

~~D. J. G. F. S.~~ Schulting
Jacco Verburgt
Editors

The New Synthese Historical Library

Kant's Idealism

*New Interpretations of a
Controversial Doctrine*

 Springer

Kant's Idealism

The New Synthese Historical Library
Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy

VOLUME 66

Managing Editor:

SIMO KNUUTILA, *University of Helsinki*

Associate Editors:

DANIEL ELLIOT GARBER, *Princeton University*

RICHARD SORABJI, *University of London*

Editorial Consultants:

JAN A. AERTSEN, *Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln*

ROGER ARIEW, *University of South Florida*

E. JENNIFER ASHWORTH, *University of Waterloo*

MICHAEL AYERS, *Wadham College, Oxford*

GAIL FINE, *Cornell University*

R. J. HANKINSON, *University of Texas*

JAAKKO HINTIKKA, *Boston University*

PAUL HOFFMAN, *University of California, Riverside*

DAVID KONSTAN, *Brown University*

RICHARD H. KRAUT, *Northwestern University, Evanston*

ALAIN DE LIBERA, *Université de Genève*

JOHN E. MURDOCH, *Harvard University*

DAVID FATE NORTON, *McGill University*

LUCA OBERTELLO, *Università degli Studi di Genova*

ELEONORE STUMP, *St. Louis University*

ALLEN WOOD, *Stanford University*

For further volumes:

<http://www.springer.com/series/6608>

Dennis Schulting · Jacco Verburgt
Editors

Kant's Idealism

New Interpretations
of a Controversial Doctrine

 Springer

Editors

Dr. Dennis Schulting
University of Amsterdam
Department of Philosophy
Oude Turfmarkt 141–147
1012 GC Amsterdam
The Netherlands
d.schulting@uva.nl

Dr. Jacco Verburgt
VU University Amsterdam
Faculty of Philosophy
De Boelelaan 1105
1081 HV Amsterdam
The Netherlands
jhp.verburgt@ph.vu.nl

ISBN 978-90-481-9718-7

e-ISBN 978-90-481-9719-4

DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-9719-4

Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Preface

The theme of this collection of essays concerns a longstanding issue in Kant studies, namely Kant's controversial doctrine of idealism, most notably his notion of 'the thing-in-itself' and its distinction from 'appearance', which is Kant's term for an empirically real object but of which he also notoriously says that it is a 'mere representation'. The question surrounding that somewhat nebulous notion of a 'thing-in-itself' is one of those perennial questions for Kant commentators, who after more than 200 years of Kant scholarship haven't been overcome by consensus as to how even to interpret Kantian idealism and the attendant distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, let alone weigh its philosophical merits.

What is it about Kant's idealism that still occupies the minds of so many Kantians and non-Kantians alike? Why and how is it different from standard idealism about objects? How do Kant's commitment to the empirical realism of objects as appearances and his denial of their ultimate metaphysical reality go together? Is it true, as Hegel charged already early on in his critique of Kant, that Kant's objects are not genuinely, objectively real, but in fact only *subjectively* objective? That, in Hegel's view at least, his idealism is not objective *enough*?

Ever since Kant's contemporary Jacobi famously complained, in his *David Hume* (1787), that the thing-in-itself presents an obstacle to understanding the critical philosophy, many philosophers, sympathetic or not to Kant's overall thought, have struggled with it. As Jacobi pointed out, without presupposing the thing-in-itself, which somehow causally affects us, 'arouses sensations in us', one cannot 'enter the system', but *with* the presupposition it's impossible 'to remain in it' for within Kant's system it's not possible to give justifiable sense to trans-phenomenal causality. Put differently, Jacobi's point is that Kant needs an argument that objects exist 'outside of us in the *transcendental* sense', thus not 'merely subjectively but actually objectively'—which supposedly is the real relevant issue here. But such an argument is unavailable for Kant, Jacobi argues, since he claims absolute ignorance of knowledge of things in themselves (or, as Jacobi puts it, the 'transcendental object'), which is the major implication of transcendental idealism.

The idea that things in themselves affect our sensibility, but nevertheless are inaccessible for minds such as ours remains a major stumbling block for many readers of Kant. A striking exception is Hegel, who thought, with some exaggeration, that the

easiest thing to grasp in Kant's philosophy was precisely the thing-in-itself. Hegel observes with simulated wonder: "We must be quite surprised [. . .] to read so often that one does not know what the thing-in-itself is; for nothing is easier to know than this" (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, §44). But given that so many words have since been dedicated to grappling with the meaning of the thing-in-itself and its ostensible relevance for Kant's critical thought the notion is apparently not so easy to grasp as Hegel has us believe.

However, as Karl Ameriks has aptly noted, precisely because "[t]he doctrine of transcendental idealism is so difficult", "one should not turn away from considering any serious hypothesis that might shed light on it" (*Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, p. 147). Indeed, widely varying and even deflationary interpretive approaches to idealism might together give us a better picture of possible avenues of approaching this controversial doctrine that seems to be central to Kant's philosophy. In the first part of this volume, which focuses more generally on interpreting Kantian idealism, Manfred Baum argues that Kant's first concern in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not idealism at all, but rather the fundamental question regarding the a priori cognizability of objects. Insofar as idealism is conceived of in the traditional sense, namely in terms of an ontological claim regarding the existence or non-existence of objects, it is not part of the argument in the *Transcendental Analytic*. One would thus do best not to attach too much importance to the label transcendental idealism, also because Kant himself uses it rather infrequently. Ido Geiger, on the other hand, seeks to defend the thesis that in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant formulates a superior version of transcendental idealism, which is no longer committed to the idea that things in themselves as existing entities underlie appearances, as Kant on his reading still argues in the first *Critique*. Having written extensively on the topic, Ameriks himself offers what he now calls the Moderate Interpretation of Kant's idealism, which one may see as his considered view on the topic. More in particular, in his essay Ameriks subjects the naturalist assumptions underlying a very recent reading of Kant's idealism, offered by Robert Hanna, to a critique.

The articles in this volume are partly based upon the proceedings of a conference that was held at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in May 2008. The main theme of the conference concerned the relation between Kant's transcendental idealism and his transcendental logic—a relation that has been much neglected in the Kant literature. The reason for this appears to be the common but disputable conception that Kant's doctrine of idealism and his discursive logic are wholly unconnected.

More than forty years after the publication of P.F. Strawson's classic *The Bounds of Sense*, there is an ongoing interest among epistemologists in the potential for epistemology of a so-called transcendental theory of experience, which however dispenses with the ostensible speculative excess of Kant's idealism. In some way or other, it is argued, the argument for a priori constraints for the experience of objects must be able to accord with unabashed naturalism about objects and, as Strawson forcefully argued in the latter part of his influential book, it is thus to be seen as quite independent of the doctrine of transcendental idealism. One of the reasons underpinning this view is the standard empiricist assumption that the

analysis of knowledge has nothing in common with the forms of logic. This goes of course against Kant's explicit claim that the categories of experience correspond to, and are derivable from, the forms of judgment. More importantly, it obstructs an understanding of the relevance of transcendental inquiry for Kant's critical project and thus an understanding of his idealism as contributing to what he asserts, in the preface of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is a "change in the way of *thinking*" (Bxvi; emphasis added). It would appear therefore that transcendental philosophy cannot concern *merely* a theory of knowledge as traditionally conceived. In some further specifiable way, it must have to do with the logic of thought itself, not just the logic of experience.

More often it is claimed that Kant's idealism is intrinsically linked up with his controversial views on space and time, more in particular his notorious view that spatiotemporal objects are not ultimately real, and that consequently idealism can easily be detached from his views on the conceptual requirements for knowledge. However, it is debatable whether Kant's distinctive transcendental logic regarding the cognitive structure of experience can indeed be separated from idealism about spatiotemporal objects. Whereas in the earlier literature the relation between Kant's aesthetics and idealism has been extensively covered, the essays in this collection do not especially address Kant's views on spatiotemporality, important though this topic is for grasping Kant's idealism. An important goal of this volume is to fill a gap in the existing literature regarding the need for an explanation of an element that is equally important for understanding Kant's doctrine of idealism, namely his particular view on logic and the discursivity of human judgment. Nevertheless, given the closeness of the doctrine of spatiotemporality and Kant's view of human discursivity some of the arguments presented in the essays here do touch upon aspects that concern spatiotemporality.

The essays in the second part of this volume examine various lines of interpretation that reflect specifically on the relation between Kant's theory of knowledge, in particular his transcendental logic underpinning it, and his idealism. One such line of inquiry would be to explore, in a way different from a similar tack by Henry Allison, the possibility of showing that Kant's conception of discursivity itself leads to transcendental idealism. This line is adopted, in various ways, in the essays by Gary Banham, Steve Bayne, Marcel Quarfood and Dennis Schulting.

In his article, Banham connects Kant's idealist position to his Copernican Turn regarding the way in which the very notion of 'object' is a product of the self-activity of the subject and so is directly related to his definition of the transcendental unity of apperception. The sense of objectivity that we have when we refer to physical objects therefore rests on some basic reference to combinatory activity by the subject, which constitutes what Banham calls the 'idealism of apperception'. According to Bayne, there is a way of seeing an important and close connection between Kant's transcendental idealism and his theory of concepts. By first distinguishing the concepts as marks theory, the concepts as images theory, and the concepts as rules theory—which he discusses against the backdrop of Leibniz', Locke's and Hume's respective theories—Bayne subsequently points out that only the latter theory of

concepts as rules is necessary, though not sufficient, for establishing a transcendental idealism based on Kant's Copernican hypothesis, namely the hypothesis that objects must conform to a "rule" which, as Kant asserts in a famous passage in the B-preface, "I have to presuppose in myself before any object is given to me, hence a priori" (Bxvii). Quarfood defends the thesis that it is only by way of examining more closely the contrast between human discursive understanding and non-discursive types of understanding that some peculiarities of Kant's conception of idealism become more understandable, in particular his otherwise rather enigmatic statements about the relation between whole and parts in things in themselves. Finally in this part, Schulting argues that idealism follows already from the constraints that the use of the categories, in particular the categories of quality, places on the conceivability of things in themselves. His claim is that, although it is not only possible but also necessary to think things in themselves, it doesn't follow that by merely thinking we have a full grasp of the nature of things in themselves.

The separability issue not only concerns epistemological readings. Some have offered metaphysical interpretations that accommodate Kant's talk about things in themselves and appearances whilst ignoring idealism, most prominently Rae Langton in her book *Kantian Humility* (1998). Langton has herself been the object of intense scrutiny. In the introductory essay below, Schulting discusses in particular Ameriks' critique of Langton's metaphysical position on Kant's transcendental distinction, which at the same time brings into view his own distinctive metaphysical reading of idealism. Lucy Allais, who in some respects is close to Langton, takes a novel approach to the usual exclusionary options of being a two-aspecter or a two-worlder regarding the transcendental distinction. In recent work, she has proposed that the best way to read Kant's idealism is by seeing it as a theory committed to the reality of things that can be characterized in two ways, which correspond to their having an inner nature that is inaccessible to human minds and to their having an appearance nature, which can be cognized by us. It's in this last sense, in the manner that they are mind-dependent, that things are metaphysically ideal, according to Allais. In the introductory essay, Schulting elaborates on Allais' views. In her own article in this volume, Allais links her middle road approach to transcendental idealism to the question of separability in the context of the Transcendental Deduction. She thinks that there are good reasons to believe that at least one line of thought in the Deduction may be compatible with straightforward realism. Allais thus argues that Kant's argument for the possibility of objective experience is separable from his argument for idealism.

Notwithstanding the great variety of interpretations of Kantian idealism, the majority of contemporary readings still appears to be based upon the assumption that the thing-in-itself is a self-standing numerically identical individual or entity that, as extramentally existing real thing, must in some sense correlate with the object as appearance. A genuinely neglected alternative would be to consider the thing-in-itself, not as a self-standing entity, but as a necessary postulated object of Reason, an *ens rationis*, which issues from the constraints of thought itself, but which must at the same time still be accounted for in terms of an uncognizable 'transcendental substratum', as Kant calls it, or a reality underlying appearances, albeit that Kant appears to see the nature of this reality as definitely non-empirical.

In the third part of the volume Dietmar Heidemann, Christian Onof, and Jacco Verburgt, each in their own way and from different angles, consider aspects linked to the issues involving the nature or, indeed, the very concept of the thing-in-itself or the ‘in-itself’, as Onof calls it. Heidemann considers the question whether Kant’s view of the thing-in-itself commits him to skepticism. Heidemann argues that transcendental idealism is not a skeptical theory concerning the existence of things in themselves, since the distinction between appearances and things in themselves must not be seen in terms of traditional skepticism with respect to the external world. Traditional skepticism rather presupposes what Kant terms transcendental realism, which holds that external objects exist in a strong ontological sense as things in themselves independently of our minds. The underlying assumptions of the skeptical hypothesis are thus not compatible with transcendental idealism. Onof focuses on the issue how we must understand what it is for something to have an ‘in-itself’ character on the basis of an explanation of the way we are causally affected by a thing. The ‘in-itself’, Onof argues, is the ground of affection and also that of which the empirical object is the appearance. Whilst we must think the ‘in-itself’ as conceptually indeterminate, its indeterminacy is a surplus of content characterizing its intrinsic nature. Onof’s proposed understanding of the ‘in-itself’ suggests it does not define an ontological realm distinct from that of empirical objects, but also that a dual-aspect interpretation of transcendental idealism is untenable. And finally, Verburgt stresses the need for including the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* into the discussion about Kant’s idealism. Verburgt concentrates on the section on the Transcendental Ideal in which Kant defines the notion of ‘the thing-in-itself’ in terms of an ideal of reason. He discusses in some detail Béatrice Longuenesse’s reading of this section and queries her more general view on the relation between the Analytic and the Dialectic, which reflects an inadequate perspective on Kant’s Transcendental Logic and a conspicuous neglect of his idealism.

The contributors to this collection of essays do not agree with one another on every aspect of Kantian idealism. What they do, however, agree upon is the continuing relevance of addressing the topic of idealism, not least because Kant’s overall philosophy is often seen, rightly or wrongly, in the light of this controversial doctrine. We believe that the essays collected here offer a comprehensive analysis of cardinal aspects of Kant’s idealism, which have hitherto not or insufficiently been considered in the Kant literature.

We wish to acknowledge the support of ASCA, in particular Eloë Kingma, and the Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam for making the conference Kant’s Transcendental Logic & Idealism, the proceedings of which lie at the basis of part of this volume, financially possible. We would like to express our gratitude to the authors who contributed their papers. We also thank an anonymous reader for Springer for his helpful comments on the manuscript, and not least Ingrid van Laarhoven for her outstanding work as our editor at Springer.

London, England
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Dennis Schulting
Jacco Verburgt

Editorial Notes

Throughout the volume references to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are indicated in the standard way by means of reference to the original pagination of the A- and B-edition (A = B).

Other works of Kant are referred to as AA = *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Herausgegeben von der Königlich Preußischen (später Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900–, followed by volume, page and (where relevant) line numbers (e.g., AA 3: 371.15–19).

Additional abbreviations of Kant's works used in this volume

- CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*
- CJ *Critique of (the Power of) Judgment*
- OP *Opus postumum*
- Prol.* *Prolegomena for Any Future Metaphysics*
- R *Reflexionen*, vols. 16–18 of the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA) of Kant's works

Contents

1 Kant's Idealism: The Current Debate	1
Dennis Schulting	
Part I Interpreting Transcendental Idealism	
2 Kant's Idealism on a Moderate Interpretation	29
Karl Ameriks	
3 Objects and Objectivity in Kant's First <i>Critique</i>	55
Manfred Baum	
4 Transcendental Idealism in the Third <i>Critique</i>	71
Ido Geiger	
Part II Transcendental Idealism & Logic	
5 Transcendental Idealism and the Transcendental Deduction	91
Lucy Allais	
6 Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Apperception	109
Gary Banham	
7 Marks, Images, and Rules: Concepts and Transcendental Idealism	127
Steven M. Bayne	
8 Discursivity and Transcendental Idealism	143
Marcel Quarfood	
9 Limitation and Idealism: Kant's 'Long' Argument from the Categories	159
Dennis Schulting	
Part III Transcendental Idealism & The Thing in Itself	
10 Appearance, Thing-in-Itself, and the Problem of the Skeptical Hypothesis	195
Dietmar H. Heidemann	

11 Thinking the In-itself and Its Relation to Appearances 211
Christian Onof

**12 How to Account for Reason’s Interest in an Ultimate
Prototype? A Note on Kant’s Doctrine
of the Transcendental Ideal 237**
Jacco Verburgt

Index 255

Contributors

Lucy Allais Department of Philosophy, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH, UK; Department of Philosophy, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa, l.l.allais@sussex.ac.uk; lucy.allais@wits.ac.za

Karl Ameriks Department of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA, ameriks.2@nd.edu

Gary Banham Department of Politics and Philosophy, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester M15 6LL, UK, g.banham@mmu.ac.uk

Manfred Baum Department of Philosophy, University of Wuppertal, D-42097 Wuppertal, Germany, baum@uni-wuppertal.de

Steven M. Bayne Department of Philosophy, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT 06824, USA, sbayne@fairfield.edu

Ido Geiger Department of Philosophy, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva 84105, Israel, geigeri@bgu.ac.il

Dietmar H. Heidemann Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Luxembourg, L-7720 Walferdange, Luxembourg, dietmar.heidemann@uni.lu

Christian Onof Department of Philosophy, School of Social Science, Birkbeck College, University of London, London WC1E 7HX, UK, c.onof@imperial.ac.uk

Marcel Quarfood Department of Philosophy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala SE-751 26, Sweden, marcel.quarfood@filosofi.uu.se

Dennis Schulting Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, 1012 GC Amsterdam, The Netherlands, d.schulting@uva.nl

Jacco Verburgt Faculty of Philosophy, VU University Amsterdam, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands, jhp.verburgt@ph.vu.nl

About the Contributors

Lucy Allais is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa and at the University of Sussex, England. Her most recent publications on Kant include ‘Kant’s Argument for Transcendental Idealism in the Transcendental Aesthetic’ (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 2010), ‘Kant, Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space’ (*Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2009), ‘Kant’s Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy’ (*Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2007), and ‘Intrinsic Natures: A Critique of Langton on Kant’ (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 2006).

Karl Ameriks is Hank McMahon Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Among his publications are *Kant’s Theory of Mind* (Oxford, 1982, 2000), *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Cambridge, 2000), *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques* (Oxford, 2003), and *Kant and the Historical Turn* (Oxford, 2006). He is also co-editor and co-translator of Kant’s *Lectures on Metaphysics* (Cambridge, 1997), editor of *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge, 2001), and co-editor of *Kant’s Moral and Legal Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2009). He co-edits the series *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*.

Gary Banham is Reader in Transcendental Philosophy at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is the author of the trilogy *Kant and the Ends of Aesthetics* (MacMillan, 2000), *Kant’s Practical Philosophy* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), and *Kant’s Transcendental Imagination* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2006). He is chief editor of *The Continuum Companion to Kant* (Continuum, 2012) and general editor of the Palgrave MacMillan series *Renewing Philosophy*. He is also editor of the journal *Kant Studies Online*.

Manfred Baum is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany. He is the vice-president and formerly president of the Internationale Kant-Gesellschaft and co-publisher of *Kant-Studien*. His many publications include *Deduktion und Beweis in Kants Transzendentalphilosophie. Untersuchungen zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Athenäum, 1986) and *Die Entstehung der Hegelschen Dialektik* (Bouvier, 1986, 1989). He also edited Klaus Reich’s philosophical legacy in Klaus Reich *Gesammelte Schriften* (Meiner, 2001).

Steven M. Bayne is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fairfield University, USA. He has published *Kant on Causation. On the Fivefold Routes to the Principle of Causation* (SUNY, 2004).

Ido Geiger is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He is the author of *The Founding Act of Modern Ethical Life. Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy* (Stanford, 2007). Most recently, he published 'Is Teleological Judgement (Still) Necessary? Kant's Arguments in the Analytic and the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment' (*British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 2009) and 'What is the Use of the Universal Law Formula of the Categorical Imperative?' (*British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 2010).

Dietmar H. Heidemann is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Luxembourg. He is author of *Kant und das Problem des metaphysischen Idealismus* (de Gruyter, 1998) and *Der Begriff des Skeptizismus* (de Gruyter, 2007). He co-edited the collection of essays *Warum Kant heute?* (de Gruyter, 2004). He is also editor of the *Kant Yearbook*.

Christian Onof is Honorary Fellow in Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London. His most recent publications concerning Kant are 'Kant's Conception of Self as Subject and Its Embodiment' (*Kant Yearbook*, 2010) and 'Reconstructing the Grounding of Kant's Ethics: A Critical Assessment' (*Kant-Studien*, 2009). He is also Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering at Imperial College, London.

Marcel Quarfood is Research Fellow at Uppsala University, Sweden. Among other publications, he is the author of *Transcendental Idealism and the Organism. Essays on Kant* (Almqvist and Wiksell, 2004) and 'The Circle and the Two Standpoints' (in the collection *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, de Gruyter, 2006). He translated Kant's *Prolegomena* into Swedish.

Dennis Schulting is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. His most recent publications include 'Non-Apperceptive Consciousness' (in the forthcoming volume *Kant's Philosophy of the Unconscious*, de Gruyter), 'Kant, non-conceptuele inhoud en synthese' (*Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 2010), 'Kant's Copernican Analogy: Beyond the Non-Specific Reading' (*Studi kantiani*, 2009) and 'On Strawson on Kantian Apperception' (*South African Journal of Philosophy*, 2008). A monograph entitled *Kant's Deduction From Apperception. Explaining the Categories* is forthcoming. He is also co-editor of the forthcoming *The Continuum Companion to Kant*.

Jacco Verburgt is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the VU University Amsterdam. Among other publications on Kant and neo-Kantianism, he has published the monograph entitled *De radicaliteit van het kwaad: over Karl Barths gesprek met Immanuel Kant en Martin Heidegger* (Narratio, 2007). A translation into Dutch of essays by Hermann Cohen is forthcoming. He is also a contributor to and co-editor of the online source *Neukantianismus-Forschung Aktuell*.

Chapter 1

Kant's Idealism: The Current Debate

An Introductory Essay

Dennis Schulting

In the last century much has been written about Kant's idealism and the problems surrounding the distinction between appearance and thing in itself. Notably, the great Kant scholar Erich Adickes dedicated a whole book to the topic, entitled *Kant und das Ding an sich*, published in 1924, in which all relevant passages in Kant's entire work were canvassed that dealt, implicitly or explicitly, with idealism or the transcendental distinction between appearance and thing in itself so as to clarify the meaning of Kant's often ambiguous language. For Adickes it was in any case beyond doubt that the notion of things in themselves referred to Kant's commitment to a thoroughgoing realism and the mind-independence of the things that we cognize.¹ Fifty years on, in 1974, came the seminal work by Gerold Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*, whose specifically non-metaphysical reading of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves, and the apparent solving of a few riddles that such a reading yields (e.g., the problem of noumenal causality), has found, in the Anglophone world, an ally of sorts in Henry Allison, who with his already classic *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense* (1983, 2004) defended the idea, against the predominant view that existed previously in English language Kant scholarship, that the nature of Kant's idealism should be seen in the light of his epistemology.

According to Allison, drawing on Prauss's work, Kant's idealism doesn't commit Kant to any speculative metaphysics or ontology that lies beyond the limits of knowledge. This view of Kant's idealism has since come to be known as the epistemological or methodological reading,² which emphasizes the perspectival change

D. Schulting (✉)

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam,
1012 GC, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: d.schulting@uva.nl

¹See for an excellent critical account of Adickes' position Bird (2006: 554ff.). See also [Chapter 9](#) by Schulting in this volume.

²The sense of 'methodological' here is nicely put by Michelle Grier, who states that it represents the position which "is very generally characterized by the claim that the representation of the thing as it is in itself is one that is methodologically entailed by the critical procedure of reflecting on objects in relation to our cognitive faculties" (2001: 89).

brought about by the transcendental turn and thus the way that issues of realism, and a fortiori the status of things *an sich*, should henceforth be regarded. Allison emphasizes the thought that to regard objects from the perspective of their necessary conceptual or, as he initially put it, epistemic conditions is precisely *not to regard* them from the perspective of their being qua things in themselves, from which the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction must be understood. Allison has been accused of presenting an anodyne interpretation of the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction (Langton 1998, 9), as it ostensibly yields a mere tautology that can't be what Kant had intended by making the distinction.³ But, although the way Allison presented his views in the first edition of *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* could be seen as vulnerable to this criticism, he later clarified his position as having to do with Kant's discursivity thesis, which includes the dual theory of the necessary constraints of sensibility and thought, not any mere notion of an epistemic condition (see Allison 1996, 4–8; 2006, 10ff.; Wood et al. 2007, 34ff.). This might still strike one as too thin a characterization of Kant's idealism—for such a reading remains distinctively non-ontological, but it at least shows that the distinction itself is not to be taken as a *mere* conceptual one.

On Allison's view, the distinction that idealism draws between appearances and things in themselves rests on the difference between two types of *concept of an object* rather than two kinds of object, one of which would have greater ontological status. The one concept (the object as appearance) includes a reference to the necessary conditions for the perception, and cognition, of an object whilst the other (object as thing in itself) includes no such reference, that is to say, it abstracts from the human cognitive perspective.⁴ And so the distinction drawn between appearance and thing in itself has no ontological import. As Allison says, the transcendental distinction has been “deontologized” (1996: 18). It merely indicates the importance of the transcendental turn regarding how to consider things, and the way we cognize them, at all. Appearances are the things as they appear to us, and things in themselves are the very same things as they *do not* appear to us, i.e., as they would be in abstraction from the way we experience them.

Allison's reading has sometimes been characterized in terms of a two-aspect reading so as to differentiate it from the ontological two-object or two-world interpretation. However, as Allison has subsequently pointed out (2004: 16), this description is somewhat confusing since aspect theories are usually associated with *metaphysical* conceptions of the distinction. Two-aspect views can either be a form of “property dualism” or, as Allison sees it, a methodological view regarding a “contrast between two ways in which [. . .] objects can be considered in a philosophical reflection on the conditions of their cognition” (2006: 1). But, as Lucy Allais has pointed out (see below), this last characterization can also again be seen in terms of a metaphysical interpretation. I return to Allison in Section 1 below.

³Cf. Quarfood's comments on Langton's critique in Quarfood (2004: 31–34); interestingly, Quarfood points out how also Langton's own reading can be construed in a way that yields nothing but a tautology.

⁴See also Quarfood (2004: 22–23).

Against the backdrop of the major work carried out by Karl Ameriks in the 1980s and 1990s and afterwards, in which he showed, in sharp contrast to Allison, that Kant was far more metaphysically committed and hence that his idealism must be seen as a thesis regarding the ontologically non-ultimate nature of appearances, a return to a more metaphysical approach to Kantian idealism can be discerned in the Kant scholarship of the last ten years. Prime examples of this approach are Langton (1998), Van Cleve (1999) and Allais (2006, 2007). Notwithstanding the possibility that, as Marcel Quarfood has suggested,⁵ the potential of methodological or epistemological readings hasn't been fully realized, I shall focus here on these more metaphysically informed readings (in Sections 2 and 3).

In the space of a single paper it is impossible to do full justice to the richness of the articles discussed below, or to exhaustively address all the minutely or not so minutely different avenues that are being pursued (or could be pursued). The sheer quality of the papers, and in one case monograph, of the last decade indicates that the debate surrounding Kant's doctrine of idealism is very much alive, notwithstanding the lasting influence on Kant commentators in the English speaking world of the early dismissive approach to idealism propagated by the likes of P.F. Strawson and Jonathan Bennett (one detects this continuing influence in the work of Arthur Collins, Paul Guyer, Robert Hanna,⁶ Kenneth Westphal and others). What I shall be able to do in the following is merely scratch the surface of the various new lines of reasoning that are opened up, in these recent articles, by reconsidering certain ingrained approaches to Kant's idealism from the last three decades or so. I want to mainly focus on discussions of the distinction between two types of reading of the idealism thesis, which are roughly known as the two-aspect and the two-world view respectively, in particular how this distinction has become blurred again in recent approaches, which makes interpretive issues even more complex than they already were. This is indicative of the problematic nature of that earlier distinction but, of course, also of the very distinction those interpretations were supposed to clarify, i.e., Kant's own distinction between appearances and things in themselves. It seems—and this becomes apparent also in these most recent interpretations—that there are grounds in Kant which show, or suggest, that he was a 'two-aspecter' (see e.g., Bxxvii), and there are equally grounds in the text that indicate, or at least suggest, his commitment to 'two-worldism' (e.g., A288=B344; A372; A249). Without in any way trying to solve that riddle in the space of this article, I attempt in the following to paint a clearer picture of the landscape of interpretive routes that very recently are being taken in Kant scholarship concerning his doctrine of idealism.

⁵Quarfood writes: "[T]he resources of the methodological two-aspect view are currently underrated, and [...] the motivations for a robustly metaphysical reading of the notion of the thing in itself, to the extent that they rest on legitimate desiderata, can be met also on this interpretation." (2004: 16–17) Quarfood looks at a version of a two-aspect reading of idealism provided by Gerd Buchdahl, which is loosely based on a Husserlian procedure, which charts the possible realizations of the concept of 'object'. (2004: 39ff.) See also Caropreso (2003: 143ff.) for an interpretation in a Praussian vein.

