test for universal certainty only in cases where my judgement is likely to be affected by subjective interests. In some

cases, such as the judgement that there is milk in the fridge, the epistemic stakes are low, and, *ceteris paribus,* there is little reason to think my judgement will be greatly affected by subjective interests. In such cases, it might be sufficient to adhere to Kant's 'rules and conditions for avoiding error in general,' which do not necessarily involve public reasoning: '1) to think for oneself, 2) to think oneself in the position of someone else, and 3) always to think in agreement with oneself' (*Logik Jäsche* IX:57). Thus, the threshold for knowledge and for certainty might not be quite as demanding as Pasternack suggests; one's tools for assessing whether a judgement is universally certain merely have to be appropriate in light of the epistemic stakes and the likelihood of error.

5.2.4 Summary

To recapitulate, here is a brief summary of my proposed reading of Kant's account of opining, believing, and knowing. In the third section of the *Canon*, Kant first distinguishes persuasion from conviction. Conviction requires interpersonal validity and, thus, the truth of the judgement. Persuasion lacks interpersonal validity. Although we can draw this distinction in the Capacity Framework, it is pragmatically inert because we have no means to finally and positively confirm the truth of all possible concrete judgements. In many cases, there might still be some undiscovered interest and, hence, a subjective cause lurking in the background. Therefore, we cannot use the conviction-persuasion distinction as a typology to categorise instances of *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework. Yet, as I will argue below, Kant needs a pragmatically utilisable typology of this sort to fulfil his overall aims in the *Canon*. As a result, a different typology or framework for categorising instances of *Fürwahrhalten* is needed. This alternative typology must not directly appeal to the judgement's truth status.

Kant introduces the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing as a pragmatically utilisable typology to categorise instances of *Fürwahrhalten* in the Concrete Framework. The distinction is drawn by means of the criteria of subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency. Subjective sufficiency requires individual conviction, which can be determined, for instance, through imaginary high-stakes betting. Objective sufficiency requires universal certainty, which can be determined, for instance, by putting one's judgements up to scrutiny by a suitable epistemic public. Opinions lack both individual conviction and universal certainty. Beliefs are instances of *Fürwahrhalten* of which we are individually convinced but that lack universal certainty. And when we are both individually convinced and universally certain, an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is a case of knowledge.

5.3 The Grounds of *Fürwahrhalten*

I have now offered a new reading of *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* through a close reading of the passage. This reading departs from existing accounts in three significant ways. First, my analysis of subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency is not formulated in terms of (epistemic or non-epistemic) *grounds*. Second, and related to this first point, I have argued that the conviction-persuasion distinction is different in kind from the opining-believing-knowing distinction. Third, my account of Kantian knowing is *fallibilist*. These features of my interpretation will be surprising not only because they go against current interpretive trends but also because there is some textual evidence for the respective opposite position. So, before proceeding to the contextual argument for my interpretation, let me say a few words about the textual evidence for and against each of these aspects of my interpretation.

Chignell's account of *Fürwahrhalten* is exemplary for the interpretation of objective and subjective sufficiency in terms of non-epistemic and epistemic *grounds*. According to Chignell, a subject's *Fürwahrhalten* is objectively sufficient only if the subject has a sufficient objective ground.[18] And it is subjectively sufficient only if the subject thinks that she has a sufficient objective ground.[19] Chignell also adds another model for subjective sufficiency in terms of non-epistemic merits.[20] Recall, further, that Chignell thinks of *Fürwahrhalten* as a propositional attitude. Correspondingly, the relevant grounds are thought of as sufficient grounds – or non-epistemic merits – for entertaining this sort of propositional attitude towards a proposition.

The analysis of subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency in terms of grounds has textual support. Although Kant does not talk about grounds when first introducing subjective and objective sufficiency in the context of the opining-believing-knowing distinction, Kant does talk about grounds of *Fürwahrhalten* throughout relevant passages. For instance, the distinction between persuasion and conviction directly mentions 'objective grounds' and 'subjective causes' of *Fürwahrhalten*. Moreover, there are passages such as the following that seem to link subjective and objective sufficiency to respective subjective and objective grounds:

> In the transcendental use of reason, on the other hand, opining is clearly too little, but knowledge is also too much. We cannot judge here at all with purely speculative aim because subjective grounds for *Fürwahrhalten*, such as those that can cause belief, do not merit approval in speculative questions [...] (*KrV* A823/B851)

Here, Kant argues that 'subjective grounds of *Fürwahrhalten*' of the sort that 'can cause belief' do not suffice to support knowledge claims but are strong enough to get

[18] Chignell 2007b, 44.
[19] Ibid., 45.
[20] Ibid., 53.

us beyond mere opinion. Similarly, a few pages later, Kant explains that what he calls 'moral certainty' is 'based on' so-called 'subjective grounds' (*KrV* A829/B854). The notion of grounds is thus mentioned in the third section of the *Canon* specifically with regard to belief (subjective grounds) and with regard to conviction (objective grounds). There is otherwise comparatively little talk about grounds in this passage.

Grounds of *Fürwahrhalten* take a more prominent role in some of the student notes of Kant's logic lectures. For instance, in the *Jäsche Logik*, Kant defines opining, believing, and knowing respectively as 'based on a ground of cognition that is' in the relevant way subjectively and objectively sufficient or insufficient (*Logik Jäsche* IX:66-70). Similar passages can be found in other logic lectures (*E.g.: Logik Blomberg* XXIV:229; *Wiener Logik* XXIV:850).

Despite these pieces of evidence in which the notion of grounds play a role, Kant does not explicitly define the subjective or objective sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten* in terms of grounds. Instead, what we find is a consistent association of subjective sufficiency with conviction and objective sufficiency with certainty (*KrV* A8222/B850; *Logik Jäsche* IX:66; *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:732-4; *Wiener Logik* XXIV:849). So, the textual evidence does not directly define subjective and objective sufficiency in terms of epistemic or non-epistemic grounds. Rather, we find the following mutually compatible claims:

1. Subjective sufficiency is individual conviction.
2. Objective sufficiency is universal certainty.
3. Opining is based on a ground that is neither subjectively nor objectively sufficient (*Logik Jäsche* IX:66).
4. Believing is based on a ground that is objectively insufficient but subjectively sufficient (*Logik Jäsche* IX:67).
5. Knowing is based on a ground that is 'objectively as well as subjectively sufficient, or certainty' (*Logik Jäsche* IX:70).

The claims are mutually compatible if those grounds are subjectively or objectively sufficient that respectively cause individual conviction and universal certainty. For instance, a ground of the judgement that we are immortal could be subjectively sufficient because it supports the individual conviction that we are immortal. Similarly, a ground of the judgement that 2+2=4 could be objectively sufficient because it sustains the universal certainty that 2+2=4. On this construal of the relation of sufficiency to one's grounds, we are able to explain both the textual evidence that defines subjective and objective sufficiency in terms of individual conviction and universal certainty and the occasional rendering in terms of grounds. This seems plausible, for instance, if we consider passages like those of point five above, where Kant explicitly calls knowing a *Fürwahrhalten* that is based on a ground that is

subjectively and objectively sufficient 'or certainty.'[21] The explanatory relationship thus has the reverse order to Chignell's suggestion: the sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten* is not to be explained in terms of the sufficiency of its grounds. Rather, the sufficiency of the grounds of *Fürwahrhalten* is to be explained in terms of the sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten*.

This reversed explanatory order is preferable because it can help us retain the distinction between, on the one hand, conviction and persuasion, and, on the other hand, opining-believing-knowing. For Kant, the key distinction between these typologies lies in the fact that only the latter is a *conscious* distinction. The opining-believing-knowing distinction is conscious in the sense that it can be drawn for concrete judgements by the judging subject. It is possible to assess whether one is individually convinced and whether there is universal certainty. By contrast, while it is possible to negatively identify cases of persuasion in some cases, it is not possible to completely rule out the possibility that a judgement may be merely a persuasion, rather than a conviction. (Recall from above that we cannot reliably positively confirm instances of convictions because conviction is defined as resting on 'objective grounds' and is thus, objectively, universally valid (*KrV* A820/B848).) The "objective" assessment of judgements on the persuasion-conviction scale contrasts with the "subjective" assessment in the sense of a conscious categorisation of judgements into opining, believing, and knowing. Consider, for instance, the following comparison between persuasion and opinion:

> Although all persuasion is false as to form (*formaliter*), namely, insofar as an uncertain cognition appears here to be certain, it can nonetheless be true as to matter (*materialiter*). And thus it is distinct from opinion, too, which is an uncertain cognition, *insofar as it is held to be uncertain.* (*Logik Jäsche* IX:73)

Accordingly, the opining-believing-knowing distinction is drawn on the basis of features of a judgement of which the subject is conscious. By contrast, the persuasion-conviction distinction depends on features of a judgement of which the subject may not be conscious. The two schemes for categorising judgements are thus different in kind. The opining-believing-knowing distinction operates within the normative space of the Concrete Framework, whereas the persuasion-conviction distinction operates in the normative space of the Capacity Framework.

That the two schemes are different in kind has so far gone unnoticed. For instance, Chignell argues that knowledge is a type of conviction.[22] He even goes so far as to suggest that the very title of the section (*Of Opining, Knowing and Believing*) is misleading and that it should instead be called: *Of Opinion, Conviction, and Belief.*[23]

[21] Consider a similar passage in the *Dohna-Wundlacken Logik*: 'Certainty is the objective sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten*.' (*Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* XXIV:734)
[22] Chignell 2007b, 38.
[23] Ibid., 36, 49.

		persuasion		**conviction**		**opining**		**believing**		**knowing**	
		factual	*conscious*	*factual*	*conscious*	*factual*	*conscious*	*factual*	*conscious*	*factual*	*conscious*
I hold something for true:	**subjective cause**	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅
It is universally valid:	**objective ground**	✗	?	✅	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
I am convinced:	**subjectively sufficient**	N/A				✗	✗	✅	✅	✅	✅
It is universally certain:	**objectively sufficient**					✗	✗	✗	✗	✅	✅

Figure 5.1: Tabular Overview of Grounds and Sufficiency Conditions

Chignell also thinks that persuasion is a separate type of *Fürwahrhalten* and on the same rank as opinion, conviction, and belief.[24] Leslie Stevenson, by contrast, thinks that persuasion is a sub-species of opining.[25] Lawrence Pasternack offers yet another proposal, according to which the primary distinction is to be made between conviction, persuasion, and opinion, with both knowledge and belief being a type of conviction.[26] Accordingly, commentators have so far collapsed the two schemes.

My suggestion, that the two schemes are different in kind, has several advantages over collapsing the two sets of distinctions. Commentators have been unable to agree on how precisely the two schemes overlap. For instance, whereas Pasternack thinks that belief is a type of conviction, Chignell disagrees and thinks that belief is a *sui generis* type of *Fürwahrhalten*.[27] This inability to agree on how the two distinctions interrelate is best explained, I believe, by the distinctness in kind of the two schemes. And this distinctness is also explained by the textual evidence. The persuasion-conviction distinction is drawn in terms of 'objective grounds' and 'subjective causes' of *Fürwahrhalten* (*KrV* A820/B848). By contrast, the opining-knowing-believing distinction is drawn in terms of the subjective sufficiency and objective sufficiency of *Fürwahrhalten* (*KrV* A822/B850). Moreover, it is also telling that Kant draws the persuasion-conviction distinction in terms of epistemic states. In the German original, Kant uses *Überzeugung* and *Überredung*, terms that clearly describe an epistemic *state*. By contrast, for the opining-believing-knowing distinction, Kant does not technically talk about the states of opinion, belief, and knowledge but about the *mental actions*

[24] Ibid., 49.
[25] Stevenson 2003, 80.
[26] Pasternack 2015, 61.
[27] Pasternack 2014a, 49; Chignell 2007a, 358.

of opin*ing*, believ*ing*, and know*ing*. This is also reflected in the title of the section in the *Canon*. This constitutes further evidence showing that the two schemes for categorising *Fürwahrhalten* are distinct and parallel, rather than overlapping.

Analysing subjective and objective sufficiency not in terms of subjective and objective grounds of *Fürwahrhalten* but in the reverse order I suggest above enables us to distinguish the notion of 'objective grounds' (*KrV* A820/B848 at the basis of genuine conviction from 'objectively sufficient grounds' at the basis of knowledge (*KrV* A822/B850). Objective grounds are those that imply the interpersonal validity of a judgement. By contrast, objectively sufficient grounds are those that ground universal certainty. These grounds will often overlap. As Kant argues, the communicability of a judgement can function as an external 'touchstone' for the truth of a judgement. But this touchstone is fallible. So, there is a distinction *in kind* between the state of conviction and the act of knowing.

Similarly, we can distinguish 'subjective causes' (*KrV* A820/B848) from 'subjectively sufficient grounds' (*KrV* A822/B850). Subjective causes are present in all instances of *Fürwahrhalten*. Subjectively sufficient grounds are those that support individual conviction. This means that the conviction-persuasion distinction is here used first-personally, i.e, consciously. If my *Fürwahrhalten* consciously has the status of a mere persuasion, it is an instance of opining. If I cannot consciously call my *Fürwahrhalten* a mere persuasion but am at the same time aware that the judgement lacks universal certainty, it is a case of believing.

5.4 Fallibilism

My account of *Fürwahrhalten* here commits Kant to a sort of fallibilism about knowledge. There can be an instance of knowledge even though the judgement could be false (but only when I do not know it to be false).[28] By fallibilism, I do not mean the possibility of knowing falsely.[29] Judging in general aims for cognition and Kant's account of knowledge as *Fürwahrhalten* with individual conviction and public certainty is only justified as a pragmatic approximation to the ideal of cognition. Thus, when it turns out that an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* that was regarded as knowledge is false, we learn that it was not an instance of knowledge. However, Kant is a fallibilist in the sense that, in the absence of defeating evidence, we can regard instances of *Fürwahrhalten* that satisfy the conditions of individual conviction and public certainty as knowledge despite our inability to finally rule out their truth. Thus, Kant is an infallibilist about cognition but a fallibilist about knowledge.

Chignell argues that Kant is a fallibilist about objective grounds, which, on his reading,

[28] For a definition of fallibilism, see: Fantl and McGrath 2009, 6.
[29] See: Bricker 2022.

are a requirement of knowledge.[30] Other commentators disagree. For instance, Watkins and Willaschek argue that objectively sufficient grounds 'guarantee the truth of the judgement.'[31] Chignell's review of the textual evidence shows that there is support for both positions.[32] According to Chignell, the textual stalemate can be settled if the certainty entailed by objectively sufficient grounds is fallibilist. I generally agree with Chignell's proposal. The sort of certainty required for objective sufficiency is fallible. Chignell proposes four different ways in which Kantian certainty could be fallible. The proposal I have offered above fits Chignell's first proposal – 'communal certainty' – most closely.[33] Instead of discussing the details of Chignell's insightful discussion of certainty, I will now explain some ways in which the type of fallibilism I attribute to Kant differs from Chignell's proposal.

The version of fallibilism I propose here as a reading of Kant differs from Chignell's. In contrast to Chignell, I do not treat Kant's distinction of opining, believing, and knowing as a conceptual analysis of the justification conditions of the epistemic states of opinion, belief, and knowledge. Instead, I have argued that Kant is engaged in an entirely different project here. In his discussion of *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant does not develop a conceptual analysis of opinion, belief, and knowledge. Rather, he is interested in pragmatic rules that help us decide when we can categorise a given instance of *Fürwahrhalten* as an instance of opining, believing, or knowing. In other words, Chignell interprets the discussion of *Fürwahrhalten* as located in the Capacity Framework, whereas I see it as normatively at home in the Concrete Framework. And allowing the fallibility of knowledge-claims in the Concrete Framework does not imply that the epistemic concept (or the "capacity concept") of knowledge is fallibilist.

It is possible to have an infallible concept of knowledge in the Capacity Framework and to simultaneously have a fallibilist norm for knowing in the Concrete Framework. Let's assume knowledge requires truth. And let's assume further that, for many possible judgements, I am unable to finally establish their truth. An example would be Charles, who memorises all entries of a phone book, knowing that the book contains one error but not knowing which entry is false.[34] Does Charles know Hilda's phone number? On an assessment in the Capacity Framework, this depends, among other things, on whether I can know that Hilda's entry is not erroneous. In the Concrete Framwork, the assessment might be different. Here, we are interested in whether Charles can take himself to know Hilda's phone number. Given the low probability of error, we might be prepared to say that Charles knows Hilda's phone number even though he does not know that this entry is not erroneous (unless we have further evidence that this is the one error).

[30] Chignell 2021, 101.
[31] Willaschek and Watkins 2020, 3207.
[32] Chignell 2021, 101–7.
[33] Ibid., 111.
[34] Example taken from: Littlejohn 2015, 217.

An infallibilist account of knowing for *Fürwahrhalten* would be too demanding to be useful. It would mean that I could never regard myself as knowing anything just because there is an ineliminable risk, however small, that a judgement that commands individual conviction and universal certainty is still false. I could not regard myself as knowing that my car is parked in the garage because someone might have stolen it since I last saw it there two minutes ago.[35] With the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework, we are in a position to explain how I can regard myself as knowing something despite epistemic risks of this sort. Knowing as a concrete psychological phenomenon of *Fürwahrhalten* is to be distinguished from knowing as an epistemic concept. And they are governed by different, albeit related, epistemic normative frameworks.