⁶See Ameriks in this volume for a critique of Hanna.

1 The Epistemological Reading Reconsidered: Allison Meets His Critics Again

In a recent article on Kant's idealism, Allison (2006) seeks to defend again his earlier thesis that Kantian idealism is best interpreted as a thesis related to the theory concerning the epistemological constraints of human knowledge. Allison (2006: 2) maintains the view that, since transcendental realism isn't a really existing ontological position, its counterpart transcendental idealism isn't a real ontological position either but rather a replacement of ontology altogether (alluding to Kant's famous phrase at A247=B303). As in the revised version of *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* and in a later contribution to a debate with Guyer and Wood (Wood et al., 2007), Allison here reaffirms the starting point in explaining transcendental idealism in terms of it being the exclusionary contrast of transcendental realism. This is an important aspect of Allison's interpretation of Kant's idealism, and not without its problems, as is pointed out by Allen Wood in a reply to Allison (Wood et al., 2007). I'm here not concerned with that argument in particular, as it would lead us too far astray in intricate discussions concerning the role of the Antinomies in establishing the doctrine of transcendental idealism. It is at any rate clear that Wood for one isn't at all convinced of the plausibility of seeing transcendental idealism in the light of it being the contrasting theory of transcendental realism (he speaks of an all too "Manichean" opposition [2007: 9]), nor he is convinced that on the basis of the apagogic proofs contained in the Antinomies Kant can conclude to the truth of transcendental idealism. But I leave that complicated discussion for another occasion.

An important, apparently new aspect that Allison introduces is the difference between two types of contrast, one between transcendental and a priori cognition, being "a matter of level", and one between a transcendental and empirical use, which "is a matter of scope".⁷ One of the implications for the topic of idealism is that the difference between transcendental realism and empirical realism lies in the "scope assigned to spatiotemporal predicates rather than the degree or kind of reality attributed to them". "In other words", as Allison writes, "it is not that empirical realism assigns a lesser degree of reality to such predicates, but merely that it restricts their applicability to the domain of possible experience". All in all, "transcendental idealism, *even as it appears in the Aesthetic*, is best seen as a deflationary proposal rather than as an ontological thesis in direct competition with the various forms of transcendentalism" (Allison 2006, 6). Allison talks even of transcendental idealism being "therapeutic" (2006: 17). (Notice, as Paul Guyer already pointed out early on in his criticism of Allison's approach [Guyer 1987, 333], that however deflationary the interpretation might be, it still commits Kant to an ontological thesis, namely that things in themselves *are not* spatiotemporal; Allison accepts this insofar as he now appears to acknowledge that the epistemological reading doesn't ultimately establish the restriction thesis.) According to Allison, Kant's critical position on spatiotemporality is not an ontological variant among others but a "radical

⁷Allison (2006: 5). But see also already Allison (1996: 18).

alternative *to* ontology” and not “a novel move *within* ontology” (2006: 6, 7). What Kant believes is required, on Allison’s reading, is “the abandonment of the unwarranted presumption that the spatiotemporal structure of our experience is projectible onto things in general” (2006: 12). Kant ‘curbs this tendency’ of transcendental realism, by first arguing that representations of space and time are forms of sensibility, and not concepts of the understanding, which undercuts the understanding’s tendency “to project its ‘pure’ (a priori) concepts onto things in general” (2006: 13). Subsequently, Kant introduces the concept of the noumenon as a limiting concept, which sets limits to sensibility (A255=B311). Allison makes the ostensibly crucial distinction between the concept of a thing in general, which Kant took over from the ontological tradition, and the concept of a thing in itself, which he invented himself according to Allison (2006: 9).⁸ Now the transcendental realist “inflates spatiotemporal predicates into predicates of things in general” and thus “unavoidably attributes them to things in themselves as well” (2006: 9). By disentangling these concepts, in Allison’s view, it becomes clear that what the understanding determines to be the characteristics of the concept of a thing in general can’t eo ipso be taken to map on things in themselves.

In his critique of Allison, Guyer reiterates his earlier critique of Allison’s claim that Kant’s restriction thesis follows from the epistemological condition claim rather than being a substantive claim about ontology. Guyer, about whom Allison, in his reply to Guyer, dryly notes that he isn’t “a fan of transcendental idealism” (Wood et al. 2007, 31), still thinks that it is clear that Kant “*does* offer arguments that are intended to show that spatiality and temporality in particular are not and cannot be properties of things that exist independently of our representations of those things and which *for that reason* must be omitted from our conception of things as they are in themselves” (Wood et al. 2007, 13). He also still believes Allison is not capable of showing that “Kant excludes spatiality and temporality only from the *concepts* of things as they are and does not ever himself assert that *things* really are not spatial and temporal” (ibid.). Guyer reasserts his earlier statements that Kant in fact “formulates a conception of things in themselves that does not *abstract from* but *denies* their spatiality and/or temporality *because* of this account [i.e., ‘an account of the conditions of the possibility of a priori cognition of the spatiality and/or temporality of the objects of our cognition’]” (Wood et al. 2007, 14). Allison protests against such an abstractionist reading, which wrongly suggests that the objects from which the spatiotemporal properties are abstracted are the same objects that have those properties. He accuses Guyer, with some right, of assuming the transcendental-realist position that things in themselves are the real objects that are being intuited. According to Allison, Guyer “takes the idealism to consist in the relocation of [spatiotemporal] properties [of real things] to the subjective domain of ‘mere representations’” (Wood et al. 2007, 33).

But Guyer is correct in pointing out that seeing, as Allison does, a claim regarding epistemic conditions (suitably amended) as saying that they reflect “the structure

⁸Cf. Allison (1996: 16). Here, Allison emphasizes the similar distinction between the concept of the transcendental object and the concept of a thing in itself.

of the mind *rather than* the nature of the object as it is in itself” still amounts to “an obviously ontological claim” (Wood et al. 2007, 16). Moreover, it is “a *non sequitur* to infer that the properties in virtue of which objects satisfy our conditions of access to them must be contributed by the mind, *unless there is some specific reason why those properties could only be contributed by the mind*”. And that there is such a “specific reason”, Guyer observes, Kant tries to argue precisely in his argument for transcendental idealism, on account of which it is held that spatiality is denied of things in themselves “*because of his assumption that the contrary would be incompatible with our a priori knowledge of spatiality*” (Wood et al. 2007, 17). Kant thus “believes the *denial* of the spatiality of things as they are in themselves to follow from the apriority of our knowledge of that spatiality.” Nevertheless, as before, Guyer still firmly thinks that because it is based on a conflation of conditional and absolute necessity, “Kant’s transcendental idealism therefore rests on a rotten foundation” (Wood et al. 2007, 18).⁹

It is further interesting to note that Guyer insists that, although his reading has been lumped together with two-world readings, he himself has actually “never held that Kant posits a second set of things that are ontologically distinct from ordinary things or appearances, except again of course in the cases of the soul and God [. . .]”. Guyer continues: “I have attributed to Kant not a two-world view, but an alternative version of a two-aspect view, on which Kant holds that spatiality and temporality are not aspects of things as they are in themselves but are a necessary aspect of our representations of them” (Wood et al. 2007, 12). This clarification makes the interpretive landscape even less easily classifiable than it already seemed. It appears that, if we allow for the notion that (putative) objects such as soul and God *are* distinct entities for almost any commentator (how could they not!), almost no commentator holds explicitly the two-world view. The two-worlder appears to be a straw man. The pertinent question is what ontological status Guyer assigns to ‘representation’, given that as alluded earlier representation is meant in a merely subjective, i.e. psychological, sense.¹⁰ From his comparison of Kant’s account of space and time to the modernists’ account of secondary qualities, Guyer seems to suggest some sort of phenomenalist take on Kant’s theory of space and time, which in some respect at least brings him in close company with another two-worlder who also says he isn’t actually one, namely James Van Cleve, who presents a strongly phenomenalist reading of Kant’s idealism (see Section 3.1 below).¹¹

⁹See further Ameriks (2003a) for a possible mediating of Allison’s and Guyer’s positions, and specifically on Kant’s apparent confusion of absolute and conditional necessity in the context of the doctrine of transcendental idealism.

¹⁰Notice that also Allison, in an earlier reply to criticisms against his notion of epistemic condition, is ambiguous with regard to the connection of objectivity with representation, as opposed to “the existence of things in themselves” (1996: 5), which oddly makes him equally vulnerable to phenomenism about appearances. Kant’s idealism can’t just have to do with how we epistemically *represent* things but must also be about how things *are* insofar as they are objects for us, lest Kant’s claims about the objectivity of appearances as empirically real objects are vacuous.

¹¹And indeed Guyer does suggest this when he talks about Kant’s alleged “degrading” or “downgrading” of spatial objects to mere mental items (cf. respectively Guyer 1987, 335; Guyer 2006, 51).

Lastly, Guyer suggests that there is a further important, and I think rather problematic, reason which ostensibly undermines Allison's thesis that Kant's conception of things in themselves should be read in terms of abstracting from the very conditions for the cognition of things. This reason rests on the fact, Guyer says, that "the *categories* are also epistemic conditions for our cognition of objects, but [that] Kant never denies that we can use the categories in conceiving of things in themselves". Since, according to Guyer, Kant "never denies that the categories enter into our *conception* of things in themselves", the categories, being clearly epistemic conditions, cannot themselves "be a sufficient reason for exclusion from the concept of things in themselves" (Wood et al. 2007, 15) In other words, Guyer reasons, epistemic conditions can't just by themselves be grounds for the unknowability thesis or the restriction thesis.

This might seem an apposite critique of Allison's notion of epistemic conditions and of the way that by means of it Allison helps himself too quickly to the restriction thesis. However, Guyer's belief that Kant "never denies that the categories enter into our *conception* of things in themselves" is seriously ambiguous. Although categories might be seen as playing a role in the *conception* of things in themselves, what they do not determine are the properties that make up the thing in itself *itself*. In other words, categories do not enter into the determination, by virtue of conceptual analysis, of the thing in itself proper, even quite apart from questions regarding sensible schematization of the categories. Guyer, as so many others, conflates the *concept* of a thing in itself (de dicto) and the thing in itself (de re). I tend to concur with Allison on this score, who replies to Guyer: "[I]s [Guyer] suggesting that for Kant things as they are in themselves *satisfy* these intellectual conditions [i.e., the categories, D.S.], which would mean that they are cognized through them? This can hardly be said of the Critical Kant; though he did seem to hold some such view in the Inaugural Dissertation and even in the *Critique*, he acknowledges that we can form analytic judgments regarding things so considered." (Wood et al. 2007, 34–35; cf. Allison 1996, 18–19)

2 Novel Two-Aspect Readings

Lately, there has been a boom in literature on Kant which focuses—often with the not always so helpful help of current theorizing—on Kant's idealism in terms of a two-aspect view that is ontological in outlook rather than methodological or epistemological (see among others Allais 2006, 2007, Friebe 2007, Westphal 2004 and Rosefeldt 2007, whose dispositionalist reading is presented as a variation on Allais' interpretation; I discuss the first three authors below). This confirms Allison's observation that his own epistemological/methodological approach isn't in fact a two-aspect view (see above). Quarfood (2004) has helpfully characterized the difference between the metaphysical and methodological or epistemological approaches in terms of adopting a 'transcendent' and a 'transcendental' or 'immanent' point of view respectively. The "transcendent" point of view, which "takes a top-down approach" (2004: 36), accepts the limits that Kant imposes on our having cognitive access to things in themselves but nonetheless deems it legitimate to inquire

into the nature of things in themselves. Quarfood also points out that metaphysical two-aspect interpretations bear a deeper family resemblance to the two-world view than admitted, since both the two-world view and the metaphysical two-aspect view think it possible to establish, “by means of general metaphysical reasoning”, “the existence of unknowable properties belonging to the thing in itself”. That is to say, “both views take Kant’s distinction between appearance and thing in itself to be primarily ontological rather than epistemological. [...] What both [the metaphysical two-aspect and the two-world view] have in common is that Kant’s distinction is considered to involve the assumption of a realm of entities of different ontological status than objects on the empirical level have.” (Quarfood 2004, 35)

2.1 The Bold Metaphysical Two-Aspect View

It is perhaps more natural to regard aspect theories as ontological rather than as having to do with epistemological readings such as Allison’s. In the context of a realist interpretation of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, Kenneth Westphal (2004: 56–61) adumbrates such a metaphysical “dual aspect” reading of idealism, referring to Kant’s talk of a double perspective in the Bxviii note in the first *Critique*. Westphal writes: “[T]he double aspect view cannot simply be two ways of thinking about or describing objects. Rather, those two ways of thinking about objects must be based on, because they can only be justified by, the metaphysically distinct characteristics objects have as intuited by us and as not intuited.” (2004: 57) The classic example of a metaphysical dual-aspect theory is Spinoza’s view regarding mind and body, which as irreducible attributes both belong to, or more precisely express, one identical and unique substance. Associating Kant’s transcendental theory, as the extreme opposite of Spinoza’s naturalism, with aspect theory would then seem not so befitting.

It appears that Westphal, and perhaps metaphysical two-aspecters who approach Kant’s idealism in general, assumes the naturalist position that the objects as things in themselves are given, with all their determinate characteristics, to which we subsequently latch on by means of intuiting these objects or aspects of these objects, or not as the case may be. This seems hardly Kantian, not even in spirit. Kant’s distinction between things in themselves and appearances appears to be relocated to the given object, the thing in itself, which is characterizable by two distinct types of state, so that the object itself has different states which are either intuitable or not. Westphal affirms: “Kant holds that the distinction between phenomena and noumena is not simply one of description, but concerns objects intuited by us and as not intuited, or, more specifically, *those states of an object that occur or are evident as we intuit them and the other, nonintuitable states of that object*. On Kant’s view, the former are all spatiotemporal, though none of the latter are.” (2004: 57; italics mine)

Westphal thus believes that the “double aspect” character is not a matter of distinguishing between “two ways of describing” these two kinds of aspect, but rather of distinguishing between two kinds of properties that the thing itself has (2004: 58). The characteristics that things have, and thus the way they are described

subsequently, depends on Kant's idealism with regard to the forms of intuition; so their characteristics depend on whether they are or aren't intuited by us in the specific manner of our intuiting. The contrast, then, between two aspects is to do with the kinds of properties a thing has, either as intuited or as unintuited. Astoundingly, the metaphysical nature of this distinction that Westphal ascribes to Kant's assumption of the ideal nature of the forms of intuition is described by him as a "metaphysical fact" (2004: 58).

2.2 Allais' Middle Course

In her article 'Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy', Lucy Allais aims to steer "a middle course" (2007: 460) between the phenomenalist and methodological readings of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves. Allais is concerned with refuting the phenomenalist reading of Kant's idealism, which claims that appearances are (merely) mental representations. She emphasizes that phenomenism conflicts with Kant's metaphysics of experience, which takes empirical objects to be really existing things that exist unperceived. On her account, Kant is not a constructionist, for whom the necessary constraints of experience are "mere ways of organising sense-data" (ibid., 461; see further the references at 461n.9). Allais notes: "Kant is not concerned merely with how we construct experience, but also to argue that there must actually be substance that endures through time and is not created or destroyed" (461n.10). In other words, there must be a way that appearances are seen, not as mental representations, or as existing in the mind, or as sense data, but as publicly perceivable objects that endure unperceived and form part of causally governed empirical nature, but which also—and this marks the distinctiveness of Allais' interpretation—allows appearances to be mind-dependent as opposed to things in themselves, which are mind-independent. In order to prop up her reading of appearances as both being *of* substantial existing things in themselves and mind-dependent, she alludes to Kant's secondary quality analogy in the *Prolegomena*.¹² She argues that once we have a proper account of Kant's theory of perception in place (namely in terms of a direct theory of perception), and so not take Kant as a representationalist, and "once we have the appropriate account of secondary qualities" (460), this analogy is very useful in understanding the in-between status of appearances as of things in themselves *and* mind-dependent (see ibid., 463ff.; see for problems facing Allais' analogy Rosefeldt 2007, 184ff.).

Although it is not always crystal clear where Allais effectively positions herself in regard to adopting the one or two object or world view, she does appear to go for the one-world view (2006: 146; most clearly at p. 163; see also the title of her 2004 article). She wants also to chart a middle course between what she calls "the extremes of seeing Kant as committed to the existence of supersensible,

¹²In the earlier literature, Arthur Collins has suggested a similar comparison (see Collins 1999, 11–12, 17).

non-spatiotemporal objects distinct from the things of which we have experience (noumena in the positive sense), and denying that Kant has any real metaphysical commitment to the existence of things in themselves.” (2007: 462n.17) Allais wants to stress that Kant is committed to the existence of really mind-independent things, which as mind-independent exist independently from us, and so are not appearances, but which have another side to them, for which they are dependent on us to the extent in which they appear to us. Allais sees her view (and that of Langton 1998) as a correction of methodological one-world views (2006: 146), but stopping short of what she intimates is extreme noumenalism about supersensible entities (148). It seems that for Allais the only things that would have a distinct existence as supersensible entities, were they to exist, would be noumena in the positive sense, and things in themselves are not these. But, against Allais, one could argue that to say that things in themselves aren’t such positive distinct entities, i.e., noumena, doesn’t imply that there is no way in which an ontological distinction can be upheld between things in themselves and appearances as two *kinds of object*.

In general, Allais’ view is an attractive one, as it enables us to make sense of the very term that Kant adopts, ‘Erscheinung’, to denote the object of experience. An appearance is not a mere mental item, but a genuine way or mode in which a mind-independent thing or object exists *for us*, apart from the way it exists in itself as mind-independent. On the other hand, at one point in the A-Deduction Kant famously says that “appearances themselves are nothing but sensible representations [*sinnliche Vorstellungen*]”, which “in themselves [*an sich*] [. . .] must not be seen as objects (outside the power of representation)” (A104; translation Guyer and Wood altered). At A127 Kant is even clearer: “[A]ppearances, as such, cannot occur outside us, but exist only in our sensibility”.¹³ And to be sure, it’s not just their formal possibility, which appearances receive from the understanding, but “as they lie in the sensibility as *mere* intuitions” (A127; emphasis added). By contrast, Allais’ account of appearances would seem to affirm their being *mind-external objects*, against Kant’s claim here, not mere representations or items in our sensibility. It seems to me that Allais’ account can’t fully exorcize the phenomenalist specter by explaining the mentalist language that Kant clearly adopts. Furthermore, her view creates a problem if an appearance were always a mind-dependent aspect of a thing that as it is in itself is mind-independent, for the question then arises as to how there can be *purely* subjective appearances, i.e., appearances which are not objectively determinable and so not aspects of real things (that is, aspects of publicly perceivable objects such as bent sticks [see her account at 471 ff.])—sometimes Kant seems to use the notion ‘appearance’ synonymously with a *mere* mental representation, a Praussian empirical-subjective object say. In other words, an appearance is not *eo*

¹³Translation of the first *Critique* follows the Guyer and Wood edition (Kant 1998). Cf. B66=A48–49. See further B164 (AA 3: 127.1–10); B236=A190–191; A490–491=B518–519, where Kant declares that appearances are “modifications of our sensibility”; finally cf. B527 (AA 3: 343.26–28) and B535=A507. See further Allais’ own references at 2007, 463n.19.

ipso a representation of an object.¹⁴ However, in Allais' favor it could be argued that to the extent that mental representations and hence illusions etc. are also, as 'inner appearances' (A386), *possible* objects of experience, they belong to the same realm of appearances as any other that are transcendently ideal, i.e., dependent on minds such as ours for being cognized as genuine empirical objects of experience (albeit not *as* purely subjective).

The biggest problem facing Allais' interpretation, however, is that on her one-world view there only seem to exist empirical objects, which have both an in-itself nature and an appearance nature,¹⁵ and not things in themselves, which *only* have an in-itself nature and *no appearance* nature (e.g., God, the soul).¹⁶ Allais may rightly point out that Kant is not committed to the (theoretically determinable) actual existence of God and other such noumenal objects (although this is more difficult to maintain regarding Kant's view on the soul, more specifically, the immaterial nature of the human mind). However, her position goes further than that: it in fact disallows even the possibility of God's existence, for on her one-world reading no room is left for objects that are effectively numerically *distinct* from appearances, and which have no phenomenal counterpart (or noumenal objects that would affect beings with a different intuitional capacity than ours). This is a general problem for two-aspect readings of idealism: no sense can be made of the different numerical identities of things in themselves and appearances, whose difference isn't just the difference in the set of properties of one and the same thing.

Allais is right to query two-world views, if such views are to mean that Kant's pre-critical stance, in the Inaugural Dissertation, namely that we distinguish between a *mundus sensibilis* and a *mundus intelligibilis* as mapping two kinds of *theoretically* accessible objects or worlds of objects (and she quotes B311, B274 [it's unclear in what sense the Refutation of Idealism refutes the two-world view], and *Prol. AA 4*: 293¹⁷), still somehow informs Kant's position in the *Critique*. However, Kant's denial of theoretical knowledge of positive noumena doesn't mean he denies

¹⁴See e.g. A101; B234–235=A189–190; B243=A198; A248–249; cf. Prauss (1971: 16–18). Prauss (1971: 19) also rightly points out that, in the Dissertation and afterwards, Kant made a distinction between 'apparentia' (*Erscheinung*) and 'phaenomenon', the former being *mere* appearance and the latter appearance as determinate object.

¹⁵She sees this as one of the advantages of Langton's interpretation, because Langton "says that the same things which we know as they appear to us have an unknown intrinsic nature, specifically, the same things whose causal powers we know have an unknown intrinsic nature" (2006: 146).

¹⁶Cf. Wagner (2008: 74, 76). Wagner speaks of "*reine* Noumena". See also Martin (1969: 168–169).

¹⁷Interestingly, the passage in the *Prolegomena* that Allais quotes in support of her view that Kant is committed to denying two-worldism appears to invite the phenomenalist interpretation. Kant says that appearances are not things, nor determinations of things in themselves, but rather modes of representation. Kant obviously cannot mean that appearances are not objects of experience. The passage cannot be used to dispute two-object views of the distinction appearance/thing-in-itself, as it is clear that appearance *as object* is not a thing in itself, but more importantly, not even "determinations belonging to things in themselves". So appearance must be a distinct entity from the thing in itself.

their existence tout court (nor of course can he affirm it). In fact, Kant is committed to finding a proper way to be able to claim something positive about the noumenal, e.g., in the *Groundworks* (cf. Wagner 2008, 76, 77), where Kant proposes the idea of human beings being part of the intelligible world as well as of the sensible world (see also in the second *Critique*, concerning the practical objectively-real nature of God, soul, etc. [AA 5: 135.2–9; cf. AA 5: 56.18–27]). Generally, things in themselves are not noumena in a positive sense (theoretically or speculatively determinable), but some noumena are real things in themselves and not mere thought entities (e.g., the soul). Also all appearances have things in themselves underlying them, but some things in themselves have no appearances somehow supervening upon them (e.g., God).

Lastly, and perhaps most distinctively of her reading, Allais proposes—so as to show that she pursues a middle way between extreme noumenalism and mere methodological readings as well as to indicate her differences with Langton on intrinsicness—to see the distinction between things in themselves and appearances in terms of “distinguish[ing] between two ways of knowing things”: “We can know things in terms of the ways in which they affect other things, and we can know things as they are apart from this” (2006: 159ff.). Allais uses the terminology of specifying something opaquely and specifying something transparently. Both ways of specifying refer to the same thing; describing opaquely doesn’t give us knowledge of the intrinsic nature of the thing, but gives us knowledge of it as appearance. Our way of cognizing things is by way of opaque specification, for we never know what things are intrinsically. We can only know outer relations, as Kant says (A277=B333). It’s not so much a distinction between sets of properties of the thing, as on Westphal’s reading (see above Section 2.1), but “between two ways of knowing the same things—knowing things intrinsically, or as they are apart from other things (including ourselves), and knowing things in terms of other things” (Allais 2006, 160). Knowing things intrinsically would be knowing them by transparent description, but we don’t actually know things that way.

Although such a reading might strike one as epistemological, Allais still means it to be nontrivial in that it says something of the thing in itself that exists (2006: 164). To make a complex interpretation even more complex, Allais also says that “[o]ur representation of space and time is not an opaque presentation of something which has a way it is in itself, but rather belongs only to appearances. [...] We cognise space and spatial relations, time and temporal relations, intrinsically and directly” (2006: 165). But, regarding this last remark, i.e., that space is represented directly and not opaquely, if the purpose of the distinction of ways of describing the same things, either transparently or opaquely, was to capture the transcendental distinction between, respectively, things in themselves that have an intrinsic nature and appearances that are merely relational, and given that one of the fundamental features of appearances in contrast to things in themselves is their spatiotemporality, then Allais’ proposal turns out not to be very useful. It could be argued though on Allais’ behalf that Kant does allow talk of knowing (directly) the *inner* nature of things,

if by inner is meant *comparatively* inner determinations, which for phenomena are nothing but relations.¹⁸

2.3 Two-Aspect Readings and Cross-Boundary Identity

A further apparent problem for Allais is that Allais, and perhaps Langton and others who espouse similar views, such as recently Cord Friebe (see below), already at the outset appear to *assume* token-identity between phenomena or appearances and things in themselves.¹⁹ However, this can't be determined beforehand, i.e., before an object for judgment has effectively been determined (by virtue of the categories, specifically those of quality). And quite probably there is no correspondence between a thing in itself and an appearance (even *its* appearance), so that for every element of a thing in itself there would be an isomorphically conforming element in an appearance. As Kjosavik (2008: 385) rightly asserts, "there is no one-to-one correlation between appearances and things in themselves". An appearance and the underlying thing in itself share properties, but their equivalence in a certain respect doesn't imply their numerical identity.²⁰ Passages which are usually quoted by two-aspecters to support the identity reading of appearances and things in themselves (see Rosefeldt 2007, 170) must, I believe, not be read as if Kant suggests a claim to strict numerical identity in those places. Importantly, a thing in itself is not the starting point of Kant's transcendental analysis, it's what we are left with after an account of judgment (which is not to deny the *de facto* given existence of the thing, the something, that appears, and of which one judges that it is so and so). This means, incidentally, that criticizing two-aspect theories as to problems regarding identity needn't be based on the requirement that there is a, to use Quarfood's words, "neutral designation of the thing reflected upon" (2004: 27).²¹ At

¹⁸See A265=B321; A277=B333; cf. Warren (2001: 44ff., 52ff.).

¹⁹This is a general problem with two-aspect interpretations, which had already been pointed out by Hoke Robinson's (1994) critique of Allison (see e.g. Robinson 1994, 422). As Willaschek (1998: 349–350) has argued, for Kant it is the case that, whilst he distinguishes various types of 'object', phenomena and noumena in a negative sense are distinguished only qua intension; the terms point to two aspects indeed of the same object of experience. Noumena in a positive sense, however, have a greater extension, and can mean things that are not objects of experience. Willaschek notes that the two-aspect theory falls short of clarifying these distinctions.

²⁰This is precisely contrary to what Prauss (1971: 22) asserts, namely that "Erscheinungen und Dinge an sich, transzendental-philosophisch verstanden, numerisch-existenziell identisch [sind]".

²¹Cf. Friebe (2007: 230–231): "Phaenomenon und Noumenon [...] sind [...] überhaupt keine Namen für *Gegenstände*—nicht einmal für bloß *einen*—sondern wenn überhaupt *Namen*, dann solche für Betrachtungsweisen. Und die sind natürlich numerisch verschieden. Schon die Eingangsfrage des Einwands—ob Erscheinungen und Dinge an sich numerisch verschiedene Gegenstände seien oder nicht—verstehet man also nur innerhalb der Zwei-Welten-Lehre, weshalb der Einwand *unzulässig* ist."

any rate, to start with the thing in itself would be to reaffirm the very problematic, transcendental-realist position that Kant's subjective turn is supposed to supplant as it can't account for the problems surrounding a priori knowledge (cf. Heimsoeth 1956, 192–193).

That Allais's position does seem to fall victim to a fallacy regarding numerical identity seems confirmed by her assertion that supposedly Kant's idealism hasn't got to do with his view of things in themselves but only with appearances (2006: 149n.23; in 2007 she frequently speaks of "Kant's idealism about appearances"²²). Surely, though, transcendental idealism concerns *the distinction* between things in themselves and appearances, not just appearances. That appearances are transcendently ideal and not metaphysically ultimately real has to do precisely with the fact that they aren't things in themselves; at the same time, a thing in itself signifies some ulterior metaphysical status, precisely because it is the contrary concept of appearance. Appearance and thing in itself come together as a set, called transcendental idealism. To disentangle the notion of 'thing in itself' from the idealism is to misapprehend Kant's very motivation behind proposing the transcendental distinction (see B-preface at Bxviii-xix note). At one point, Allais acknowledges as much by asserting that "[o]ne part of transcendental idealism is the claim that we cannot know the intrinsic nature of things" (2006: 166), which isn't just a claim about appearances but implies an ontological position regarding how things are constituted in themselves such that we cannot know them.

Friebe's recent two-aspect account nicely brings out this major problem regarding numerical identity that, as I hinted at the start of this section, is faced by all two-aspect readings. According to Friebe, and in a way similar to Allais' reading, the empirical object has two aspects: an aspect of subject-dependence and one of subject-independence, both of which it has "zugleich" (2007: 231). The empirical object is not an appearance, nor thing in itself, but it is subject-dependent in that it appears and it is subject-independent in that it also is a thing in itself. The terms 'appearance' and 'thing in itself' refer to subject-dependency and subject-independency respectively, not to the object. Friebe, however, correctly notes the obvious problem with this reading: "Dass nämlich etwas zugleich subjektabhängig wie auch subjektunabhängig sein soll, klingt widersprüchlich; dieser Interpretationsrichtung gemäß scheint ein identischer Gegenstand zwei *entgegengesetzte* Aspekte zu haben." (2007: 231) Friebe's apparent solution that subject-independency is analytically implied by subject-dependency isn't entirely clear nor convincing. It doesn't remove the doubts concerning the two-aspect view

²²Collins does the same by asserting that "in any case [Kant] is plainly not an idealist when it comes to things in themselves" (1999: 27–28) and "Kant's is an idealist view about appearances and a realist view about things-in-themselves" (ibid., 29). This is an odd view to hold, as Kant would on this view be both a transcendental idealist and a transcendental realist. Allais' claim that idealism only concerns appearances, not things-in-themselves, is in fact begging the question in favor of her own dual-aspect reading; it already assumes a realist conception of the thing in itself, which is supposedly given and is then said to have two ways of being considered, namely as appearing, which is the ideal aspect of the thing, and as being in-itself, which is its real aspect.

raised by my previous observation about identity problems. Friebe asserts: "Dass etwas erscheint, impliziert, dass es auch an sich betrachtet werden kann, da es sonst nur Schein wäre." (2007: 231) This is obviously true, but this is rather different from claiming—and this is the pivotal issue here—that the *same* thing that is subject-dependent is also not subject-dependent. Friebe's explanation of the noted problem doesn't address a real contradiction between aspects.

Now, one could argue that one and the same thing could still have two (seemingly) contradictory aspects at different times. Or one could say that it has these aspects in different respects, considered from various standpoints, as thing in itself and as appearance, say; but then it must be clarified what the sense of respect is here. However, these possible rejoinders don't allay the worry, first, that Kant means the phenomenal and noumenal aspects or properties of things to be *exclusionary* properties, if we allow for them being called properties; and secondly, that according to Kant spatiotemporal properties are not properties *of* things in themselves, not that they are non-noumenal or subject-dependent properties that things in themselves also have, as Friebe and other two-aspecters, including Allais, suggest. But the most pressing problem here is: how can *one and the same* thing have two *exclusionary* properties, the property of being spatial and the property of not being spatial, say? Either the thing is spatial or isn't—it can't both be spatial and *not* be spatial.²³

If it is the case that the thing that has extrinsic properties, spatial properties say, is the very same (numerically identical) thing that also has intrinsic properties, non-spatial properties say, then it seems that the thing in itself as such is in space, which conflicts with Kant's official doctrine that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal.²⁴ If it is only part of the thing that is in space (by virtue of its having extrinsic properties), then one can't say that it is the thing in itself as such, i.e., as an individuated mereological whole (qua having all of its properties, both extrinsic and intrinsic), which is in space, but only part of the thing (only qua its having extrinsic properties). But then the thing as it appears in the spatial realm can't be the same (numerically identical) thing that is not in space (the thing qua its having intrinsic properties), and so appearance and thing in itself would appear to be two different objects (as on the two-world view). The crucial problem here is that absolutely different, *exclusionary* properties can't be attributed to one and the same thing (*stricte dicta*) on pain of contradiction.

Friebe's talk of two cases of a thing in itself, one of which is the 'appearance' along with its spatial properties, strikes me as wrong. To read Kant's implication at B332=A276 that 'appearances are not things in themselves' as *confirming* such a two-aspect view, as Friebe alleges (2007: 233), strikes me as obstinate. How does one square an interpretation as Friebe's with Kant's own intentions, when Friebe

²³Cf. Van Cleve (1999: 147). See also Robinson (1994: 422).

²⁴This last fact is not a worry for interpreters who dismiss the doctrine, but it is for Allais since she endorses it; notice that Allais also says that space and time "are *merely* the subjective form of our intuition, and represent no property of things in themselves at all" (2006: 165); hence, they "are not the way something unknown as to what it may be in itself appears to us" (*ibid.*) and so space and time are not the way to describe, to put it in Allais' terms, things in themselves opaquely.

writes that above implication of Kant's can be construed as saying that "Erscheinung als der eine Fall von Ding an sich ist natürlich kein bloßes Ding an sich als der andere Fall von Ding an sich" (2007: 234) Friebe wants to circumvent the problems associated with Kant's denial of spatiotemporal properties to things in themselves by simply, but confusingly, asserting that an appearance is "eine Fall von Ding an sich", which *as thing in itself* has the forms appropriate to an appearance. He writes: "[W]enn Kant nun sagt, [. . .] dass Raum und Zeit keine Formen der Dinge an sich selbst seien [. . .], so bedeutet dies nicht dass Raum und Zeit *bloß* subjektive Formen der Anschauung wären, sondern nur dass sie keine Formen *desjenigen* Falls von Ding an sich sind, den allein die naiven Realisten kennen. Dass sie als Formen der *Erscheinung* auch Formen des Dings an sich sind [. . .] ist damit nicht nur nicht ausgeschlossen, sondern geboten [!]. Denn die Subjektabhängigkeit (Räumlichkeit) der empirischen Objekte ist *ein Fall von* Subjekt-Unabhängigkeit (Raumartigkeit)" (2007: 234). I think it is safe to say that the analytical reconstruction so often inappropriately imposed on Kant has gone horribly awry in this particular case.

Another problem for Allais' variant of the aspects reading of Kantian idealism is that, in a way similar to Friebe's talk of subject-dependence, she speaks about appearances in terms of *mind-dependent* properties of objects, that is, of things in themselves (Allais 2007), but it is unclear to me how a property of a mind-independent object, i.e., a thing in itself, can be seen to have the feature of mind-dependence or to have a disposition such that it is knowable by us. The key point here is that one wants to know what it is that attributes a property that is essentially foreign to the thing (as it is in itself) and thus constitutes the mind-dependence relation and a fortiori a priori knowledge thereof. It would seem that although it might be said to have a disposition to dependency on the mind a thing can't all by itself produce this relation, not at any rate if the mind-dependence must be necessary and such that we, as minds, have a priori insight into it. Mind-dependence as a relation suggests that at the very least two *relata* are constitutive of that relation.

3 Continuing Issues with the Ontological Approach to Idealism

3.1 Phenomenalism Revisited

Ever since the Garve-Feder review of Kant's first *Critique*, there has been a strong temptation to see Kant's idealism in terms of Berkeley's. In a recent essay on this topic, Ameriks aptly compares this continuing tendency with "a stray dog that refuses to go home" (Ameriks 2006, 67). There is of course a certain correspondence between Berkeley and Kant, not least in regard to the fact that both their forms of idealism are characterized by a metaphysical, negative aspect. Both hold that something of the object is not real. Also, both Kant and Berkeley want to leave room for existence claims regarding God, the soul etc. But there is much that distinguishes Kant from Berkeley, something which phenomenalist interpreters of Kant have always tended to disregard. Recently, a phenomenalist reading has been offered by James Van Cleve (1999). Ameriks, who is otherwise sympathetic to

Van Cleve's account of the metaphysical/ontological side of Kant and who like Van Cleve dismisses epistemological readings, takes issue with Van Cleve's phenomenalist interpretation of Kant's idealism. Ameriks (2006: 69) believes that Van Cleve pulls Kant much too close in the direction of Berkeley.

Ameriks frames his criticism in the familiar terms of his general critique of idealist strategies in post-Kantian philosophy and afterwards, as offering 'short arguments' towards their conclusions. "The heart of the idea of a 'short' argument is simply this: the conclusion of ideality is to be drawn *directly* from the most *general* features of representation, for example, the mere fact that we use representations at all, or that we are passive or active with respect to them, or simply that we require intuitions or concepts or their combination. [. . .] [I]t bypasses the strategy of arguing [. . .] that the first and most crucial stage on the way to any conclusions about ideality has to do with features distinctive of our *specific* nature as *spatiotemporal* knowers." (Ameriks 2006, 69) In short, Berkeley's argument for idealism can be considered such a short argument for idealism (69). What would Kant's "non-short argument" be? Ameriks calls this his "species argument", "because it concerns our species of intuition" (70).

Famously, Berkeley holds that there is Being only where there is representing. For Berkeley, being is in some sense reducible to representation and so ideal, but since active spirits are in fact at the foundation of reality, in a sense reality and representation also go together (Ameriks 2006, 71). For Kant, on the other hand, reality and representation are not so closely linked, and neither do ideality and representation overlap. Some of the aspects of reality are not represented or representable. To make the connection between ideality and representation, Kant introduces his what Ameriks calls species argument. To illustrate the difference between Kant's and Berkeley's idealism, Ameriks quotes from a letter from Kant to J. S. Beck, in which Kant differentiates his own position, which concerns "ideality in reference to the *form of representation*", from the one ascribed to him by Garve and Eberhard who "construe it as ideality with respect to the *matter*, i.e., ideality of the *object* and its existence itself" (as quoted by Ameriks from Kant's correspondence in Ameriks 2006, 73).²⁵ This distinction between ideality as to form and ideality as to matter, between formal and material idealism, is crucial for Kant. It is clear that Kant repudiates material idealism as a form of 'crude idealism'.

Van Cleve appears to read Kant's idealism precisely in terms of material idealism. Two-worlders or quasi-two-worlders tend to reduce objects of experience to representations as mental states, whereby they take Kant's talk of 'mere representations' literally in terms of their material content (cf. Strawson 1966, 237, 238, 245). Van Cleve makes the prima facie implausible claim that "objects owe their very *existence* to being cognized by us" (Van Cleve 1999, 5), which seems to clearly express the Berkeleyan being=representation principle. Ameriks notes that such a view in fact conflicts with a two-world view, which takes non-empirical things in themselves seriously, as does Van Cleve. Now to concede, Ameriks (2006: 77) argues,

²⁵See Kant, AA 11: 395.

that things in themselves exist which are non-empirical means to concede that these things *are not* dependent on our representations or minds; ergo their existence is not owed to us. However, Van Cleve might also be taken to argue that it is not the things in themselves, or Being *in general*, that are dependent on our representation, but rather the object as appearance that is dependent on our representation for its existence *as object* (so not as thing in itself).²⁶ This would be in line with Kant's main claim in the Transcendental Deduction that it is not just our experience of an object that is constrained by certain subjective conditions, but the very fact that there *is* an object for me (B137). This need not conflict with the aforementioned distinction between form and matter that Kant alludes to in his letter to Beck, since what is dependent on our representation is the fact of the existence of the object *as object* (for me), not all of the object's underlying existential characteristics, so only formally and not materially. To the extent that objects are strictly speaking always objects for us, it could thus well be that Van Cleve is right about empirical objects being but "clusters of empirical determinations" (Ameriks 2006, 79). This appears to be borne out by Kant's assertion at B527=A499 that "the appearances, in their apprehension, are themselves nothing other than an empirical synthesis (in space and time) and thus are given only *in this synthesis*" (Kant's emphasis).

To underline the strong reading of phenomenalism that Van Cleve seems to ascribe to, Ameriks elaborates on Van Cleve's informative distinction between ontological phenomenalism, which is Van Cleve's own preferred route, and analytical phenomenalism.²⁷ The ontological, strong version of phenomenalism asserts that, to take Ameriks' example, the existence of a tree "is just the existence of a set of actual tree representings in some subject" (2006: 80). On the other hand, analytical phenomenalism merely asserts that "it is true that a tree exists even if there are no such actual representings as long as it is still the case that some subject would have appropriate tree representings if its experience were simply extended in various natural ways" (80). As Ameriks points out, Van Cleve believes that Kant, in most cases, confirms ontological phenomenalism: for example, at A191=B236, Kant suggests that a house, being "only an appearance, i.e., a representation", is "nothing but a sum of [...] representations".²⁸ Ameriks' response to Van Cleve's use of the example isn't entirely adequate, for it seems to me that sum (*Inbegriff*) just means sum or totality here, not 'quintessence' or purport as Ameriks suggests (what could Kant mean on that reading?).²⁹ In a way, Van Cleve is right to infer from the above passage that an empirical object is nothing but the whole of representations unified by the unity of consciousness (cf. numerous passages in the

²⁶Cf. Van Cleve (1999: 134): "[Things in themselves] do not depend on human beings either for their existence or for their being the way they are." Van Cleve is thus, rightly, careful to distinguish between the notions 'object' and 'thing in itself'.

²⁷See Van Cleve (1999: 71).

²⁸See Van Cleve (1999: 123–124).

²⁹Cf. A114. See also Kant in the same letter to J.S. Beck quoted earlier, where he quotes Beck: "The union [*Inbegriff*] of representations is itself the object, and the activity of the mind whereby this union [*Inbegriff*] of representations is represented is what we mean by 'relating them to the

A-Deduction). It is important to note, however, that this need not be worrisome for Ameriks' interpretation, as this sum of representations still only means the whole of *possible* experience, governed by transcendental apperception, which is a general feature of experience (not an act of a psychological subject), and so not the (arbitrary or even objectively determined) sum of someone's actual psychological mental states. Nevertheless, Van Cleve's ungainly talk of "virtual objects" (1999: 8) doesn't make his reading of Kant's idealism any more appealing, as it undermines Kant's emphatic empirical *realism* about objects. Overall, then, Van Cleve's interpretation does indeed seem to be vulnerable to the psychological reductionism that Ameriks rightly criticizes.

But instead of arguing that Kant could be seen as an *analytical* phenomenalist of sorts, rather than as an ontological phenomenalist, Ameriks himself wishes to stress that Kant's talk of representations must always be "understood epistemically rather than merely psychologically" (2006: 81). Ameriks convincingly argues that in some way Kant could more profitably be seen as an evidentialist regarding experience, than as a phenomenalist at all. "What always matters to Kant is not what mere inner sense series of primitive representations is occurring, but what kinds of judgments and epistemic activities we have or are capable of having" (81–82). A good example, adduced by Ameriks, that shows that Kant is not concerned with the psychological capacity for experience or perception tout court but with a higher order experience is magnetic matter, which is something that we can't perceive, but is nonetheless determinable by extrapolating its existence from law-governed experience (A226=B273). Kant's term 'experience' must be seen in terms of 'empirical knowledge', which excludes states for which there is no evidence, but which are not thereby denied existence, as reality itself is not "tied down by the limits of our knowledge" (Ameriks 2006, 82). Experience for which there is evidence would certainly be phenomenal, but on this account there would still be "evidence-transcendent truths" that are "non-phenomenal" (82).

3.2 *Metaphysical Short Arguments to Idealism*

Karl Ameriks has in the past staunchly defended a moderately metaphysical stance on Kant's idealism in criticizing views which see in his idealism a claim that makes things in themselves not only unknowable but literally unthinkable. This tendency, still common among many traditional readers of Kant—but fortunately less so among the very recent crop of Kant interpreters—goes back to the earliest appropriations of Kant's philosophy (Reinhold among others) and has been prevalent ever since Hegel's trenchant criticisms (see Ameriks 1991, 2000; cf. Hegel's critique of Kant's notion of 'thing in itself' in Hegel 1985, 108ff. and also

object'." (AA 11: 314 [Kant 2007, 399]). 'Inbegriff' is translated here as 'union', but the translator's use of 'uniting' for 'Zusammensetzung', to which Kant adds 'synthesis' in brackets, indicates that what is meant here by Kant is composition or synthesis (see Kant 2007, 399 note).

Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, §§44–45). Ameriks has, quite usefully, labeled this strategy for reading Kant's idealism a 'short argument to idealism'.

Short arguments to idealism move "to idealism relatively quickly and directly by beginning not with our specific form of sensibility, but with some much more general or 'global' feature of human cognition" (2003b: 137), e.g., the fact that everything that we think and know is something that *we* represent, and so in abstraction from our way of representing it cannot be known. This was the course Reinhold adopted in his *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789). The arguments that, for Kant himself, establish idealism are 'long' arguments specifying the details of our forms of sensibility, carried out by Kant in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. Kant's own argument always circles round the specificity of our spatiotemporal intuitions (hence, Ameriks now labels it Kant's 'species' argument; see above Section 3.1), and is never solely about, more globally defined, sensibility, conceivability or representability tout court. The import of Ameriks' 'short argument' label is to show that some interpreters want to extract a simpler argument from Kant's argument for idealism than is in fact allowed on the basis of the specifics regarding the forms of intuition (space and time), by starting from a simpler premise, without of course the exposition for such a short argument necessarily also being short.

The short route to idealism has always been very popular, from Reinhold onwards. It is, as Ameriks points out, also very common to associate such strategies for reading idealism with the common view that Kant, once and for all, made all attempts to theorize about ultimate reality futile. A recent interpreter of Kant, Rae Langton, is an exception to this tendency, but, as Ameriks (2003b) ably demonstrates, in her book *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (1998) she appears still a victim of the short-argument-to-idealism strategy.

As the subtitle of her work makes clear, Langton focuses on the unknowability thesis. Basically, her claim is that since things in themselves are characterizable by intrinsic qualities, which by their nature are not relational, and knowledge is based on the way things relate to us, we can't have knowledge of these qualities and thus of things in themselves. Langton argues that things in themselves are substances qua bearers of intrinsic properties (1998: 20), whereas phenomena are *their* relational or extrinsic properties, thereby circumventing any reference to the conditions of sensibility or cognition, which on Langton's reading are only indirectly related to the unknowability thesis. Interestingly, Langton's take on the issue of unknowability does not appear related to the topic of idealism: she starts from the assumption of there being things with intrinsic qualities together with the epistemological reflection that such qualities cannot be known by us human cognizers, and hence that *humility* is required on our part. However, as Ameriks points out, this realist reading of unknowability still involves idealism, because "it also involves the metaphysical claim that certain features are such that we cannot know them as inhering in things precisely *because* they cannot ever belong to things in themselves as such. Hence they must be 'merely phenomenal' or 'ideal' [...]" (Ameriks 2003b, 140).

Ignorance or unknowability about things in themselves thus follows, according to Langton, not from specific arguments about spatiotemporality or the categories,

but from the simple fact that our human knowledge is receptive (Langton 1998, 3). This looks like a very short argument, but Langton looks to find additional premises in Kant's early work, especially *Living Forces* (1747) and the *Physical Monadology* (1756) to prop up this argument. It is hardly evident that arguments for unknowability can be gleaned from considerations about receptivity, as this latter concerns our empirically receiving data, whereas concerns about the ideality of our representations for Kant always have to do with the possibility of a priori knowledge (cf. Heimsoeth 1956, 191–192). Importantly, Langton allows that unknowability is not a trivial consequence of the notion of 'thing in itself' itself, but concerns the fact that we don't know what there is in terms of an ulterior reality with its own "distinguishing [*unterscheidende*] and inner predicates" (A565=B593). Thus, although we can't know things with such predicates, or how they are like, we can neither deny that things in themselves have such predicates (what is meant by Kant are *absolutely* inner determinations). The notion of a 'thing in itself' is not vacuous (notice that for Kant, in aforementioned passage, the fact that we can't effectively determine the thing's inner predicates, means that we aren't justified in assuming its existence and hence it remains a "mere thought-entity [*Gedankending*]").

Ameriks lauds Langton for stressing that there is nothing paradoxical about claiming that things in themselves have inner predicates whilst also claiming unknowability, for a distinction between types of knowledge can be made. This is an obvious strategy, which Ameriks has always emphasized, but oddly the German Idealists (Hegel in particular) and their followers, even today, strangely continue claiming that Kant can't make *any* claims as to the putative nature of things in themselves. For, supposedly, even stating that things in themselves have inner predicates would be a claim to knowledge, which on Kant's restriction thesis is foreclosed. But, as both Ameriks and Langton point out, for Kant there is a definite distinction between thinking and knowing (see e.g., Ameriks 2003b, 156, 157; cf. Kant Bxxvi note). The knowledge that we *do* have of things is, Langton points out, knowledge of relations, and these are denied transcendental reality. However, we can still *think* things insofar as they have a putative transcendental reality to which we haven't cognitive access.

Another important point of Langton's interpretation, emphasized by Ameriks and potentially problematic for Allais's take on intrinsic properties and things in themselves, is that, contra Leibniz, Kant held that relational claims are not reducible to intrinsic claims about individual substances (see Langton 1998, Chap. 5).³⁰ If Kant held the opposite, Leibnizian view, he would be making a dogmatic claim as to the nature of things in themselves, for at least we would then know that phenomenal truths entail noumenal truths about things in themselves (see Ameriks 2003b, 144). Langton's main claim is succinctly put by Ameriks in the following terms: "[A]ll we can know is relational, but the relational does not reveal the intrinsic (given the non-reducibility doctrine), so what we know is, in this sense, 'mere phenomena', not things in themselves." (2003b: 144) It is clear, from an examination of Kant's

³⁰Cf. Allais' critique of Langton in Allais (2006) and Langton's response in Langton (2006).

earliest concerns in the works quoted at length by Langton, that for Kant, also in the Critical period, a substance must have intrinsic properties, without at least some of which it wouldn't exist as substance. Also, that some substances could exist *without* having any relational properties, which in turn need not entail the truth about the intrinsic nature of substances (cf. Ameriks 2003b, 146). The distinction between intrinsic and relational properties is fundamental for Kant. Now if our phenomenal knowledge equates with knowledge of what is relational and every knowledge claim concerns a determination of relational properties, it follows that we can only know relational properties and not intrinsic properties. If this is what the unknowability thesis is about, it seems fairly innocent, as Ameriks notes.³¹ But is it true that, for Kant, the relational equates with the phenomenal and the intrinsic with the 'in itself'?

As Quarfood points out (2004: 48ff.), in the *Critique* at A26=B42 Kant is clear as to the fact that "neither absolute *nor relative* determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited a priori" (emphasis added). Thus, it's not relationality that limits our knowledge but the a priori connection with our forms of intuition. On Langton's account one would expect relative determinations to be phenomenal by default, and thus knowable, but Kant allows the possibility that these could not be cognized, i.e., because they are determinations of things in themselves.³² This is also indicated by an oft-cited passage in the *Critique*: "The things that we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be, nor are their relations so constituted in themselves [*ihre Verhältnisse so an sich selbst beschaffen sind*] as they appear to us" (B59=A42; cf. B66–67). As Ameriks points out (2003b: 148–149), Langton's view ("humility does follow from receptivity, given irreducibility" [Langton 1998, 126]) is vulnerable to the very stipulative, anodyne approach of which she accuses Allison. If relational means non-in-itself by stipulation, then we have ruled out that some relational properties could be had in terms of being inner properties of things in themselves. Ameriks points to one for Kant very important relational property which is non-phenomenal, and thus a property of a thing in itself: freedom, which involves a form of causal relation (2003b: 149).³³ A clear-cut division between relational properties and properties that things in themselves have (intrinsically) is a mere definitional strategy that can't account for one of the core tenets of Kant's philosophy!

Ameriks also adduces an example from the Inaugural Dissertation, where Kant still held the view that we can, through the intellect, have knowledge of

³¹Cf. Ameriks (2003b: 154–155, esp. 155n.42, 43) regarding Langton's too strict "severing [of the] relations between things in themselves and phenomena". Ameriks does not see why the line between relationality, that is inbuilt in e.g. causal power, and intrinsicity should be drawn so sharply as does Langton. There must be *some* grounding relations *between* things in themselves and phenomena, and also transcendental affection shows that there is something both non-phenomenal and relational (Ameriks 2003b, 156–157); cf. Westphal (2004: 38ff.) on noumenal causal affection.

³²See further on inner absolute and comparative determinations Warren (2001: 37–58).

³³Cf. Westphal (2004: 56n.37). Westphal also asserts that noumena need not be non-relational, and more importantly, as he writes, "the alleged nonrelationality of noumena in any positive sense would thwart Kant's account of moral agency *ab initio*". See also Quarfood (2004: 61–65) and Wagner (2008).

the intelligible world, but also argued that knowledge concerned “interaction of substances and the unity of the world of finite beings”, clearly knowledge, then, that is “at once relational and concerning things in themselves” (2003b: 150) To underscore a similar point, Quarfood (2004: 45) refers to the Dissertation (Section IV; AA 2: 406ff.), where Kant discusses the “principle of the form of the intelligible world”, and addresses the issue how substances are related and how these can be known by the intellect.³⁴

So, to conclude this section, against Langton it must be argued that it is not relationality as such, the pure relationality involved in being sensibly affected (receptivity), but certain specifics of particular relations (such as space and time) that lead Kant to conclude to idealism.³⁵

4 Concluding Remarks

Other important and distinctive new interpretations of Kant's idealism of the last ten years or so have been offered by Adams (1997), Collins (1999), Warren (2001), and more recently Wood (2005) and Rosefeldt (2007), whose dispositionalist reading of the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction is presented as a variation on Allais' reading. As they could not, within the allocated space, be given the attention that is their due, an account of their versions of idealism is not included here. A central element of Adams' approach is considered in the article by Schulting in this volume. The cardinal aspects of Wood's identity interpretation are discussed in the articles by Schulting and Onof below (for an account of Wood on idealism see also Ameriks, forthcoming).

As may be clear from my account of the current debate, there is still much disagreement among Kant commentators as to how to interpret the doctrine of idealism and even whether idealism is relevant for an assessment of Kant's thought in general or for all of its aspects. It is at any rate clear that debates surrounding Kant's idealism are very much alive in today's Kant scholarship, which gives one hope for the future of Kant studies, particularly his theoretical philosophy. There are promising signs that the same importance is accorded again to investigating an even more obscure part of Kant's theoretical philosophy, and which despite many efforts by prominent brains has remained a closed book to most readers, namely the Transcendental Deduction of the categories.

Acknowledgements I want to thank Christian Onof and Cristiana Battistuzzi for their comments and suggestions. Many thanks in particular to Jacco Verburgt for his meticulous comments on this article and, in general, for our excellent collaborative work on this volume.

³⁴Incidentally, Quarfood suggests in a note that “Kant's development from the Dissertation to the critical philosophy of CPR might be seen as the transition from a metaphysical to a methodological two-aspect view” (2004: 47, 48n.65), rather than from an ontological two-world view to a methodological two-aspect view.

³⁵See for an additional critique of Langton's interpretation Falkenstein (2000).

References

- Adams, R. 1997. 'Things in Themselves'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LVII (4): 801–825.
- Adickes, E. 1924. *Kant und das Ding an sich*. Berlin: Pan.
- Allais, L. 2004. 'Kant's One World'. *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12(4): 655–684.
- Allais, L. 2006. 'Intrinsic Natures: A Critique of Langton on Kant'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXXIII (1): 143–169.
- Allais, L. 2007. 'Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45(3): 459–484.
- Allison, H. 1996. *Idealism and Freedom. Essays on Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Revised & Enlarged Edition. New Haven and New York: Yale University Press.
- Allison, H. 2006. 'Transcendental Realism, Empirical Realism and Transcendental Idealism'. *Kantian Review* 11: 1–27.
- Ameriks, K. 1991. 'Hegel and Idealism'. *The Monist* 74: 394–396.
- Ameriks, K. 2000. *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2003a. 'Kantian Idealism Today'. In K. Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 98–111; (first published in *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 9 [1983]: 329–342).
- Ameriks, K. 2003b. 'Kant and Short Arguments to Humility'. In K. Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 135–157.
- Ameriks, K. 2006. *Kant and the Historical Turn*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ameriks, K. forthcoming. 'On Reconciling the Transcendental Turn and Kant's Idealism'. In S. Gardner (ed.), *The Transcendental Turn*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bird, G. 2006. *The Revolutionary Kant*. Chicago and LaSalle, IL: Open Court.
- Caropreso, P. 2003. *Von der Dingfrage zur Frage nach Gott*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
- Collins, A. 1999. *Possible Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Falkenstein, L. 2000. 'Langton on Things in Themselves'. *Kantian Review* 5: 49–64.
- Friebe, C. 2007. 'Über einen Einwand gegen die Zwei-Aspekte-Interpretation von Kants Unterscheidung zwischen Erscheinung und Ding an sich'. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 61(2): 229–235.
- Grier, M. 2001. *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, P. 1987. *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, P. 2006. *Kant*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Hegel, G.W.F. 1985. *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: die Lehre vom Sein (1832)*. In *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 21. Eds. F. Hogemann and W. Jaeschke. Hamburg: Meiner.
- Heimsoeth, H. 1956. *Studien zur Philosophie Immanuel Kants. Metaphysische Ursprünge und Ontologische Grundlagen*. Cologne: Kölner Universitätsverlag.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2007. *Correspondence*. Trans. and ed. A. Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kjosavik, F. 2008. 'Appearances, Things in Themselves and Transcendental Idealism'. In V. Rohden et al. (eds.), *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants. Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Band 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 385–396.
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility. Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Langton, R. 2006. 'Kant's Phenomena: Extrinsic or Relational Properties? A Reply to Allais'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXXIII (1): 143–169.
- Martin, G. 1969. *Immanuel Kant. Ontologie und Wissenschaftstheorie*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

- Prauss, G. 1971. *Erscheinung bei Kant*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Prauss, G. 1974. *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Quarfood, M. 2004. 'The Thing in Itself. Methodological Perspective or Metaphysical Entity?'. In M. Quarfood, *Transcendental Idealism and the Organism. Essays on Kant*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, pp. 16–65.
- Robinson, H. 1994. 'Two Perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32(3): 411–441.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2007. 'Dinge an sich und sekundäre Qualitäten'. In J. Stolzenburg (ed.), *Kant in der Gegenwart*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 167–209.
- Strawson, P.F. 1966. *The Bounds of Sense*. London: Methuen.
- Van Cleve, J. 1999. *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wagner, H. 2008. 'Kants affirmative Metaphysik von Dingen an sich'. In H. Wagner, *Zu Kants Kritischer Philosophie*. Eds. B. Grünwald and H. Oberer. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, pp. 73–81.
- Warren, D. 2001. *Reality and Impenetrability in Kant's Philosophy of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Westphal, K. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willaschek, M. 1998. 'Phaenomena/Noumena und die Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe'. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds.), *Immanuel Kant. Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 325–351.
- Wood, A. 2005. *Kant*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wood, A., Guyer, P. and Allison, H. 2007. 'Debating Allison on Transcendental Idealism'. *Kantian Review* 12(2): 1–39.