So, I propose that Kant is an infallibilist about cognition but a fallibilist about knowledge. This type of infallibilism has some advantages over Chignell's. For instance, I do not have to discount textual evidence that seems to imply some commitment to infallibilism. We are capable of infallible judgement, i.e., cognition (within the limits of our cognitive capacities) in light of the principles of our cognitive capacities as such. But infallibility would be too demanding an epistemic norm for *Fürwahrhalten*. In concrete judging, we are fallible. Thus, the distinction between cognition and knowledge can account for both fallibilist and infallibilist commitments in Kant. Moreover, my proposal tracks Kant's reasons for a fallibilist account of knowing. It is only as a concrete phenomenon, i.e., in *Fürwahrhalten*, that subjective causes begin to play a role in Kant's epistemology. It is only these subjective causes that introduce the possibility of error. If we were to consider our cognitive capacities in abstraction from their concrete instantiation in an actual subject, these sources of error would disappear; our cognitions would be infallible.

Aside from accounting for the apparently conflicting pieces of textual evidence for and against fallibilism in Kant,[36] the present proposal should be independently attractive on philosophical grounds. There has been a long-standing debate between fallibilists and infallibilists about knowledge. Fallibilism holds that one can know something even if there remains some possibility that one might be wrong.[37] There is strong intuitive support for fallibilism. We are frequently prepared to ascribe knowledge to subjects even though it cannot be completely ruled out that they are mistaken.[38] One often knows something through memory even though one recognises that one's memory is fallible. Moreover, fallibilism is an attractive response to certain types of scepticism that exploit far-fetched scenarios that seem to threaten the very possibility of infallibilist knowledge. At the same time, there are strong intuitions to support the view that knowledge requires infallibility.[39] One way of dealing with this is to find an

[35] Dutant n.d.
[36] See: Chignell 2021, 101–7.
[37] Fantl and McGrath 2009, 6.
[38] E.g.: Cohen 1988, 91; Radford 1966, 1.
[39] For an overview, see: Dutant 2016, 149–51.

analysis of the concept of knowledge (be it fallibilist or infallibility) that can explain both intuitions.[40]

According to the proposal I suggest here, Kant is similarly able to deal with these conflicting intuitions. Kant can distinguish an epistemic *concept* of knowledge[41] in light of our cognitive capacities (Capacity Framework) from the epistemic *practice* of knowing (Concrete Framework). Kant uses the term *cognition* most frequently to talk about the epistemic concept of knowledge. Cognition is necessarily true and infallible because the Capacity Framework abstracts away the sources of error, i.e., the subjective causes of *Fürwahrhalten*. By contrast, the concept of *knowing* as an instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is fallible because subjective causes of *Fürwahrhalten* are always present, and it cannot be ruled out that there are no objective grounds. The best we can do to rule out error is to check for individual conviction and universal certainty. But these tests are imperfect. As a result, it is possible to know something according to the Concrete Framework, even though the possibility of error cannot be completely ruled out. At the same time, knowledge in the Capacity Framework, which Kant mostly refers to as cognition, is infallible.

This distinction between an infallible capacity concept of cognition and a fallible concrete concept of knowledge allows Kant to deal with different types of sceptical threats to our knowledge at different levels. Some types of scepticism are based on an attack on our capacity to know anything at all.[42] For instance, some radical versions of idealism exploit doubts about our capacity to infer from mental content to a non-mental reality. These sorts of scepticism have to be addressed at the capacity level. To successfully address this sort of scepticism, it is necessary to demonstrate the possibility of infallible knowledge in light of our cognitive capacities. Other types of scepticism exploit more mundane sources of possible error, such as non-zero chances of unreliable memory or testimony (e.g.: the telephone book or the parked car). These sources of possible error do not undercut our ability to know anything at all. Instead, they exploit possible sources of error that have to do with imperfections in our epistemic practices. According to Kant's model, these errors are possible because of the subjective causes of *Fürwahrhalten*. Therefore, these latter types of scepticism can be more effectively addressed with a fallibilist conception of concrete instances of knowing.

[40] E.g: ibid., 155.

[41] Here, I mean "knowledge" in a loose sense, encompassing cognition, knowledge, and contemporary conceptions of knowledge.

[42] See, e.g., Pryor's description of the classical Evil Demon scenario in his rebuke of skepticism: Pryor 2000, 522.

5.5 *Opining, Knowing and Believing* as Part of the Doctrine of Method

In this section, I will argue that my account of Kant's distinction between opining, believing, and knowing is more cogent than alternative interpretations in light of its function as part of the *Canon of Pure Reason*. My argument will build on recent work on the *Canon* by Lorenzo Mileti Nardo.[43] Two of Mileti Nardo's claims are particularly relevant. First, as a part of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, the *Canon* provides rules that fulfil the function of what prior to Kant used to be called *logica utens*.[44] Kant's rejection of the idea that logic can truly have a practical part in this sense suggests that the principles he discusses in the *Method* have a different normative status. I will argue that this implies a shift from the Capacity Framework in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements* to the Concrete Framework in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*

Peter Geach introduces his paper *On Teaching Logic* with an evocation of the old distinction between *logica utens* and *logica docens*:

> In medieval writers an important distinction was drawn between two applications of the term '*logica*': there was *logica utens*, the practice of thinking logically about this or that subject-matter, and there was *logica docens*, the construction of logical theory.[45]

Geach refers to this distinction to justify the value of *logica docens* by reference to its utility for *logica utens*: 'Now *logica utens*, as a matter of good habits of mind, needs to be backed up with a modicum of *logica docens* that the student has made his own.'[46] Mileti Nardo shows that this distinction was not only known to medieval writers; it traces back to ancient times and was also popular among 18$^{\text{th}}$ century German logicians.[47] The idea behind this distinction between *logica utens* and *logica docens* is that the discipline of logic covers all principles for using our cognitive powers to attain certain epistemic goals. For instance, Meier's *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* specifies largely practical principles to attain 'perfection' of one's 'erudite cognition (*gelehrte Erkenntnis*)' and there are several criteria of perfection, such as 'extensiveness,' 'truth,' 'clarity,' or 'certainty.'[48] According to this conception of the discipline of logic, a wide range of pragmatic rules for using one's cognitive powers in specific domains or sciences are a part of logic.

Kant came to disagree with this conception of logic.[49] For Kant, the domain of logic

[43] Mileti Nardo 2023.
[44] Ibid., 85–6, 91.
[45] Geach 1979, 5.
[46] Ibid., 6.
[47] Mileti Nardo 2023, 83; C.f.: Fabbrizi 2012.
[48] Meier 1752, 1, 6, 11, 23, 29, 42.
[49] Mileti Nardo 2023, 86.

is restricted to necessary and universal principles of thinking and, as a result, has no practical part.[50] Evidence for Kant's rejection of the division of logic in a theoretical and a practical part can be found, for instance, in the *Jäsche Logik*:

> Yet another division of logic is that between theoretical and practical logic. But this division is also incorrect. General logic, which, as a mere canon, abstracts from all objects, can have no practical part. This would be a *contradictio in adjecto*, because practical logic presupposes knowledge of a certain kind of object to which it is applied. We can therefore call every science a practical logic; for in each we must have a form of thought. General logic, considered as practical, can therefore be nothing more than a technique of scholarship in general, an organon of the school method. (*Logik Jäsche* IX:17-8)

Kant rejects the notion of a practical logic because it would conflict with the universality of general logic. For Kant, logic is the 'science *a priori* of the necessary laws of thought but not in view of particular objects but of all objects in general' (*Logik Jäsche* IX:16). But practical logic, i.e., specific rules for thinking about 'this or that subject-matter'[51] would depend on 'knowledge of a certain kind of object' for applying these rules.[52] Thus, the rules of practical logic would not be universal and, therefore, inconsistent with Kant's conception of general logic.

The *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* is Kant's alternative to a practical logic (See: *KrV* A708/B736).[53] The *Method* is supposed to pursue a similar project as the old *logica utens*. In light of Kant's rejection of the concept of *logica utens* as a domain of general logic, this leaves two options, as Gabriele Gava notes.[54] On the one hand, we could stay within the domain of logic, and thus retain a commitment to universality, but lose domain-specificity.[55] On the other hand, we could retain domain-specificity but lose universality; i.e., we would have a new discipline outside the sphere of general logic.[56] Gava calls this a '*particular* doctrine of method.'[57]Thus, there are two ways, in principle, in which the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* could be understood to supplant the earlier *logica utens*.

The *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* is a particular doctrine of method, i.e., it is outside the sphere of general logic and instead domain-specific.[58] In his introduction of this part of the first *Critique*, Kant says that it should 'achieve that in transcendental intention what, under the name of a practical logic [...] was sought for by the

[50]Ibid., 87.
[51]Geach 1979, 5.
[52]For a more detailed discussion of Kant's reasons for rejecting the notion of practical logic, see Gava's analysis, with which I agree: Gava 2023, 43–4.
[53]Mileti Nardo 2023, 91; Gava 2023, 46, 49.
[54]Gava 2023, 45.
[55]Ibid., 44.
[56]Ibid., 45.
[57]Ibid., 46.
[58]Gava 2023, 46, 49; See, also: Mileti Nardo 2023, 91–2.

schools but badly achieved' (*KrV* A708/B736). Kant leaves unexplained what exactly it was that was 'sought for by the schools.' However, given the general definition of *logica utens*, what was sought for must have something to do with rules for thinking about a specific domain or subject matter. Kant explains why practical logic failed as a domain of general logic:

> [B]ecause, since general logic is not restricted to a specific type of cognition of the understanding (*Verstandeserkenntnis*) (e.g., not to the pure), and also not to specific objects, it cannot do more, without borrowing cognitions from other sciences, than to propound titles for possible methods and technical terms that are used as principles for systematicity in particular sciences [...]. (*KrV* A708/B736)

Accordingly, practical logic fails as a domain of general logic because, as general logic, it could not restrict itself to specific types of objects or types of cognition.[59] Yet, precisely such object- or cognition-dependent rules are needed for the systematic structuring of particular sciences. Kant's aim in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* must thus be understood as contrasting with this approach. Here, Kant can restrict the scope of rules of thinking to specific types of cognitions (such as a priori cognitions) and to specific objects of cognition.[60] So, the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* contains the rules for thinking about a specific domain. These rules are not part of general logic; they are not universal and depend on the specific types and objects of cognition of the relevant domain.

I argue that the shift of scope from general logic to rules of thinking about a specific domain implies a shift from the Capacity Framework to the Concrete Framework. In the first part of the *Critique*, the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements*, Kant offers an account of our capacities for theoretical cognition in general. By contrast, the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* offers rules for thinking about specific kinds of cognitions. These rules are not justified merely by appeal to general features of our cognitive capacities. Rather, they are justified by the specific content of the relevant cognitions or judgements. That is, the content of the rules for thinking in the *Doctrine of Method* depends on the specific content of concrete cognitions and judgements.

There is also a second sense in which the *Doctrine of Method* shifts focus from a capacity-epistemology to the Concrete Framework. Rules for developing or furthering a particular science are rules of an epistemic practice rather than an analysis of epistemic capacities in abstraction from their concrete employment. The pursuit of knowledge in a science requires a cognitive effort by particular reasoners, involving social collaboration and concrete acts of judging. This is borne out in many passages in the *Doctrine of Method*, for instance in Kant's endorsement of freedom of thought and expression (*KrV* A752/B781) or his derision of historical cognition as a means

[59] See: Gava 2023, 44.
[60] Ibid., 49–50.

of acquiring genuine philosophical cognition (*KrV* A836/B864). Accordingly, in the *Doctrine of Method*, Kant engages in the epistemology of the Concrete Framework, specifying rules for concrete acts of judging for a concrete discipline or science.

It is not entirely clear for which precise domain or field of science the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* is supposed to provide rules for thinking. For ease of expression, I will write as if the *Doctrine of Method* provides the rules for pursuing *philosophy* as a science. However, my argument remains consistent with various alternative possible readings.[61]

Irrespective of questions about how precisely to circumscribe the types of cognitions and objects for which the *Method* is supposed to provide rules of thinking, it is clear that Kant thinks of them as forming a *science*. Kant's concept of a science is characterised by the notions of systematicity and systematic unity: 'systematic unity is that which first makes common cognition into a science' (*KrV* A832/B860). In an earlier part of the *Critique*, namely in the *Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic*, Kant already justified reason's use of certain rules or principles in efforts to systematise cognitions into a science (*KrV* A643/B671 ff.). There, Kant justifies reason's legitimate use of the principles of homogeneity, specification, and continuity (*KrV* A658/B686) as well as reason's regulative teleological employment of the ideas of soul, world and God to pursue the systematic unity required for science (*KrV* A674/B702, A682-6/B710-4).[62]

This raises the question of why Kant would need to specify further principles for attaining scientific unity and why he does so in a different and later part of the *Critique*, i.e., in the *Doctrine of Method*. Moreover, Kant's renewed discussion of the ideas of soul, world, and God in the *Canon* seems repetitive, in light of his earlier treatment in the *Appendix*. One possibility, as suggested by Frederick Rauscher, is that Kant 'offers a counterpart for practical reason of the regulative use of theoretical

[61] Five options stand out. First, the domain might be the cognitions established in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements*. This is a possible option in light of the *Critique's* structure. Second, the *Doctrine of Method* could be the 'method of metaphycis,' as Gava suggests based on an analysis of the specific contents discussed in each part of the *Method* (ibid., 51). Third, a version of the latter option would be to think of the *Doctrine of Elements* as concerned with the rules of philosophy proper, since in its fourth part, the *History of Pure Reason*, Kant calls metaphysics 'what we can call philosophy in the proper sense' (*KrV* A850/B878). Fourth, the domain could be judgements of pure reason. This seems plausible in light of the titles of each main section of the *Method*, which consists of the *Discipline*, the *Canon*, the *Architectonic*, and the *History* – all '*of Pure Reason*'. Mileti Nardo suggests this option, taking Kant's description as a 'complete system of pure reason' literally (*KrV* A707/B735) (Mileti Nardo 2023, 92). Fifth, Adrian Moore suggests that the *Method* is a methodological account about transcendental arguments (Moore 2010, 312). I find this last option somewhat implausible, given Kant's explicit statement in the *Discipline* that '[n]othing can be said here of the peculiar method of transcendental philosophy' (*KrV* A738/B766). In any case, I do not wish to settle this dispute here. It is not my present aim to offer an exhaustive interpretation of the *Doctrine of Method*. Moreover, it would take significant work even to just describe the precise differences between these five (and perhaps other potential) options. Instead of settling this debate on a general level, I will here rest content with considering some specific aspects of the *Doctrine of Method* to illustrate the normative shift from the Capacity Framework to the Concrete Framework.

[62] "Science" is here understood in a wide sense, rather than the narrow sense of proper natural science, i.e. physics. See: Breitenbach 2022, 37.

reason' in the *Canon*.[63] Accordingly, the ideas of soul, world, and God are here merely discussed in their function as principles for systematic unity of the science of morals, i.e., practical reason. I find this suggestion implausible. Neither the *Discipline*, nor the *Architectonic*, nor the *History* of pure reason have an exclusively practical focus. Why should only the *Canon of Pure Reason*, as the only main part of the *Method*, have an exclusively practical concern? Moreover, and as I will argue in greater detail below, the *Canon* is concerned with the 'theoretical use' (*KrV* A809/B838) of these ideas. Moreover, although Rauscher's suggestion might explain the repeated treatment of the ideas of soul, world, and God in the *Canon*, it cannot explain the renewed treatment of principles of systematicity of science in the *Doctrine of Method* more generally. Why do we need a further account of how to attain systematic cognition post-*Appendix*?

The distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework allows us to explain Kant's renewed elaboration on principles of attaining systematicity in science, after the *Appendix*. In the Appendix, Kant clarifies and justifies the principles of attaining systematicity and unity for any science purely by appealing to features of our cognitive capacities (and specifically by appealing to features of reason). Here, Kant is not concerned with any particular science or with the concrete use of reason. Subjective or psychological causes of error do not play a role here. Thus, the *Appendix* justifies reason's use of the concepts of soul, world, and God and the principles of homogeneity, specification, and continuity for the attainment of *any* science in light of the principles of our cognitive capacities in abstraction from their concrete employment.

By contrast, with the *Doctrine of Method*, Kant shifts his attention to attaining scientific unity for a concrete science. Here, further rules become necessary to guide our epistemic endeavours. These rules depend on the content of what is cognised in that science, and subjective and psychological causes of error cannot be ignored. For instance, in the first part of the *Discipline*, Kant argues that the 'mathematical method' will remain fruitless in philosophy (*KrV* A726/B754).[64] This claim depends on a comparative analysis of these specific types of cognitions. Kant then breaks this general claim down into specific practical rules for "doing philosophy:"

1. In philosophy, one cannot start from definitions (*KrV* A731/B759).
2. Axioms do not feature in philosophy (*KrV* A732/B760).
3. Demonstrations are likewise unattainable in philosophy (*KrV* A735/B763).

Thus, the upshot of the *Discipline of Pure Reason in Dogmatic Use* is that the methods and the terminology of mathematics should not be used in philosophy (*KrV* A735/B763). Kant's argument for this claim depends on a comparative analysis of the specific contents and nature of both mathematical and theoretical cognitions. The

[63] Rauscher 2010, 302.
[64] See: Chance 2015, 91.

main purpose of this section is thus to provide us with rules for practising philosophy, i.e., for concrete efforts at using reason to attain philosophical cognition.