Part I
Interpreting Transcendental Idealism

Chapter 2

Kant's Idealism on a Moderate Interpretation

Karl Ameriks

1 The Idea of a Moderate Interpretation

For many interpreters, the holy grail of Kant scholarship is to find a *meaning* for the doctrine of transcendental idealism that is not only consistent, understandable in its origins, and not immediately absurd, but also does full justice to the complex fact that Kant insists on claiming both that there are 'real appearances' (*Erscheinungen* in contrast to *blosser Schein*), that is, appearances disclosing to us features of physical objects that are empirically real, and also that these features are nonetheless 'mere appearances' in contrast to 'things in themselves'.

It is often presumed that giving priority to the Mere Appearance claim and accepting it literally is enough to 'demote' the Real Appearance claim and force one to regard Kant himself as an idealist in a bad subjectivist sense.¹ To avoid demoting empirical reality in this way, other interpreters often presume that the only option left here is to go to the opposite extreme, namely, to give priority to the Real Appearance claim and to water down the Mere Appearance claim in such a way that it has no significant metaphysical character.² There is an alternative, however, to these common but extreme presumptions. The obvious exegetical objections that can be raised against each of these 'one-sided' interpretive approaches warrant the exploration of a more inclusive and accommodating reading—one that can offer a coherent and non-absurd version of Kant's doctrine even while not denying *either* part of his twofold commitment to 'weighty' notions of empirical objects as well as of things in themselves.

K. Ameriks (✉)

Department of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA
e-mail: ameriks.2@nd.edu

¹See e.g., McDowell (1994: 42ff.); and Wood (2005). See my discussion of Wood's treatment of idealism in Ameriks (forthcoming).

²See e.g., Allison (2006). Wood (2005: 74) inclines strongly to favoring this reading, but he also recognizes that there are considerations that speak against it, offered by interpreters such as Guyer and Adams.

The starting point of such a reading, which I will call the Moderate Interpretation,³ is the thought that, in introducing the unusual term ‘transcendentally ideal’ for appearances, Kant means to, and can, give them a distinctively real but ‘in-between’ status, that is, the status of a level of reality that is higher than what is ‘empirically ideal’ (i.e., merely subjective in an individual, psychological, and occurrent sense) but is lower than the ‘transcendentally real’ features of things in themselves. Because the notion of such an in-between status, which would allow for at least three rather than only one or two levels (such as the familiar levels of the strictly psychological and the strictly physical) of reality, is admittedly an unusual one, it would be good to find some familiar analogies to help illuminate it.

Fortunately, a number of very recent interpretations have begun to converge on invoking basically the same kind of familiar analogy here, one that proposes that to speak of Kantian transcendentally ideal appearances (I will use the terms ‘Kantian appearances’, or just ‘ideality’ or ‘appearances’ as short for this longer phrase) is not to speak in just any way of items that might be ‘considered’ but is to speak, in the first instance, specifically of objects that can be given, that is, that are in principle accessible to a sensible mind like ours.⁴ This point is then taken to suggest the specific analogy that such appearances can be understood roughly in terms of the model of recent broadly ‘realistic’—and also, in effect, ‘in-between’—understandings of *perceptual* features, that is, features of objects *as* perceivable.⁵ Such items are neither purely subjective nor purely objective but can only be understood as involving both subjective and objective features. For the purposes of the analogy, these features can include even so-called secondary qualities such as color—with the concession that Kant himself was not entirely clear or consistent in his treatment of these particular qualities, and, like many writers, could speak sometimes, but not always, of color as if it were merely a private and psychological entity, or merely a ‘mechanical’ arrangement of an object’s uncolored parts.⁶

Without deciding about how best ultimately to treat specific kinds of sensible modalities, the crucial starting point of this analogy, for the purposes of the Moderate Interpretation, is simply the phenomenological fact that in everyday life

³In the light of points made by Lucy Allais, I have come to prefer the term ‘moderate’, rather than terms such as ‘modesty’ or ‘humility’, because this term more directly indicates the ‘in-between’ status that is crucial here. On many points related to these issues I am very indebted to discussions with participants at conferences on this topic in London and Amsterdam.

⁴See especially Allais (2007); Rosefeldt (2007); and my *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques* (Ameriks 2003, Chaps. 12, 13, and 14). Brief anticipations of this approach can be found in a remark about idealism as “a principle of modesty” in my *Kant’s Theory of Mind* (Ameriks 1982, 7), as well as in my review of *Kantian Humility*, by Rae Langton, in Ameriks (2000c). More extensive defenses of this general approach are given in my *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques*, ‘Introduction’, and *Kant and the Historical Turn: Philosophy as Critical Interpretation* (Ameriks 2006, Chaps. 3, 5, and 6). In this essay, I am primarily concerned with explaining just the general idea of the Moderate Interpretation, and for a more direct discussion of specific passages in Kant’s texts the reader is referred to the works cited in the footnotes.

⁵See McDowell (2001, Chaps. 6 and 7), McGinn (1999, Chaps. 15 and 16), and Stroud (2000).

⁶For details, see again the works cited above in note 4 above.

such perceptual features are not regarded as characterizing merely subjective states as such. As Kant himself reminds us, in everyday life (under 'normal conditions') we are familiar, for example, with the genuine green color appearance of grass as a perceptual feature that—unlike a sensation of pain—is not *taken* to exist literally just within a particular mind but is taken to distinguish the non-illusory *appearance of* some thing that is empirically real, and thus is taken as having *a* root in objects that are distinct from, but not inaccessible to, our acts of perception.⁷ At the same time, however, because these features essentially involve ways of appearing *to* perceivers, they are also understood as having *a* root in the sensible kinds of minds that have the capacity to be appeared to in specific ways. These features can thus be distinguished from whatever underlying categorial properties would characterize objects simply 'by themselves' and not at all in terms of how they might directly appear to specific kinds of sensible minds. What complicates matters here, of course, is the fact that Kant does not speak simply of 'objects by themselves' but introduces the unusual term 'thing in itself', a term whose meaning certainly requires more clarification than he directly provides.

For this reason, and to do justice to Kant's own stress on disanalogies between his view and other positions, it is important to distinguish the specific in-between nature of Kantian appearances that is central to the Moderate Interpretation from the nature of the in-between items that may occur in other theories—for example, in standard eliminativist versions of scientific realism, which also stress a basic contrast between perceptual appearances and underlying categorial properties of objects. Scientific realism of this kind takes all the perceptual and dispositional features of our perceptual experience to be supported by, and in some sense reducible to, or replaceable by, nothing more than the (eventually) cognizable categorial properties of spatiotemporal *physical* objects (objects that it presumes can be adequately characterized without reference to any sentient beings as such). In this way it eschews adding any *literally metaphysical* (as opposed to physical) talk about things 'in themselves'. Kant, however, explicitly distinguishes his own view from the approach suggested by early anticipations of scientific realism. He rests his distinctive position on a priori philosophical arguments, rather than scientific hypotheses. His argument for idealism culminates in treating appearances in terms of an approach that is multilevel but not simply scientific precisely because it ultimately places appearances in an in-between relation to something not considered to be spatiotemporal.⁸ Kant's relevant arguments are all about the transcendental ideality of the sensible features of space and time, and however one may feel about the validity of these arguments, their main conclusion is clear enough, namely, that although space and time are specific sensible features that are fundamental in any scientific account of the physical objects of our experience (and hence are of a higher

⁷See Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), §14. Stroud happens to discuss the example of green from a somewhat similar perspective in Stroud (1999: 170–171).

⁸Kant contrasts his position with that of Locke and others in the *Critique* at Aix; A29=B45, and *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that Will be able to Come Forth as a Science* (1783), First Part, Notes II and III (AA 4: 288–294).

level of reality than what is merely subjective), they cannot be present in any proper description of objects as things in themselves.

2 ‘Transcendental’ and ‘Idealism’

The only way to begin to make proper sense of the distinctive in-between status that Kant ascribes to appearances is therefore to try from the very start to understand exactly what he means in not endorsing a standard form of scientific realism and instead insisting on the peculiar phrase ‘transcendentally ideal’. Each of the two key terms here deserves close scrutiny, and the second is especially liable to misunderstanding.

The term ‘transcendental’ indisputably plays a key role in Kant’s own *arguments* for his idealism because, as Kant explains, these primarily concern a priori knowledge, and *transcendental* idealism is thus introduced as an explanation concerning the a priori conditions that make such knowledge possible for us. Nonetheless, the term is not essential to *defining* what his final position simply means, and Kant himself repeatedly proposes that his doctrine can also be described as “formal” or “Critical” idealism, or even better, although elliptically, as idealism about space and time.⁹ This is an elliptical formulation because the full Critical doctrine of transcendental idealism concerns a claim not merely about space and time themselves but about the realm of *all* that we can determinately know. This point can be missed because, given the *Critique*’s full arguments, the extension of this ideal realm eventually *turns out* to be identical with what can be known as spatiotemporal—but ideality is not simply defined in this way. For all that matters here, the main reason for Kant’s putting a term such as ‘transcendental’ or ‘formal’ in front of ‘idealism’ is just to make a reassuring philosophical contrast, to emphasize that, whatever his doctrine is, it is neither trivially objective in a way that has nothing essentially to do with subjectivity and conditions of knowledge, nor is it an immoderate subjectivist idealism—either of a merely empirical and psychological kind, which would reduce physical matter to acts of particular human perceivers, or of a metaphysical kind with respect to ‘matter’ in its broadest philosophical sense, which would imply that we are like a divine being that creates everything *ex nihilo*.

The term ‘idealism’ by itself, as Kant uses it for his own theory, has a number of distinct layers of meaning, but the first and most important point about it is that the term is *not equivalent* to negative notions such as ‘merely mental’, ‘merely subjective’, or ‘non-existent’. On the Moderate Interpretation, Kant’s own use of ‘ideal’ in the context of transcendental idealism has an in-between and in part essentially positive meaning. It affirms of some feature really appearing to us both that this feature is empirically objective and also that, as such, it has a reality that does not ‘stand on its own’, for it is the appearance not only ‘of’ (in an in principle transparent,

⁹See Kant’s use of these terms in the *Prolegomena* at AA 4: 287–294, and for further references see my *Kant and the Historical Turn* (Ameriks 2006, Chap. 3).

intentional, and empirically causal sense) an object with other empirically determinable features but also 'of' (in an opaque and non-empirical grounding sense) something *fundamentally more basic*—the object as a transcendently real 'thing in itself'—that is a non-manifest 'ground' or real condition of the appearance.¹⁰

This interpretation can therefore also be called a 'fundamental dependence' or 'non-unconditional' reading of idealism, or, more precisely, of the ideality of what appears to us. The phrase "fundamentally more basic" needs to be unpacked in detail, but what it signifies (given the full doctrine of transcendental idealism), in the first instance, is just that, metaphysically, an appearance could not exist without some thing in itself, while the converse is not true. Furthermore, even though 'appearing' is in part a mental notion, and so there is a mental characteristic built into one side of the transcendently ideal/real contrast, the main contrast here is not to be understood (either by definition, or as a final conclusion) simply in terms of the mental as opposed to the non-mental. For all that we know theoretically, there might well also be things in themselves that are mental in a very significant sense—and this possibility is in fact affirmed in Kant's practical philosophy. Moreover, although on this interpretation the *Critique's* idealism does in a way still concern the mental, it does not concern the mental in just any sense but is originally taken to apply just to features of *objects* that in fact appear to us, that is, that are, or could be, 'directly present' as 'object presenting' to a finite sensible mind with structures 'basically like' ours.

This point about objectivity involves a further positive and distinctive characteristic of Kantian ideality, namely, that it essentially involves phenomenal features that are, in addition, *internally structured* by a necessary cognitive form, a form that defines its 'in-between' status as 'higher' than whatever might be present but not structured in this way. Hence, when Kant characterizes space and time as the "only" forms of our sensibility that "strictly speaking" have transcendental ideality,¹¹ he thereby implies that there are some items in us, namely mere sensations or feelings, that are not simply non-existent but have a kind of *merely subjective* reality—which is also called 'empirical ideality', in contrast to 'transcendental ideality'. The subjectivity of sensations consists in their existing simply as psychological occurrences in the mind, as that 'through which' appearances can arise in perception, even though, as such, they themselves do not thereby appear to the mind. Here again Kant's theory of perception implies that what originally appears

¹⁰Hence I take Kant's claim (Bxxvii) that it is absurd to speak of an appearance without anything that appears to be a substantive point with realist implications that are both empirical and not merely empirical.

¹¹A28=B44 (translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from the Kemp Smith edition). Kant jumps hastily to presuming that space and time are the "only" such forms, because these forms have a special universal significance. He thereby overlooks the fact that even space may not be a fully universal structure of appearance (sounds, for example, might appear without appearing as spatial), and there may be other ways in which (other less than fully universal) features such as color and sound can also involve necessary structures, even of a synthetic a priori kind, that supplement the more general structures of space and time.

to us in ordinary life, and what we can immediately know, are features of objects, such as even the color green, as a property of grass, and not any mysterious bare sensation itself. In whatever way sensations accompany our perceptual knowledge, they are not themselves to be thought of *as* looking green.

All this also implies that, even though when Kant discusses what is not ideal, he tends to focus on things in themselves, the mere fact that something is not ideal in his (transcendental) sense is just a negative fact, and it does not entail something that positively characterizes the intrinsic nature of a thing in itself. We can think, for example, not only of sensations but also of items such as the souls of amoeba, which, in addition to not appearing, presumably cannot exist at all. Such items should also not be called transcendently ideal, even though they too (like sensations) are not things in themselves and they therefore lack transcendental reality. They can simply be called non-existent; or, more precisely, we can just say that the properties involved in our talk about them are not co-instantiated.

Finally, among the kinds of items that cannot literally appear to us, there is also the very different class of items that can have a positive existential status and that includes not only whatever things in themselves directly ‘underlie’ our sensory perception but also items that are not directly tied to such perception—such as our freedom and God, to which Kant also eventually allows transcendental reality even while he denies that they can be known theoretically. For this reason, one can speak loosely and innocuously of something more than just a ‘one world’ view in Kant—as long as this is not meant literally to imply two separate worlds, let alone two worlds of (theoretical) knowledge of determinable objects and determinable relations to one another, but simply to provide a reminder that his ultimate ontology need not be immediately restricted to the mundane sphere of things or features that could appear to us. For Kant, ‘the world’ is defined as the most extensive whole with interacting parts that is itself not a part of anything else, and this leaves over the kinds of transcendently real features and things in themselves just mentioned, which can exist outside of the world and even in a concrete asymmetric relation to it but cannot be in a symmetric or literal part/whole relation to it.¹²

In sum—and in contrast to the presuppositions of many other interpretations—the Moderate Interpretation implies a multiple breakdown in symmetry between appearances and the transcendently ideal, on one side, and things in themselves and the transcendently real on the other side. All appearances, in Kant’s basic sense, imply that there are things in themselves,¹³ and the existence of something transcendently ideal implies that there is something that, in contrast, has transcendental reality. Nonetheless, some things in themselves could lack appearances, and so some transcendental realities could have nothing to do with anything transcendently ideal. Furthermore, some items that lack transcendental ideality do not thereby have transcendental reality, for they may either not exist at all or may have

¹²See B112. This point is already made in *Metaphysics Herder*, in Kant (1997: 3) (AA 28: 39).

¹³I use the plural term for convenience here. Kant does not provide a theoretical argument for a plurality of things in themselves, but it is clear that he never takes monism very seriously.

some kind of merely subjective status; and so, when we say simply that something lacks transcendental reality, this does not entail that it has transcendental ideality. All this implies in turn that there is no reason to endorse any general thesis, either epistemological or ontological, assigning an identity relation or one-to-one mapping between all possible Kantian things in themselves and appearances, even if, for all items that are said to be ideal, and thus an appearance in the transcendental sense, there exists at least some relevant thing or things with transcendental reality.

Taken altogether, these terminological clarifications are just another way of expressing the Moderate Interpretation's understanding of Kant's transcendental notion of ideality as a matter of existing in an in-between way that contrasts with both radically subjective and entirely objective forms of existence. Here the notion of ideality signifies existing as a kind of item that is at least a genuine appearance of an object but happens to lack the kind of independent form of existence that amounts to being a thing in itself or a feature of such a thing as such. Kantian appearances are in this way doubly oriented toward things: they imply a thing *in itself*, that is, something with features that turn out to be such that they cannot appear to us as such, and they also constitute the empirical objects that we cognitively distinguish in terms of properties and structures that could appear to beings like us. Moreover, the term 'could' is used here in a way that is meant to introduce a reminder of a further realistic aspect of Kant's view, the fact that he allows that there may be real empirical properties that cannot appear to us as we *actually* are—for example, magnetic items too fine-grained for human beings as such ever to be able to directly see, although it matters that they presumably *could* be perceived through merely accidental, even if not actually possible, modifications of our spatiotemporal nature as sensory beings.¹⁴

For all these reasons, the transcendental ideality of a feature is to be understood not at all in a simple negative sense, as a flat denial of all its reality, but as only a denial of its having *either* a merely subjective status or the peculiar unconditioned and entirely appearance-transcendent status needed for transcendental reality. As 'transcendentally ideal', a feature cannot directly be, or even 'confusedly' indirectly characterize, a thing in itself as such, and yet, precisely as ideal, it does provide us with the '*appearance of a thing*', which implies both that it has the manifest (and a priori structured) content sufficient for empirical objectivity and also that it is dependent in a way that requires a thing that exists with features more basic than this manifest content. Even though we cannot ourselves theoretically determine the inherent nature of things in themselves, Kant's notion of a thing in itself is not to be reduced to a mere verbal possibility or fiction but ultimately refers to whatever underlying (in a way that is opaque to us) weighty and genuine non-sensible reality there is, a reality that can contrast with items that are transcendently ideal without thereby demoting these items into non-entities simply because they are in this sense 'mere appearances' of something more fundamental.

¹⁴See A226=B273. A 'non-accidental modification' would be one, for example, that would allow us, even 'in this world', to know things in a determinate non-sensory way.

3 'Idealism' in Context

For Anglophone philosophers this is admittedly not the most natural way to understand the term 'idealism'. Nonetheless, it can be argued that this is an appropriate way to begin to understand Kant's many expressions on the topic, and that it is by no means as idiosyncratic as it may seem, for it best fits relevant ways in which other German philosophers such as Hegel tend to use the term.¹⁵ More generally, even if within the Anglophone tradition the term 'ideal' often implies simply 'not real', the possibility of a positive and very different kind of reading, where that implication is not intended, is only to be expected, once one recalls the term's obvious Platonic origin. For philosophers in the Platonic tradition, 'ideal' means precisely 'most real', rather than 'least' real, let alone not real at all.¹⁶ (The reversal of this meaning in many modern contexts should be no more surprising than learning that in many philosophies 'objective' used to mean 'existence in mind' and 'subjective' the opposite.) When he focuses on the term 'ideal', Kant himself makes direct and appreciative reference to this positive meaning, even while going on significantly to modify the Platonic tradition (A313=B370). Kant gives what he calls 'ideal'—in his *theoretical* philosophy—a relatively high status, but in a merely empirical and in-between sense, and so, in contrast to Plato's philosophy, ideality here is merely indicative of, but not identical with, the even higher and non-empirical level of reality. Kant adds, however, that this higher level is truly there, to be determined by us, although only through what he designates as the 'ideal of pure *practical* reason'.

Kant clearly realizes that his own favored, positive, and strictly transcendental use of the term 'idealism' contrasts with the dominant modern and negative use of the term, and hence his *Critique's* B-edition directly opposes the subjectivist position that he takes to be commonly called 'idealism' in philosophies immediately preceding his own. Hence, even though he is himself, in his own proper sense, an idealist, he also gives the name 'Refutation of Idealism' to a crucial argument that he offers against his main modern opponents. In this argument Kant does not take back his own transcendental idealism but instead attacks the modern subjectivist *epistemological* position (associated originally with Descartes) that gives priority to alleged independent determinate knowledge of a strictly mental realm. It is clear, moreover, that Kant also means to reject the subjectivist and mentalist *ontological* positions that dominate much of earlier modern philosophy, namely, the Humean, Berkeleyan, and Leibnizian views that mental beings are all that could exist—whether they be mere associative bundles of impressions, or active empiricist spirits, or rationalist monads.

If one knew only of this Refutation, and the fact that Kant's position is neither, in its positive sense, dogmatic mentalism, nor, in its negative sense, mere skepticism,

¹⁵See my 'Hegel and Idealism' (Ameriks 1991); *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Ameriks 2000a, 276, n. 18); 'Introduction: Interpreting German Idealism' (Ameriks 2000b); and *Kant and the Historical Turn* (Ameriks 2006, Chap. 6).

¹⁶See Beiser (2003).

one might, of course, wonder why he chooses nonetheless to characterize his philosophy essentially in terms of idealism. The considerations just offered along the lines of the Moderate Interpretation are helpful here as well, for they give an understandable sense to Kant's complex terminological moves here. Even if it is not subjectivistic, his idealism essentially does begin from the subjective phenomenon of appearances that are given to a mind with structures that are ideal in the 'modest' double sense indicated earlier: they allow us to know empirical objects in a direct and structured way, and (given Kant's arguments) they are not self-standing—as others have thought space and time could be—but point, in a non-analytic way, to the underlying and more fundamental reality of things in themselves.

It is precisely these two points that Kant stresses repeatedly in the *Prolegomena* as well as in the *Critique's* B-edition responses to the first interpreters who tried to reduce his idealism to subjectivism. Elsewhere, he especially emphasizes that appearance in his sense involves a kind of dependence in its particular instances that is a matter of real rather than logical or analytic grounding. This is the main point of his repeatedly insisting, against Leibnizians, that the appearances that he is discussing are not 'confused' versions of things in themselves whose concepts could simply be analytically decomposed and clarified in order to be able, in principle, to reveal the features of these very same things in themselves as such.¹⁷

This is not to say, however, that for Kant it is part of the very *definition* of a thing in itself that we cannot know it. The negative claim that we cannot theoretically determine particular things in themselves, whether in principle through analysis or any other technique, is not a matter of a stipulated meaning (of 'ideal') but is rather presented as a substantive result of the arguments of the *Critique*. This negative claim is not even present in Kant's Inaugural Dissertation, which already has a doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time but combines this doctrine with the pre-Critical view that we can still gain some determinate knowledge of things in themselves through a non-sensory (intellectual) insight into non-spatiotemporal truths, for example, that God is ultimately responsible in a non-spatiotemporal way for there being a real connection of the plurality of finite substances.¹⁸ Despite the significant differences between these two texts, Kant's mere notion of things in themselves remains the same, and it can be understood as fundamentally 'metaphysical' throughout both the Dissertation (1770) and the *Critique* (1781). These texts share the doctrines that things in themselves have a kind of self-standing and unconditioned reality, and that space and time cannot characterize independent beings as

¹⁷See especially Kant's essay 'contra Eberhard', *On a Discovery whereby any New Critique of Pure Reason is Made Superfluous by an Older One* (1790) in AA 8: 185–251, and see above note 8.

¹⁸Even though Kant's view is more metaphysical in his Inaugural Dissertation (*On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World*), it is worth noting that even then, when he claims that there are some truths about things in themselves that we can determine, he does not go so far as to relapse into a Leibnizian view that there is an in principle analytically traceable connection that reveals the positive nature of *particular* finite things in themselves to be a full explanatory ground of the nature of corresponding particular appearances.

such (a view original to his doctrines after 1770 at the latest), and these doctrines together are taken to entail the denial of the transcendental reality of all spatiotemporal features and the realm of all that is essentially dependent on them. (This is not at all to deny that the earlier text claims that our justified determinate theoretical use of the categories can go beyond that realm, whereas the later text argues directly *against this claim*.)

4 The Ideal As Fundamentally Conditioned

At this point it might still be objected that the general kind of metaphysical dependence being stressed here, as definitive of the appearance/thing in itself distinction, misses something essential in explaining Kantian ideality because it does not immediately characterize ideal items simply in terms of mentality. But this ‘initially neutral’ feature of the Moderate Interpretation can be seen as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. If the main point of ascribing transcendental ideality turns out to be not to deny all reality outside the mental, but instead to say even of something mental (namely, a determinate appearance, which has a kind of reality that *involves* mentality but is not merely subjective) that it is ontologically dependent on a more basic, that is, non-dependent or unconditional, kind of reality that *need not* be knowable or even mental at all, then it remains true that Kant’s own notion of ideality should not itself be *defined* in terms of *mere* mentality.

This is not to deny that the concrete features which, for Kant, characterize all that is transcendently ideal are features that in fact involve a necessary relation to our kind of mind. More specifically, on the form of the Moderate Interpretation that I am proposing, the *Critique*’s strong ideality claim (namely, that transcendental idealism is inescapable, and not merely the most ‘intelligible’ kind of metaphysics) ultimately must rely on the complex position of the Dialectic’s First Antinomy. This position claims both that spatiotemporal features are essential to what is cognitively accessible and directly apparent to sensible minds like ours (and so they are in that sense mental), and, *in addition*, that these features are ideal and cannot characterize things in themselves. This additional claim cannot come from a ‘short argument’ that says that their mentality *as such* is what keeps features from characterizing things in themselves. If that were the argument, then there would have been no reason to bother, as Kant does, with all the *specific* contradictions that arise, according to the dialectical proofs, with the determination of the features of spatiotemporal magnitude. Those proofs clearly rest on steps that presuppose an undisputed extra premise that there are features of things in themselves that require a consistent and absolutely determinate and unconditional status—a status that, it turns out, the features of our spatiotemporal sensibility cannot provide (given the Dialectic’s considerations about magnitude). This point is what then leads Kant to the conclusion that even though the manifest spatiotemporal features necessarily characterize our experience, they cannot be self-standing, and hence there must be, underlying that experience, some more fundamental and non-spatiotemporal features, the transcendently real features of things in themselves. All this reveals that it is not mere

mentality but the characteristic of requiring a particular kind of more fundamental real ground that is distinctive of Kant's notion of ideality.¹⁹

Moreover, even though it is also true that some things in themselves are such that they are disposed to affect us in such a way that, in normal circumstances, the result is that we will have a certain kind of mental state, such relational mental truths still are not to be characterized as truths applying to a thing 'in itself' *as such*; it matters, after all, that Kant uses the term 'thing in itself' rather than simply 'thing'. Just as with the central expression in Kant's practical philosophy, namely, 'end in itself', so too with the central expression of his theoretical philosophy, namely, 'thing in itself', the 'in itself' character should be taken to refer not to just any truths about an item but instead only to those features that it can have *unconditionally*—and there is no reason to think that this character must include the relation of conditioning sensible appearances (even if, in the situation that we are in fact in, it must be admitted that there truly are sensible appearances conditioned by things in themselves).²⁰ As noted earlier, there is an asymmetric relation here: there is nothing in the mere existence of a thing in itself (as opposed to our use of the notion, which always starts from the 'fact' that we are aware of appearances) that entails the existence of appearances, although the converse is not true. Without here further specifying exactly what this means, I will call the features of a thing in itself as such the thing's non-ideal and 'inherent' features, as opposed to features that have to do directly with whatever involvement it has with appearances.²¹

In addition to all these points, there is also another Kantian way to appreciate the crucial but often overlooked looseness of the connection between transcendental ideality and mere mentality. Recall again that at the time of the Dissertation Kant allowed that our mind might cognize how it is in itself, for at that time he held that it could have an intellectual as opposed to a merely sensory and spatiotemporal determination of itself. This means that Kant was then allowing that in principle we can access inherent and transcendently real features of a thing in itself as such, such as our simplicity—and yet these features are obviously mental. It is true that later, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's criticism of rational psychology leads him away from this position of the Dissertation. This criticism, however, merely

¹⁹Here I am merely explaining the basic meaning of Kant's position, and not endorsing or even trying to analyze in detail the Dialectic's specific arguments. I concede that these arguments rest on several controversial presumptions, especially about the kind of quantitative determinacy that features supposedly would require in order to characterize things as things in themselves. See my *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (Ameriks 2003, Chap. 3).

²⁰See Langton (2007); and my *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (Ameriks 2003, Chap. 11). Something that Kant calls 'unconditioned' does not have to be unconditioned in all respects but can be unconditioned simply in respect to a particular category.

²¹I will avoid the term 'intrinsic' here because it is now much disputed, after Langton's interpretation and reactions to it, whether features of things in themselves must (as she contends) be non-relational, or non-dispositional, or (by definition, given, the mere addition of something like 'the non-reducibility thesis') non-phenomenal. On critiques of views in Langton's *Kantian Humility* (Langton 1998), see Allais (2006); and my *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (Ameriks 2003, Chap. 5).

involves specific objections to claims about *how* the mind knows itself—and in particular a denial that it is capable of merely intellectual theoretical determination of itself—but it does not rest on any change in the very definition of the meaning, as opposed to the extension, of the term ‘transcendentally ideal’. Hence, the specific positive feature of mere mentality, or even cognizable mentality, cannot by itself be sufficient for the status of being ‘mere appearance’ in the sense of ‘transcendentally ideal’. This is also why the *Critique* in general argues that self-knowledge is merely ideal not by a ‘short argument’ that would rely on simply pointing out that this knowledge is in and about a mind, but rather by insisting that for it to be genuine self-knowledge, that is, determinate, it must be expressed in spatiotemporal terms, and then it is specifically the ideality of spatiotemporality that thereby brings with it the ideality of our self-knowledge.²²

All this also helps to explain how Kant so confidently held on to the doctrine of the ideality of self-knowledge in particular even when respected opponents thought that it was the weakest part of his idealist system. As hypothetical allies of skepticism, they were willing to allow that our spatial perception, which is obviously supposed to be about physical things that are not actually within our (presumably) nonspatial mind, might in fact not reach reality as such. What they could not see is how inner perception, where there is not this particular kind of gap, might possibly fail altogether in its efforts to reach ultimate reality. But now we can understand why Kant’s rarely accepted reply is right to the point here and reveals how his position is epistemologically innovative and not ontologically absurd: if a thing in itself is precisely not just any object that might be known, but is the purely inherent nature of a thing in itself as such, then, given the Critical point that even all our self-knowledge must be expressed in terms of spatiotemporal determinations, and that such determinations, for the reasons given earlier, cannot apply to *any thing* in an inherent and *unconditioned* sense, it follows then, and only then, that our self also cannot be known by us as a thing *in itself*. And this of course is not at all to deny the existence of the self, or to question extensive knowledge of the self insofar as it is a conditioned object of experience.²³

5 On Another Kind of ‘Moderate’ Alternative

To put into somewhat better relief the specific features of the kind of Moderate Interpretation of Kantian idealism that is being proposed here, I will conclude by devoting a section to contrasting it with the somewhat similar interpretation in

²²For a discussion and criticism of this inference, see my *Kant’s Theory of Mind* (Ameriks 1982, Chap. 7).

²³It may look as if I am concluding that there is nothing very odd about Kant’s doctrine of the ideality of all our determinate theoretical self-knowledge—but in fact this doctrine can be considered quite questionable as long as it rests on the general controversial doctrines that all our determinate self-knowledge really does have to involve spatiotemporal characterizations and that the metaphysical status of temporality in particular is in no way absolute.

Robert Hanna's recent *Kant, Science, and Human Nature* (Hanna 2006). Hanna's version of a moderate strategy involves two main components. The first component is the contention that Kant himself wants to combine an appreciation of modern science with what Hanna calls the philosophical position of "manifest realism", a form of perceptual realism that in the first instance is also aimed against extreme positions in theoretical philosophy. On the one hand, this position rejects the excessive subjectivism of either standard empiricism or phenomenism and asserts an enriched empirical realism that contains necessary objective structures. On the other hand, it goes against the 'non-manifest' position of either the excessive naturalism of eliminativist scientific realism or any traditional dogmatic metaphysics that posits supersensible items in principle beyond direct human perception. Hanna assumes from the start that any such positing—either of what is supposedly natural but in principle hidden, or of something supernaturally noumenal—introduces a level of the "Really Real", which would *undermine* the reality of the "manifest" level of our common perceptual experience.²⁴ This now familiar 'demoting presumption' distinguishes Hanna's interpretative approach from the Moderate Interpretation proposed here, but in other ways his approach is recognizably moderate in a broad sense, and it is worth exploring in some detail to see if it may nonetheless provide an even better perspective on Kant's idealism.

The second main component of Hanna's strategy is called the thesis of the "practical foundations of the exact sciences".²⁵ This component involves the construction of a Kantian philosophical anthropology aimed at avoiding the extreme and opposed positions of any "scientific naturalism" that provides at best an "error theory" for any belief in the ineliminable reality and value of acts of human autonomy, and of any dogmatic metaphysics that insists on making positive noumenal claims in order to preserve such belief. In putting these components all together, Hanna can be understood to be constructing his own kind of moderate Critical version of the contemporary position of nonreductive materialism. On this position, theoretically there exists only one world of natural and material things, and yet that world is to be understood as still having room for "emergent" or irreducible sensory, organic, and intentional properties, properties that can supposedly preserve all that is of genuine value in human willing and practical life. Crude naturalism and crude supernaturalism are thus both avoided.

Hanna gives distinctive substance to what he calls his "cognitive semantic" reading of Kant by adding significant existential affirmations—of possibly instantiable non-empirical (e.g., a priori) properties—as well as significant existential denials—of any theoretical cognition of positive noumenal determinations. Exegetically, he can thus also characterize his position as a middle path between innocuous 'two aspect' interpretations of Kant that would go so far as to deny the existence of any noumenal properties, as well as extravagant 'two worlds' interpretations that would make determinate theoretical claims about a noumenal world.

²⁴Hanna (2006: 5).

²⁵Hanna (2006: 30).

Hanna realizes that this middle position runs into a special exegetical challenge when the practical realm of Kant's philosophy is considered, and he develops an original theory of action to meet the challenge. He proposes understanding the property of free will as something wholly internal to human life, a matter of the *complex natural* "singularities" of our embodied intentional responsiveness. On this view the claim of human freedom is neither immodestly noumenal—in the strong sense of affirming something outside of nature altogether, nor is it so modest that it is explicable in more basic terms that are not distinctively human—as in the eliminativist naturalism that Hanna mocks as the benighted position that "we are nothing but mechanized puppets epiphenomenally dreaming that we are real persons".²⁶

6 Further Versions of Moderation

Within the broad common ground of relatively moderate Kant interpretations, there remains a variety of middle paths that could be pursued. One way to begin to think about relevant motivations behind choosing among the different options here is to go back to consider again the key terms in Hanna's title: science and human nature. He takes these terms to be very closely related, but it is worth keeping in mind that the relation can go in opposite directions. One main option would be simply to use modern exact science to explain all of human nature, in somewhat the same way that it may appear in principle to be able to explain all of the rest of nature. This strategy can be said to define the main tendency of the scientific revolution, with the main later leaders of this movement differing basically in how they understand the phrase 'in somewhat the same way'. From a Kantian perspective, *scientism* can be understood as the program of immodestly understanding 'somewhat' here to mean 'almost exactly the same', and of thus going to the extreme of minimizing the fundamental difference between human nature and the nature of other things. This difference is so important to Hanna that he takes a diametrically opposed strategic option and proposes that human nature should be understood in relation to science primarily as *explanans* rather than *explanandum*: for his Kant, it is ultimately because human nature is the way it is, that our ontology and science can be the way it is, rather than vice versa.

This "primacy of human nature thesis"²⁷ is reflected in Hanna's account of manifest realism, which limits what is natural and real to what is in principle "directly *humanly* perceivable".²⁸ In expressing this point and making use of the notion of what is possible "in principle", Hanna leaves room for the moderate empirical realist thought that there are objects that no human being will ever *actually* perceive, as well as for the thought that, whenever material objects are in fact perceived, their existence even then is not literally immanent to the mind. The claim that something

²⁶Hanna (2006: 14).

²⁷Hanna (2006: 32).

²⁸Hanna (2006: 142, my emphasis; cf. *ibid.*, 29).

must in some way be within the *intentional realm* of our epistemological access, the realm of what we can in principle intend and directly confirm, does not mean that it literally must exist simply in the psychological domain of our actual intendings and confirmings.

Hanna collects many passages from the *Critique* that appear to express a manifest position just like this, but there are, of course, other possible readings, and the position obviously requires further clarification concerning the meaning of each term of the key phrase, “directly humanly perceivable”. One could explore it in relation, for example, to truths about the center of the sun, or beyond our prior ‘light cone’, or about what is only ‘bat perceivable’ and still seems real and spatiotemporal but not human. Rather than dwelling here on these issues, I will focus on noting that, however Hanna’s key terms are clarified, there are two different spheres of items that can be contrasted with the realm delimited by Hanna’s notion of manifest realism. First, there is the thought of instantiated properties that are non-manifest-and-*yet-in-some-way-physical*, a thought that Hanna considers to be central to the view of advocates of radical forms of scientific realism but that he totally rejects and takes to be not a part of Kant’s own position. Second, there is the thought—also rejected by Hanna as irrelevant here (not as impossible, but just as “methodologically” irrelevant)—of instantiated properties that are considered to be both-non-manifest-and-*non-physical*. This is a thought that most contemporary philosophers may take to be empty, and yet it corresponds to traditional metaphysical readings of noumenal properties implied by Kant’s doctrine of things in themselves.

Despite the apparent deep differences between these two thoughts, there may be relevant ways to bring these thoughts together. For example, one might argue that, although, on a traditional reading of Kantian things in themselves, such things can seem at first to have to be items that are strictly supernatural as well as noumenal, such as God or other possible spirits, nonetheless there might be a way even for a contemporary naturalist philosopher to introduce scientific items that are *relevantly analogous* to Kantian things in themselves, items that can, *in a sense*, be said to have non-manifest natural and noumenal properties, and, moreover, can even have these properties at the very same ‘level’.²⁹

Wilfrid Sellars proposed one version of this view when he claimed that, “at the end of the day”, the entities in the ultimate ontology warranted by scientific realism would contain properties that are natural in an understandable and *extended but still literal* sense because they would include theoretical physical items that are fundamentally unlike anything that we now can understand but are introduced precisely to eventually explain some of the most complex of natural events, namely sensations.³⁰ These items would admittedly not be called ‘natural’ *if* one were restricted to understanding ‘nature’ simply in terms of the properties that define our current *type* of understanding of items in space and time, which supposedly cannot ever

²⁹I am using ‘noumenal’ in a broad sense, at first just to contrast with what is manifest or phenomenal, and leaving other characteristics open for the discussion that follows.

³⁰See Sellars (1963); and for a very helpful overview see C. F. Delaney (1977).

account for what he calls the homogeneous “grain” of sensory qualia—but Sellars believed they can nonetheless be called ‘natural’ in an extended sense because of how they function as *successor* concepts to our earlier and cruder notions of nature. (There is an obvious analogy here to the Kuhnian thought that the scientific revolution’s introduction of its new framework led to an irreversible replacement of earlier concepts of nature but not to a transcendence of nature altogether.)

Because the lawful determination of these natural features, in this *extended* and second Sellarsian sense of ‘nature’ transcends not only our present actual knowledge but also the particular *conceptual framework* of our current understanding of nature, Sellars suggested that in a sense these features can also be called ‘noumenal’. He understood that these posited features are *admittedly unlike* the noumena of the Critical philosophy in at least three ways: they are in principle theoretically knowable, they have nothing to do with a spiritual realm, and they are still scientifically natural and spatiotemporal, even though in new and extended senses. Nonetheless, these posited entities *remain like* Kant’s noumena in two very important ways: negatively, they transcend, in principle, the features of all the phenomena that we can comprehend in our current perception and cognitive framework; and, positively, there are grounds for saying that they also constitute the most fundamental level of reality.

It appears to be precisely this kind of Sellarsian picture that is the implicit target of most of Hanna’s efforts in defending what he calls Kantian manifest realism. Hanna’s version of Kant remains moderate insofar as it denies *any* eliminativist ontological position on the whole realm of phenomena, once the ‘noumena’ of the ultimate version of scientific realism are introduced. Against this kind of eliminativism, Hanna wants to preserve a ‘manifest image’ that contains all the macro-objects of ordinary experience in a way that will *never* be ontologically replaced by entities like those posited in Sellars’s ‘scientific image’.

7 Further Alternatives to Hanna’s Alternative

Hanna’s approach has understandable Kantian motivations of its own, but one might still try to find a moderate interpretation that is not as radical as Sellars’s and yet is more realist and ‘science friendly’ than Hanna’s. One move here would be to argue that, quite apart from any speculations about future reductive accounts of sensations, there may be elements in current science that already present something like a *benign and broadly naturalistic* parallel to Kant’s theoretical distinction of phenomena and noumena, a parallel that has some interesting similarities with Sellars’ account but is not so extreme. The distinctive feature of this account is that it would retain the crucial distinction, which is central to Kant’s transcendental idealism, between (1) spatiotemporal and (2) perceptually determinable properties, on the one hand, and properties that, on the other hand, are not (in any remotely ordinary sense) spatiotemporal or perceptually determinable. In addition to making this double distinction, the account would also parallel Kant’s practice of (3) calling the former properties ‘phenomenal’ and the latter ‘noumenal’, and of (4) taking the

latter to have a kind of special ultimacy because they serve as real grounds that are not themselves grounded by phenomena.

If I am not mistaken, on certain readings of contemporary developments in cosmology and physics there may now be a significant parallel to the four points of this Kantian way of thinking, that is, a relevant *quasi-Sellarsian but not necessarily eliminativist analog* to transcendental idealism, even if not an exact replica of it. Numerous cosmologists have recently introduced the notion that there may be “singularities”³¹ in nature that exist in quantum states such as the most primitive “stages” of the world’s initial conditions, and that theorizing about these states involves the postulation of entities that are distinguishable but are not characterizable specifically in terms of spatiotemporal properties.³² If these theorists are not wholly misled, or even if there is simply some understandable possibility that theories like theirs (with elements that exist in states without space or time—or at least without anything like what Kant and most of us have tended to think of as space and time) could hold for some universe of genuine objects, then there would be, I think, reasons for taking these theories to imply a contemporary conceptual framework that can be said to be, all at once, moderate, realist, and *relevantly analogous* to Kant’s transcendental idealism.

There are, of course, *obvious negative aspects* to the analogy. These contemporary physical theories are introduced on the basis of *specific scientific explanatory* considerations that are largely empirical, unlike the kind of a priori and purely philosophical arguments that underlie Kant’s doctrine. Moreover, the non-spatiotemporal entities that the physicists posit are unlike Kant’s noumena insofar as they are, to some extent at least, *theoretically determinable by us*—and, in part, already within current science, unlike the entities posited in Sellars’s entirely hypothetical theory. Nonetheless, these entities remain in significant ways *positively analogous* to Kantian noumena insofar as they in principle also transcend all the (1) sensory and (2) spatiotemporal properties directly accessible in perception by human beings. Moreover, just as it is natural to think of Kantian noumena as *more basic* than (as the real grounds of) the phenomena of our experience, it is also natural to think of these purely theoretical scientific entities, precisely because of their explanatory location ‘prior’ to the emergence of spatiotemporal properties, as also being (3) like noumena because (4) they are in an important sense more basic than the phenomena of our ordinary experience. Although these scientific entities would, of course, not constitute a spiritual, mystical, or supernaturally motivated ontology, but would simply consist of physical ‘stuff’ in an extremely primitive sense, there remain, I believe, enough points of similarity to allow them to be said to be, on the whole, more like than unlike Kantian noumena. After all, whatever ‘spiritual’ character may in fact attach to Kant’s noumena, or things in themselves, this is not something that attaches to them as a matter of definition but is rather something that, as the

³¹This is a term that Hanna invokes near the end of his book (2006: 439), for his own purposes in trying to construct a broadly naturalistic Kantian practical philosophy. See below, at n.39.

³²See Greene (2004: 472).

Critique makes clear, involves extra considerations that may apply only to a subset of the whole noumenal realm.

Although Hanna appears to have constructed his doctrine of manifest realism precisely to oppose any view that involves perceptually hidden ‘micro-entities’, it remains unclear to me what the full grounds are for his opposition, and for presuming that Kant himself could not allow for a possibility of the kind that I have suggested as being at least somewhat in the spirit of his own idealism— notwithstanding the points of difference that have been granted. I should note, however, that the analogy that I have just been proposing does not focus on the specific characteristics about purported micro-entities that Hanna himself emphasizes and criticizes. The form of scientific realism that he concentrates on attacking does not have specific cosmological roots but is characterized primarily by the metaphysical thought, stressed in Rae Langton’s interpretation of Kant, that bodies can have hidden ‘essences’, consisting of the essentially non-relational and ‘intrinsic’ characteristics of them as things in themselves.³³ Against this kind of view, Hanna understandably contends that such essences would contrast oddly with the phenomenal and relational characteristics that constitute all the typical explanations about *bodies* that we in fact understand throughout our experience.

While the Moderate Interpretation that I have proposed does not appear to rule out exploring the possibility of something like this particular *metaphysical version* of a Kantian analog of scientific realism, it also need not be said to be committed to Langton’s specific version. I suspect that Hanna and Kant are right in closely tying the specific notions of the physical or *bodily*, and their concrete ‘explanation’, to characteristics that are always relational (since, contrary to suggestions at the end of Langton’s book, speaking of non-relational features of a ‘body’ seems very odd here), and, conversely, I would add that one needs to leave room for the fact that (also contrary to Langton’s reading) some crucial Kantian noumenal properties, for example, our freedom, seem relational as well.³⁴

8 Theoretical Difficulties

Whatever proper objections Hanna may be able to raise against other interpretations, there remain reasons against leaping into accepting Hanna’s type of manifest realism, especially insofar as its insistence on not allowing existence claims about any entities beyond human experience appears to rest simply on the dubious ‘demoting presumption’ noted earlier. That is, it fails to appreciate that saying X is more basic than Y, even in the sense in which hidden noumena or things in themselves may be more basic than phenomena, need not mean saying that X is ‘Really Real’ in a sense that has to make the ‘lower’ reality of the objects of phenomenal experience itself *fraudulent*. Interpreters such as Hanna could save themselves the trouble of

³³See above note 21.

³⁴See above note 21.

a well-intentioned but overly radical assault on any non-fully-manifest realism by considering the possibility that (despite the threats of some scientific metaphysicians) *even if we do allow* the possibility of some basic and hidden 'micro-entities' of a quasi-noumenal-and-Kantian sort (e.g., either 'cosmological' or 'Langtonian'), this need not immediately lead to ontologically eliminating the objective features of our common experience that Hanna so much wants to preserve. Instead of offering us the familiar and *discouraging dilemma* of having to choose between mere phenomenalism or antirealist noumenalism, it may be that Kant can be understood as having found a way simultaneously to allow *three levels of irreducible reality*: private merely mental events, subjective-objective perceptual features, and intrinsic non-perceptual objective properties. A form of 'manifest realism' might then survive as the middle layer of this ontological cake, but it need not be dogmatically maintained as the whole story.

Rather than going further into these general issues here, however, it is useful to consider some problems with the other basic theme of Hanna's Kant interpretation, his claims about the primacy of human nature in an *explicitly anthropological* sense. One way that Hanna expresses his position on this point is by saying, "there cannot be things without the real possibility of [human!] persons"; or, as he goes on to say, "things can exist without existing human beings, and in fact did so for millions of years before we came along. But things could not have existed unless it were really possible for us to come along".³⁵ One worry about such statements is that they suggest a casual (even if not directly causal) *speciesism*, a speciesism that ultimately seems foreign to Kant, even if it is also true that the Critical philosophy very much concerns the structures and implications of our particular sensible species of cognition. Against Hanna's biological speciesism, there is the fact that, throughout his general metaphysics, Kant does not restrict the very meaning of the notion of a 'thing'—as opposed to the narrower notion of 'an object theoretically knowable and determinable by us'—to the notion of spatiotemporal things, let alone to the notion of humanly perceivable spatiotemporal things—for, otherwise, the *transcendental reality* of the spatiotemporality of things in themselves would follow, and of course he rejects that kind of realism when he introduces the notion of non-spatiotemporal things in themselves.

It therefore seems un-Critical to presume that the Critical Kant considers the 'real possibility' of the human species, or even the features of space and time, to be clearly metaphysically necessary for any otherwise nonempty universe. This point can be pressed by either a theist or an atheist. Consider the familiar theistic notion of a traditional God who is free-standing and not required to be a creator, or the naturalist hypothesis of an extremely simple and non-generative primordial state of a universe. In either case, there might have been some 'things', even finite things, such that, by themselves or through God's 'lazy' hand, those things would be so primitive that they would not even be in any spatiotemporal relations, or at least not in the specific kind of spatiotemporal relations needed for the real possibility, if

³⁵Hanna (2006: 32; cf. *ibid.*, 169).

not the actuality, of biological entities that have some kind of distinctively *human* nature. All this remains thinkable, I believe, as long as here the notion of ‘real possibility’ signifies, as it should, something that applies specifically to the kind of *animal* species that is human, and not just to any kind of entity, and as long as the notion also signifies more than the mere logical possibility of such an entity. Otherwise, the claim that the real possibility of human beings is a condition of the existence of things at all would amount to no more than the trivial condition that there could not be things unless human beings are *logically* possible—and it is hard to make sense of relevant situations violating that minimal condition.

All this is admittedly rather abstract metaphysical speculation, but it is the kind of speculating that one is forced into as soon as one sees that special terms such as ‘real possibility’ are playing a key role in an argument. In contexts like this, where a very substantive claim rests on the idea that some ordinary X is allegedly impossible if the ‘real possibility’ of some allegedly most fundamental Y is not granted, I believe it is sufficient to introduce what is simply an *epistemically possible* defeater. That is, the opponent of Hanna’s anthropological speciesism does not himself have to establish in this situation the ‘real possibility’ of the X type item that he is using as a defeater. The opponent can simply say that if, as far as we know, such an X does not seem impossible (to him) even when the real possibility of the Y is not itself conceded, then (if there are no overwhelming other considerations, such as an absolute practical inability to believe otherwise) the substantive claim that Y is a real condition of X needs to be withdrawn—which, admittedly, is not to say that the claim has been shown to be false either. Rationalist dogmatists such as Leibniz, Spinoza, and Hegel might not have permitted the thought, but there is nothing that I can see in Kant’s theoretical philosophy that rules out the austere notion of a God who could have created some kind of world of things and yet have been such a minimally playful being that he would not have also bothered to make things that are complex enough to structure a world in which *human* beings are even ‘really possible’, let alone actual. As long as we are in such a general state of ignorance about real possibilities and what they involve and rest on, it seems to me that Critical caution teaches us to abstain from insisting that the specific real possibility of the human species is itself a condition of the existence of all other things.

One might try to escape from counterexamples like this by saying that such speculations are entirely beyond the bounds of sense, because in a world where there is no human nature there could not even be the minimal kinds of coherent categorial features, such as thinghood, propertihood, consistency, and diversity, that are needed even to allow sense for the thought of any ‘world’ of ‘things’. To propose this kind of argument, however, is precisely to move away from the spatiotemporal characteristics and other much more specific features that distinguish ‘human’ nature as such, and it is thus to go beyond the ‘anthropological’ considerations that Hanna starts out by emphasizing. It is one thing to say that any possible world of things must meet minimal conditions of rational consistency and categorial complexity (quantity, quality, substantiality and inherence, relationality and influence). It is something else to insist that any such world must depend on—rather than simply

not make absolutely impossible—the much more specific features of finite, embodied, spatiotemporal rational agents. Moreover, if Kant were to think otherwise, and were to assume that the specific *schematized* categories of the human species are necessary conditions of all else, then it is hard to make sense of why he even bothered to speculate—as he repeatedly did—about nonhuman and non-spatiotemporal species, or of why he did not rule out all *rational* psychology and theology *from the start* by saying that non-spatiotemporal entities are not only not theoretically determinable but are clearly not even possible or understandable at all, that is, are *just as immediately* absurd (and not merely insufficient for theoretical determination of a particular object) as positing something that involves no quantity or quality at all.

9 Practical Difficulties

Whatever difficulties arise with the alleged foundational role of humanity on Hanna's account, these can be distinguished from the specific exegetical difficulty that attaches to the distinctive concluding argument of his interpretation. Here Hanna makes a bold attempt to preserve some kind of genuinely Kantian theory of action and morality within a metaphysics that remains naturalistic enough to reject *any appeal* to positive noumenal characteristics, such as a will that has a causality that is not naturally caused and that operates non-spatiotemporally as an absolute free cause of natural events. The obvious difficulty is how to square Hanna's view here with Kant's firm commitment to what he takes to be our common moral belief that our actions involve noumenal freedom in a positive spontaneous sense, and with the *Critique's* overall project of protecting this particular belief by securing metaphysical room in general for things in themselves that can be absolutely spontaneous grounds of what is spatiotemporal even though they are not spatiotemporal 'in themselves'. Rather than stressing the general exegetical difficulties with interpretations that minimize these points, I will comment directly on the main problems that I see in specific expressions unique to Hanna's positive account of what he takes to be a proper Kantian view of freedom.

Hanna begins his chapter on freedom with a quotation from the first *Critique*, that "practical freedom can be proved through experience".³⁶ This is a somewhat controversial passage, but a similar remark can be found near the end of the third *Critique*, which states that the "objective reality" of human freedom "can be established [. . .] in experience".³⁷ As the latter quotation makes clear, however—and as is especially evident from Kant's definitive claim at the start of the second *Critique*—the requisite "experience" that Kant ultimately has in mind here cannot be just any human experience but must involve acceptance of the implications of the strict "practical laws" of the categorical imperative and its notion of an "end in itself".³⁸ Furthermore, rather

³⁶ A802=B830.

³⁷ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §90 (AA 5: 468; translation Pluhar).

³⁸ *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Preface (translation Gregor).

than relying on a mere factual appeal to experience of any type, Kant also makes clear, by the very least at the time of the second *Critique*, that any rational acceptance of pure practical reason's demand to heed its laws, as laws that duty requires, is something that itself presupposes there is *no* 'live' *theoretical* defeater for our belief in a metaphysical capacity to act absolutely freely. That is, although Kant insists that theoretical philosophy cannot establish that we actually have freedom in this strong positive sense, he also insists that we can properly maintain a belief in any strict freedom in our action at all only if there is a theoretical justification of the doctrine of transcendental idealism in a strong metaphysical sense, that is, a sense that entails that spatiotemporal causation is not the only kind of causation.

This is in effect to say that, in one sense, the crucial sense of establishing a necessary condition for maintaining a central rational belief, Kant is actually committed to a doctrine of the *primacy of theoretical* over practical reason. That is, unless theoretical reason can restrict knowledge and make room for faith by definitively refuting the doctrine of the transcendental reality of space and time, practical reason, however strong its urgings, would not have any possible authority for us, for it would be *idly* telling us we ought to be freely obeying rules that we would know we cannot actually obey in this way. One can acknowledge this particular theoretical primacy, however, without denying a Kantian primacy of practical reason in *other* very significant senses, for it still remains true that for Kant the unconditional value of human existence can in no way be disclosed by, or reside in, our purely theoretical use of reason. Accepting the importance of this point is still compatible with insisting that only a fully developed Critical theoretical use of reason (one which includes an idealist metaphysics) can save us from having to give up what Kant obviously takes to be our most important beliefs, our moral convictions.

It may be that Hanna's position, which is hesitant to invoke a fully noumenal doctrine of Kantian freedom, goes back to a presumption (common to many readers) that Kant holds that a mere feeling of moral conviction on our part is *by itself* enough to license our conviction in our unconditional freedom and moral standing. The main innovation in Hanna's discussion at this point appears to be the special emphasis he places on the fact that Kant frequently mentions that we do not regard ourselves as agents whose actions are to be *explained* through merely 'mechanical' forms of causation. Hanna stresses passages throughout numerous works in which Kant insists that our explanations and initiations of human action involve organic, teleological, and psychological features that are so complex and internally vivid that, so it seems, this makes them *in principle unlike* the processes that we know how to explain through merely mechanical patterns—even though this is also not to say that they involve any *violations* of the deterministic mechanistic laws that we do know. Hanna's main innovation at this point is to propose that, without violating the unity of nature, there can still be, within the directly accessible realm of human action, "one-time-only" or "one-off" laws of *natural* causal singularities.³⁹ That is, we should understand our life as involving what Hanna calls free intentional

³⁹Hanna (2006: 444).

actions that are “macrophysical non-mechanistic non-deterministic causal dynamic biological processes of my own living organismic body”.⁴⁰ Given these singularities, and the complexity of human intentions, Hanna concludes that “there cannot be a Newton of my human mind”, just as Kant famously insists that there *cannot* be a “Newton of even a blade of grass”.⁴¹

An obvious exegetical limitation of these considerations, whatever their systematic status, is that there is no reason in the text to suppose that Kant himself is thinking of the notion of such “one-off” *natural* (i.e., spatiotemporal) laws. Moreover, there are features of the text that indicate that Kant would be positively adverse to the strategy Hanna is proposing here, and this is because in the end Kant actually means to take back what it at first may *seem* that he is saying in his Newton passage. That is, if one reads through to the end of the third *Critique*, what one sees is that for Kant, at the level of nature, the problem with mechanism (in his broad sense) is never a demonstrable intrinsic failing but simply an *epistemological* limitation on humanity's part. It is true that Kant believes that even if we were Newtons, that is, the greatest of human geniuses, *we* could never see how a mechanistic explanation of biological processes can be worked out—but that does not mean that Kant holds that there cannot be such a true account. On the contrary, what the third *Critique* is carefully constructed to teach at the end is that, insofar as we pay attention to being simply ‘human’ in a natural sense, we must acknowledge that even mechanism could be true after all, and so all our *theoretical* teleological thinking could be mere short-sightedness, albeit of a kind that, given our human nature, we cannot expect to avoid using within this life.⁴²

This point does not at all bother Kant because he has designed his discussion of the possibly fallacious character of our theoretical teleological orientation precisely in order to make all the more dramatic his belief that we still *do* have adequate reason to hold on to thinking of ourselves as irreducibly intentional and free beings, even in face of the ‘in principle’ predictability of all human action (albeit not a predictability *by* ‘human’ beings)—but this is because, through what is involved in our status as purely moral beings, and through that alone, we can get beyond a merely human perspective. We are qualitatively special inhabitants of the world simply because we have the faculty of *pure reason*, and as such we can appreciate morality's pure practical laws in a way that abstracts from all our specifically animal characteristics—other than our inescapable weakness of also having a sensory faculty that makes us always see the moral law as a strict ‘imperative’, something which we do not heed as a matter of ‘nature’.