In what sense do these rules of thinking help us attain the systematic unity required for a science? Kant's main concern here seems to be that we correctly categorise the epistemic status of our claims, propositions, and hypotheses when we engage in the practice of philosophy. Consider the following example, in which Kant applies the results of the first section of the *Discipline* to an example from the *Doctrine of Elements*:

> Thus, no one can thoroughly comprehend the proposition that everything that happens has its cause from these given concepts alone. Therefore, it is not a dogma, although in another point of view, namely the only field of its possible use, i.e. experience, it can be quite well and apodictically proved. But it is called a principle (*Grundsatz*) and not a doctrine (*Lehrsatz*), although it must be proved, because it has the special property that it makes its own ground for proof, namely experience, possible in the first place, and must always be presupposed in it. (*KrV* A737/B765)

Here, Kant clarifies, as an example, the epistemic status of the category of causality and its principle that all events have their cause. He argues that this principle is not a 'dogma' or 'doctrine.' Kant defines a dogma (or doctrine) as a 'direct-synthetic proposition from concepts' (*KrV* A736/B764). Kant argues that the categories do not match this description because although they constitute 'certain principles', they do not do this 'directly from concepts but always only indirectly through relations of these concepts to something completely arbitrary, namely possible experience' (*KrV* A736-7/B764-5). Unpacking all of this is beyond the scope of the present chapter. Nonetheless, this passage illustrates the sense in which Kant thinks the *Discipline* can contribute to the systematic unity of philosophy as a science: The *Discipline* here helps us to accurately categorise our philosophical judgements.

The categorisation of concrete philosophical propositions or judgements into various types helps with attaining systematic unity in at least two ways. First, for Kant, there is a difference between, for instance, a dogma and a principle. Being conscious of a specific proposition's or judgement's status as one or the other is important to avoid confusing them with each other. Second, avoiding confusion of this sort is also important for the practice of philosophizing. Confusion about the epistemic status of certain propositions or judgements could cause one to misuse them. For instance, one could be led to transcend the bounds of possible experience were one to mistake the category of causality for a dogma. As I will show below, the *Canon of Pure Reason* is similarly concerned with questions about the appropriate categorisation of certain concrete judgements. Categorising judgements into different types is thus one way in which the *Doctrine of Method* is supposed to aid with attaining systematic unity in a

concrete science.

Further passages of the *Discipline* contain rules for the concrete use of our cognitive powers even more evidently.[65] In his attack on the 'polemic use of pure reason' Kant argues that judgements of reason should not be defended against their 'dogmatic negation' (*KrV* A739/B767). For instance, this rule is directed against the argumentative strategy of defending the judgement that there is a God against the sceptic by arguing that the sceptic cannot show that there is no God (KrV A741-2/B769-70). This strategy is unsuitable *for pure reason* because the commitment to the judgement that there is a God is on similarly shaky ground (*KrV* A730/B778). Again, this rule seems to be motivated by the general aim of making progress in the relevant science. This progress requires a public arena of freedom of expression and speech (KrV A752/B780) but also restraint on behalf of participating reasoners to avoid mistaking the polemic, dogmatic, and sceptical uses of reason as methods for positively attaining new cognitions (KrV A756/B784). There can, however, be a legitimate negative use of the sceptical method (*KrV* A768/B796). Accordingly, Kant discusses the polemic, the dogmatic, and the sceptical uses of reason here as potential candidates for methods for using reason to attain new cognitions in philosophy. Kant chastises these methods as inadequate for enlarging the body of knowledge of the science whose rules of thinking are laid out in the *Method*.

To sum up, in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, Kant shifts his aims from the Capacity Framework to the Concrete Framework. Earlier, in the *Doctrine of Elements*, Kant's claims were based on an account of our cognitive capacities, conceived in abstraction from their concrete employment. In the *Dialectic*, this resulted in Kant's claim that reason cannot provide us with positive new knowledge that transcends the boundaries of possible experience, such as questions about God, world, the soul, and freedom. Moreover, in the *Appendix* to the *Dialectic* Kant showed that there is a certain legitimate and positive role for reason's ideas in guiding reason's activities towards the systematic unity required for a science. The *Transcendental Method* does not merely repeat or apply these claims that were already established in the *Doctrine of Elements*. Rather, Kant here shifts his focus to a different question. The *Doctrine of Elements* was concerned with the question of what cognitions reason can legitimately achieve, whereby reason is investigated as a capacity independent of its concrete application by human or human-like thinkers. By contrast, the *Doctrine of Method* is concerned with the question of what rules concrete human reasoners need to effectively pursue philosophy as a science, given the results of the *Doctrine of Elements*. That is, the *Doctrine of Method* is concerned with applied rules for thinking; it is Kant's guidebook for making progress in philosophy through rules of thought that help us avoid common mistakes that trap us, as concrete philosophers and thinkers, in pointless dialectical debates or unjustified claims to apparent knowledge.

[65] For an overview and more detailed discussion, see: Chance 2015, 91.

If my account of the *Method's* overall function here is accurate, this counts in favour of my interpretation of Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* and the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing. My account can explain, for instance, why Kant introduces his account of *Fürwahrhalten* only this late in the *Critique*. *Fürwahrhalten* is introduced only in the *Method* because it is the concept of concrete judgements, taking into account subjective causes of error. This only becomes relevant in the *Method* because it is there that Kant switches from the Capacity Framework to the Concrete Framework. The concept of *Fürwahrhalten* suits Kant's needs in the *Method* because it allows him to develop a set of epistemic norms that are specific to the epistemic practice of concrete reasoners. The *Dialectic* has already shown that reason will not get very far in its acquisition of new cognition in matters that transcend possible experience. Yet, this still leaves open the question of how to deal with reason's necessary ideas about God and immortality as a concrete reasoner. The *Method* has the aim of providing us with rules of thinking to use reason such that we can still progress with the relevant science, such as philosophy.

The *Canon*, as we will see shortly, addresses a particular stumbling block for the concrete use of reason here: even though I might know, from the *Dialectic*, that I cannot cognise God or immortality, these ideas are nonetheless necessary for me. This raises the problem, for me, as a concrete reasoner, of how to entertain these necessary judgements (there is a God; I am immortal) with the impossibility of cognising their objects. Kant's concept of *Fürwahrhalten* as the concept of a concrete judgement is applicable here because Kant is interested in the judgements that there is a God and that we are immortal as concrete judgements of particular reasoners in the *Canon*.

5.6 The Function of *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* in the *Canon*

I will now argue that the main task of the third section of the *Canon* is to show how the judgements that God exists and that we are immortal (henceforth: the *Canon Judgements*) merely amount to the status of belief, rather than knowledge, despite the necessity and universal certainty of both judgements.[66] What I will call the *Puzzle of the Canon*[67] is the question how it is possible for the *Canon Judgements* to be universally certain without counting as knowledge. I will argue that this problem only arises for Kant because the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing is drawn in terms of individual conviction and universal certainty rather than justification conditions. While my argument builds on Mileti Nardo's analysis of the role of *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing* in the *Canon*, I disagree with his view that this role could be fulfilled by the prevalent account of this distinction in terms of epistemic and

[66] Mileti Nardo 2023, 97–8.

[67] The puzzle I discuss here differs from Rosenkoetter's 'Canon Problem,' see: Rosenkoetter 2019; Schönecker, Buchenau and Hogan 2005, 1.

non-epistemic justification conditions of propositional attitudes.[68]

5.6.1 The Problem of the *Canon of Pure Reason*

The *Canon of Pure Reason* is the second main part of the *Doctrine of Method*. The prior *Discipline* specified rules of thinking to help us avoid transcending the boundaries of possible experience in our use of pure reason. So, the purpose of the *Discipline* was largely negative. Nonetheless, as Kant has shown in the *Dialectic* and its *Appendix*, certain experience-transcending concepts are nonetheless necessary for reason, namely those of freedom, immortality, and God (*KrV* A798/B826). The purpose of the *Canon* is to lay out rules for the proper use of these ideas (*KrV* A796/B824). In the first section of the *Canon*, Kant argues that a *Canon* is not necessary for the concept of freedom because 'practical freedom can be proven through experience,' so only the two latter ideas – God and immortality – remain as a topic for the *Canon* (*KrV* A802/B830).[69]

Initially, it may seem as though the *Canon* is exclusively concerned with rules for moral philosophy or for practical reason(ing).[70] In his introduction to the *Canon*, Kant argues that it will 'not concern the speculative but the practical use of reason' (*KrV* A797/B825). On this basis, it is tempting to think that the ideas of freedom, immortality, and God are here understood merely as practical ideas, in complete separation from speculative or theoretical reason. According to this picture, Kant divides our uses of reason into two domains, a practical and a theoretical domain. The theoretical domain denies the possibility of cognition for these ideas. The practical domain exploits this lack of theoretical knowledge, i.e., the room for faith. Practical reason can then allow us to have a practical belief in these ideas. Alas, the situation is more complex.

The specific question of the *Canon* is not how practical reason can help us entertain a practical idea of immortality or God. Instead, the question is whether and how practical reason can support a *theoretical* use of the ideas of immortality and of God. This becomes evident right at the beginning of the first section of the *Canon*. There, Kant reminds us that reason 'is driven by a natural tendency to transcend its empirical use' with the goal of 'finding a resting point in a systematic whole' (*KrV* A797/B825). This use of reason is clearly not a purely moral judgement. The notions of transcending the boundaries of possible experience and systematicity indicate that Kant here talks about theoretical judgements. In this section of the *Canon*, Kant then wants to clarify whether this 'tendency is grounded merely in its [reason's] speculative, or much rather simply and only on its practical interest' (*KrV* A797/B825). This shows that the ideas of God or immortality here are not thought of as practical concepts or judgements.

[68] Mileti Nardo 2023, 99.

[69] For discussions about the role of freedom in the *Canon*, see: Schönecker, Buchenau and Hogan 2005; Esteves 2014; Josifović 2015.

[70] This view is held, for instance, by: Rauscher 2010, 302.

Rather, Kant is concerned with the question of whether reason's 'natural tendency' to pursue cognition of these transcendent ideas is grounded in a theoretical or only a practical *interest*. Kant explicitly puts questions about the possible success of attaining theoretical judgements about these concepts aside and concerns himself only with these ideas in their function as ends for theoretical enquiry:

> I will now set aside the success that pure reason has with speculative intent, and ask only about those tasks whose resolution constitutes its ultimate end, whether it achieves it or not, and in view of which all others have merely the value of means. (*KrV* A797/B825)

Here, Kant explains that certain ideas constitute the 'ultimate end' of reason's use 'with speculative intent.' The ideas of freedom, God, and immortality are thus here discussed as teleological ideas that guide reason's speculative use. Kant then proceeds to argue that our 'speculative interest' in these ideas is 'only very low.' Thus, to make sense of Kant's argument here we must distinguish between, on the one hand, the speculative and the practical *interests* of reason and, on the other hand, the speculative and practical judgements that we are free, that we are immortal, and that there is a soul. Kant's problem in the *Canon* is to explain how reason's practical *interest* can support its teleological use of these ideas as ends of *theoretical* enquiry. The ideas of immortality and of God must somehow be entertained as speculative or theoretical judgements. They must be entertained as theoretical judgements as ideas of a systematic whole as a teleological end of speculative enquiry, even though this end cannot be attained. Although reason's use of these ideas results from a practical *interest*, they are here discussed in their teleological function for theoretical reason's speculative enquiries.

In the remainder of the first section of the *Canon*, Kant argues that practical freedom can be 'proved through experience' (*KrV* A802/B830). As a result, reason's practical interest in freedom can be satisfied without a canon *KrV* A803/B831). This suggests that a canon is only needed for ideas, concepts, or judgements that *cannot* be proved through experience or otherwise cognised. As a result, only rules for thinking about two questions remain as a topic for the *Canon:* 'is there a God? is there a future life?' (*KrV* A803/B831).

In the second section of the *Canon*, Kant shows that the ideas of God and immortality, though grounded in a practical interest, are necessary not only for the practical but also for the theoretical use of reason:

> I say, therefore, that just as the moral principles are necessary according to reason in its practical use, so it is also necessary for reason in its theoretical use to assume that everyone has cause to hope for happiness to the same extent that he has made himself worthy of it in his behaviour, and that therefore the system of morality is inseparably connected with that of

> happiness, but only in the idea of pure reason. (*KrV* A809/B837)

Here, Kant claims that his conception of the highest good (happiness in proportion to virtue) is necessary not only for reason in its practical use but 'also necessary for reason in its theoretical use.' According to Kant, immortality and the idea of a God who proportions happiness in accordance to virtue are necessary presuppositions for the possibility of this conception of the highest good (*KrV* A810-1/B838-9). The implication of this is that not only the practical but also the theoretical use of reason must *necessarily* judge that there is a God and that we are immortal. Although they are grounded only on a practical interest, they are also necessary for *theoretical* or *speculative* reason:

> But this systematic unity of ends in this world of minds, which, though, as mere nature, can only be called the world of the senses, yet, as a system of freedom, the intelligible, i.e. moral world (regnum gratiae), inevitably leads to the purposive unity of all things that make up this great whole, according to universal laws of nature, just as the former according to universal and necessary moral laws, and unites practical reason with speculative reason. [...] This gives all natural science a direction in the form of a system of ends [...]. (*KrV* A815-6/B843-4)

Kant here argues that reason's practical interest in the highest good necessitates theoretical reason to have a conception of the experienceable natural world as part of a larger whole, in which the highest good is furthered or possible even in light of the laws of nature. In other words, theoretical reason must think of the natural world as consistent with what our practical interest in the highest good requires. The 'world must be presented as originating from an idea' if it is to be consistent with the moral use of reason (*KrV* A815-6/B843-4). And it is only through this conception of a world in which the highest good is possible through immortality and God that 'natural science' is given 'a direction in the form of a system of ends.'

The judgements that there is a God and that we are immortal are thus also necessary for the systematicity of scientific pursuit. It is only on the basis of a conception of the world in which nature and morality are consistent that our practical interest can play its teleological role of guiding reason to further systematic enquiry into the natural world. This explains why Kant discusses these ideas in the first *Critique*: they are here discussed as necessary theoretical judgements.

The remaining problem for the *Canon* is to reconcile the following dilemma. On the one hand, our judgements that there is a God and that we are immortal are necessary not only as practical judgements but also as theoretical judgements. Scientific enquiry can only take place as the pursuit of an understanding of the world as a systematic whole if we judge, not only practically but also theoretically, that there is a God and that we are immortal. Yet, we *cannot cognise* that there is a God and that we are

immortal, as Kant argued earlier in the *Dialectic*. The problem for the *Canon* is to show how these theoretical judgements can be maintained *despite* their necessity for theoretical reason.

5.6.2 Kant's Solution to the Problem of the *Canon* in *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing*

With my interpretation of *Of Opining, Knowing, and Believing,* we can understand the function of this section as Kant's solution to the problem of the *Canon*. As I have argued, Kant must explain how we can entertain the judgements that there is a God and that we are immortal as theoretical judgements, despite the fact that these judgements are necessary for theoretical reason and Kant's prohibition on cognition of their respective objects. In contrast to a widespread interpretation, I argue that this problem is *not* simply resolved with Kant's introduction of the concept of a belief. According to Kant's general account of opining, believing, and knowing, it would seem as though the judgements that God exists and that we are immortal are instances of *knowledge*; their necessity makes them universally certain. It is only with Kant's distinction between logical and moral certainty at the end of the third section of the *Canon* that this problem is finally resolved.

Here is my general account of how Kant's argument in *Of Opining, Knowing, and Believing* solves the puzzle of the *Canon*. We can identify three steps in Kant's argument. In each step, Kant approximates a solution to the problem of the *Canon*, i.e., to the question of how it is possible for us to entertain the *Canon Judgements*. In the first step, Kant shows that the distinction between persuasion and conviction cannot be used to solve the *Canon Puzzle*. In the second step, Kant argues that the general distinction between opining, believing, and knowing also cannot be used to solve the *Canon Puzzle*. Finally, in step three, Kant argues that it is only with the introduction of the notion of *moral belief* that the *Canon Puzzle* can be resolved. I will now explain each step in turn.

First, the distinction between persuasion and conviction cannot be used to solve the puzzle of the *Canon*. This distinction cannot be used because we can neither positively establish that the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife are persuasions, nor that it is a conviction. Kant's definition of a persuasion is that it must have its ground 'in the particular constitution of the subject' (*KrV* A820/B848). This is not the case for the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife. These judgements have their ground in reason's practical interest, which is the same *for all subjects*, not just for a particular subject. Moreover, since we can never positively confirm that a judgement is a conviction (given our fallibility), we can also not regard these judgements as convictions. Therefore, the conviction-persuasion distinction cannot be used to solve the problem of the *Canon*.

Second, the general distinction between opining, believing, and knowing cannot be used to solve the puzzle of the *Canon*. As I have argued above, Kant generally distinguishes opining, believing, and knowing by appeal to the conditions of individual conviction and universal certainty. Without further qualification, this general account would classify the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife as knowledge. After all, these judgements are universal and necessary, and thus certain, for every reason. Yet, Kant is adamant that in 'the transcendental use of reason [...] opining is too little, but knowing also too much.'

Third, it is only with the introduction of the notion of moral belief and its corresponding distinction of moral from logical certainty that the problem of the *Canon* can be resolved. Moral belief is a special case of belief, for Kant. In moral belief, we are absolutely certain and necessary (*KrV* A828/B856). Yet, this certainty is different in kind from the certainty in non-moral judgements. And moral certainty, although it is universal and necessary, is not an infallible indicator of truth. Recall that universal certainty was only introduced as a condition for knowledge because it is a fallible but relatively reliable indicator of the truth of a judgement. Kant clarifies that this is not the case for certainty that ultimately rests on one's 'moral disposition (*moralische Gesinnung*)' (*KrV* A829/B857). Thus, in the case of judgements that ultimately have a practical basis, such as reason's practical interest, the relevant instances of *Fürwahrhalten* are merely beliefs, rather than knowledge, despite their certainty and universality.

I have already discussed the contents of the first two steps of this argument at length above. Thus, I will now only develop the third step of Kant's argument in *Of Opining, Knowing and Believing*, which stretches roughly from after Kant's initial introduction of the distinction between opining, believing and knowing until the end of the section.

Importantly, my reading of Kant's distinction between opining, believing, and knowing can explain why these passages after the opining-believing-knowing distinction exist at all. For rival accounts to my interpretation, the problem of the *Canon* could be solved immediately: Kant could simply state that the judgements that there is a god and that we are immortal do not have sufficient objective grounds. After all, these judgements are not based on cognitions of these objects but on our practical needs. Yet, the discussion we find paints a more complex picture. Specifically, Kant's discussion is driven by the problem that it is not clear why the judgements that there is a god and that we are immortal are not instances of knowledge, given that they are universally certain.

The General Distinction between *Opining, Believing, and Knowing* Cannot Be Used to Solve the Problem of the Canon

Immediately after introducing the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing, Kant argues that - in general - one is not allowed to opine 'without at least knowing something' (*KrV* A822/B851). This general rule is then narrowed for the case of judgements of pure reason: 'In judgements from pure reason it is not at all allowed to opine' (*KrV* A822/B850). This further restriction is relevant for the context of the *Canon* because the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife *are* judgements of pure reason. So, these judgements cannot be held as a matter of opining. Even more important than this clarification that the judgements cannot amount to mere opining, is Kant's explanation for why this is so:

> For, because they are not based on empirical grounds, but everything must be cognised a priori, where everything is necessary, so the principle of connection requires universality and necessity, and **thus complete certainty**, since otherwise no guidance to truth can be encountered. (*KrV* A823/B851, my bold emphasis.)

Accordingly, judgements from pure reason are only legitimate when they have universality and necessity and are thus *completely certain*. If my reading above is correct, this means that in judgements of pure reason, *only knowledge* is allowed (given that an objectively sufficient judgement is *certain*). Kant exemplifies this with judgements in mathematics and in the 'principles of morality (*Grundsätzen der Sittlichkeit*)': one 'must know' in both types of judgements (*KrV* A823/B851). But this introduces a problem: We *must know* in judgements of pure reason, because such judgements must be *certain*. But the *Canon Judgements* are judgements of pure reason. So, it seems as though these judgements are completely illegitimate: we can neither opine, nor believe, nor know that God exists and that we are immortal. A few lines later Kant reiterates this apparent conclusion:

> In the transcendental use of reason, opining is of course too little, but knowing is also too much. In merely **speculative regard, we therefore cannot judge here at all**; since subjective grounds of *Fürwahrhalten*, like those, that can effect believing, do not deserve approval, since they do not hold up in the absence of empirical aid, nor can they be communicated to others in equal measure. (*KrV* A823/B851, my bold emphasis)

Accordingly, the *Canon Puzzle* cannot be solved merely by applying the definitions of opining, believing, and knowing. The Canon judgements *are* theoretical judgements. Were the EJR correct, the Puzzle of the Canon would be solved too soon, as we could already explain why the Canon judgements are not knowledge. By contrast, if we follow the dialectic of Kant's argument, the Canon Puzzle is still quite puzzling at this point. Judgements of pure reason require absolute certainty. The Canon

judgements are judgements of pure reason. They are also *absolutely certain*, universal, and necessary. So, it still seems like they are knowledge. But in this theoretical use of pure reason, we cannot allow knowledge; it thus seems as though 'we cannot judge here at all.' So, it is still unclear how we can account for the Canon judgements.

Pragmatic Belief and Ethical Belief

With the examples of *pragmatic belief* and *ethical belief*, Kant introduces a *new* category of beliefs that differs from the earlier account in terms of subjectively sufficient *Fürwahrhalten*. After having shown that we cannot easily account for the Canon judgements with the existing definitions of opining, believing, and knowing, Kant introduces an additional type of *believing*: believing 'in merely practical relation' (*KrV* A823/B851). When an agent has a practical end, it can be necessary to judge that something is the case in order to attain this end. When the end itself is not necessary, it is an end of *skill*. When the end is necessary, as a practical end, it is an end of *morality*. Correspondingly, there can be *pragmatic belief* or *ethical belief*. Importantly, ethical and moral believing *differs* from the standard model of *believing* as subjectively sufficient *Fürwahrhalten*, i.e., as requiring individual conviction. We can also ethically and morally believe in instances of *Fürwahrhalten* of which we are *not convinced*, i.e., in instances that are *not* subjectively sufficient. This becomes clear when we consider Kant's example of *pragmatic belief*:

> A physician must do something for a patient who is in danger but does not know the illness. He considers the symptoms and judges, because he does not know anything better, it is consumption. Even according to his own judgement, his belief is merely contingent; another [physician] might form a better judgement. (*KrV* A824/B852)

As this example illustrates, Kant's discussion of ethical and practical believing serves the purpose of introducing a *new and additional* model of believing. These types of believing allow for cases of believing where the judgement is *not even* subjectively sufficient. The physician himself judges that he does not know. That is, the physician is *not even convinced* of his judgement. The pragmatic belief falls short of the standard of subjective conviction. This complication is typically overlooked in the secondary literature. Most commentators take Kant's discussion of pragmatic and moral believing as providing an analysis of different sorts of subjective sufficiency. But I argue that this reading is implausible, as Kant himself clarifies here that the judgement is not even sufficient for the standards of the physician. At best, as Kant says, the judgement is 'only comparatively sufficient, when I do not know any other condition, under which the end can be attained' (*KrV* A823-4/B851-2). Accordingly, Kant introduces the notion of comparative subjective sufficiency to allow believing in cases that fall short of proper subjective sufficiency, which requires subjective *conviction*.

Doctrinal Belief

One might wonder why Kant interjects this discussion of pragmatic and ethical believing at all. As we have seen, the problem of the *Canon* concerns theoretical judgements. Pragmatic and ethical believing, by contrast, are only permitted 'in practical relation' (*KrV* A823/B851). The interjection makes sense, however, if we understand it as an illustration of *exceptions* to the rigid account of opining, believing, and knowing introduced earlier. The exception illustrates that it is possible to believe in some judgements even when those judgements are not subjectively sufficient. That Kant introduces pragmatic and ethical believing for this purpose is also suggested by his next move, in which he returns again to *theoretical judgements*:

> However, although we cannot undertake anything in relation to an object, and the *Fürwahrhalten* is thus merely theoretical, we can in many cases think of an undertaking, for which we suppose to have sufficient grounds, and imagine to ascertain the certainty of a matter, so there exists in merely theoretical judgements an analogon of practical [judgements], to which [cases of] *Fürwahrhalten* the term believing is befitting, and which we can call doctrinal believing. (*KrV* A825/B853)

In this passage, Kant turns his attention again to *theoretical* judgements and thus to the Puzzle of the Canon. The passage introduces the new notion of *doctrinal believing*, which concerns explicitly *theoretical judgements*. According to Kant, doctrinal belief is analogous to practical belief. But analogous in what sense? Chignell thinks that the analogy consists in the presence of a practical necessity that forces me to form a firm commitment that goes beyond mere opinion.[71] For instance, he characterises Kant's example of doctrinal belief, where Kant would bet all his possessions on the existence of aliens, as an instance of 'forced betting.'[72] This view of the analogy strikes me as mistaken for two reasons. First, it is unclear why such cases would not already be covered by pragmatic belief. Second, Kant's example is not actually an instance of forced betting (and thus *contrasts* with the earlier case of forced betting, which was used to illustrate *pragmatic* belief):

> Were it possible to ascertain [the truth of this judgement] through any experience, then I would bet everything I have on the claim that there are inhabitants on at least one of the planets that we see. Therefore I say that it is not merely opinion but strong belief (on whose accuracy I would wager many advantages in life) that there are inhabitants in other worlds. (*KrV* A825/B853)

No one forces Kant to make this bet in this example and there is no indication that he would bet 'all his possessions' and 'many advantages in life' on this claim only if

[71] Chignell 2007a, 345.
[72] Ibid., 346.

he were forced to do so. Thus, contra Chignell, there is an important disanalogy to the cases of pragmatic and ethical believing: doctrinal believing is *not* occasioned by some practical necessity. Instead of being grounded in *practical necessity*, the reason why Kant would bet everything on this claim is that he is *so convinced* that there is extraterrestrial life! For Kant, it seems that this judgement *must be true*, and it is as a result of this strong conviction that it cannot be a mere opinion.

Accordingly, by doctrinal belief, Kant means instances of *Fürwahrhalten* in theoretical judgements that satisfy the condition of (very strong) individual conviction but for which the evidence that would be required for universal certainty is (as of yet) unattainable. Can this concept of a belief be used to solve the problem of the *Canon*?

Kant argues that the 'doctrine of the existence of god' is *also* a doctrinal belief. Kant argues that the evidential 'teleological unity' of nature provides us with sufficient evidence to have a doctrinal belief in God (*KrV* A826/B854). However, this concept of a belief is still inconsistent with universal *certainty*. While there can be a strong, widespread, or even universal individual conviction, the concept of doctrinal belief is still inconsistent with universally certain and necessary judgements. So, although there is *also* a doctrinal belief in God, this concept cannot offer us a solution to the problem of the *Canon*.

Moral Belief

The problem of the *Canon* is only solved with Kant's introduction of the notion of *moral belief* (*KrV* A828/B856). In contrast to other types of belief, moral belief is consistent with universal certainty and necessity.[73] It is possible to consistently entertain the judgements that there is a God and that we are immortal because these judgements are moral beliefs. They are moral beliefs because their certainty is merely a moral, rather than a logical certainty (*KrV* A829/B857).

Upon introducing the notion of a moral belief, Kant emphasises that it comes with absolute certainty:

> The end is here determined unavoidably, and according to my insight there is only one condition possible, under which this end coheres with the entirety of all ends, and therefore has practical validity, namely, that a god and a future world exist: I also **know with complete certainty** that no one else is acquainted with different conditions, which lead to the same unity of purposes under the moral law. But because the ethical precept

[73] I thus agree with Mileti Nardo that 'Kant's general definition of Belief cannot account for the necessity' and certainty of the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife. Thus, the function of the remainder of the third section of the *Canon* is to explain how these two judgements can be universally certain despite not counting as knowledge. I therefore generally agree with Mileti Nardo's account of the function of the third section of the *Canon*. I disagree, however, with Mileti Nardo's endorsement of the propositional attitude reading and of the justification reading of opining, believing, and knowing. See: Mileti Nardo 2023, 100.

> is at the same time my maxim (as reason commands that it shall be), so I shall inevitably believie in God's existence and a future life, and I **am certain** that nothing can shake this belief [...]. (*KrV* A828/B856, my bold emphases.)

Accordingly, *complete certainty* attaches to the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife, at least when these judgements are considered from their theoretical side. And this certainty requires explanation, since it will be universal (everyone is bound by the moral law). So, moral belief is analogous to ethical belief: whereas ethical belief lacks even conviction (and thus falls short of ordinary belief), moral belief *overshoots* the mark and is so certain that it seems as though it should count as knowledge. It is thus unsurprising that Kant next explains why moral belief is *not knowledge*:

> Although of course no one will be able to pride themselves: he knows that there is a God and a future life; for, if he knows that, he is just the man whom I have sought for so long. All knowing (if it concerns an object of mere reason) can be communicated, and I would therefore also be able to hope to see my knowledge enlarged through his instruction in such admirable measure. No, the conviction is not logical but moral certainty, and, since it rests on subjective grounds (the moral attitude), so I must not even say: it is morally certain that God exists etc., but, I am morally certain etc. (*KrV* A829/B857)

In this passage, Kant explains why the moral judgements of reason that God exists and that there is an afterlife fall short of constituting knowledge not because they are less certain than instances of knowing but because the *certainty* is different in kind. Kant distinguishes *logical certainty* from *moral certainty* and argues that the latter does not suffice for knowledge. The context introduces *communicability* as a criterion for knowing. This makes sense if we understand the criterion of *universal certainty* as referring to the public use of reason, as per my interpretation of Kantian knowing above. Knowing requires universal certainty in a way that requires the possibility to meaningfully discuss the judgement in public discourse. Normally, universal certainty is an indicator that a judgement has been successfully established through the public use of reason. The universal certainty that attaches to the moral beliefs in God and immortality, however, is an exception. In this case, certainty results from thoroughly 'subjective grounds,' albeit subjective grounds that everyone shares.

Why are the grounds of moral certainty incommunicable? On the face of it, it seems as though they should be communicable. Does the *Canon* not consist precisely in an argument to the effect that the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife are necessary and certain? I think this objection can only be addressed if we understand Kant as merely verbalising a judgement that reason makes in any case.

That is, the incommunicability does not concern the effability of moral grounds.[74] The grounds of moral certainty are communicable. But communicating these grounds in the sense of verbalising them will not *convince* people. This is because certainty presupposes a moral disposition.[75] It is only because *we are* moral that we are certain of these judgements. And Kant does not take himself to convince us to *be moral*. Kant's concluding remarks in the *Canon* support this view:

> Is this all, some will say, that pure reason accomplishes in opening views beyond the bounds of experience? nothing more than two items of belief? even the most common understanding could have accomplished as much, without consulting the philosophers for this! (*KrV* A830-1/B858-9)

Moral belief is, therefore, not based on incommunicable grounds in the sense that we cannot give reasons or that our reasons have nothing to do with the objects of belief. Rather, moral belief is merely belief - and not knowledge - because the certainty we have in those judgements depends on a moral disposition, which is not justified or established by a communicable argument. Morality itself is ultimately beyond philosophical grounding; and so its necessary presuppositions - God and immortality as conditions of the highest good - beyond the reach of knowledge.

Summing Up

If my reading of Kant's argument in the *Canon* is correct, Kant can conclude the *Canon* with the notion of moral belief. Moral belief constitutes an exception to the general distinction between believing, opining, and knowing. On this general distinction, it would seem as though reason's theoretical judgements (based on a practical interest) that God exists and that there is an afterlife constitute knowledge because they are universally certain. This would seem to conflict with Kant's denial, earlier in the *Critique*, that we can cognise these objects. After all, the condition of universal certainty for knowledge is justified because it constitutes strong evidence for the truth of a judgement. Thus, Kant needs to explain why, in the case of the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife, universal certainty is not a sufficient condition for regarding these instances of *Fürwahrhalten* as knowledge. Kant can explain this exception by distinguishing moral from logical certainty. Moral certainty, which is universal and necessary, does not reliably indicate the truth of the cognition. Instead, it only reliably indicates the presence of a moral disposition. This presence of a moral disposition must be taken for granted and is noncommunicable; it, therefore, does not support claims of knowledge.

[74] Recall my account of the communicability test for persuasion above, according to which communicability for Kant requires that I be able to *convince* someone of my judgement. In a similar vein, Jens Timmermann has argued that, for Kant, communicability means something like '*impartibility*:' Timmermann 2018, 685.

[75] Ware offers an analysis of Kant's ethical works to show that Kant did not take his job as a moral philosopher to consist in addressing the radical moral sceptic: Ware 2021, 16 ff., 52–7.

My account can explain why Kant devotes so much more space to this discussion after initially introducing the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing. Were this distinction drawn directly in terms of the presence or absence of sufficient objective or subjective grounds, this lengthy discussion would serve no purpose in the *Canon*. Kant could settle the problem of the *Canon* straight away by arguing that the grounds of the judgements that there is a God and that there is an afterlife are not objectively sufficient. That Kant instead focuses on the fact that these judgements are nonetheless certain and that he explains why they can be instances of beliefs rather than knowledge despite their certainty constitutes evidence for my interpretation of opining, believing, and knowing in terms of individual conviction and universal certainty.

This reconstruction of Kant's argument in the third section of the *Canon* contrasts with Chignell's interpretation of the role of Kant's discussion of moral belief in the following way. Chignell takes it to be obvious that the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife are not instances of knowledge because they fail the condition of objective sufficiency.[76] Kant's argument is then understood as a justification for why we may have a moral belief in God and in the afterlife.[77] Yet, as I have shown, Kant already argues that we do and must judge that God exists and that there is an afterlife in the prior second section of the *Canon*. Thus, what remains to be explained in the third section is not that and why we take it to be true that there is a God and an afterlife but why these judgements do not amount to knowledge, despite their universal certainty.[78]

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have challenged the dominant account of Kant's taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten* as defined through conditions of epistemic justification. I have argued that the distinction between opinion, belief, and knowledge is not a matter of the strength of the justification of an instance of *Fürwahrhalten*. Instead, the distinction is drawn on the basis of the strength of the factual acceptance of the judgement. This factual acceptance can be on the individual level, which Kant calls individual conviction. Or it can be public, in which case it is universal certainty. The distinction thus reflects factual levels of acceptance of a judgement. The purpose of the taxonomy of opining, believing, and knowing is to account for different levels of acceptance of judgements, which indirectly indicate the probable strength of their grounds. If this account is correct, then Kant's taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten* is not an account of

[76] Chignell 2007a, 359.
[77] Ibid., 356.
[78] Mileti Nardo's contextual analysis of the role of the third section of the *Canon* comes to the same conclusion about the purpose of Kant's introduction of the concept of moral belief as I do here, i.e., that it is Kant's aim to explain how *Fürwahrhalten* can be universally certain and yet not knowledge: Mileti Nardo 2023, 100.

epistemic achievements through justification conditions but an account of phenomenal features of concrete judgements that characterise opinion, belief, and knowledge.