For better or worse, *rather* than seeing human nature—in the sense Hanna proposes—as the ultimate foundation of Kantian theoretical and practical existence, it seems to me that something close to the opposite is true: for Kant, pure reason is

⁴⁰Hanna (2006: 444).

⁴¹Hanna (2006: 447).

⁴²See Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §90 (AA 5: 464n.); and see my “The End of the *Critiques*: Kant's Moral “Creationism”” (Ameriks 2008).

the absolute essence and proper ground of our theoretical and practical existence, and we have to apply this reason as best we can to the difficult task of governing, rather than absolutizing, the colorful and very real but crooked timber of our all too human—and, as such, secondary—nature. All this is still compatible with a Moderate Interpretation of idealism. The version of this interpretation that must be used, however, if it is to stand as a proper reflection of Kant's own intentions, is one that understands human intentional experience as standing in between, on the one hand, phenomena that we can determine and, on the other hand, noumenal features within us that we can affirm—but on the basis of pure moral considerations alone, as absolutely free determining causes. In the end, then, the only form of a Moderate Interpretation that can still claim to represent Kant's own views (especially about what matters most to him, namely freedom) remains one that not only, like Hanna's, allows empirical realism, but also, unlike Hanna's, asserts some level of real features that are in themselves non-spatiotemporal altogether.⁴³

References

- Allais, L. 2006. 'Intrinsic Natures: A Critique of Langton on Kant'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73: 143–169.
- Allais, L. 2007. 'Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45: 459–484.
- Allison, H. 2006. 'Transcendental Realism, Empirical Realism, and Transcendental Idealism'. *Kantian Review* 11: 1–28.
- Ameriks, K. 1982. *Kant's Theory of Mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 1991. 'Hegel and Idealism'. *The Monist* 74: 386–402.
- Ameriks, K. 2000a. *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy: Problems in the Appropriation of the Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2000b. 'Introduction: Interpreting German Idealism'. In K. Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–17.
- Ameriks, K. 2000c. Review of Rae Langton *Kantian Humility*. *Philosophical Books* 41: 111–113.
- Ameriks, K. 2003. *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2006. *Kant and the Historical Turn: Philosophy as Critical Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2008. 'The End of the Critiques: Kant's Moral "Creationism"'. In P. Muchnik (ed.), *Rethinking Kant: Volume 1*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, pp. 165–190.
- Ameriks, K. forthcoming. 'On Reconciling the Transcendental Turn and Kant's Idealism'. In S. Gardner (ed.), *The Transcendental Turn*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Beiser, F. 2003. 'Two Concepts of Reason in German Idealism'. *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus/International Yearbook of German Idealism* 1: 15–27.
- Delaney, C. F. 1977. *The Synoptic Vision. Essays on the Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

⁴³See A537=B565, where Kant writes that "if [...] appearances are not viewed as things in themselves [...] they must themselves have grounds which are not appearances [...] [and] the consequence of insisting upon the [absolute] reality of appearances is to destroy all freedom" (translation modified).

- Greene, B. 2004. *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time and the Texture of Reality*. New York: Random House.
- Hanna, R. 2006. *Kant, Science, and Human Nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kant, I. 1997. *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Trans. and ed. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Langton, R. 2007. 'Objective and Unconditioned Value'. *The Philosophical Review* 116: 157–185.
- McDowell, J. 2001. *Mind, Value and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McDowell, J. 2004. *Mind and World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McGinn, C. 1999. *Knowledge and Reality: Selected Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2007. 'Dinge an sich und sekundäre Qualitäten'. In J. Stolzenberg (ed.), *Kant in der Gegenwart*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 167–209.
- Sellars, W. 1963. *Science, Perception and Reality*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul and New York: Humanities Press.
- Stroud, B. 1999. 'The Goal of Transcendental Arguments'. In R. Stern (ed.), *Transcendental Arguments: Problems and Prospects*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 155–172.
- Stroud, B. 2000. *The Quest for Reality: Subjectivism and the Metaphysics of Color*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, A. 2005. *Kant*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Chapter 3

Objects and Objectivity in Kant's First *Critique*

Manfred Baum

1 Objects in Transcendental Idealism

Ever since Johann Georg Heinrich Feder published the *Göttingen* review of Kant's first *Critique* in 1782, this book has been read as a specimen of transcendental idealism or even as a 'system' of transcendental idealism, and up to this day the characterization by Feder is quite common. For example, the best present account of Kant's main work, by Henry Allison, goes under the title *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Garve's review of the book, which was abridged by Feder, does not speak of a system of transcendental idealism. In particular, Garve does not make the comparison of Kant's with Berkeley's idealism, a comparison "which may have insulted [Kant and his followers] the most, but which I regret the least",¹ as Feder tells us in his autobiography. Garve only briefly reports what Kant says about his transcendental idealism in the fourth Paralogism of the *Critique*. And this is in fact the first time in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that Kant himself uses this term.

It would indeed be strange for a 'system' of transcendental idealism that its key-notion first shows up on page 369 and then almost disappears from the book. So, we need to look at the passages where Kant coins this term and examine them closely. When we look at the first mentioning of the term, we see that Kant uses it to make an important distinction. He says: "[O]ne would necessarily have to distinguish a twofold idealism, i.e., the transcendental and the empirical one."² Then he proceeds: "I understand by the transcendental idealism of all appearances the doctrine [*Lehrbegriff*] that they are all together to be regarded as mere representations

M. Baum (✉)

Department of Philosophy, University of Wuppertal, D-42097 Wuppertal, Germany
e-mail: baum@uni-wuppertal.de

¹Feder (1825: 119). His own words are: "welches wohl am meisten beleidigt haben mag, ich aber am wenigsten bereue."

²Note that the words after the comma are not given in the Guyer/Wood translation (Kant 1998).

and not as things in themselves, and accordingly that time and space³ are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given for themselves or conditions of objects as things in themselves.” (A369) Here we have the first of only two definitions of transcendental idealism to be found in the *Critique*. That this definition by Kant has been misunderstood since the days of Garve and Feder only emphasizes the need to reflect on the meaning Kant wants this term to have.

In order to get a better grip on the passages quoted above we need to concentrate on three aspects which we will now discuss.

(1) First we have to take the context of this definition into account. Kant introduces it in a passage of the Transcendental Dialectic in which he criticizes a kind of rational psychology as part of a dogmatic metaphysics. Idealism is, accordingly, a metaphysical position, following from an inference to the unknown causes of given perceptions and their doubtful existence. This position is for Kant roughly identical to that of Descartes and he calls it ‘problematic’ or ‘sceptical’ idealism. This kind of idealism rests on the sober observation that unknown causes, inferred from given effects, are necessarily undetermined as far as their qualities and even their way of existence is concerned. In the case of perceptions as given effects, their cause may exist not in the perceived object, but in the perceiving subject, or in God (or in a *genius malignus*).

Kant opposes this kind of (empirical) idealism to dualism. He understands dualism as the assertion of a possible certainty concerning the existence of bodies or objects of outer sense, using a Wolffian term. This term designates the ontological position of stating a duality of kinds of existing things in the world, bodies and spirits. Kant adapts this Wolffian term to his own purpose and redefines it. In this metaphysical perspective, dogmatic idealism amounts to the claim that only spirits exist. An idealist of the Cartesian type is thus not someone who dogmatically denies the existence of bodies as external objects of the senses, but is rather someone who claims that we can never be fully certain of their existence. They could be illusions, dreams, or fictions of some kind or other, i.e., they could be things whose existence consists only in being perceived by us. Idealism concerns the existence⁴ of perceived external objects as doubted or denied by metaphysicians who hold a certain position vis-à-vis the relation of the soul to other substances (be they bodies or souls). It is not an *epistemological* position, and Kant, as we shall see, does not intend to refute such a kind of idealism by presenting a deduction of the categories or a proof of the principles of the pure understanding. The epistemological or rather transcendental question about the a priori cognizability of objects does not deal with existing objects (whether internal or external) as such. This is one of the many things that Garve and Feder failed to understand in their reviews and they did not remain the only ones who did not recognize this.

³Notice this order of time and space, which is strangely inverted in the Guyer/Wood translation (Kant 1998).

⁴*Dasein* or *Wirklichkeit*.

In the Guyer/Wood translation of Kant's definition of 'transcendental idealism' the sequence of the key terms 'time' and 'space' is inverted (for whatever reason). However, Kant's strange assertion that the idealism of all appearances or objects of the senses means to regard them altogether as *mere* representations, can only make any sense if we take all external and internal objects as objects of the inner sense, the form of which is time and which does not admit of spatial figures and spatially dimensioned objects. So time is superior to space, insofar as spatial objects can only be represented and made conscious through positing them in the inner sense and thereby submitting them to time and its relations. The direct objects of the inner sense, i.e., all appearances insofar as we can empirically become conscious of them, are representations in time (regardless whether they are merely states of mind or representations of objects in space).

(2) The term "appearance", as is well known, is defined by Kant as "the undetermined object of an empirical intuition" (A20=B34). This indeterminateness of an appearance is twofold. The first indeterminateness is an ontological one. The object, which is only an object in anticipation of its future determination as a *phenomenon*, is still undetermined as to its being either a substance or an accident. These two kinds of reality belong disjunctively to any full-fledged object. But only the understanding, in determining a given empirical intuition, can bring about the decision between substantiality or accidentality as the modes of existence belonging to an object of thought, which is at first given in empirical intuition. This also means that appearances of the inner sense, when determined, can only be states or accidents of an (unknown) substance, i.e., states of my mind or so-called representations of objects (including objects other than myself *and* myself *as* an object).

There is a second indeterminateness of the appearances or *sensibilia*. They are also undetermined objects in the sense that they can become *phenomena* or determined objects by the understanding's decision between representations (of which I can become conscious) as merely *temporal* states of my own mind (actually or possibly given in inner intuition) and other possible empirical objects that can only be represented *as* other than myself by referring their representations in my inner sense to a location *in space*. In the case of sensations, this presupposes not only space as a priori given in intuition, but also the formal intuition of particular objects as already having figure and extension qualifiable by the representational content of sensation. Mere appearances are not yet determined in regard to their belonging to time only, or to time and space. This, however, has nothing to do with their existence.

Thus, determined objects of the senses, or *phenomena*, are always substances or accidents of substances, in time only or in both time and space. They get this determination through concepts (empirical and pure) of the understanding, supervening on their empirical intuitions given in time and space. But their being *existing* objects, distinct from their 'mere' representations (in the sense of dreams and fictions of imagination), depends on two things. Firstly, it depends on the fact that there is an a priori proof of the necessary existence of something permanent in space and, secondly, on empirical laws of relating particular perceived things to other perceived things in the context of outer and inner experience of objects, which is ultimately governed by causality.

Kant adds such a proof only to the second edition of the *Critique* in his refutation of skeptical (empirical) idealism, when he is challenged by misunderstandings such as Garve's and Feder's. So little is he concerned with idealism as a problem of transcendental philosophy when he first publishes his work. His main topic is the a priori cognizability of objects in mathematics and metaphysics, i.e., transcendental aesthetic and logic as such, not a particular problem of rational psychology as a part of dogmatic metaphysics. When Kant adds his Refutation of Idealism in the second edition of the *Critique*, he inserts it into the subchapter on the postulates of empirical thinking in general, i.e., into his definition and elucidation of our a priori cognition of possible, real (existing) and necessary objects of experience. This presupposes that the possibility of experience has been warranted by proofs a priori, which are not at all grounded on the assumption of real (existing) objects. Existing external objects distinct from 'mere' representations of the imagination are a problem that can only be solved on the basis of a theory which has already established the a priori possibility, i.e., the necessity, of the empirical cognition of objects.

(3) The third problem in understanding Kant's definition of transcendental idealism is raised by his opposing appearances as "mere representations" to "things in themselves" (A369). The ambiguous term "mere representation" *here* cannot mean dreams or fictions for these would have to be contrasted with real, that is, existing, empirical objects in space, *not* with things in themselves. "Mere representations" must, therefore, mean appearances of the inner sense (or states of my mind) through which I can represent the sensible object in space and time regardless of the question whether these appearances are real or merely fictitious. The represented objects of the senses depend, among other things, on the functioning of my perceptual apparatus, but they could qualitatively totally agree with how things are independently of my subjective constitution, i.e., with things as they are in themselves (although nobody could explain how such an agreement could come to happen).

Now, Kant's claim that the represented objects are not objects as they are in themselves rests entirely and exclusively on the temporality and spatiality of these objects of my senses. It is thus *not* the case that they are mind-independent things in themselves and, in addition, in space and time. For they cannot be things in themselves *because* they are represented *as* being in time and space, and time and space themselves cannot be determinations, even less conditions, of things in themselves. This, of course, presupposes Kant's proof of the a priori ideality of time and space in the Transcendental Aesthetic. There, it is shown that they are *only* sensible forms of our intuition and thus cannot belong to things in themselves. These proofs are totally independent of all considerations concerning the *existence* or *non-existence* of appearances as objects of the senses (which is the topic of idealism). We shall not go into these proofs themselves, but take them for granted. As conditioned by the subjective forms of our sensibility all *undetermined* objects of our senses, hence all appearances, can be called "mere representations", in the sense that whatever objects represented by them depend on our sensible capacity to represent them, which in its turn can safely be inferred from their temporality and spatiality. Time and space in turn condition all qualitative and quantitative sensible determinations as well as the sensible relations between appearances. If this is conceded, then one can say

what Kant actually says: all appearances (being “mere representations”) have to be regarded as not being things in themselves, which somehow could be cognized by making use of these appearances.

Since Kant's definition of transcendental idealism only reminds us of a fundamental result of the Transcendental Aesthetic, it does not provide anything new to the reader of the *Critique*. What is new is only his *confrontation* of this specifically Kantian version of idealism, resulting from his investigation into the a priori conditions for the cognition of objects as such (and therefore called a *transcendental idealism*), with the time-honored Cartesian psychological or empirical idealism as a metaphysical doctrine. In this respect, Kant claims that a transcendental idealism may well embrace a version of metaphysical dualism, conceding the existence of matter (cf. A370, A379) as independent of our representations of it without thereby taking it as a thing in itself. Matter, then, is an object of experience, the existence of which is in some sense not mind-dependent, since it is not a representation merely in time. However, since it is only possible as something spatial, it is first given as an appearance, which means as an undetermined object or mere sensible representation that *can* be determined through concepts of the understanding and thereby *become* a *phenomenon* or an object of external experience and, ultimately, of physical science.

So far we have seen that for Kant a ‘real or existing thing’, a ‘thing in itself’, an ‘object of the senses’, and an ‘object of the understanding’ are four well-distinguished kinds of object. This means that objectivity, which characterizes an object as such, must be a fifth topic of investigation for him. But before dealing with objectivity we first need to turn to the second occurrence of the term ‘transcendental idealism’ within the *Critique*, which survived Kant's rewriting of his work for its second edition. What is noteworthy is that all references to transcendental idealism in the Paralogisms, with which we were dealing so far, were deleted by Kant for the second edition.

In Kant's second and final edition of his main work, there are, apart from a heading, only two more sentences in which we find him using the term “transcendental idealism”. It is now understood as “the key to solving the cosmological dialectic” (A490=B518). Kant here indicates its role in the solution of the four cosmological antinomies, i.e., the apparently contradictory conclusions of reasoning about the world as a totality of objects of experience taken as given in itself. But this passage does not tell us what transcendental idealism means. Kant refers to what he has “sufficiently proved” (ibid.) in the Transcendental Aesthetic. And then he gives us his second definition of the “doctrine” of transcendental idealism: “Everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself” (A490ff.=B518ff.).

Thus, again, transcendental idealism follows directly from the proofs of the Transcendental Aesthetic about the nature of space and time. Empirical objects are nothing but appearances. As objects of the senses they are appearances, but as depending in their possible givenness on space and time as subjective conditions of their intuition, they are “nothing but” appearances and, therefore, cannot be

confusedly represented things in themselves. In this passage, appearances are again “mere representations [*bloße Vorstellungen*]” that can only after their determination through the understanding be taken to be objects, i.e., *phenomena*, and as such be distinguished from their representations and also from “mere representations”, now in the sense of dreams and fictions. When these representations, all together given in inner sense, are themselves represented through the determining understanding “as extended beings” in space or “series of alterations” of substances in time and space, we get nothing more for the determination of their content as empirical objects than what is given to us in our senses. They are thus merely appearances thought *as* objects that cannot qualitatively differ from our empirical intuitions of them. If they are empirically cognized as existing outside of our mind and its representations, i.e., in space, they are still appearances (*phenomena*), objects whose determinations and existence *as known or knowable by us* depend on our cognitive faculties. This is what is meant by the somewhat misleading phrase “they have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself”.⁵

Of course, Kant does not mean here to say that extended objects or objective alterations of substances have no existence grounded in itself. For, how could any existence be grounded in itself? Not even a necessary being’s existence could be grounded in this existence. Nor can the “in itself” mean that existence *is* some thing in itself. What Kant wants to say is: the existence of empirical objects, such as bodies in space and their temporal alterations, is for us grounded in the cognitive faculties of the mind and not grounded in these same things taken as things in themselves. Their appearance and existence is (firstly) grounded in our faculty of empirical intuition, including imagination. They thus exist as accidents or states of the representing mind (or the soul, its unknown substance). And this is also true of their existence as empirical objects in space, for space itself exists only in the mind. Whenever we represent their mind-independent existence as objects in space, this can only be grounded in the existing forms and activities of our mind, which employs the a priori form of the intuition of space, empirical concepts and the categories, ‘existence’ *being one of these categories*. All this cannot be grounded in things in themselves because (among other things) existence, let alone causality, or even mere possibility (in the sense of “*reale Möglichkeit*”⁶), cannot be safely attributed to things in themselves of which we have no cognition whatsoever. Thus empirical objects such as bodies and their alterations have no existence grounded in (or belonging to) things in themselves, which could somehow communicate to us that they exist.

All this does, of course, not mean that there are no existing things in themselves underlying (as, perhaps, Leibniz’s aggregates of monads do) all empirical objects and our perception of them. On the contrary, our taking these objects as determined

⁵We must excuse Guyer and Wood here, because even in German the phrase is hardly clear: “[...] sie außer unseren Gedanken keine an sich gegründete Existenz haben” (A491=B519).

⁶See, e.g., the footnote on Bxxvi. Kant calls this “*reale Möglichkeit*”, meaning the possibility of things as contrasted with that of concepts. But when we translate it as ‘real possibility’ we must avoid mistaking ‘real’ for ‘actual’, which would make the phrase nonsensical.

appearances indicates already that we take them as the appearances of something, which we necessarily think by means of the only tools for thinking objects available to us (i.e., the categories). But since there is, by definition, no pure and therefore no empirical intuition of objects in themselves, this application of the categories is in vain and only tells us how *we* think something in order to think it as an object. So we cannot even claim to have cognition of the mere possibility of things in themselves, since the “real possibility” of anything means, for Kant, that it agrees with the formal conditions of experience (in accordance with intuition and concepts) (A218=B265). But, again, to say that we have no cognition of the possibility of things in themselves does not mean that they are impossible. This would imply that they could not consistently be thought. It only means that we cannot *know* anything about their real possibility or real impossibility, for our concept of them is a problematic one, and our ignorance of them is perfect.

This concludes my discussion of the two definitions of transcendental idealism in Kant's first *Critique*. So far we have only pointed at the relation between this doctrine and the Transcendental Aesthetic as well as to the way in which this relation determines the fourfold status of objects as appearances, *phenomena*, real things, and things in themselves.

The *Prolegomena*, which is in large part directed against the *Göttingen* review, adds little to the two definitions I have quoted and discussed. Kant admits, however, that he himself has given the name “transcendental idealism” to his theory, but the context clearly shows that the “theory” he means is the one of the Transcendental Aesthetic (AA 4: 293ff.). He insists that “idealism” in its received meaning is the doubting of the existence of things, in particular of these things taken as things in themselves. The doubting of the latter, he says, “never came into my mind” (ibid.). Kant's own “so-called” idealism concerns “only the sensory representation of things, to which space and time above all belong” (ibid.; Hatfield's translation⁷). In the case of space and time, Kant had not only *doubted* that things in themselves exist in space and time and that they appear to us as they are in themselves, but he had flatly denied even the possibility of this. He now also suggests to call his version of idealism “critical” idealism in order to prevent further misunderstandings of the term “transcendental”. The only material addition of the *Prolegomena* to the first *Critique* in respect of transcendental idealism is contained in three passages of the Appendix.

In the first passage Kant says that his idealism “is solely for grasping the possibility of our *a priori* cognition of objects of experience, which is a problem that has not been solved before now, nay, has not even once been posed” (AA 4: 375n.). This is a passage where indeed transcendental idealism is related to the main task of the whole *Critique* (not only to the Transcendental Aesthetic). But in another passage, shortly before the one just quoted, he insists that his version of idealism, although it “runs through my entire work, [. . .] does not by far constitute the soul of the system” (AA 4: 374), contrary to Feder's view of the entire *Critique* as a system of

⁷In Kant (2004).

transcendental idealism. But when Kant here says that his transcendental idealism is solely a means for solving the as yet unsolved and even unposed problem of “our a priori cognition of objects of experience” in metaphysics, applied mathematics and theoretical physics, this looks like recommending it as a mere hypothesis. But the truth of such a hypothesis could not be asserted independently of its role in the explanation of a priori synthetic cognition. This reading is, however, ruled out by a third passage directed at Feder’s understanding of Kant’s intriguing idealism. “The idealism [. . .] was taken up into the system [*Lehrbegriff*] only as the sole means for solving this problem [namely, the problem of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition which, indeed, constitutes the soul of the system, M.B.] (*although it then also received its⁸ confirmation on yet other grounds*)” (AA 4: 377; my italics). The “other grounds” clearly refer to Kant’s proof of the transcendental ideality of space and time in the Transcendental Aesthetic and its independent confirmation by the necessity to adopt this ideality in order to avoid the contradictions of the cosmological antinomies. In the Aesthetic he had already declared: “The second important concern of our transcendental aesthetic is that it not merely earn some favor as a plausible hypothesis, but that it be as certain and indubitable⁹ as can ever be demanded of a *theory* that is to serve as an organon.” (A46=B63, my italics) It is true that Kant’s entire doctrine of synthetic a priori cognition in mathematics, physical science, and metaphysics rests on the ideality of space and time, the result of his Transcendental Aesthetic. This ideality is proven from the nature of space and time and from our a priori intuition of them. Had Kant not done this, the whole system would move in a vicious circle. For if we had to accept the truth of the doctrine of the ideality of space and time only in order to be able to explain synthetic a priori cognition of objects, which in turn *presupposes* such ideality, we would be caught in a circle of explanation. The truth of Kant’s theory of synthetic a priori cognition rests on the truth of his theory that space and time are transcendently ideal. This latter truth does not depend on its consequence, but is established and also confirmed independently “on yet other grounds”. Thus transcendental idealism as the theory of space and time being merely subjective conditions of all our intuition can be what Kant calls an “organon”¹⁰ for the establishment of his transcendental logic.

2 Kantian Objectivity

The main result of Kant’s transcendental idealism is not the claim that things as they are in themselves cannot be cognized by us and remain indeterminable X’s. This is an analytic, that is, trivial, truth following from his doctrine that

⁸In a draft version of this passage Kant had written “*vor sich selbst*” (“by itself” instead of “its”), which indicates that he wanted to distinguish the role of his idealism in solving the problem of synthetic a priori cognition from its role as a key to solving the cosmological dialectic, which he considered as a confirmation of his doctrine in the Transcendental Aesthetic (see AA 23: 62).

⁹Or, rather, “undoubted [*ungezweifelt*]”; Kemp Smith has “have [. . .] freedom from doubt”.

¹⁰Note that Kant here uses the term “organon” in a modified sense of the Aristotelian tradition. Cf. A61=B86 and A12=B26.

all cognition requires intuitions of objects and the fact that all our intuitions are sensible. For, if this is sufficiently proven, then it follows that all objects that are by definition *not* objects of our sensibility, whether they be only objects of the senses taken *as* non-appearances or such objects that cannot at all be objects of our senses (i.e., God and perhaps other *noumena*), must then be non-cognizable.

The main result is rather that all objects that *can* be cognized, both empirically and a priori, cannot be things in themselves nor even resemble them. And since, according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, being in space and time or being in only one of them is an infallible criterion of being a mere appearance, neither all so-called secondary sense qualities of objects nor all primary ones (because they are only possible in space and time as forms of our sensible intuition) can determine things as to what and how they are in themselves. Now, since all this follows from Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic, we may ask whether or not the nature of our understanding and our reason, which are investigated in Kant's Transcendental Logic, provides us with additional arguments for the thesis that the objects of these intellectual faculties cannot be conceptually determined and cognized as they are in themselves.

The metaphysical doctrine that deals with such a question and expounds the predicates of things in general taken as objects of intellectual cognition, is ontology. We all know that Kant lectured on Baumgarten's version of Wolff's ontology for several decades. In order to facilitate our understanding of Kant's critique of this ontology, we have to ignore for a while that, in Kant's view, Baumgarten did not properly make a distinction between 'understanding' and 'reason', that he took for granted that the understanding as a faculty of thought could also produce cognition of things and that the most general ontological concept for Baumgarten is 'thing' (*ens*) and not 'object' (as Kant would argue). It is also well known that Kant, in the chapter on Phenomena and Noumena, says that "the proud name of an ontology [. . .] needs to be replaced by the modest one of a mere analytic of the pure understanding" (A247=B303; translation amended). This looks like an outright denial of the possibility of a science of things in general and a plea for its replacement by what Kant himself has called transcendental logic. Fortunately, we have the lecture notes by Mrongovius taken in 1782–1783, in which we can see Kant arguing for his demand in a little more detail. Kant obviously refers to Baumgarten's definition and treatment of ontology in §§4ff. of his *Metaphysica*. "Ontologia [or *Grundwissenschaft*] est scientia predicatorum entis generaliorum".¹¹ In §5, Baumgarten adds that these more general predicates of the thing (*entis*) are "prima cognitionis humanae principia".¹² We also have Georg Friedrich Meier's translation of this book in which J.A. Eberhard comments that by "the thing" Baumgarten means the same as Wolff's "das Ding überhaupt, oder sofern es ein Ding ist" and not a thing of a certain kind. Mrongovius reports¹³:

¹¹"Ontology is the science of the more general predicates of the thing."

¹²"First principles of human cognition."

¹³Of course we have to take this for Kant's words.

In transcendental philosophy we consider not objects, but rather reason itself, just as in general logic we regard only the understanding and its rules. Thus transcendental philosophy could also be called transcendental logic. It occupies itself with the sources, the extent, and the boundaries of pure reason, without busying itself with objects. For that reason it is wrong to call it ontology <*ontologiam*>. There we consider *things already* according to their general properties. Transcendental logic abstracts from all that; it is a kind of self-cognition. [...] It thus concerns not the object but the subject—not things, but rather the source, extent, and boundaries of reason in its pure use, i.e., free of experience.¹⁴

If Kant said such things in his lecture, he has taken a short way from Wolffian ontology to transcendental logic, basically by comparison of his innovation, transcendental logic, with general logic, which is based on the subject's self-cognition of its understanding's necessary rules for thinking. Transcendental logic is not ontology but an investigation that must come before any theory of the general predicates of things to which thinking is applied. It deals only with the pure, non-empirical, use of reason in a critical way, asking for its justification by examining its sources, extent, and boundaries. However, taking this short way is not unwarranted. For to go from ontology to a transcendental analytic of the pure understanding means only to follow the lead implied in the task of ontology, i.e., to specify the "general properties" (i.e., general attributes) of things. In doing so, we are looking for "*praedicata*" and that means concepts which are concepts of things as such, i.e., "insofar as they are things" (in Wolff's words). In examining reason in order to find the concepts of thinghood, or rather of the objectivity of objects, we are taking only one more step higher on the ladder of the generalization of predicates of things which are objects of the understanding before they can be subsumed under ontological predicates such as Aristotle's categories. This is in accordance with the scholastic search for transcendentals, namely predicates of the *ens qua ens*, which are presupposed for all the categories. The Kantian version of this move is:

In ontology one speaks of things in general, and thus actually of no thing—one is occupied with the nature of the understanding for thinking of things—here we have the concepts through which we think things, namely, the pure concepts of reason—hence it is the science of the principles of pure understanding and of pure reason. But that was also transcendental philosophy, thus ontology belongs to it—one has never treated it properly—one treated things in general directly—without investigating whether such cognitions of pure understanding or pure reason or pure science were even possible. There [in ontology] I speak already of things, substances and accidents, which are properties of things that I cognize *a priori*. But I cannot speak this way in the *Critique*. Here I will say substance and accident are also found among the concepts that are *a priori*. How do I arrive at that? What can I accomplish with that? What is possibly cognized *a priori* of objects, insofar as they are substances?¹⁵

I have given these long quotations because they document, more than any other Kantian text I know of, how Kant sees his position vis-à-vis Wolffian (and scholastic) ontology, and how this position emerges from a critique of that ontology.