In all three types of *Fürwahrhalten*, we take something to be true. Kant's point is that it makes a difference whether something is taken to be true with or without individual conviction or universal certainty. Universal certainty is a strong indicator that the judgement is probably true so that it may be regarded as knowledge. Judgements that lack such universal certainty but of which we are nonetheless (for whatever reason) individually convinced are beliefs because they can support decisive action that relies on a commitment to the truth of the judgement. Most instances of *Fürwahrhalten* will fail to meet either condition, and we must regard them as opinions: judgments that do not meet the standards necessary for belief or knowledge.[79]

Kant's taxonomy of opinion, belief, and knowledge aims to provide us with criteria to categorise concrete judgements, i.e., instances of Fürwahrhalten reliably. This focus on concrete judgements is necessitated by the overall function of the *Doctrine of Method*, which is to provide rules for thinking to help us achieve systematic progress in a science (such as metaphysics or philosophy). The *Method* thus specifies rules for the concrete practice of using pure reason in philosophy. These rules depend on the concrete content of (possible) cognitions in philosophy and must take into account possible causes of error that cannot be ruled out in the concrete use of our cognitive powers. This implies that we must take account of our fallibility and that a useful taxonomy for structuring our judgements cannot appeal to conditions beyond our epistemic reach.

Distinguishing opinion, belief, and knowledge by appeal to the quality of the epistemic or non-epistemic justification of our judgements would be unsuitable for Kant's purposes as we might not be (able to be) aware of the quality of the justification of our judgements. You might think that you judge X to be the case based on objective grounds. Yet, your judgement might be caused by subjective grounds. Were opinion, belief, and knowledge directly defined in terms of justification conditions, we would not be able to tell whether a given instance of *Fürwahrhalten* is an opinion, a belief, or knowledge.

Kant's distinction between opinion, belief, and knowledge through individual conviction and universal certainty constitutes a pragmatically useful alternative to a distinction in terms of justification conditions. We can tell whether we are individually convinced, for instance, by testing whether we would place a high-stakes bet on its truth. We can also check for universal certainty by engaging in public reasoning. The conditions of

[79] As Lawrence Pasternack shows, Kant's concept of knowledge is very demanding, and most of our instances of *Fürwahrhalten* are opinions. My reading of knowledge differs from Pasternack's. For instance, I disagree with Pasternack's infallibilism about Kantian knowledge, which is based in a reading of certainty as a logical criterion. However, I agree with the general point that even non-logical certainty in the sense of universal agreement is very demanding, such that most of our concrete judgements are mere opinions. See: Pasternack 2014a, 53, 55–9.

individual conviction and universal certainty thus allow us to categorise our judgements into opinions, beliefs, and knowledge despite our inability to eliminate subjective causes of error. The purpose of this taxonomy is thus to enable us to bring systematic order into our concrete judgements in pursuing philosophy (or whatever else concerns the *Method*) as a science.

The *Canon* introduces the distinction between opining, believing, and knowing to address the problem of how we can categorise our judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife. It would be inaccurate to categorise them as knowledge since the condition of universal certainty is only justified as an indirect indicator that the relevant judgement is probably true. After all, the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife, though theoretical, are only based on a practical interest – not on grounds that have to do with the objects of these judgements. Yet, universal certainty attaches to these judgements because the practical interest is a necessary feature of pure (practical) reason. Thus, in accordance with Kant's general distinction between opinion, belief, and knowledge, it would seem as though the judgements that God exists and that there is an afterlife are instances of knowledge. To avoid this problem, Kant clarifies that these two judgements are a special case. Their certainty is universal but this certainty is moral and not logical. Moral certainty, however, only indicates a subjective ground of a judgement. This contrasts with ordinary cases of universal certainty, which indicate an objective ground. The problem of the *Canon* is thus resolved by introducing the concept of a moral belief for instances of *Fürwahrhalten* of which we are individually convinced, and that are universally – but only morally – certain.

Chapter 6

Objective Reality

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I argued that objective reality is the success standard a judgement has to meet to count as a cognition. The epistemic norms of Kant's taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten* – opining, believing, and knowing – are also ultimately motivated by this conception of a successful judgement, that is, cognition. To fully appreciate the meaning of Kant's conceptual repertoire in epistemology, we thus need a deeper understanding of his concept of objective reality. In this chapter, I will first explain why the concept of objective reality poses a problem, given Kant's wider systematic commitments. Then, I will suggest one possible solution: Kant's requirements can be met by a nomic account of objective reality, according to which a judgement has objective reality when it corresponds to the relevant applicable laws.

My argument will take the following form. I will first establish a few desiderata for an account of objective reality. Two criteria are particularly significant. First, I will argue that objective reality cannot be identified with either empirical reality (the reality of appearances) or absolute reality (the reality of things in themselves). Instead, as I will argue in Section 6.2, an account of objective reality must be "ecumenical" in the sense of applying to both empirical and absolute reality. Second, objective reality is a condition not only for theoretical but also for practical cognition. I will therefore argue in Section 6.3 that an account of objective reality must remain domain neutral, in the sense of being able to function as a success criterion for both theoretical and practical cognition.

With these positive desiderata for an account of objective reality in mind, I will survey existing proposals for readings of objective reality in Section 6.4. This survey will show that existing accounts face a trilemma: they are either too realist, too idealist, or too empty (in content). I will consider four accounts of objective reality: the Reference

Reading, the Truth Reading, the Actuality Reading, and the Real Possibility Reading. Although each of them has some textual evidence going for it, they ultimately fall into the trap of the trilemma. Thus, no existing reading can fully satisfy the requirements of an account of objective reality as a success standard for cognition. Moreover, given the difficulty of escaping the trilemma, it might be useful to find an alternative conception of objective reality.

In Section 6.5, I propose a new account of objective reality. I will argue that objective reality can be understood as a nomic concept. Accordingly, objective reality is the criterion that a judgement conform to relevant applicable laws. Because the concept of a law can perform a similar function as the concept of a mind-independent object as a check on the objectivity of cognition, this option should be prima facie attractive. Nomic objective reality combines the advantages of a non-metaphysical success criterion for cognition with a suitable sense of mind-independence. Moreover, a nomic account of objective reality can satisfy the desiderata of ecumenicality (Section 6.2) and domain neutrality (Section 6.3), whilst avoiding the trilemma of metaphysical accounts of objective reality (Section 6.4). Thus, a nomic account of objective reality should be a promising alternative candidate for an account of *the* central success criterion of Kantian cognition.

While I hope to show that nomic objective reality is a plausible alternative to existing proposals, it is not at this stage fully developed and requires considerably more work. The proposal of a nomic concept of objective reality should thus be seen as an idea of one imaginable way of addressing some of the problems that I think beset currently available accounts. Fully developing this idea will take more space and capacity than I can devote here. Nonetheless, I hope to be able to show that it is an idea that merits further attention.

6.2 The Ecumenical Concept of Objective Reality

Kant uses the concepts of objective reality and objective validity[1] right from the beginning of the first *Critique*, in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, in passages that aim to clarify his transcendental idealist position. Kant introduces several concepts, none of which are explicitly defined, to explain how his claims about the apriority of space and time should be understood. These concepts include several contrasts, such as those between reality versus ideality, empiricality versus transcendentality, and absolute versus transcendental versus empirical reality (*KrV* A28/B44, A35-6/B52, A37/B54, B70).

[1]Whether objective reality and objective validity are synonymous is contentious and there are various accounts of their respective relation. At *KrV* A28/B44, Kant seems to associate objective validity with reality. There are other passages, which suggest instead an association of objective validity with truth (e.g.: *KrV* A211/B256). For dedicated studies, see: (Meerbote 1972; Bunch 2010). I will largely bracket this question here and instead focus only on the concept of objective reality, leaving open its relation to the concept of objective validity.

With regard to space, Kant clarifies that his position entails its simultaneous reality and ideality (*KrV* A28/B44).[2] Space has reality only in the sense of *empirical reality*, i.e., 'in light of all that which we can externally encounter as an object' (*KrV* A28/B44). By contrast, 'without taking into account the nature of our sensibility,' space is *transcendentally ideal*. Space, therefore, has reality but not transcendental reality, i.e., not reality 'as something that lies at the ground of the things in themselves' (KrV A28/B44). The reality of space is thus not a reality of things in themselves. This remains true for Kant's usage of objective reality, a term not yet introduced at this stage of the *Critique*. We cannot conceive of the objective reality that functions as a success criterion for cognition as the reality of a mind-independent world of things out there, due to Kant's prohibition on the possibility of cognising things in themselves.

In his discussion of time, Kant introduces the concept of *absolute reality* as the concept of a reality that attaches to things in themselves (*KrV* A35/B52). This concept is used to distinguish two possible meanings of the concept of objective reality.[3] On the one hand, objective reality can be understood as absolute reality, i.e., as the reality of a thing in itself. Taken in this sense, time does not have objective reality. On the other hand, objective reality can be understood as (merely) empirical reality, in which case time is objectively real. Accordingly, Kant again denies that time has absolute or transcendental reality. Time 'has' objective reality only in the sense of empirical reality (*KrV* A35-6/B52-3). So, again, objective reality for Kant cannot take the meaning of transcendental or absolute reality.

Kant's usage of the concept of objective reality in the *Aesthetic* shows that he assumes a more general meaning of objective reality that can be realised in different ways.[4] Things in themselves can have objective reality. Kant describes this as *absolute* reality. Of course, we cannot cognise things in themselves. We can cognise appearances. And appearances have objective reality not in the sense of absolute reality but in the sense of *empirical* reality. Given that both absolute and empirical reality are types of objective reality, there must be a more general meaning of the concept of objective reality. This more general sense of objective reality must explain why we can regard both absolute and empirical reality as types of objective reality.

Casting both absolute reality and empirical reality as types of objective reality has an important function for Kant.[5] Recall from Chapter 1 the problem of the objectivity of knowledge for transcendental idealism. On a commonsensical account of knowledge, our knowledge is objective because it matches the "world out there." This world is normally thought of as mind-independent. This picture permits of a very simple criterion for the objectivity of knowledge: our knowledge is objective only if it corresponds to

[2] My analysis in this and the next paragraph is indebted to Günter Zöller's detailed study of Kant's usage of objective reality and objective validity: Zöller 1984.
[3] Ibid., 52.
[4] Ibid., 49.
[5] From here, I depart from Zöller.

or matches the world out there. Because the world out there is thought to remain the same regardless of our mental states, the world itself functions as a standard of objectivity for knowledge. In other words, the objectivity of commonsensical knowledge is anchored in what Kant would call absolute reality. And this view of knowledge is what Kant describes as transcendental realism (*KrV* A369). Thus, I argue that Kant's description of both absolute reality and empirical reality as two types of objective reality is intended to express the idea that empirical reality is as epistemically valuable as absolute reality (at least for our purposes).

So, the function of Kant's concept of objective reality is to provide us with an epistemic success criterion that explains why cognition is equally epistemically valuable on Kant's account as on rival transcendental realist accounts. This has important implications for our analysis of Kant's concept of objective reality. On the one hand, we cannot interpret objective reality as the reality of a mind-independent world out there that functions as a completely cognition-independent "check" of objectivity for cognition. On the other hand, we cannot straightforwardly identify objective reality with empirical reality, as we would then fail to understand the sense in which Kant's account of cognition is as epistemically valuable as cognition on transcendental realist accounts.

This latter point is easy to miss: it might be tempting to identify objective reality simply with empirical reality.[6] After all, Kant affirms the empirical reality of space and time and of appearances (*KrV* A36/B53). However, while it is in some sense correct that our cognitions have objective reality only in the sense of empirical reality for Kant, this strategy fails to appreciate the wider meaning of objective reality. And it is only in accordance with this wider meaning that covers both absolute and empirical reality that we can explain the epistemic value of cognition. Therefore, we need what I will call an *ecumenical concept of objective reality*, i.e., one that expresses the sense in which Kantian cognition is equally objectively real and thus valuable as cognition on transcendental realist accounts.

To see why we need an ecumenical concept of objective reality, reconsider the thought experiment of your transcendental idealist from Section 1.2. You try to convince your transcendental realist friend that, on your account, your cognition (or knowledge) of the lake in front of you is equally meritorious of the status of cognition (or knowledge) as on her transcendental realist account. Your friend will be tempted to respond that your account is inferior because the lake is not absolutely real for you. You will respond that it is empirically real. To explain why empirical reality is equally good, you can argue that both absolute reality and empirical reality satisfy the conditions of objective reality. And what really matters for your judgement that there is a lake to merit the status of cognition is that it has objective reality. An account of objective reality must therefore be ecumenical in the sense of applying to both absolute reality

[6] This seems to be the interpretive route taken by Günter Zöller, who proposes to understand Kant's objective reality as empirical reality in contrast to absolute reality: Zöller 1984, 50 ff.

and empirical reality.

6.3 Domain Neutrality

Objective reality is a success condition not only for theoretical but also for practical cognition. To my knowledge, this feature of practical cognition has rarely been noted in the small number of studies of Kant's concept of practical cognition that do exist.[7] In this section, I offer some textual evidence showing that objective reality is equally present as a condition of practical cognition as it is for theoretical cognition. This is important because the condition of objective reality constitutes a continuity between Kant's concepts of theoretical and practical cognition. Therefore, if we are to attain a unified account of Kant's concept of cognition, we need an account of objective reality that is domain-neutral. That is, Kant's concept of objective reality must work as a success criterion for both theoretical and practical cognition.

Right from the beginning of the *Preamble* to the second *Critique*, Kant explains that practical reason can prove its *reality* 'and that of its concepts through its exercise [*durch die Tat*]' (*KpV* V:3). Part of the task of the second *Critique* is to show how it is possible for pure practical reason to prove its own and its concepts' reality.[8] Practical reason proves its reality through practical cognition.[9] Thus, to demonstrate the reality of practical reason, Kant shows how it is possible for us to have practical cognition. This requires an account of the 'objective reality' of three aspects of practical reasoning (*KpV* V:4-6): first, of the objective reality of practical reason itself (*KpV* V:15); second, of the objective reality of the moral law and of freedom (*KpV* V:4); third, of the objective reality of the ideas of God and immortality (*KpV* V:4-6, 132, 134).

The objective reality of practical reason lies in its causal efficacy to determine the will (*KpV* V:15). That is, the objective reality of practical reason depends on a 'causality from freedom' (*KpV* V:16). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant famously argues that we can cognise our practical freedom through becoming conscious of the moral

[7] Kain 2010; Schafer 2022, 2023a, 77–9; One exception is Lara Ostaric's account of practical cognition, which does acknowledge the continuity of 'the conditions of objective reality that must be met by the claims of theoretical reason (science) and those of the practical:' Ostaric 2017.

[8] According to a popular interpretation of Kant's *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*, Kant's aim there is to justify morality or the objective reality of the moral law with an account of (the possibility of) practical reason, in the sense of giving us an answer to the question: "why be moral?" or to help us answer the question: "why be moral?" E.g.: Paton 1947, 199; Reath 1989; Korsgaard 1996, 12; An alternative reading holds that Kant takes our commitment to morality and knowledge of the moral law for granted, aiming merely for a philosophical explanation how practical reason can overcome the motivational pull of empirical desires for happiness: Ware 2021, 14; None of my claims here depend on a particular reading, as I only focus on the fact that practical cognition requires objective reality just as much as theoretical cognition. For an overview of readings of Kant's moral philosophy, see: Johnson and Cureton 2024.

[9] Again, this claim does not depend on a specific interpretation of the overall argumentative structure of Kant's practical philosophy. It is possible to either take Kant to be engaged in a justification of practical reasoning and the moral law as such or to take him to philosophically explicate the phenomenon of common morality.

law's bindingness, which Kant describes as a fact of reason (*KpV* V:30-1).[10] With this factum of the consciousness of the moral law's bindingness, pure practical reason proves its own and, thereby, *directly* practical freedom's objective reality (*KpV* V:42) and *mediately* its concepts' reality. Kant's argumentative strategy here contrasts with the first *Critique* because it does not involve a deduction. Nonetheless, the argumentative target of establishing the objective reality of judgements to count as cognitions remains the same, as Kant clarifies:

> Thus, the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proven by any deduction, by any effort of theoretical, speculative, or empirically supported reason, and thus, even if one were to abandon apodictic certainty, it cannot be confirmed by experience and thus proven a posteriori, and yet it is firmly established for itself. (*KpV* V:47)

The moral law is, for Kant, a 'practical cognition' (*Groundwork* IV:389). In the above comparison with his method from the first *Critique*, Kant explains that cognition of the moral law is not attained through a deduction. Instead, its 'objective reality' is 'firmly established for itself.' Accordingly, Kant affirms the condition of objective reality as a necessary condition not only for theoretical but also for practical cognition. The moral law is objectively real for us, and thus has the status of a cognition because we are conscious that it can 'become the ground of the existence of objects' if we adopt it as a maxim of our will (*KpV* V:46). That we are conscious that we can make the moral law our maxim is shown, for instance, by Kant's thought experiment of the man who realises that he could refrain from giving false testimony even if it would mean his certain death at the gallows (*KpV* V:30). Consciousness of the moral law as a practical cognition and thus of its objective reality is thus a fact of reason (*KpV* V:31, 42, 47).

The fact of reason of the moral law serves as the basis for practically deducing the objective reality of freedom. The consciousness of the moral law as a fact of reason, Kant claims, 'serves as a principle of deduction of an inscrutable capacity [...] namely that of freedom' (*KpV* V:47). Because the 'moral law' is a 'law of causality through freedom' (*KpV* V:47), it serves as a principle of deduction to secure the 'objective, albeit only practical, and yet indubitable reality of freedom' (*KpV* V:49). Accordingly, objective reality is again the success criterion for showing that our practical cognition of freedom merits the status of cognition.

Practical reason itself is similarly established because the fact of reason proves its objective reality: 'The objective reality of a pure will, or, which is the same, of pure practical reason, is given in the moral law a priori virtually as a fact' (*KpV* V:55).

[10] There is a long-standing debate about Kant's appeal to a fact of reason, and about whether this fact is a deed (*Tat*) or a matter of fact (*Tatsache*). For the former view, see, e.g.: Henrich 1960; For the latter, see: Kleingeld 2010; Ware 2014; And there is, of course, a debate about whether this doctrine of the fact of reason constitutes a reversal from Kant's earlier views in the Groundwork. See: Timmermann 2010; For a third reading of factum in the sense of givenness, see: Kain 2010, 220.

Because the 'concept of a will' is 'already contained in the concept of a causality with freedom,' the 'objective reality' of pure practical reason in the sense of a will that can determine our actions from a priori principles is entailed by the objective reality of freedom (*KpV* V:55, c.f.: 89, 93). Again, Kant's strategy here for establishing our cognition of practical reason is committed to the success criterion of objective reality.

The situation is slightly more complex in the case of the postulates of pure practical reason. The postulates are freedom, immortality, and God (*KpV* V:122, 124, 132). They are necessary presuppositions for the possibility of the highest good, which requires that happiness be necessarily proportionate to virtue (*KpV* V:110-3). The practical postulates are *not* practical cognitions (*KpV* V:4-5). Nonetheless, they are necessary presuppositions of the possibility of the highest good. And the highest good is the necessary object of the pure will, i.e., of a will determined by the moral law (*KpV* 5:109). If it is to be possible to determine one's will by the moral law, the highest good must be possible. So, the postulates of freedom, immortality, and God must be possible. Two senses of possibility must be distinguished here. On the one hand, there is practical possibility, which concerns the possibility of acting. On the other hand, there is a theoretical or speculative sense of possibility, which concerns the possibility of objects. For Kant, the objective reality of freedom, immortality, and God is only required for the theoretical but not for the practical possibility of the highest good. Thus, it is not the postulates themselves that have objective reality. Rather, the postulates' practical necessity licenses treating the *theoretical* ideas of the soul, immortality, and God as having objective reality:

> These postulates are not theoretical dogmata but presuppositions in necessary practical respect, and thus do not extend speculative cognition but give the ideas of speculative reason in general (by means of their relation to the practical) objective reality [...]. (*KpV* V:132)

Accordingly, the 'ideas of speculative reason' of God, immortality, and the soul are given 'objective reality' in a practical respect as necessary presuppositions of the highest good. This implies a distinction between the concepts of freedom, immortality, and God as practical postulates and the corresponding ideas of speculative reason. The concepts of freedom, God, and immortality do *not* require objective reality as postulates of practical reason. As postulates, they are merely necessary presuppositions of the moral law as a principle of action, which cannot ground a 'duty to presuppose the existence of an object' but only the 'duty [...] to bring about and promote the highest good in the world' (*KpV* V:125). It is only for theoretical reason's ideas that these concepts acquire objective reality in a practical respect. Speculative reason's ideas of God, immortality, and the soul thus 'receive objective reality through an apodictic practical law' but here they have objective reality not as determining judgements (*KpV* 5:135). Objective reality is theoretically only affirmed for ideas rather than judgements, which are 'still not cognitions' but merely '(transcendent) thoughts'

(*KpV* 5:135).

There is thus a contrast between the objective reality of, on the one hand, the moral law, and freedom and, on the other hand, the postulates of practical reason. Only the former count as *cognitions*, i.e., as judgements that have objective reality. The latter are merely postulates of practical reason that neither count as judgements nor do they have objective reality. The postulates merely licence theoretical reason to think of its ideas of God, immortality, and the soul as having objective reality, and only to allow a theoretically coherent picture of the world in practical reason's service. By contrast, the moral law and freedom as a capacity for acting in accordance with the moral law have objective reality as cognitions of practical reason.

My present aim is to find an account of objective reality that can explain Kant's usage across the theoretical and practical domains. As we have seen, objective reality is a condition of practical cognition as much as of the theoretical case. For my present account of objective reality, the genuinely practical objective reality of practical reason, freedom, and the moral law must be taken into account. Clearly, there is a difference in the sense in which these practical cognitions are thought to be objectively real as compared to the objective reality of theoretical cognitions. After all, Kant frequently reminds us that our practical cognition of freedom reveals its 'objective and albeit *only practical* nonetheless undoubted reality' (*KpV* V:49, my emphasis; c.f.: V:4-6, 48, 56, 70). So, there is a difference, for Kant, between the sense in which practical as opposed to theoretical cognitions can have objective reality. Nevertheless, there must be a sense of objective reality that is common to both theoretical and practical cognitions to explain Kant's usage of objective reality as a success criterion for both types of cognition. The present account of objective reality must thus be domain-neutral.

6.4 The Trilemma of Interpreting Objective Reality

Kant uses the condition of objective reality to secure the non-arbitrariness of cognition. A judgement that has objective reality is a cognition because the condition of objective reality places a constraint on judgements to secure their epistemic value. In this section, I will consider several possible interpretations of the concept of objective reality. I will argue that they fail to explain the non-arbitrariness of cognition in light of Kant's transcendental idealism. The interpretations I consider ultimately presuppose a metaphysical theory of a mind-world relationship that undergirds the criterion of objective reality.[11] And this metaphysical theory is always threatened by a trilemma: it will either be too realist, too idealist, or too empty. If, as I have argued in Section 3.4, objective reality is to serve as a success standard for cognition, we need an account that escapes this trap. Therefore, in the next section, I will propose an account of objective reality that does not rely on the model of a mind-world relationship to

[11] This point is contentious, of course. See: Allison 2006.

give meaning to the notion of objective reality.

Here are the interpretive options that I will now consider: First, objective reality could be understood as merely requiring a reference between representations and objects (the Reference Reading). Second, objective reality could mean truth, i.e., the correspondence of the representation or judgement to objects (the Truth Reading). Third, objective reality could require that the objects of cognition actually exist (the Actuality Reading). Fourth, objective reality could require the real possibility of objects that are cognised (the Real Possibility Reading).

6.4.1 Reference Reading

According to the Reference Reading, objective reality merely requires successful reference of a representation to an object.[12] There is some textual evidence for this reading. Consider, for instance, the following passage:

> If a cognition is to have objective reality, i.e., if it is to relate to an object and have in that object its signification and meaning, then the object must be capable of being given in some way. (*KrV* A155/B194)

Here, Kant seems to describe objective reality in terms of successful reference to an object. This reference is supposed to secure the 'signification and meaning' of cognition. A similar passage can also be found for practical cognition, where Kant argues that practical 'cognitions must not wait for intuitions to gain meaning' because 'they themselves bring about the reality of that to which they refer' (*KpV* V:65-6). So, there is at least some textual evidence for a Reference Reading of objective reality.

Aaron Bunch has offered the least ontologically committed reading based on these passages. According to Bunch, objective reality merely requires the cognition to have meaning in an object and that the object is here 'merely intentional or representational, not actual.'[13] On this basis, Bunch denies that objective reality even requires reference; he argues that it requires *merely* meaning.[14]

Two points of objection should be made here. First, reference as such does not necessarily require the actuality of an object; it is possible to refer to intentional or representational objects. So, even if cognition does not require actuality, this does not preclude the possibility that the relation between cognition and its object is a relation of reference rather than meaning. That *more than meaning* is required by

[12] Allison seems to support a version of this reading at one point: 'the claim of objective reality is equivalent to the claim that they have reference or applicability to whatever objects are given to us in intuition.' However, although this reading is formulated as a reference reading, it also requires givenness in intuition. This, as I argue here, introduces a requirement that goes beyond mere reference. At the very least, givenness is required for the real possibility of the object. As Allison explicitly emphasises, 'the notion of objective reality has an ontological sense.' Allison 1983, 135; For discussion, see: Bunch 2010, 76.

[13] Bunch 2010, 77–8.

[14] Ibid., 78.

objective reality is evident from Kant's claim that cognition is to have its signification and meaning 'in *that* object' (*KrV* A155/B194, my emphasis). Accordingly, cognition requires a relation to *a* specific object or to *a* particular object. But a relation to a particular object is reference, not meaning.[15] For instance, the word "fork" has a meaning. But if I want my cognition of *the* fork that I use to eat the steak to have its meaning in *this* fork, then my cognition *refers* to that fork. Clearly, cognition has reference to *that* particular object that is cognised, even if that object turns out not to be an actual object. Second, precisely because reference as such does not entail a specific ontological commitment, even an account in terms of reference of cognition to objects is insufficient for Kant's concept of objective reality.

Mere successful reference to an object is insufficient because it lacks a particular metaphysical or existential commitment. Some of our representations or concepts can successfully refer to an object that does not exist. For instance, it is possible, on Kant's account, for our concept of a unicorn to successfully refer to a unicorn. But unicorns do not exist. And we cannot cognise unicorns.[16] Yet, for Kant, objective reality is supposed to secure more than mere reference to some object. Some existential or metaphysical commitment is entailed. Once this condition is added, we are left with the three other possible remaining readings.

A version of this objection can be found in Nick Stang's objection to the claim that Kant is concerned merely with the successful representation of objects.[17] According to Stang, Kant realised that the successful representation of objects does not entail their actuality or real possibility. But for a judgement to count as cognition it must refer not only to some object (that may only be logically possible) but to a really possible or actual object.[18] Thus, Kant is concerned not merely with representing objects but with representing *really possible* objects.[19] So, even if reference to objects is required, this reference is only successful in the sense Kant requires if it relates to an object that is really possible. But then the success condition for our judgement is not merely that it represent *an* object but that it represent an object that is *really possible*, in which case the Real Possibility Reading would be accurate (see below). An alternative option is that the object of representation must be actual, in which case the Actuality Reading would be accurate (see below). Overall, then, the reference reading is *too empty* - it lacks a clear existential or metaphysical commitment that the concept of objective reality seems to require.

[15] Alston 2012, 37.
[16] See: Allison 1983, 135.
[17] Stang 2016, 159–62.
[18] Stang 2016, 161; See also Stang's distinction between various different conceptions of the notion of the object in Kant that reflects the difference between object in the sense of a thing that is really possible and object in the sense of the intentional content of a representation. According to Stang, cognition is of objects in the former sense of really possible things: Stang 2021, 2022.
[19] Stang 2016, 159–62.

6.4.2 Truth Reading

On the Truth Reading, objective reality is basically just another term for truth.[20] To say that a judgement must have objective reality to be a cognition is to say that it must be true. As I have already argued in Section 3.4.3, Kant is committed to a correspondence theory of truth. Truth requires the correspondence of some mental state (the judgement, in this case) and its relevant object. Accordingly, if objective reality means truth, then objective reality simply requires the correspondence of a judgement to its object.

There are two problems with the truth reading. First, as we have already seen at 3.4.3, Kant endorses the nominal definition of truth as correspondence (*KrV* A58/B82). However, Kant also argues that there can be no general criterion to determine, for every possible cognition, whether it is true (*KrV* A58/B82 ff.). So, it is not entirely clear if Kant would think that truth could be a useful success standard for cognition.

In any case, I am more concerned here with a second problem. Even if truth and objective reality were equivalent, we would still require a substantive theory about the judgement-object correspondence required for truth. Just as in the case of the Reference Reading, mere correspondence to "some" object will not suffice here. Correspondence to the non-existent object of a unicorn will hardly suffice for some true judgements about unicorns. Consider the example of the category of causality. By aiming to prove the objective reality of this category, Kant does not merely intend to express facts about a concept. Instead, Kant aims to show that, in Watkins and Willaschek's terms, the category of causality does '"latch on" to the world.'[21]

The analysis so far already reveals a general requirement for readings of objective reality. Kant's concept of objective reality goes beyond the merely semantic or epistemic. To perform its role in Kant's theory, objective reality must, it seems, come with some metaphysical commitment. Kant's aim in arguing that various sorts of cognition have objective reality is to give his account of cognition metaphysical weight. At the very least, a substantive explanation is required to account for the objectivity of knowledge. There must, it seems, be a mind-world relationship. The challenge is, then, to offer a theory of the meaning of the world-component of this relationship – or something to fulfil its role – that is consistent with transcendental idealism and nonetheless sufficiently contentful. So, any semantic or epistemic analysis of Kant's concept of objective reality will ultimately have to be backed up with a more substantively metaphysical background theory. So, it seems that we are left with the remaining two options that do offer an analysis of objective reality in more straightforwardly metaphysical terms.

The reference reading and the truth reading are both initially appealing because they

[20] Ralf Meerbote says that he is 'inclined to believe that Kant identifies "objective reality" with "truth"' but he offers no explicit defence of this view here: Meerbote 1972, 57.

[21] Watkins and Willaschek 2017, 100.

seem to avoid the first two challenges of the trilemma. Theories of reference and truth may initially seem to be able to eschew metaphysical commitments. As a result, there is no clear threat of an overly realist or an overly idealist theory. However, these two options fail at the third challenge: they are "too empty" or incomplete. Once we try to fill in these gaps, however, we leave the apparently secure space of metaphysically non-commital readings and are threatened, again, by the first two challenges of being either overly realist or overly idealist.

6.4.3 Actuality Reading

The Actuality Reading may appear to be the most intuitive and overtly metaphysical conception of objective reality. It holds that the condition of objective reality requires that the object of cognition be actual.[22] There are, however, two problems with this straightforward identification of objective reality with actual existence. First, for at least some possible objects of cognition, this criterion seems to require too much. For instance, it is not clear that the *Transcendental Deduction* aims to establish the *actuality* of the categories. Its aim is more modest, demonstrating merely the 'possibility of the same [the categories] as cognitions a priori of objects of an intuition as such' (*KrV* B159). Similarly, Kant claims that no a priori cognition is attainable for us other than 'of objects of possible experience' (*KrV* B166). So, at least in the case of a priori cognition, the objects that are cognised are not necessarily actual but merely possible. This is also the case for the objects of mathematical and geometrical cognition. For instance, the object of a triangle need not be actual for judgements about it to have objective reality. Instead, Kant argues that construction in intuition merely secures that the triangle, and facts about it, apply to *possible* experience for the cognition to have objective reality. Thus, the Actuality Reading seems to require too much.

Second, there is a danger that the problem of giving meaning to Kant's concept of objective reality is now merely expressed in different terms, rather than solved. Even if we could agree that objective reality meant the actual existence of objects of cognition, we would still need to offer a theory about what it is for an object to "actually exist" in Kant's framework. So, to avoid the charge of again being "too empty," we need a more substantive theory about what actual existence of objects means or requires. I will now consider two options that might seem to fit Kant's theory: identifying objective reality either with empirical reality or with grounding in absolute reality.

To begin with, consider the option of identifying objective reality with empirical reality. According to this option, empirically real objects actually exist. However, this response introduces the threats of circularity and analyticity. If empirical reality is defined from the outset in transcendental idealist terms, i.e., as reality in light of the conditions

[22] In a glossary entry, Paul Guyer defines objective reality as '[a] representation having an actual object:' Guyer 2006, 376.

of the possibility of experience, then Kant's claim that we can only cognise what conforms to the conditions of possible experience would become question-begging:

(1) Cognition requires objective reality.

(2) Objective reality means empirical reality, as distinguished from absolute reality.

C Therefore, we can only cognise empirical reality.

Were objective reality equivalent to empirical reality, and were empirical reality whatever conformed to the conditions of the possibility of cognising reality, then it would be analytically true that we could only cognise empirical reality as distinguished from absolute reality.[23] This is not only inconsistent with the ecumenicality of objective reality. However, it would render Kant's prohibition on the cognition of things in themselves a trivial, analytic truth about the concept of cognition. Clearly, Kant took it to be a substantive and synthetic insight that we can only cognise that part of objective reality that he describes as empirical reality.[24] Thus, objective reality cannot be identified with empirical reality.

Another option would be to ground the objective reality of cognition in (some relation to) absolute reality.[25] For instance, one could suggest that what ultimately grounds the reality of empirically real objects is the affection-relation of sensibility to the thing in itself that "causes" the sensation. This is not an implausible suggestion. After all, Kant insists that the givenness of objects in sensibility is necessary for cognition. Moreover, even non-empirical theoretical cognition merits its status only because it applies indirectly to objects that can possibly be given in experience, i.e., appearances. So, perhaps objective reality requires some sense of grounding in absolute reality, i.e., a grounding in things in themselves/noumena.

The option of grounding in absolute reality is not entirely unattractive. It could probably appease our transcendental realist friend. We could argue that the objects we cognise inherit their reality-status from completely mind-independent objects. Thus, although the content of our cognition is only of mind-dependent objects (appearances), the cognition merits its status as cognition only because the reality of these appearances is grounded in the reality of completely mind-independent things in themselves. Thus, this option would seem to secure a mind-world relationship in the traditional sense of a fit between the mind and a completely mind-independent world. Although we do not know that mind-independent world, we know that there is such a world and

[23] This is a version of Langton's critique of Allison's deflationary interpretation of transcendental idealism: Langton 1998, 9–12.

[24] Ibid., 10.

[25] For instance, one could argue that the objective reality of phenomena obtains due to a grounding relation to noumena. For an account of grounding of phenomena in noumena, see: Bader 2022; Note that this proposal of the objective reality of cognition depending in some way on the absolute reality of things in themselves is compatible with both one-world and two-worlds readings. For overviews of the one-world/two-worlds debate, see: Allais 2004; Walker 2010; Stang 2014; Oberst 2015; Stang 2024.

that it is this mind-independent world that grounds the reality of our cognitions of a mind-dependent world.