¹⁴Kant (1997: 116, emphasis added).

¹⁵Kant (1997: 114ff.)

One fundamental critique concerns the fact that pre-Kantian metaphysics (including Baumgarten's ontology with the possible exception of Crusius) is not properly defined as the system of *pure* philosophy, i.e., of a priori cognition of things. In the particular case of ontology as dealing with the *necessary* predicates of *all* things, Kant's lecture criticizes or even derides Baumgarten's definition of ontology as follows: "We now begin the science of the properties of all things in general¹⁶ which is called ontology." (Kant 1997, 140). This means that Kant wants to say: what is called "ontology" should be defined as Kant just defined it and not as Baumgarten did, namely as "*scientia praedicatorum entis generaliorum*".¹⁷ Kant not only ignores Baumgarten's use of the comparative "*generaliorum*,"¹⁸ which means "the more general", but he seems to attack his use of the term "general" tout court. The text proceeds: "Ontology is supposed to be [*soll* (...) *seyn*, i.e. is allegedly] the science that deals with the general predicates of all things, which are such predicates as are common to most things". (ibid.) Baumgarten thus failed to realize that these predicates of things (in any ontology proper) must be *strictly* universal and not permit of any exception, as his "general" or "more general" predicates do. The text goes on: "[I]f the predicates are not universals <*universalia*>, i.e. [predicates] which are common to *all* things, then one does not at all [*gar nicht*] know what ontology is."¹⁹ They must belong to all things [...]. If I say general predicates, an exception still always occurs, and how far does it extend?"²⁰ This means that Kant told his students that Baumgarten did not at all know what ontology is and that his definition is seriously flawed.

In what follows the text explains what the proper topic and task of ontology is according to Kant himself:

One easily comprehends that it will contain nothing but all basic concepts and all basic propositions [i.e., principles] of our a priori cognition in general: for if it is to consider the properties of all things, then it has as an object nothing but a thing in general, i.e., every object of thought, thus no determinate object. Thus nothing remains for me other than *the cognizing*, which I consider. (The science that deals with objects in general will deal with nothing but those *concepts* through which the understanding thinks, thus of *the nature of the understanding and of reason*, insofar as it cognizes something *a priori*.—That is transcendental philosophy, which does not say something a priori of objects, but rather investigates *the faculty of the understanding or of reason for cognizing something a priori*; thus with regard to *content* it is a self-cognition of the understanding or of reason, just as logic is a self-cognition of the understanding and of reason with regard to *form*.²¹

¹⁶I would prefer to translate "*Dinge überhaupt*" as "things as such" for reasons that will presently become obvious.

¹⁷Which in German would be „die Wissenschaft der allgemeineren Prädikate des Dinges”.

¹⁸This could be due to Mrongovius.

¹⁹I have changed Ameriks' and Naragon's translation of this sentence in order to come closer to Mrongovius' German.

²⁰Kant (1997: 140).

²¹Kant (1997: 140, my italics).

This concludes my lengthy quotations from Kant's lectures on metaphysics, given shortly after the publication of the first *Critique*. The transition from "a thing in general" (belonging to the Wolffian tradition), to "every object of thought, thus no determinate object" as Kant's interpretation of Wolff's (but not exactly Baumgarten's) sole topic in ontology, and Kant's conclusion that ontology has to be transformed into a science of "cognizing", i.e., of concepts through which the understanding thinks a priori, which requires an investigation of the nature of understanding and reason in their pure use analogous to formal logic—this step-by-step derivation of transcendental logic superseding traditional ontology can be found nowhere else in Kant's published works, which may excuse my extensive use of Mrongovius' notes. What one can learn from these passages is that the concepts of objects in general, which turn out to be Kant's categories, are what constitutes the objectivity of objects of thought and cognition. However, if we take Kant's metaphysical deduction of his categories for granted, we will still have to explain how the objectivity of objects, and *which* objectivity of *which* objects, depends on the nature of understanding and reason.

Objects, for Kant, get their objectivity from the intuiting and thinking subject—so much seems to be certain. Kant's revolutionary theory of intuition (which says that intuition is not reducible to concepts) and of pure sensibility (with its faculty of a priori sensible intuition of objects) was either forgotten or came under attack from his immediate followers and opponents. It is only in so-called German Idealism that the dependence of objects of cognition on the understanding, as far as their formal determinations are concerned, was called 'idealism'. Kant, however, never did so. For him material idealism consisted in doubting the extra-mental existence of objects that were hypostatized representations, which he took as an unwelcome consequence of transcendental *realism*, the basis of which Kant had undermined by his proofs for the ideality of space and time. Transcendental realism took appearances and their subclass *phenomena* for things in themselves—however distorted their perceived determinations may have been. According to Kant, *phenomena* were thus falsely taken as *given* objects (in themselves). He however insists that, to the contrary, the *objectivity* of these objects, not the objects themselves, is a product of the human understanding. Objects are for Kant something in between representations and things in themselves, whose existence has to be granted but which could not even be doubted with sound arguments. They are certainly not impossible, since their general concept is free of contradiction; they are even postulated by reason as an intelligible (i.e., noumenal) substrate of appearances. Still they could never be cognized for lack of their intuition. But certainly they can be *thought*, and when they are thought they must be thought through the categories which are the only means available to us for thinking objects.

These categories are also the only possible concepts with which to think empirical objects or *phenomena* as such, i.e., as *objects*. These cognizable objects do not necessarily have to be real, i.e., existing, objects. They may be merely *possible* objects which are no less objective than real objects. In fact, the necessity (and universality) of the objectivity of objects can only be proved (if at all) with respect to *possible* objects (of experience). These are ontologically mere appearances in

the stronger sense of *phenomena*. The objectivity of these objects rests not on these objects themselves, it is not a generalized common feature of experienced objects. If the empirical objects owe their objectivity to the human understanding, this understanding can (of course) not arbitrarily distribute objectivity among appearances and thereby transform them into empirical objects. Our understanding, being discursive, can only think things whose empirical intuitions, that is, whose sensations conditioned by space and time, are given to it, prior to its thinking activity. But there are also *formal* conditions a priori for the thinking of objects. An object is a thing underlying, somehow, the representations of a representing subject. Whenever the understanding thinks an object corresponding to the formal a priori conditions governing intuition it must make use of the categories, which are formal concepts of objects of sensible intuition in general derived from the logical functions of the synthesis of concepts in judgements. To apply them to the manifold of a given sensible and empirical human intuition means to subsume this manifold under the universal concept of a (necessary) synthetic unity of a pure manifold of intuition which is contained in time.²² This is what Kant means when he says about his categories that the understanding “brings a transcendental *content* into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that refer to objects *a priori*”,²³ i.e., before they are empirically given to us. The apriority of this reference to objects means that they can only be thought *as* objects of the understanding *and* of intuition through the subsumption of an empirically given manifold of intuition under these categories. This is how the objectivity of objects, which is constituted by subjecting their pure intuitive manifold to a synthesis of the pure understanding, precedes these empirical objects themselves.

Now, one may ask why the understanding should do that in the first place, even if we concede that it *can* do that. Kant's answer is that there is a certain *ad hominem* necessity to do that, because to the nature of our understanding intrinsically belongs its faculty of self-consciousness (or apperception). Not the subject *tout court* nor the understanding merely as a faculty of thinking (i.e., using concepts in representing things) is the principle of objectivity among its representations. Rather the subject's *apperception* is this principle which makes the concept of an object of our cognition in general (and not only of thought) possible and even necessary. This connection, of apperception and objectivity, plays the main role in the synthetic or progressive procedure, which Kant develops in the first part of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in the second edition of his *Critique*. But under the name of “consciousness in general” (AA 4: 304) apperception is also present in the analytic or regressive procedure, starting from an analysis of the possibility of experience, in the *Prolegomena*. In order to get an insight into this connection we need to turn to the Deduction itself. However, I can only briefly deal with the first of these expositions

²²This is, of course, an allusion to Kant's doctrine of transcendental schematism.

²³A79=B105; my italics. I replaced Guyer's and Wood's “pertain to” (for “*gehen auf*”) by “refer to”, which is what Kant means.

of the Kantian doctrine of objectivity, emphasizing its dependence on Kant's new concept of apperception.

Kant begins the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in its B-version (§16) with a presupposition for which he does not argue but takes for granted, namely that I have representations of which I can be conscious as "my representations". His argument starts with claiming that this (possible) consciousness necessarily implies a certain kind of self-consciousness, the consciousness "I think". The simple reason for this is that the consciousness of representations as *my* representations means already that I am also conscious of the subject which has these representations, whom I call 'I'. Of this 'I', I am conscious not only as the owner of its representations but also as the one who can think them, and this is the (possible) self-consciousness of the form 'I think A', 'I think B' etc. This way of analytic reasoning is by no means trivial.

Firstly, self-consciousness or apperception was taken by Leibniz and Wolff as a particular kind of consciousness, namely, as the consciousness that comes about when the thinker himself happens to be the object of his consciousness. For Leibniz and Wolff, this consciousness depended on the distinctness of the consciousness of another object such as 'A' or 'B'. Kant reverses this order of dependence. I cannot have the consciousness of 'A', 'B', etc. as my representations without having the consciousness of myself. Original apperception is thus presupposed in all consciousness of all my representations *as mine*. Therefore, Kant often speaks of apperception merely as consciousness.

Secondly, we need to remember that the self of which I am conscious is not only the owner of representations but a thinking self. This means, for Kant, that it can think something ("*etwas*") through its own representations. Were this not the case, then I could become conscious of all my representations as mine but I could not think some particular representation itself and *a fortiori* no object through it. There could be only two reasons for this. The first is that my representation would be formally impossible, i.e., it would be a concept implying a contradiction, which cannot be thought by any thinker. A second (more elementary) reason would be that I am not actually conscious of this representation, and thus I cannot think its content as a concept. A representation could well be mine, but for my consciousness it would be nothing, i.e., no given content or matter *for* consciousness and for thinking.

So far we have only dealt with what Kant calls the analytic unity of apperception. This term means that in all possible consciousness like 'I think A', 'I think B' there is an identical element, namely the 'I think. . .', which is like a common concept or a mark that can be shared by many things. However, if I want to become conscious of the identity of apperception (or consciousness) itself in all particular consciousness of something else (such as the consciousness of 'A' or 'B'), i.e., of its *numerical* and not only its conceptual unity, I must synthesize my representations (which as given before being thought can only be intuitions and their manifold), and I must be able to become conscious of this at least possible synthesis. Kant calls this new kind of self-consciousness, which arises from the consciousness of myself as the identical 'synthesizer' of all the manifold of given representations (of which each separately

I may be conscious), the “synthetic unity of apperception”. *Some* (“*irgendeine*”²⁴) such synthetic unity of apperception is required, not for the possibility of the consciousness “I think”, but for the possibility of the consciousness of the identity of the “I think” in all possible manifold in a given and conscious intuition. I could become conscious of myself as the identical source of synthesis of the manifold of my intuitions if this synthesis were merely an arbitrary one, executed for instance by my composing imagination. Only “some” synthetic unity of apperception arising from “some” (necessarily possible) synthesis of representations is a requirement for the possibility of the consciousness of the identity of myself.

Are there some particular acts of intellectual synthesis by the understanding (not by the imagination, which depends for its arbitrary acts of synthesis on some contingently given sensible matter), which are sufficient conditions of the synthetic unity of apperception and at the same time necessary acts of mere thinking? And if so, necessary in respect of what? This is the same question as: is there an *objective* synthetic unity of apperception, i.e., one that results from an act of synthesis by the understanding that every possible thinker must perform? Kant's answer is that there is such an intellectual synthesis and that it can be found in general or formal logic. The logical form of, e.g., categorical judgements is itself a form of truth. For, in order to achieve truth in thinking, I must connect my concepts not arbitrarily or at random but according to the form of predication and say of some ‘S’ that it is ‘P’. Only then can my thought be in agreement (or disagreement) with its object. Thus the synthesis of predication is a synthesis that every thinker has to perform if his thinking is to have objective validity, i.e., show some kind of objectivity (namely logical objectivity). This is what Kant has in mind when he says that “[t]he logical form of all judgments consists in the objective unity of the apperception of the concepts contained therein” (B140). The objective unity of apperception is, of course, a particular kind of synthetic unity of apperception, one that any thinker, concerned with objectivity in his thinking, has to take as a formal norm in combining his concepts (in view of a possible truth-value of the resulting combination) through which he can, at the same time, become conscious of the identity of himself *as a thinking subject*. This kind of apperception, however, is not one of this or that particular thinking subject at some particular time, but what Kant calls “apperception in general” or “consciousness in general” (B143). Since the “I think. . .” of apperception is related to all representations as such of which I can be conscious (whether they be intuitions or concepts), the objective unity of apperception in respect of intuition (thought, as we shall see, in the category) will only be *analogous to*, but not the same as, that in connecting concepts in judgements. But the former will depend on the latter, because it is the thinking self and its self-consciousness (the “I think. . .”) that underlies all possible kinds of consciousness of representations.

An object of intuition is something in whose concept the manifold of this given intuition is united. This is true of any object of intuition, even fictitious ones. But if a certain form of uniting the manifold of a given intuition were necessary, we could

²⁴B133.

have objects of intuition that are *formally* the same for every discursively thinking being confronted with its particular manifold of intuition, that is to say, it would not be a merely private object. Now, the only possible kinds of combining the manifold of intuition, which are such that every discursive thinker has to perform them in thinking its corresponding object, will be those acts that, firstly, are required for every possible objective synthetic unity of (pure) apperception (not depending on arbitrary acts of synthesis performed on contingently given sense data) and that, secondly and therefore, are acts according to the forms of synthesis of concepts in judgements (which alone can have a truth-value) about logical objects, but now applied to the manifold of a given sensible intuition. This means, to give an example, that those synthetic unities of a given sensible intuition (or intuitions of *objects* for every discursive thinking) are necessary in which this manifold is united as a manifold of accidents in a substance.²⁵ For this particular synthetic unity of intuitions (thought through a particular category) is the only one that corresponds to the relation of predicates to a subject, which in turn is a formal requirement for judgements which every possible thinker, who wants to think objects through his concepts, must fulfill. He must fulfill this requirement in such a way that no other way of combining concepts can, as far as the form of such combining is concerned, be in necessary agreement with an *object* of thought *in general*. In the case of categorical judgements this means that infinitely many judgements of this form may be materially false in respect of their objects, but it can never be the case that their intuitable object is not a substance having accidents.²⁶ And *objects* of intuition are only possible *as such* if they are at least substances of accidents, which is not something that can be intuited in them but something which must be thought of them whenever they are thought *as objects*. This is how the objectivity of the objects of our cognitive faculties depends, in its very possibility, on the transcendental unity of apperception regarding all our representations.

Acknowledgments Many thanks to Drs. M.J.A. Romijn for his very competent help in the joint effort of transforming my spoken words into readable English. The remaining imperfections are, of course, mine.

References

- Feder, J. G. H. 1825. *Leben, Natur und Grundsätze*. Leipzig: Schwickert.
- Kant, I. 1997. *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Trans. and ed. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2004. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Trans. and ed. G. Hatfield. Revised edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁵This is, of course, for any particular object only a necessary, not a sufficient condition.

²⁶An example in general logic (in Kant's sense) would be: I can mistake a tree for a man, but I can never be mistaken in assuming that it is an object of my judgement.

Chapter 4

Transcendental Idealism in the Third *Critique*

Ido Geiger

Kant's assertions about things in themselves in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are notoriously difficult to understand and indeed to reconcile with one another. The fundamental claim of transcendental idealism is that our experience and knowledge are necessarily shaped by the forms of our intuition (space and time) and ordered by the pure concepts of the understanding (categories). This claim naturally leads to its contrast with philosophical views that assume that we have knowledge of things as they are in themselves. For such viewpoints, true knowledge is knowledge of how things are quite independently of our minds. The doctrine of transcendental idealism thus generates this merely negative or limiting notion of things as they are in themselves. It is not controversial that employing the notion polemically or to draw this significant contrast is a legitimate use of the term.

Nevertheless, Kant quite often seems to attribute positive content to the term and these claims have been a source of the most heated controversy from the first publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant sometimes speaks of things in themselves as though they were a second set of entities that somehow ground or even cause the world of appearances we experience and know. But the proclamation that a second realm of entities exists is criticized as a lapse into the type of transcendent metaphysical ambitions, which Kant aims to quash. Kant seems to lay claim to knowledge of that which lies beyond the realm of what we can cognize, even if this is only the bare knowledge that things in themselves exist. Moreover, positing such a second set of entities makes our knowledge of appearances seem illusory. Against his proclaimed intentions, it commits Kant to the claim that we cannot know what real reality is like. Finally, some passages assert, again against Kant's own strictures, that things in themselves are the causes of appearances, even though the category of causality is supposed to structure the realm of appearances and apply only within it.

A second set of assertions describes things in themselves as the very same entities as appearances, but thought of as stripped of the structuring conditions of experience and knowledge. According to these claims, it seems that an object of experience thought of not as existing in space and time and not as subsumed

I. Geiger (✉)

Department of Philosophy, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva 84105, Israel
e-mail: geigeri@bgu.ac.il

under the categories is that same thing thought of as it is in itself. Appearances are described as appearances of such things in themselves or as somehow grounded in them or correlated to them. But it is difficult to make sense of this identity and consequently of this grounding. For the forms of intuition and the concepts of the understanding are necessary conditions of the very individuation of things. It thus makes no sense to say that a thing in itself is identical to an appearance. It is not even coherent, so critics of this view sometimes underscore, to speak of things in themselves in the plural.

Finally, it is sometimes suggested that transcendental idealism should be understood as the view that the scope of the objects of our cognition is restricted by the structure of our minds to objects that independently of our mental activity conform to the necessary conditions of cognition. But this reading seems to lack any explicit textual grounding; and it stands in patent contradiction to Kant's repeated claims that we actively shape the objects of cognition and for this reason can have no experience of things as they are in themselves. Indeed, the claims that imply that things in themselves exist are no less problematic for this position than for the former better grounded views.

This brief and familiar sketch might lead some readers to the conclusion that if talk of things in themselves is not altogether eliminable, then transcendental idealism had better find a manner of thinking and speaking that does not commit it to the existence of such entities, nor consequently to their possession of causal powers or even to their mere individuation. Certainly, talk of things in themselves has a polemical role in contrasting transcendental idealism with the variety of transcendently realist philosophical views Kant criticizes. The contrast, moreover, might have an important role in formulating the doctrine of transcendental idealism itself. Furthermore, the claim that experience and knowledge are structured by our minds might also demand that we think beyond this domain. Specifically, it might demand that we somehow think of appearances as grounded in what is not shaped and ordered by our minds. If this is indeed so, then Kant ought to teach us how to think of this contrast and this grounding relation without commitment to any transcendent metaphysical claims.

In this article, I will not attempt to contribute to the complex and fertile debate about the meaning of the doctrine of transcendental idealism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Rather, I will try to defend the claim that in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant articulates the doctrine differently and that this new formulation of the doctrine meets the demands just presented. The first part of the paper will argue that the third *Critique* complements the discussion of its predecessor by seeking to formulate an additional transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge, viz., the principle of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of nature. It is this undertaking and the newly discovered transcendental condition of empirical experience, which I will present in the second section of the paper, that bring Kant to reformulate the doctrine of transcendental idealism. I will present this new formulation of the doctrine in the third part of the paper and argue that it is no longer committed to the existence of things in themselves. Rather, Kant speaks of the rational *idea* of the supersensible, which we cannot cognize but must think of as the

unindividuated ground of appearances. Most significantly, the contrast between the idea of the supersensible and sensible appearances, as it is formulated in the third *Critique*, allows us to think of the realm of appearances as the only world there is. Transcendental idealism is thus no longer committed to the view that appearances are grounded in *entities* that lie outside the territory of what we can cognize. In the third *Critique*, the supersensible ground of appearances is the rational *idea* that what is given to us in intuition is purposive for our cognitive faculties.

1 The Question of the Conditions of Empirical Knowledge

In the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant strikingly asserts that the pure concepts of the understanding and their application to the forms of intuition are necessary *but not sufficient* conditions of empirical experience and knowledge. The application of the category of causality, for example, to our forms of intuition accounts for the fact that every alteration has a cause that temporally precedes it. However, it does not account for the fact that we find amongst causal connections empirical regularities or laws. Yet our experience is constituted by such empirical laws. Moreover, we attribute necessity to these laws, although being empirical their necessity is not something we can perceive. Kant writes:

[T]he understanding says: All alteration has its cause (universal law of nature); now the transcendental power of judgment has nothing further to do than to provide the condition of subsumption under the *a priori* concept of the understanding that has been laid down for it: and that is the succession of the determinations of one and the same thing. Now for nature in general (as the object of possible experience) that law is cognized as absolutely necessary.—Now, however, the objects of empirical cognition are still determined or, as far as one can judge *a priori*, determinable in so many ways apart from that formal time-condition that specifically distinct natures, besides what they have in common as belonging to nature in general, can still be causes in infinitely many ways; and each of these ways must (in accordance with the concept of a cause in general) have its rule, which is a law, and hence brings necessity with it, although given the constitution and the limits of our faculties of cognition we have no insight at all into this necessity. (AA 5: 183)¹

This line of thought reveals a further transcendental condition of empirical experience. In our empirical investigations of nature we necessarily assume that its objects are subsumable under a system of empirical concepts or laws. In other words, we assume that nature is constituted by regularities to which general concepts can apply. Kant calls this necessary assumption the principle of the purposiveness of nature for our cognitive capacities: “Thus, as I shall show forthwith, the principle of the purposiveness of nature (in the multiplicity of its empirical laws) is a transcendental principle” (AA 5: 181). It is the *a priori* principle guiding reflective judgment. Indeed, it is the task of reflective judgment, the protagonist of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, to search for empirical concepts and laws under which

¹Quotations from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and its First Introduction refer to the Guyer and Matthews translation in Kant (2000). Quotations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* refer to the Guyer and Wood translation in Kant (1997).

to subsume empirical particulars. In contrast, determinative judgment, which Kant discusses in the first *Critique*, subsumes particulars under given concepts, pure or empirical (AA 5: 179).

Now it is important to note that the problem Kant raises in the Introduction to the third *Critique* is one he grappled with already in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Indeed, the differences between the texts constitute a very important guide to reading the third *Critique*.² Already in the first *Critique* Kant suggests that the principle of the systematic unity of nature, viz., the assumption that nature constitutes a unity subsumable under a system of concepts or laws—he also calls it there (on one occasion) the principle of the purposiveness of nature (A686–687 = B714–715)—is a necessary condition of empirical experience and knowledge.³ However, there are noteworthy differences between the discussions. First, in the later text, of course, the principle of the purposiveness of nature is no longer a principle of reason but the a priori principle of reflective judgment. Second, the Introduction to the third *Critique* soon reveals that the earlier assumption of the systematic unity of nature is only part of what in the later text Kant calls the principle of the “*purposiveness of nature* in its multiplicity” (AA 5: 180). In the third *Critique* the principle takes two distinct forms. It appears not only as the assumption of the logical or conceptual purposiveness of nature (AA 5: 192–194), as it did in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but also as the assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature (AA 5: 188–192). Indeed, the latter is said to be more fundamental than the former (AA 5: 193–194). This is striking because of the very fact that Kant is claiming that *the assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature is a condition of empirical experience and knowledge*. Though this claim seems to be generally overlooked it is, I propose, the key to understanding the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment and the third *Critique* more generally.

2 The Aesthetic and Logical Purposiveness of Nature

There is considerable disagreement about what precisely Kant thinks goes on in our minds when we express our aesthetic pleasure in an object of nature. He claims that we feel this distinct pleasure when our understanding and imagination are in a state of harmonious free play. But what precisely is this state and how is it related to cognition? Some interpreters understand Kant to be saying that in this state we feel a harmony or fit between the understanding and the imagination, although no concept is employed by the understanding, which an apprehended manifold in intuition might be said to fit. It is a state in which all the conditions necessary for cognition are met, except for the actual subsumption of a sensible manifold under an empirical concept. Other readers take Kant to be claiming that aesthetic pleasure in natural objects is a state in which the understanding ranges over a variety of concepts

²For a helpful discussion of the shift see Brandt (1989: 180–187, 189–190).

³For my analysis of the Appendix see Geiger (2003).

that might be applied to a sensible manifold, without determining the manifold by means of any particular concept. The understanding proposes, so to speak, a variety of ways to conceive of a sensible manifold, without fixing on any one way. A very recent third approach suggests that in aesthetic judgments an object is determined by the concepts required to identify it as the kind of thing it is, yet we feel that it offers more unity or coherence than the application of these concepts demands. It is this special unity that is the cause of aesthetic pleasure.⁴

However, the latter two interpretations find only scant support in Kant's text. The latter, in particular, seems to find no texts that expressly support it, whereas the second interpretation seems to depend on but a few ambiguous claims. Specifically, Kant says in the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that in judgments of taste the apprehension of the form of a given object "agrees with the *presentation* of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined)" and he goes on to say that in such judgments "no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated" (AA 20: 220–221). But this passage does not assert that a variety of concepts is found to fit an object and that we take aesthetic pleasure in freely flitting between these possibilities. More importantly, both these readings contradict an explicit and indeed central Kantian claim, viz., the second moment of judgments of taste: "That is *beautiful* which pleases universally without a concept" (AA 5: 219). Indeed, this claim is made so often in the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* that it is hardly necessary to offer textual support for it. It is one of the cornerstones of Kant's conception of natural beauty.

The obvious problem with the first, precognitive interpretation—as it stands—is that it offers no account of how aesthetic judgment might be part of Kant's account of the conditions of empirical knowledge. Put differently and in its own terms, it is not clear what it might mean to say that all the conditions necessary for cognition are met except for the actual subsumption of a sensible manifold under a particular empirical concept. What are these conditions? Why posit their existence?⁵ Indeed, it is precisely the fact that aesthetic judgments make no use of concepts that seems to imply that their analysis has no bearing on the question of empirical knowledge. Aesthetic pleasure involves the same faculties involved in cognitive judgment, viz., the understanding and the imagination. But according to the extant precognitive views, aesthetic judgment is not a necessary condition of knowledge. So in contrast

⁴For a very helpful overview and criticism of the former two approaches, which he calls the "pre-cognitive" and "multi-cognitive" readings of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, and a presentation of the third, "meta-cognitive" interpretation see Guyer (2006).

⁵Henrich, for example, holds that what aesthetic judgments respond to is the "unity and the precision of the *arrangement* of a perceived manifold in space and time" and what makes perceiving these forms a source of pleasure is the fact that they fit the "conditions of a possible conceptualization in general" (Henrich 1992, 49). However, Henrich does not say what these general conditions are, nor does he explain why we should think that there are such conditions. He says explicitly that they are less general than the categories and more general than the conditions of employing particular empirical concepts. It bears emphasizing that they clearly are not actively conditions of cognition.

to his explicit statement in the Introduction to the third *Critique*, the analysis of aesthetic judgment is not a part of Kant's transcendental project—and thus bears no significance for the interpretation of his conception of transcendental idealism. We seem to be facing a dilemma. Aesthetic judgment is non-conceptual, and yet knowledge for Kant is necessarily conceptual, for “intuitions without concepts are blind” (A51=B75). How then can aesthetic judgment be a condition of empirical knowledge?⁶

To answer this decisive question we first have to ask what it is about a natural object that occasions aesthetic pleasure? Kant holds that what we find beautiful in objects of nature is their form. But what precisely he means by this is a matter of controversy. I suggest that form refers to the spatial (and more rarely temporal) arrangement of a manifold given in intuition.⁷ This is suggested already when Kant first introduces the distinction between logical and aesthetic purposiveness.

What is merely subjective in the representation of an object, i.e., what constitutes its relation to the subject, not to the object, is its aesthetic property; but that in it which serves for the determination of the object (for cognition) or can be so used is its logical validity. In the cognition of an object of the senses both relations are present together. In the sensible representation of things outside me the quality of the space in which we intuit them is the merely subjective aspect of my representation of them [. . .]. (AA 5: 188–189)

I am suggesting, then, that what occasions aesthetic pleasure is the spatial form of a natural object. Succinctly put, we find flowers, animals and crystals beautiful because of their shape.

This brings us to the crux of the matter. How is the pleasure we take in the shape of a natural object related to cognition? Kant, I am claiming, holds that aesthetic judgments underlie the original non-conceptual delineation of objects. It is aesthetically that we cut out objects, so to speak, from the spatial manifold given to us in intuition. Aesthetic pleasure is the feeling that we are facing a meaningful form, a form that will prove amenable to our search for concepts under which to subsume it. It logically precedes and indeed makes possible every cognitive judgment in which this manifold of intuition is subsumed under concepts. This is what Kant describes as the feeling of harmonious free play between the understanding and the imagination. We feel aesthetic pleasure before we know anything about a particular spatial form; and for this reason, botanists, for example, must disregard what they know about a flower to recapture the original aesthetic relation to it and take pleasure in its form (AA 5: 229). At the most fundamental, pre-conceptual level it is beautiful shapes that we make into objects.