A problem with this theory about grounding in absolute reality is that it would entail that, by cognising an appearance I would also cognise the objective reality of the corresponding thing in itself. After all, if the objective reality of appearances is grounded in the objective reality of their corresponding things in themselves, then cognition of an appearance would entail that the corresponding thing in itself has objective reality. However, Kant denies the possibility of this inference in his discussion of *Phaenomena and Noumena* (*KrV* A235/B294 ff.). In the B-edition, Kant argues that we can use the concept of a noumenon only in the negative sense as the concept of a thing that is 'not object of our sensible intuition' (*KrV* B307, 309).[26] Kant's concept of the thing in itself fits this description: things in themselves are not objects of our sensible intuition; only appearances are objects of our sensible intuition. The concept of the noumenon is Kant's general concept of objects that, like things in themselves, cannot be sensibly intuited. Significantly, Kant argues that this is a problematic concept, 'whose objective reality cannot be cognised in any way:'

> I call a concept problematic that contains no contradiction, that is also connected with other cognitions as a limitation of given concepts, but whose objective reality cannot be cognised in any way. The concept of a noumenon, that is, of a thing that is not to be conceived at all as an object of the senses, but as a thing in itself (only through a pure understanding), is not at all contradictory [...]. [...] In the end, however, the possibility of such noumena cannot be comprehended at all [...]. [...] The concept of a noumenon is, therefore, merely a border concept [...] and thus only of negative use. (*KrV* A254-5/B310-1)

Kant here argues that the concept of a noumenon is a problematic concept. It 'contains no contradiction,' so it is *logically* possible. However, its objective reality 'cannot be cognised in any way.' So, our cognition of appearances *does not* license claims about the objective reality of things in themselves. We merely entertain the concept of noumena as a 'border concept' (*Grenzbegriff*) of something that we cannot cognise because it cannot be sensibly intuited. Yet, a theory that requires the grounding of the objective reality of cognised objects in the objective reality of things in themselves (i.e., in absolute reality) would entail precisely that we could infer the objective reality of things in themselves from the objective reality of appearances. This would be a positive use of the concept of noumena, which would violate Kant's restrictions on the legitimate use of this concept.

[26] This negative conception is to be distinguished from the positive concept of a noumenon as the 'object of a non-sensible intuition,' i.e., as the concept of the object of an intuitive intellect (*KrV* B307). Because we do not have an intuitive intellect, this positive concept of a noumenon plays no role in our positive theory of cognition.

There is further evidence for this position in the A-edition. In passages that Kant deleted or replaced in the B-edition, he explicitly discusses whether the theory of appearances from the *Transcendental Aesthetic* could license claims about the objective reality of noumena: 'Now one would think that the concept of appearances, as limited by the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, would already provide us with the objective reality of the noumena [...]' (*KrV* A249). After all, if our senses 'present something only, as it appears,' then there must also be something that appears, which should license us to attribute objective reality to that (concept of) the thing that appears (*KrV* A249). Against this line of reasoning, Kant argues that the concept we can make of the thing that appears is merely of 'something = x, of which we do not know anything, nor can we know anything about it (given the current setup of our understanding)' (*KrV* A250).[27] In other words, the theory of sensible intuition from the *Transcendental Aesthetic* does allow us to form the concept of something that appears but not to make any positive claims about that concept, including claims about objective reality. Yet, for a theory of cognition to ground the objective reality of appearances and other possible objects of cognition in the objective reality of things in themselves, this is precisely what would be required. Thus, this second option of grounding objective reality more generally in (some relation to) absolute reality cannot work because we cannot cognise the objective reality of noumena.

Kant's prohibition on cognising the objective reality of noumena concerns not only empirical cognition but also philosophical cognition. This is important because one could object to my argument here that, while we cannot cognise the objective reality of the things in themselves that correspond to appearances in empirical cognition, we might still be able to cognise philosophically that these things in themselves have objective reality. Kant's argument here is directed precisely against this potential escape route via philosophical cognition. Kant's introduction of the concept of noumena is intended to ensure that it is not only the *object* (the thing in itself) whose objective reality we cannot cognise but also the *concept* of objects of this sort (noumena) that does not permit of positive claims about its objective reality. And philosophical cognition would make positive claims of this sort.

So, the two options of giving meaning to actuality, either by identification with empirical reality or through grounding in absolute reality, fail because they fall into the first two traps in the trilemma. On the one hand, the identification with empirical reality is *too idealist*: it will fail to convince your transcendental realist friend that objective reality could function as a success condition for cognition worthy of the name. After all, if you *define* cognition from the outset only as judgements that correspond to a mind-dependent world of appearances, you would be begging the question against transcendental realism. Moreover, this option would be inconsistent

[27] A further reason that Kant advances in the A-edition is that although we can form the concept of a non-sensible intuition, we cannot prove its possibility (*KrV* A252).

with the ecumenicality of objective reality (Section 6.2). On the other hand, a grounding-relation in absolute reality is *too realist*: although this option would be more likely to satisfy your transcendental realist friend, it transgresses the boundaries of Kant's transcendental idealism. Although we can entertain the concept of an absolute reality consistently (because we can have a logically possible concept of a thing in itself and of noumena), we cannot make claims about the objective reality of things in themselves / noumena.

Accounts of actuality can also fall into the third trap of being too empty (for present purposes). Consider, for instance, Stang's distinction of three senses of actuality (or existence) in Kant.[28] First, actuality (existence) can be understood as absolute positing, meaning that there is an object. Second, actuality (existence) could be understood as causal efficacy: an object possessing causal powers. Third, actuality could be understood as the merely modal concept of that which is to be distinguished from what is merely *possible*. I do not deny that all three of these senses of actuality can be found in Kant and that they have their legitimate use. However, they cannot help us with the present problem of accounting for the meaning of objective reality.

First, if actuality merely means that 'there is an object,'[29] we will again have to offer a theory of what it means for there to be an object. That is, we would need to provide some metaphysical content or story around this. Again, there will be a question about whether this object that "is" should be understood as an appearance, or as a thing in itself, or some further option. On Stang's account, this concept of actuality as positing is used to explain Kant's (argument for) the distinction between logical and real possibility. Stang argues that the modal concepts of possibility and existence are not predicates of objects but of concepts.[30] The basic thought here is this: were possibility the predicate of an object, then so would be impossibility. However, an impossible object does not exist. The difference between possibility and impossibility must thus be conceptual (rather than ontological): 'a distinction between concepts possibly instantiated by objects of absolute positing, and concepts not possibly instantiated by such objects.'[31]

So, (real) "possibility" is a property of those concepts that are possibly instantiated by objects of absolute positing. This account of possibility relies on a background notion of actuality in the sense of absolute positing. The givenness requirement that is supposed to guarantee the objective reality of cognition would be analysable as the requirement that cognition refer to an absolutely posited object.[32] While this might be useful for a real possibility reading of objective reality (see below), it constitutes

[28] The subsequent three sentences cite Stang's distinction from: Stang 2016, 322–3.
[29] Ibid., 322–3.
[30] Stang 2016, 165; Leech disagrees, arguing that 'real possibility concerns *things*,' whereas logical possibility concerns concepts: Leech 2017, 101.
[31] Stang 2016, 165.
[32] Ibid., 170–1.

an ontological concept of absolute positing as an account of actuality.[33] Stang argues that, for Kant, our 'epistemic access to absolute positing is via sensible intuition.'[34] If this is the case, then the givenness requirement is supposed to ensure that cognition refer to an absolutely posited object. But then we have come full circle - back to the level of ontology. Once again, the account is not fully satisfactory, as I can still ask: "What does it mean for there to be an object?" Is that concept of a posited object that of a completely mind-independent object? Is it mind-dependent?[35] In other words, I will again have to work through the options of the actuality reading already discussed above.[36]

Second, the concept of actuality as possessing causal powers will not work because it can only be 'understood through the categories of relation,' such as cause and effect.[37] So, this concept of actuality can only be developed and understood by means of the categories. Yet, the categories themselves can only be used in cognition because they have objective reality, as Kant aims to show in the *Deduction*. So, there is at least some threat of circularity here, which I will now set aside, however. More problematic is that we can judge that all sorts of objects, even those beyond the limits of possible cognition, have causal powers. For instance, our concepts of God or transcendental freedom are concepts of objects that have causal powers.[38] We can judge that God possesses causal powers (if this is a fact about the concept of God). So, if objective reality were defined as actuality in this sense of possessing causal powers, we would be able to cognise God. Kant does not allow this. Thus, this sense of actuality cannot be used as an analysis of objective reality.

Third, a merely modal concept of actuality is insufficient, by itself, to give content to the concept of objective reality. As a merely modal concept, actuality is simply the logical correlate to possibility. Were objective reality to mean actuality in this sense, it would merely state that cognitions that have objective reality are not merely possible but actual. But this meaning of actual does not go beyond the logical contrast to possibility. Thus, this modal sense of actuality must be backed up with a more substantive sense of actuality (or existence). Stang does offer such a more contentful sense of actuality by defining actuality as a concept we use to represent 'all the objects *there are* (absolute positing),' i.e., actuality in the first sense of meaning 'there is an object.'[39] So, we end up again with the initial task of giving substantive content to the first option of Stang's distinction, i.e., actuality in the sense of absolute positing.

[33] See: ibid., 77–9.
[34] Ibid., 165.
[35] For instance, Leech argues that real possibility is 'connected to conditions for cognition,' requiring empiricality. This may be accurate. But then we cannot non-circularly use the concept of real possibility and its associated sense of actuality as an account of objective reality because objective reality is supposed to function as a success standard for cognition itself. See: Leech 2017, 115.
[36] A notable exception is de Boer's account of Kant's concept of an object. See: Footnote 48.
[37] Stang 2016, 322.
[38] Ibid., 322–3.
[39] Ibid., 322–3.

6.4.4 Real Possibility Reading

Grüne suggests that objective reality 'consists in relating to really possible objects.'[40] There are several passages that textually support this reading. For instance, at one point Kant argues that logical possibility alone is insufficient 'for the objective reality of the concept, i.e., the possibility of such an object as is thought through the concept' (*KrV* A220/B268). Moreover, there are also passages where Kant characterises cognition in modal terms, as Stang points out.[41] Consider, for instance, the following footnote from the *B-Preamble* to the first *Critique*:

> To cognise an object, it is required that I be able to prove its possibility (be it according to the testimony of experience from its reality, or a priori through reason). But I can think what I want, if only I do not contradict myself [...]. But in order to attribute objective validity (real possibility, for the former was merely logical) to such a concept, something more is required. But this something more need not be sought in theoretical sources of cognition; it can also lie in practical ones. (*KrV* Bxxvi n.)

Given that objective reality is the success criterion for cognition, that Kant sometimes describes objective reality in modal terms, and that Kant here claims that cognising an object requires being 'able to prove its possibility,' the real possibility reading has strong textual support. Moreover, the textual evidence also clearly shows *what sort of* possibility is required: cognition requires not merely logical but real possibility. This reading also has a systematic advantage. For at least some cognitions, such as the categories, actuality would require too much. At least according to some readings, Kant's argument in the deduction merely shows that the categories apply to *possible* objects of experience, not that they are actual.[42] So, the real possibility reading can better explain some passages where it seems as though objective reality requires something less than the actuality of its objects.

While there is textual and systematic evidence that speaks in favour of the real possibility reading, it is not decisive. As we have seen, there is also textual evidence for its rival interpretations. Moreover, the apparent definitions of objective reality and of cognition in modal terms never state that real possibility is a sufficient criterion for a judgement to count as cognition. These passages are consistent with real possibility being a necessary but insufficient requirement for objective reality. Given that actuality entails real possibility (*KrV* A231/B283),[43] these passages might be consistent with the actuality reading.

For at least some types of cognition, I am doubtful that the real possibility requirement

[40] Grüne 2017, 116.
[41] Stang 2016, 161, 169.
[42] Consider: '[The categories] serve for the possibility of empirical cognition.' (*KrV* B 147) Or: 'Consequently, no cognition is possible for us a prior than only of objects of possible experience.'
[43] Stang 2016, 174.

is sufficiently strong. Empirical cognition is the clearest case. Empirical cognition is experience, which Kant describes as 'a cognition of objects through perception' (*KrV* B219) and, specifically, a 'cognition that determines an object through perceptions' (*KrV* B218). At least at one point, Kant describes the relation of an object to the understanding with perception as *actuality*:

> By the actuality of a thing, I certainly posit more than possibility, but not in the thing; for that can never contain more actuality than what was contained in its complete possibility. But since the possibility was merely a position of the thing in relation to the understanding (its empirical use), so the actuality is at the same time a connection [*Verknüpfung*] of it with perception. (*KrV* A234/B287 n.)

Accordingly, the connection of an object with perception is a relation of actuality. Empirical cognition consists in this sort of relation. So, in empirical cognition, we cognise *actual* objects. This also makes intuitive sense. When we experience a house in front of us, we take our experience to be of an actual house, not of a really possible house. It can be objected, of course, that actuality is *only* required for empirical cognition but not for other types of cognition. On this basis, it could be argued that the actuality requirement for empirical cognition results from the more general condition of real possibility because actuality entails possibility. Empirical cognition requires actuality because we can only prove the real possibility of empirical objects if we cognise their actuality. This defense of the real possibility reading is available but it strikes me as somewhat artificial. In experience, I am not merely interested in the actuality of empirical objects with the instrumental epistemic aim of proving their real possibility. Instead, my epistemic interest is directly directed at the object's actuality. Moreover, this sort of defence of the real possibility reading cannot be easily extended to practical cognition. There may be a practical correlate for real possibility, such as real practical possibility. But my cognition of the moral law is supposed to establish more than its real practical possibility; cognition of the moral law must show it to be actually binding and necessary. Overall, then, I am sceptical that the real possibility reading captures what gives epistemic value to the notion of cognition; something more than mere possibility is required.

Another reason to be sceptical about the real possibility reading is that it eventually still requires an account of actuality, which reintroduces the problems of actuality readings discussed above. According to Stang's detailed account of real possibility, one central feature of real possibility is a groundedness requirement. The fact that something is really possible must have 'a real ground in some actual object or principle.'[44] Stang then distinguishes two possible types of grounds, immanent and transcendent grounds.[45] The former are immanent in the sense of being within the sphere of phenomena, i.e.,

[44] Ibid., 199.
[45] Ibid., 200.

at the level of *empirical reality*. The latter are transcendent in the sense of being beyond the sphere of phenomena, i.e., at the level of noumena and thus *absolute reality*. Identifying objective reality with either type of real ground will reintroduce the familiar problems of being too idealist or too realist that I discussed above. For instance, on Stang's reading, '[e]mpirical objects have noumenal grounds in that they are the appearances of those noumena.'[46] But this suggestion just *is* the theory of grounding in absolute reality that I discussed above. Thus, even if the real possibility analysis of objective reality were accurate, it would still depend on account of actuality because facts about real possibility must be grounded in actual objects or principles. Yet, any such account of actuality will encounter the problems that beset the actuality reading that I discussed above. In other words, the real possibility reading does not offer an easy way out of the trilemma.

In the following section, I will suggest a different way of escaping the trilemma. Given the ecumenicality and domain neutrality of objective reality, and given the difficulty of escaping the trilemma discussed here, it may be a good idea to search for a non-metaphysical reading of objective reality. Accounts of objective reality that are based on what Stang calls *immanent* grounding,[47] i.e., those that are based on the conditions of possible experience in accordance with Kant's transcendental idealism, will always be suspected of being too idealist. By contrast, accounts based on *transcendent* grounding, i.e., those that are based in the absolute reality of things in themselves, will face the opposite suspicion of being too realist. There is also no easy way out of this with merely semantic or modal conditions, since they ultimately depend on a more robustly metaphysical theory to give them meaning.[48] Moreover, the ecumenicality of objective reality means that we require an account that does not depend on the details of transcendental idealism, since it must cover both empirical *and* absolute reality. Further, the domain-neutrality of cognition means that a purely ontological reading of objective reality will be too restrictive, as the objects of practical cognition are not objectively real in an ontological sense. In the next section, I will argue that a nomic conception of objective reality can cater to these requirements.

6.5 A Nomic Account of Objective Reality

In one aspect, laws are similar to mind-independent objects; they can obtain regardless of mental states. For instance, tax laws obtain regardless of whether you like paying taxes. This independence of laws is in some ways analogous to the concept of the mind-independence of physical objects. A chair is in the room regardless of whether

[46] Stang 2016, 200.
[47] Ibid., 200.
[48] A notable further option is Karin de Boer's interpretation of Kant's concept of an object as acquiring non-arbitrariness by being based on rules. This account is not entirely dissimilar from my proposal of nomic objective reality below. However, de Boer's proposal is still conceptualised *within* Kant's transcendental idealist framework and thus fails to satisfy the ecumenicality condition (Section 6.2) See: Boer 2023, 28–9.

you want it to be. Of course, there are other ways in which laws can be mind-dependent. A legal law depends on people with minds who write, legislate, and enforce it. However, note that the same is true for some physical objects. You can remove chairs from a room if you dislike them. So, some laws are, in some ways, mind-dependent. However, this does not necessarily affect the sense of mind-independence relevant for the present section: laws can have force across time, space, and different individuals. In this section, I will argue that this feature of laws – their mind-independence in analogy with the concept of mind-independent objects – makes the notion of law suitable for a different reading of objective reality, namely as nomic objective reality.

In this section, I will present a nomic account of objective reality. I do not present this nomic account as an exegetical interpretation of Kant's explicit theory of objective reality. I do not think that Kant has an explicit theory of objective reality. At best, there is some textual evidence here and there that points in different directions. As we have seen above, there are good reasons to suspect that none of these directions leads us to a fully satisfying account of objective reality. So, the present proposal is intended to fill a gap in Kant's theory: to offer an account of objective reality that is fit for its use as a success criterion of cognition and satisfies the abovementioned requirements: ecumenicality and domain neutrality. Although I do not present this account as an interpretation of Kant, it is based on Kantian resources. Specifically, my argument starts with one of Kant's reflections on the unity of theoretical and practical reasons: the concept of nature in the most general sense (*KpV* V:19-20).

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant discusses the unity of theoretical and practical reason in several places. An area where this matter gains importance is in addressing how we can conceive the two domains – theoretical and practical – as equally binding for reason (*KpV* V:42-3).[49] One problem here is that these two domains of law can come into conflict. For instance, as we have seen in Section 6.3, the moral law demands the highest good (happiness in proportion to virtue). Yet, in empirical cognition, we do not find a world that conforms to the ideal of the highest good. Thus, it seems as though the laws of nature and morality do not apply to the same world. However, we are empirical beings, so the moral law commands actions in the empirical world. Therefore, we need the concept of a unified empirico-practical world in which both domains of laws can be thought of as simultaneously forceful. As a concept for this unified empirico-practical world, Kant introduces the concept of 'nature in the most general sense:'

> This law [i.e., the moral law] is intended to provide the world of the senses, as a sensible nature (as far as rational beings are concerned), with the form of a world of the understanding, that is, a supersensible nature,

[49]This problem comes in various guises. On the one hand, it concerns the unity of theoretical and practical reason. See, e.g.: Kleingeld 1998; On the other hand, it also concerns the unity of theoretical and practical cognition. See, e.g.: Ostaric 2017; Schafer 2023b.

> without, however, detracting from the mechanism of the former. Now, nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws. (*KpV* V:43)

My present proposal is to take and develop this concept of 'nature in the most general sense' as the 'existence of things under laws' as a starting point for a nomic interpretation of objective reality. Although Kant does not explicitly introduce this concept as an account of objective reality, several features of this concept make it uniquely suitable. First, this concept of nature is explicitly designed as a domain-neutral concept of a common reality for theoretical and practical reason. What is common to the domains of theoretical and practical reason is their lawfulness. So, the criterion of domain-neutrality (Section 6.3) can be met. Second, this concept of nature in the most general sense has the potential to satisfy the ecumenicality requirement (Section 6.2). By itself, this concept does not prescribe what types of laws there are or at which metaphysical level they are situated. We can in conceive of laws at the noumenal level, at the empirical level, or indeed of laws of cognition. The concept of a law is sufficiently general to allow both absolute and empirical reality to be aspects of a more general concept of nomic objective reality.

Although Kant's formulation here is in terms of the existence of things under laws, my proposal is that objective reality *itself* should be understood as a nomic concept. By "nomic," I mean law-based or legal. Specifically, we can think of objective reality as requiring that a judgement conform to relevant applicable laws. Laws can apply to a judgement in two ways. In the one hand, laws can apply to a judgement *qua* judgement, i.e., as a mental act. On the other hand, laws can apply to the object of the judgement *qua* object. To take an example, consider a judgement that the glass is full of water. The objective reality of this judgement will depend on conformity with some laws that apply to judgement as a mental act, for instance that the right sorts of concepts are used. But it will also depend on conformity with some laws that apply to the object of the judgement, i.e., the glass of water (including, for instance, relevant laws of nature). This conception of objective reality contrasts, for instance, with semantic, metaphysical, ontological, or modal readings of objective reality.

My proposal is distinct from the debate about (Kant's concept of) nomic necessity.[50] Rather than being the concept of a metaphysical "check" for the stability and objectivity of cognition, objective reality is the concept of a legal "check." One way to think of this is in analogy to legal advice. Suppose you want to build a garden shed but you are unsure whether you need planning permission. You ask a lawyer friend, who assures you that you do not need planning permission. The criterion for whether the lawyer's judgement is accurate is *the law*. We can think of objective reality as a

[50] This debate concerns the problem of how to conceptualise the necessity of laws, especially of physical laws. Whilst this is an important subsidiary question for the present topic, it is not the sense of nomicity relevant here. For general discussion of nomic necessity, see, e.g.: Hung 1981; Halpin 1999; For discussion of Kantian nomic necessity, see: Stang 2016, Ch. 10; Massimi 2018; Langton 2018.

concept for judgements that are accurate in this sense. The lawyers' judgement has "objective reality" only if the law does not require you to have planning permission. Thus, nomic objective reality functions as a success criterion for cognition by requiring law-conformity. And this conception of law as a source of the stability of knowledge is independent of questions about the very concept of a law or nomic necessity.[51]

Conformity with relevant laws is a suitable success criterion for cognition. Law-conformity can explain certain desirable aspects of cognition, such as intersubjective validity. Laws can be stable and valid for multiple or all individuals. Moreover, there can be different kinds of laws for different kinds of things. For instance, there could be necessary laws of nature. But there can also be necessary laws of cognition. Or there can be necessary laws of action. Thus, the concept of a law can be applicable across the different domains of Kant's account of cognition. Moreover, the concept of a law does not beg the question of transcendental idealism. The nomic conception of objective reality is also available to transcendental realists.

Consider the following comparison with the transcendental realist's construal of a success criterion for cognition. For the transcendental realist, cognition must somehow map onto the world, so there must be a correspondence between a mind-independent object and a mental state. The mind-independent object here serves as a "check" on cognition to guarantee its objectivity. By contrast, my proposal is that the mental state (the judgement) must conform to relevant applicable laws. Thus, laws also function independently of the mind "checks" to secure the objectivity of cognition. Laws can perform this role because they can apply across different individuals, across time and space, for various tokens of the same kind of object, and so on. In other words, laws have various features that make them suitable as "checks" in similar ways as the concept of a completely mind-independent object. However, to perform this role, laws need not be completely mind-independent. For instance, legal rules are made up more or less arbitrarily by minds and depend on people's use of their minds for enforcement. However, this does not change the fact that they can constitute a robust "check" on the legality of my actions.

This nomic conception of objective reality is consistent with Kant's accounts of the possibility of various types of cognition. If cognition is a judgement that has objective reality, i.e., judgement that conforms to relevant applicable laws, then an account of the possibility of cognition must determine what those laws are and whether it is possible for us to have judgements that conform to them. It is possible to read Kant's critiques precisely as an account of which laws there are for various kinds of judgements and whether it is possible for us to judge in accordance with them. While the concept of objective reality demands that judgements conform to relevant applicable laws, it is the task of a theory of cognition (such as Kant's) to determine precisely which laws *are* applicable to various types of judgements. The concept of

[51] See: Watkins 2017; Massimi 2017.

objective reality is the concept of conformity to relevant applicable laws *in general*. By itself, it does not prescribe where these laws come from or what gives them their legal power. Determining *which* laws apply to various sorts of cognition is the task of a positive theory of the possibility of cognition, such as Kant's *Critique*.

This feature of the nomic concept of objective reality – neutrality about the source and content of nomic power – secures the ecumenicality of objective reality. The concept of nomic objective reality does not prejudge the question of whether our cognitions can have absolute or empirical reality. Both absolute and empirical reality are subtypes of nomic objective reality. Judgements would be nomically absolutely real only if they correspond to the laws of things as they are independent of experience. Judgements are nomically empirically real only if they correspond to the laws of things as they appear to us. Both types of nomic objective reality are conceivable. However, Kant argues that we are only capable of theoretical judgements that satisfy the latter type of objective reality.

This concept of objective reality is available as a pre-theoretical success criterion for cognition. It is available pre-theoretically in the sense that it neither presupposes a transcendental realist nor a transcendental idealist concept of a success criterion for cognition (or knowledge). Instead of agreeing with the transcendental realist that cognition can only be objective if it corresponds to a mind-independent object, we can now propose an alternative conception of a neutral success criterion for cognition. Presupposing that only the metaphysically thick notion of a mind-independent object could serve as a "check" on cognition would beg the question against transcendental idealism. If we are to decide between a transcendental realist and a transcendental idealist theory of cognition, we need a *neutral* success criterion (Section 6.2). Nomic objective reality is neutral in the relevant sense because it merely requires that the judgement conform to relevant applicable laws, whatever they are. The success of a theory of cognition must then be assessed on the basis of whether it can spell out these laws, whether we are able to judge in conformity with them, and when we do so. Kant's critical theory of cognition can be read as an account of which laws judgements must satisfy to be successful and the degree to which we are capable of such judgements. The onus is then on the transcendental realist to offer a comparable theory that specifies how we are capable of judgements that satisfy the laws that would apply to cognition of things in themselves.

To conclude this section, I want to consider some proposals for how a nomic conception of objective reality could function as a success criterion for various types of cognition. To begin with, there are some laws that apply to all judgements, namely the laws of logic. These include, for instance, the principles of identity or non-contradiction. Next, there are laws that are specific only to some types of judgements. For instance, Kant's conception of mathematical cognition as construction in intuition means that mathematical cognition must conform to the forms of intuition. Kant's *argument* for

this law is that it is only through this conformity with the forms of intuition that applicability to objects of experience is guaranteed. Empirical cognition must conform to both laws of nature and the laws of cognising empirical objects or events that Kant develops in the *Transcendental Logic*. These laws include, of course, that the matter of empirical cognition must be given in intuition and that this matter must be thought under concepts using the categories. In practical cognition, we can distinguish applied practical cognition from philosophical questions and cognition of the moral law. Applied practical cognition, i.e., questions about what one should morally do in concrete situations, must conform to the moral law. Cognition of the moral law itself can be thought of as a self-reflexive cognition of practical reason's law.

The specific content and arguments for how and why some laws do or do not apply to some types of cognition are, of course, a matter of debate among various competing interpretations of Kant's critical theory. Many competing views on Kant's transcendental idealism can be understood as interpretations of *which* laws apply to various types of judgements and why. Thus, nomic objective reality is compatible with a variety of accounts of the positive doctrine of transcendental idealism and with various accounts of Kant's practical philosophy.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a new account of objective reality. I proposed that objective reality could be understood as a nomic concept, requiring the conformity of judgements to relevant applicable laws. This account has several advantages. First, nomic objective reality is ecumenical in the sense that both absolute reality (things in themselves) and empirical reality (appearances) can be types of a more general concept of nomic objective reality (see: Section 6.2). Second, nomic objective reality is domain neutral because it can accommodate both theoretical and practical cognition's objective reality (see: Section 6.3). Third, nomic objective reality avoids the trilemma besetting metaphysical interpretations of the concept, which run the risk of being either too idealist, realist, or empty (see: Section 6.4). Although the present proposal is not an interpretation of Kant's account of objective reality, it is at least inspired by the Kantian concept of nature in the most general sense as the existence of things under laws (*KpV* V:43). Given these advantages, I believe that the further development of the concept of objective reality as a nomic concept merits attention.

In my positive account of nomic objective reality (Section 6.5), I offered a general description of what I mean by a nomic account of objective reality and of some advantages I take it to promise. However, more work needs to be done. For instance, we need a deeper understanding of how laws can perform the role of mind-independent objects to secure the non-arbitrariness of cognition. Moreover, Kant's sophisticated

theory of laws and legal force must be taken into account.[52] It would be important to show, for each type of cognition, how it is ultimately defined by a specific set of laws as its success criteria. Finally, the concept of nomic objective reality as a success criterion for judgements could also be developed independently of Kant's transcendental idealism to show that it is available to the transcendental realist. Achieving this would exhaust the scope of at least one more thesis. I will leave this project for other places. For present purposes, I hope to have shown at least that there is one possible new avenue for an account of objective reality.

I conclude this chapter with a thought on the appeal of the nomic concept of objective reality. The nomic concept of objective reality helps us formulate a concept of cognition (or knowledge) not in terms of a mind-world or subject-object relation. Instead, the concept of cognition is formulated in terms of a judgement-law relation. This is important because it can help us avoid an impossible situation that Johann Gottlieb Fichte describes. According to Fichte, our theorising about knowledge can either take the object or the subject as a starting point.[53] He calls the former approach dogmatism and the latter idealism.

For Fichte, this leaves two options.[54] Either we explain knowledge from the dogmatist's starting point, which means that we must presuppose a relation to mind-independent things in themselves to secure the objectivity of knowledge. Or we explain knowledge from the idealist's starting point. However, Fichte thinks that the idealist cannot avail himself to the concept of a mind-independent thing in itself in her account of the objectivity of knowledge. Instead, the transcendental idealist must start from an account of the concept of subjectivity to attain a suitable concept of objectivity. This strategy leads to absolute idealism.

The dire situation that Fichte describes is based on the assumption that cognition must be explained in terms of a mind-world/subject-object relation. This assumption ignores possible alternatives. If my proposal in this chapter is worth pursuing, the concept of nomic objective reality might be an alternative to Fichte's situation. With the nomic success standard for cognition, we can avoid choosing between the transcendental realist (dogmatist) or the idealist starting point. Nomic objective reality could function as a neutral success standard for cognition that avoids the mind-world gap that is so hard to bridge. In other words, instead of choosing either the transcendental realist or the transcendental idealist starting point, nomic objective reality offers us an ecumenical starting point that does not beg the question for or against either theory.

[52] E.g.: Ameriks 2017; Watkins 2019.
[53] Fichte 1799, AA IV, 2: 20-7.
[54] See: Beiser 2002, 264–9; For a critical commentary on Fichte's setup of this choice, see: Lachs 1972, 314–5.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

I have argued that the distinction between Kant's concepts of cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*) is best understood with the help of a distinction between two frameworks of epistemic normativity (Chapter 2). Cognition is Kant's concept for the successful exercise of our cognitive capacities in determining judgement, whereby our capacities are conceptualised in abstraction from their concrete application (Chapter 3). Kant's *Critiques* are mostly concerned with an account of our cognitive capacities in a way that abstracts from their concrete application. I have called this the Capacity Framework. In the first *Critique*, most of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements* is situated within the Capacity Framework, although Kant does here and there also rely on concrete examples. It is thus no surprise that Kant only introduces his concept of *Fürwahrhalten* – and with it, the concept of knowledge – very late in the first *Critique*, specifically in the *Canon*, some 800 pages into the book (Chapter 4). By *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant refers to concrete judgements. Accounts of *Fürwahrhalten* are therefore situated in the Concrete Framework. As part of the taxonomy of *Fürwahrhalten*, Kant's concept of knowledge is not defined by epistemic justification conditions. Instead, Kant's concept of knowledge relies on the phenomenal criteria of individual conviction and universal certainty (Chapter 5). Whether a concrete judgement is an opinion, a belief, or knowledge depends on the psychologically and socially concrete level of conviction and certainty respectively.

Kant's concept of cognition – rather than his concept of knowledge – resembles our contemporary concept of knowledge most closely. Kant's concept of cognition at least entails that the judgement must be justified, true, and believed (Sections 3.4-3.6). Moreover, cognition is defined in recognisably *epistemic* terms as a judgement that has objective reality. By contrast, Kant's taxonomy of opinion, belief, and knowledge differs radically from analyses of these concepts in contemporary epistemology. Kant's account does not *directly* appeal to epistemic justification conditions. Instead, Kant's

distinction is drawn in terms of psychologically accessible, phenomenal features of concrete judgements. This enables Kant to use an infallibilist concept of cognition in the Capacity Framework but a fallibilist concept of knowledge in the Concrete Framework.

I want to conclude with a reflection on a problem I raised in the introduction. I argued that a satisfactory account of knowledge for transcendental idealism must address the *conceptual* challenge (What is knowledge?) in a way that is at least acceptable for the transcendental realist (Section 1.1). After all, if we want to convince our transcendental realist friend David of transcendental idealism, we need to show that there is at least some sense in which our theory is just as much about knowledge as his doctrine. My account of Kant's concepts of cognition and knowledge can help with answering the conceptual challenge. To begin with, the distinction between the Capacity Framework and the Concrete Framework helps us distinguish between threats to knowledge that threaten the very possibility of knowing anything in light of our capacities from more mundane threats in concrete judging. This is useful because it blocks certain sorts of scepticism that exploit our fallibility in concrete judging and use it for illegitimate claims about our cognitive capacities. Kant's Capacity Framework and its associated concept of cognition can help us focus on the question of whether we are, in principle and in light of our cognitive capacities, capable of determining judgements that have objective reality.

Kant's concept of cognition is backed up by a criterion of epistemic success: objective reality. I have argued that this criterion must be sufficiently general (or "ecumenical") to also be available to our transcendental realist friend David. *If* an account of objective reality can be given that can perform its function as an epistemic success criterion, whilst being ecumenical *and* without presupposing the truth of transcendental idealism, then Kant can successfully address the conceptual challenge (Section 1.1). In my review of several proposals of accounts of objective reality (Section 6.4), I rejected proposals that must ultimately rely on a metaphysical or ontological concept of objective reality. Although many sophisticated interpretations of this sort are available, their argumentative purchase is forever threatened by a trilemma of being either too realist, idealist, or empty. Instead, we should look for a non-metaphysical and non-ontological account of objective reality that can genuinely explain the non-arbitrariness of cognition. I have proposed one possible avenue for developing an account of objective reality that I take to be fruitful: a nomic account of objective reality could explain the non-arbitrariness of cognition through the concept of laws, rather than by appeal to things in themselves. This proposal requires further development. If successful, it might put Kant's reliance on the concept of cognition – and with it on the concept of knowledge – on a stronger footing.

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