⁶In contrast to many other interpreters Ginsborg does offer a detailed answer to the problem of empirical concept acquisition and bases it on the model of judgment Kant offers in the Analytic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment. Nevertheless, her analysis of aesthetic judgment itself, well worth examining in detail, does not view it as a condition of empirical concept acquisition. See Ginsborg (1990, 1997, 1998 and 2006).

⁷For the sake brevity I shall henceforth speak of spatial forms, although Kant thinks that there are also examples of beautiful temporal forms. He suggests (employing Euler's theory) that the beauty of pure colors and tones is a response to the temporal arrangement of vibrations of air (AA 5: 224).

These very controversial claims will no doubt greatly surprise readers of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*. Yet, strikingly, Kant himself describes aesthetic pleasure as *making possible the cognition of an object*:

But if cognitions are to be able to be communicated, then the mental state, i.e., the disposition of the cognitive powers for a cognition in general, and indeed that proportion which is suitable for making cognition out of a representation (whereby an object is given to us) must also be capable of being universally communicated; for without this, as the subjective condition of cognizing, the cognition, as an effect, could not arise. (AA 5: 238)

The subjective condition of cognizing is the feeling of aesthetic pleasure expressed in pure judgments of taste.

His readers, however, fail to note Kant's claim. The reason for this systematic failure must be the assumption that the application of the categories to the forms of our intuition, discussed in the first *Critique*, already makes cognition possible. More specifically, it seems to be generally assumed—if only implicitly—that the result of the Transcendental Deduction and the Schematism is a world of empirically undetermined objects to which the categories apply. These are the objects upon which we conduct our empirical search for regularities. However, in a striking passage about the formation of empirical concepts Kant explicitly denies this assumption. He says that the “principle of the reflection on given objects of nature is that for all things in nature empirically determinate *concepts* can be found” (AA 20: 211–212) and he adds that this claim might sound as though he is speaking about the search for concepts for *given* objects. However, in a note appended to this claim Kant explicitly contradicts this understanding of the principle of reflection. He writes:

On first glance, this principle does not look at all like a synthetic and transcendental proposition, but seems rather to be tautological and to belong to mere logic. For the latter teaches how one can compare a given representation with others, and, by extracting what it has in common with others, as a characteristic for general use, form a concept. But about whether for each object nature has many others to put forth as objects of comparison, which have much in common with the first in their form, it teaches us nothing; rather, this condition of the possibility of the application of logic to nature is a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our power of judgment, in which the manifold, divided into genera and species, makes it possible to bring all the natural forms that are forthcoming to concepts (of greater or lesser generality) through comparison. (AA 20: 211–212n.)

Kant is claiming here that there is a question that precedes the empirical search for concepts that apply to the objects of experience. The transcendental principle he is discussing is the assumption that we can sort nature into like objects according to their spatial form alone. It is for these aesthetically sorted groups of like objects that we search for empirical concepts. This note explains then what Kant means when he asserts that the principle of reflection on objects of nature assumes that “one can always presuppose a form that is possible for general laws cognizable by us” (AA 20: 211–212). It is the assumption that we can sort nature into natural kinds aesthetically, i.e., according to the spatial form of objects. Indeed, Kant says explicitly that this discussion complements the discussion of the categories and the transcendental schematization of nature in the first *Critique* (AA 20: 212–214). In the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, then, Kant is offering a solution to

a problem that still eluded him in the Schematism chapter of the first *Critique*. There he claimed that the “schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty” (A141=B180–181). In the Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments Kant says of the imagination that in pure aesthetic judgments “it schematizes without a concept” (AA 5: 287).⁸ The task of the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment might be described then as giving an account of empirical schematism.

Confirmation of this claim is found in Kant’s discussion of what he calls the normal idea of a species, i.e., its average shape and size. The normal idea is grasped, he claims, before we find out by empirical investigation which concepts apply to a species: “This *normal idea* is not derived from the proportions taken from experience, as *determinate rules*; rather it is in accordance with it that rules for judging first become possible” (AA 5: 234). It is aesthetic judgment that first makes possible the empirical investigation of natural species.

One particularly significant objection to the interpretation I am presenting is that it seems to commit Kant to the implausible claim that every object about which we can make a cognitive claim is beautiful.⁹ Kant, however, is attempting to offer an analysis of what we ordinarily mean when we describe an object as beautiful and we certainly don’t seem to think that every object is beautiful. Moreover, I am claiming that judgments of natural beauty refer to the spatial form of objects. But many objects just don’t have a distinct perceivable form, some because they are too abstract, some because they come in varied shapes, some are merely theoretically inferred entities, while others are either too small, large or faint to perceive.

Kant does not address this problem explicitly. There is though an answer readily available to him and which he might seem to have in mind. The analysis of natural beauty is an account only of the most fundamental delineation of nature into objects and then into natural kinds based on these shared forms. Other objects and kinds are derivative of this original sorting into natural kinds. We find beautiful the objects of the original aesthetic sorting but not the objects of derivative kinds. Kant confirms this suggestion when he describes pure colors and tones as beautiful and explains that we are responding to the temporal form of vibrations of air. However, mixed colors and tones, he claims, are not beautiful but agreeable (AA 5: 224–225). This is a clear case in which we can sort pure colors and tones into kinds based on our aesthetic response to them; this fundamental sorting allows us, in turn, derivatively to define mixed colors and tones. Similarly, we can define the highly varied empirical group of flowers based on similarities that we discover amongst aesthetically sorted kinds of flowers such as roses, tulips, etc.

⁸In the First Introduction, in contrast, he says that the principle of reflection does not operate schematically (AA 20: 214). However, he seems to be drawing the contrast between reflective judgment and its search for empirical concepts, on the one side, and the schemata of the categories and determinative judgment, on the other side.

⁹This objection is also raised against other preconceptual readings.

We see most clearly that pure judgments of taste are the condition of cognitive judgments in Kant's discussion of the presupposition of a common sense, from which I quoted above. It is the assumption that others judge the same objects to be beautiful as I do that allows me to solicit their assent to my aesthetic judgments. It furthermore allows me to communicate with them, because the assumption that we all identify the same sensible manifolds as objects and similarly sort the manifold given to us in intuition into groups of like objects is a condition of the objectivity and universality of cognitive judgments. Clearly, if we did not identify the same manifolds as objects and similarly sort them according to their form, then we would not be able to communicate about these objects and kinds and claim, for example, that this flower has three petals and three sepals or that in this particular kind of tulip the petals and sepals are white to pinkish-red with a yellow centre. This explains why Kant calls the demand of assent of aesthetic judgments "*exemplary*, i.e., a necessity of the assent of *all* to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce" (AA 5: 237). It is precisely because aesthetic judgments logically precede cognitive judgments that make them an example of a rule that we cannot specify. I can demand the agreement of others to my objective cognitive judgments. In contrast, the "*should* [*Sollen*] in aesthetic judgments of taste is [...] pronounced only conditionally" (AA 5: 237). It is the assumption that others will give this assent and agree with my aesthetic judgments that is the "indeterminate norm of a common sense" (AA 5: 239). As we will see below, the regulative assumption of the indeterminate norm of a common sense will prove very important for the interpretation of Kant's conception of transcendental idealism in the third *Critique*.

I am claiming, then, that the principle of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature is a necessary condition of empirical experience and knowledge. Kant complements its analysis in the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* by analyzing the principle of the logical or conceptual purposiveness of nature in the *Critique of the Power of Teleological Judgment*.¹⁰ In the *Analytic*, the focus of the discussion is the organism. The starting point of the argument is the undisputed claim that we think and speak of organisms as though they were self-organizing. The conclusion that we think of organisms teleologically or as though they were purposive products of nature follows from this claim by simple conceptual analysis. To view an organism as organized is to view it as though it were an end ordered by a rational intentional causality. To view it as self-organizing is to view it as though it were its own end or its own rational intentional cause. But to view it in this way is to judge it teleologically, as though it were a purposive product of nature. No doubt this argument assumes a great deal at its outset. But Kant seems to employ it precisely because he thinks that this assumption is not controversial: "No one has doubted the correctness of the fundamental principle that certain things in nature (organized beings) and their possibility must be judged in accordance with the concept of final causes" (AA 5: 389). His ultimate aim, however, is to argue that teleological judgment is

¹⁰For a more detailed account of these claims see Geiger (2009).

not only a necessary condition of our experience of organisms but a necessary condition of any empirical experience and knowledge. Organized beings are “the only ones in nature, which, even if considered in themselves and without a relation to other things, must nevertheless be thought of as possible only as its ends, and which thus first provide objective reality for the concept of an *end* that is not a practical end but an end of *nature*, and thereby provide natural science with the basis for a teleology” (AA 5: 375–376). Indeed, Kant makes it very clear that his aim is to argue that teleological judgment is necessary for natural science generally:

It is obvious that once we have adopted such a guideline for studying nature and found it to be reliable we must also at least attempt to apply this maxim of the power of judgment to the whole of nature, since by means of it we have been able to discover many laws of nature which, given the limitation of our insights into the inner mechanisms of nature, would otherwise remain hidden from us. (AA 5: 398)

The ultimate point of Kant’s discussion of teleological judgment, then, is the claim that teleological judgment is a necessary transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge for discursive creatures. A discursive understanding experiences or cognizes particular objects of nature by an act in which the power of judgment subsumes a particular object under a universal empirical concept. To subsume a particular under a universal empirical concept is to focus on one or more perceived characteristics of it and to leave undetermined the variety of different particulars that might fall under the concept. This is our fundamental relation to the empirical objects of nature. Thus, the subsumption of a particular under an empirical concept necessarily involves an assumption of unity. We cannot specify the full detail of the variety of objects which we might subsume under a concept for “it is contingent in how many different ways distinct things that nevertheless coincide in a common characteristic can be presented to our perception” (AA 5: 406). Nevertheless, we assume that the variety subsumed under a universal concept constitutes a unity. In employing it we will be referring to like objects, objects that share certain properties and causal relations. The unity and variety that fall under a concept cannot at any stage be fully specified or fully determined. To claim this would commit us to the view that ultimately our relation to objects of experience is not conceptual, but immediate or intuitive. We are, however, discursive creatures and do not possess an intuitive understanding “which does not go from the universal to the particular and thus to the individual (through concepts)” (AA 5: 406). Rather, the assumption is that the variety of objects subsumed under any empirical concept is further subsumable under more specific empirical concepts. To employ any empirical concept is therefore to assume that it has a place within a network of concepts and that the other concepts related to it are themselves such conceptual nets. To employ any empirical concept is therefore implicitly to assume a systematic whole of empirical concepts through which nature can be known. But to view nature as subsumable under a systematic whole of concepts is to assume its logical or conceptual purposiveness. It is to judge nature teleologically, to think of it as though it were made to be known by discursive creatures. The necessity of teleological judgment follows, then, from the fact that to subsume an object under a concept

is implicitly to assume that nature is purposive for our discursive cognitive powers. Thus, to employ any empirical concept is implicitly to judge it teleologically. The assumption of the logical or conceptual purposiveness of nature is therefore a necessary condition of empirical experience. It thus complements the assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature.

I argued in this section that the assumption of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of nature is a transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge. In the next section, I show that complementing the work of the *Critique of Pure Reason* by formulating this transcendental principle allows Kant to offer a different conception of the doctrine of transcendental idealism in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

3 Transcendental Idealism in the Third *Critique*

The contrast between appearances and things in themselves is evidently on Kant's mind in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. This is made abundantly clear already in the introduction to the work. But his important insights in this work are generally articulated employing another term, viz., the supersensible. The Introduction hints at the change in the term that his discussion in the body of the work elaborates. It underscores that both Kant's theoretical philosophy as well as his practical philosophy show that we cannot have theoretical cognition of "a thing in itself, which would be the supersensible, the idea of which must underlie the possibility of all those objects of experience, but which itself can never be elevated and expanded into a cognition" (AA 5: 175). (Kant employs the idea of the supersensible in the third *Critique* to reformulate the doctrine of transcendental idealism in relation to his practical philosophy and to the question of the unity of theoretical and practical reason; I will focus on the reformulation of the theoretical doctrine and will not discuss these highly important questions in this article.) I want to suggest that it is significant that in contrast to the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant is not asserting here nor in the body of the third *Critique* that there *exists an entity* called a thing in itself or the supersensible that is inaccessible to cognition and yet asserts that its *existence* must, in some way, underlie the possibility of the objects we cognize. Rather, he is claiming that the *idea* of the supersensible underlies the possibility of all objects of experience. In other words, talk of the idea of the supersensible does not commit Kant to the existence of a corresponding entity. On the other hand, and this is no less significant, he declares that the idea of the supersensible "must underlie the possibility of all those objects of experience" (AA 5: 175). The idea is presented as a transcendental condition of experience and knowledge and is thus a definitive part of the doctrine of transcendental idealism.

The absence of claims that the supersensible exists is striking. In itself, however, this might seem to be no greatly significant matter. It might seem to be a more cautious position than we find articulated in the first *Critique*, but not essentially different than the variety of irreconcilable claims we find there, which assert that things in themselves exist. More precisely, it might be thought that Kant no longer

claims that an entity or realm of entities we cannot cognize exists and somehow grounds the appearances we can cognize, but that he still holds that we must think of its existence, must necessarily assume its existence, for otherwise the very claim that our experience and knowledge are of *appearances* would be undermined. Put slightly differently, Kant is perhaps more cautious here and refrains from positing the existence of things in themselves as the ground of appearances, but still thinks that we can—indeed, that we must—*conceive* of the existence of things in themselves as grounding appearances. If this is indeed his position in the third *Critique*, then Kant might still be charged with propounding a transcendent metaphysical view, or perhaps only for straying outside the limits drawn by the critical philosophy.

In what follows, I will attempt to defend the claim that the notion of the supersensible in the third *Critique* is essentially different from the notions of thing in itself that (rightly or wrongly) are commonly attributed the theoretical undertaking of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is not a realm of entities outside or beyond the realm of experience. Nor is it the same realm of entities differently conceived. Rather, the idea of the supersensible, as it now functions in Kant's theoretical philosophy, is just the idea of the purposiveness of nature for our cognitive powers. In articulating this conception Kant is attempting to rid himself of the last remnant of transcendent metaphysics, or so I will suggest. There is but one world and its objects are given to us in intuition and conceived by the understanding. There is, however, a further transcendental condition of experience, viz., the idea that what is given to us in intuition and must be ordered by the understanding is purposive for our powers of cognition. This is the sense of the supersensible ground of appearances in the third *Critique*; and it is this work, I argued in the previous sections, that is charged with the task of completing the theoretical work of the first *Critique* by articulating the necessary conditions of a particular empirical experience.

In order to understand Kant's conception of the supersensible the crucial passages to examine—this should come as no surprise—are those discussing the resolution of the antinomies of judgment, in particular the resolution of the antinomy of taste:

1. *Thesis*. The judgment of taste is not based on concepts, for otherwise it would be possible to dispute about it (decide by means of proof).
2. *Antithesis*. The judgment of taste is based on concepts, for otherwise, despite its variety, it would not even be possible to argue about it (to lay claim to the necessary assent of others to this judgment). (AA 5: 338–339)

The fact that Kant presents the antinomy as in need of resolution should give us pause. The section entitled 'Resolution of the antinomy of taste' (§57) refers explicitly to a conflict discussed earlier in the sections devoted to the two peculiarities of the judgment of taste (§32, §33):

The judgment of taste determines its object with regard to satisfaction (as beauty) with a claim to the assent of *everyone*, as if it were objective. (AA 5: 281)

The judgment of taste is not determinable by grounds of proof at all, just as if it were merely *subjective*. (AA 5: 284)

Indeed, Kant says explicitly that the thesis and antithesis of the antinomy are “nothing other than the two peculiarities of the judgment of taste represented above in the Analytic” (AA 5: 339). But in introducing these sections of the Analytic Kant claims that the deduction of aesthetic judgment will serve as the “resolution of these logical peculiarities” (AA 5: 281). So the antinomy seems to settle a conflict already resolved in the Deduction, indeed resolved by introducing the necessary presupposition of a common sense that we examined in the previous section.¹¹

The resolution of the antinomy of taste takes a different though closely related course. In the manner typical of the discussion of the antinomies of the first *Critique*, Kant claims that resolving the conflict between asserting and denying that judgments of taste are based on concepts consists in “showing that the concept to which the object is related in this sort of judgment is not taken in the same sense in the two maxims of the aesthetic power of judgment, that this twofold sense or point of view in judging is necessary in our transcendental power of judgment, but also that the semblance involved in the confusion of the one with the other is, as a natural illusion, unavoidable” (AA 5: 339). The obvious question to ask is what are the two senses or points of view to which Kant is here referring.

The one point of view asserts that an object of the senses is “an object of satisfaction *for me*” (AA 5: 339). This quite clearly refers to the spatial form of an empirical object that I find beautiful. It is significant to note the claim that the two points of view are points of view of “our transcendental power of judgment”. The first point of view is that of “an intuitive singular representation related to the feeling of pleasure” (AA 5: 339). This is the point of view of the second peculiarity of judgments of taste and of the thesis of the antinomy. It was a central claim of the second part of this paper that it is the harmony of the faculties expressed in aesthetic judgments that gives us objects and an aesthetic preconceptual sorting of objects into natural kinds. This explains why Kant calls this viewpoint transcendental. It is a necessary condition of empirical experience and knowledge.

The other point of view, which, Kant says, grounds the claim of a judgment of taste to universal validity, relates the judgment to “the mere pure rational concept of the supersensible, which grounds the object (and also the judging subject) as an object of sense, consequently as an appearance [*was dem Gegenstande (und auch dem urteilenden Subjekte) als Sinnenobjekte, mithin als Erscheinung zum Grunde liegt*]” (AA 5: 340). The point of view, to repeat, is that of “the mere pure rational concept of the supersensible” and it grounds the object for the judging subject “as an object of sense, consequently as an appearance”. How does this point of view ground the claim made by a judgment of taste to universal validity? And how does the rational concept of the supersensible ground objects *as appearances*?

At this juncture it is crucial to emphasize once again that the Deduction settled the contradiction between the conflicting peculiarities of judgments of taste by

¹¹For discussion of the fact that the antinomy claims to resolve a conflict already settled see Wicks (2007: 147–153). In contrast to the line of interpretation I am trying to develop, Wicks seems to read Kant’s idea of the supersensible ontologically.

identifying the necessary assumption of a common sense: “that subjective element that one can presuppose in all human beings (as requisite for possible cognitions in general)” (AA 5: 290). The question then is the following: What is the relation between the presupposition of a common sense and the idea of the supersensible substratum of appearances?

I claimed in the second section of the paper that Kant holds that our most fundamental experience of nature is the experience of the aesthetically pleasing form of an object. It is aesthetic judgments that cut up the manifold given to us in intuition into objects and this enables us to sort objects into natural kinds based on their spatial form alone. It subsequently allows us to search for empirical concepts under which to subsume these kinds. The correlate of these claims is simply the assumption of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of the sensible manifold given to us in intuition. This is the idea of the supersensible. Kant writes:

But now all contradiction vanishes if I say that the judgment of taste is based on a concept (of a general ground for the subjective purposiveness of nature for the power of judgment), from which, however, nothing can be cognized and proved with regard to the object, because it is in itself indeterminable and unfit for cognition; yet at the same time by means of this very concept it acquires validity for everyone (in each case, to be sure, as a singular judgment immediately accompanying the intuition), because its determining ground may lie in the concept of that which can be regarded as the supersensible substratum of humanity. (AA 5: 340)

Here, Kant explicitly identifies the idea of the supersensible with the idea of a “general ground for the subjective purposiveness of nature for the power of judgment”.¹² The idea, of course, is “in itself undeterminable and unfit for cognition”. We cannot cognize the aesthetic purposiveness of nature, nor can we determine that nature is an object purposive for cognition. But by means of this transcendental presupposition, an aesthetic judgment, though it is a singular judgment expressing the pleasure a person senses in the form of an object, “acquires validity for everyone”. The transcendental presupposition can thus be “regarded as the supersensible substratum of humanity”. It is the assumption that we all cut up the manifold given to us in intuition into objects in the same manner and that this delineation of the manifold will then prove amenable to our attempts to subsume it under universally valid concepts.

The idea of a common sense and of the supersensible ground of appearances, so I am suggesting, are correlates.¹³ It is the presupposition of our common sense that explains the appeal judgments of taste make to universal assent, by identifying the faculties at work in these judgments and their role in cognition. The idea

¹²Guyer seems to read the sense attributed to things in themselves in the first *Critique* into these passages. His analysis thus concludes that the resolution of the antinomy employing the notion of the supersensible is invalid and that all that is actually needed to resolve it is the notion of the harmony of the faculties and their claim to universal assent. See Guyer (1997: 299–307).

¹³In the first *Critique* Kant distinguishes the direct proof of transcendental idealism given in the Transcendental Aesthetic from the indirect proof in the Antinomies (A506–A507=B534–B535). It is interesting to note that in the Analytic and the Dialectic of the *Critique of the Power of Aesthetic Judgment* these two proofs seem to be correlates of one another.

of the supersensible ground of appearances is the idea that our common aesthetic judgments will give us objects cognizable by the understanding. This presupposition means that what is most fundamentally given to us in intuition is not cut up into objects and so is not yet conceptualizable by the understanding. It is the assumption of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of nature that grounds our common experience of objects of sense. But this analysis is a commitment to the claim that the objects of sense we experience are appearances. They are shaped both aesthetically and conceptually by our minds. It is in this way that the idea of the supersensible “grounds the object (and also the judging subject) as an object of sense, consequently as an appearance” (AA 5: 340).

It is important to note that in Remark II to §57 Kant anticipates the discussion of the Dialectic of the Teleological Power of Judgment and claims that the idea of the supersensible also underlies the assumption of the logical purposiveness of nature.¹⁴

But if it is conceded that our deduction is at least on the right track, even if it has not been made clear enough in every detail, then three ideas are revealed: *first*, that of the supersensible in general, without further determination, as the substratum of nature; *second*, the very same thing, as the principle of the subjective purposiveness of our faculty of cognition [. . .]. (AA 5: 346)

I suggest that the idea of the supersensible substratum of nature, with no further determination, underlies aesthetic judgment and thus the assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature. The second idea underlies teleological judgment and thus the assumption of the logical purposiveness of nature.

Indeed, Kant returns to the idea of the supersensible in the section that ends the Dialectic of the Teleological Power of Judgment (§78). I claimed in the previous section that the Critique of the Power of Teleological Judgment establishes that the assumption of the logical purposiveness of nature is a necessary condition of experience. It is necessary, first, in order to identify organisms. Second, and more generally, it is necessary for the employment of any empirical concept. Empirical concepts, so I argued above, all implicitly contain an assumption that what is subsumed under them is indeed a unity. This is the assumption of the logical purposiveness of nature. What is given in intuition is made to be known by discursive creatures like us for whom knowledge is conceptual.

The Dialectic aims to reconcile two seemingly contradictory maxims. The first orders us to judge all natural wholes mechanistically, i.e., to explain a whole as a function of the properties and forces of its parts. The other demands that we judge organisms teleologically, i.e., as wholes. Though the formulation of the maxim refers to organisms, I argued above that teleological judgment is necessary to identify any object subsumable under any general empirical concept. The antinomy of teleological judgment asks how we are to reconcile the two maxims directing us to judge an organism as a purposive whole and as the blind effect of the forces and

¹⁴He also anticipates the discussion of the unity of theoretical and practical reason in the Methodology of the Power of Judgment. I do not discuss this matter in this article and so I will not cite the third idea Kant mentions in the following quote.

properties of its parts. A similar question is raised about the employment of any general empirical concept, because use of any empirical concept presupposes a greater unity that we can ever actually experience and so justify.

The Dialectic resolves the antinomy by drawing a clear distinction between the teleological identification of natural wholes (organisms or kinds) and the principle of mechanistic explanation. So the maxims of mechanistic and teleological judgment do not contradict each other. The last section of the Dialectic (§78) connects the discussion to the idea with which we are concerned. It is the idea of the supersensible, Kant claims, that allows us to reconcile the maxims of mechanistic and teleological judgment, but “we can have no concept of this except the undetermined concept of a ground that makes the judging of nature in accordance with empirical laws possible” (AA 5: 412). This is the transcendental principle of the purposiveness of nature. He adds that “the common principle of the mechanical derivation on the one side and the teleological on the other is the *supersensible*, on which we must base nature as phenomenon” (AA 5: 412).

Most significantly, in Remark II to §57 and in §58, Kant crowns the revision of his doctrine of transcendental idealism. In these passages he makes it abundantly clear that his formulations in the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment apply to the resolution of the antinomies of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* as well:

[T]here are *three kinds of antinomy* of pure reason, which, however, all coincide in this, that they force reason to give up the otherwise very natural presupposition that holds objects of the senses to be things in themselves, and rather to count them as appearances, and ascribe to them an intelligible substratum (something supersensible, the concept of which is only an idea and permits no genuine cognition). (AA 5: 344)

Moreover, Kant explicitly links the Transcendental Aesthetic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* with our present discussion of the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment and refers to the “the principle of the *ideality* of the purposiveness in the beautiful in nature” as an “explanatory ground for our power of representations” (AA 5: 350).

Just as the *ideality* of the objects of the senses as appearances is the only way to explain the possibility that their forms can be determined *a priori*, likewise the *idealism* of the purposiveness in judging of the beautiful in nature and in art is the only presupposition under which the critique can explain the possibility of a judgment of taste, which demands *a priori* validity for everyone (yet without basing the purposiveness that is represented in the object on concepts). (AA 5: 351)

Here, transcendental idealism is no longer committed to the existence of an otherworldly realm of entities grounding appearances. It explains aesthetic judgments and their claim to universal validity by identifying an idea that is a necessary condition of experience, viz., the assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature. This is the sense of transcendental idealism in the Critique of the Power of Aesthetic Judgment. More generally, the third *Critique* completes the formulation of the doctrine of transcendental idealism by adding to the conditions of experience that we find in the Aesthetic and Analytic of the first *Critique* an additional condition, viz.,

the idea of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of nature. This idea is the idea of the supersensible ground of appearances.

4 Conclusion

I started out by distinguishing the negative and contrastive claims about things in themselves in the *Critique of Pure Reason* from the positive and problematic employment of the term. Unlike most discussions of the matter I did not try to make sense of these latter claims nor did I attempt to reconcile the tensions between them. Instead, I examined what becomes of the contrast between appearances and things in themselves in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and suggested that there is a remarkable shift in Kant's position in the later work. In the third *Critique* Kant no longer attributes existence to things in themselves, let alone speaks of a second set of entities that ground or cause appearances. Nor does he speak of them as the very same entities as appearances—and thus as individuated—but thought of not as existing in space and time and not as subsumed under the categories, and thus stripped of the very conditions of individuation. Instead, what we find is the *idea* of the supersensible ground of appearances, which we learn is the regulative idea of the aesthetic and logical purposiveness of nature for our cognitive capacities. The claim that this idea is a necessary condition of empirical experience and knowledge entails the commitment to the doctrine of transcendental idealism. For it is the claim that experience and knowledge are necessarily shaped by our minds. This later formulation of the doctrine seems to me to be superior to the earlier formulations. The problematic positive role of things in themselves in the first *Critique* is replaced by what seems to be a critically acceptable role allotted to an idea of reason in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

Acknowledgments I am deeply indebted to Aviv Reiter, Nir Friedman, Dennis Schulting and Yaron Senderowicz for their comments on this paper.

References

- Brandt, R. 1989. 'The Deductions in the *Critique of Judgment*: Comments on Hampshire and Horstmann'. In E. Förster (ed.), *Kant's Transcendental Deductions: The Three Critiques and the Opus Postumum*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 177–190.
- Geiger, I. 2003. 'Is the Assumption of a Systematic Whole of Empirical Concepts a Necessary Condition of Knowledge?'. *Kant-Studien* 94: 273–298.
- Geiger, I. 2009. 'Is Teleological Judgment (Still) Necessary? Kant's Arguments in the Analytic and in the Dialectic of Teleological Judgment'. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17: 533–566.
- Ginsborg, H. 1990. 'Reflective Judgment and Taste'. *Noûs* 24: 63–78.
- Ginsborg, H. 1997. 'Lawfulness Without a Law: Kant on the Free Play of Imagination'. *Philosophical Studies* 25: 37–81.
- Ginsborg, H. 1998. 'Kant on the Subjectivity of Taste'. In H. Parret (ed.), *Kants Ästhetik – Kant's Aesthetics – L'esthétique de Kant*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 448–465.
- Ginsborg, H. 2006. 'Aesthetic Judgment and Perceptual Normativity'. *Inquiry* 49: 403–437.

- Guyer, P. 1997. *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, P. 2006. 'The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited'. In R. Kukla (ed.), *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 162–193.
- Henrich, D. 1992. 'Kant's Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment'. In D. Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World: Studies in Kant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 29–56.
- Kant, I. 1997. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Ed. P. Guyer and trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wicks, R. 2007. *Kant on Judgment*. London and New York: Routledge.

Part II
Transcendental Idealism & Logic

Chapter 5

Transcendental Idealism and the Transcendental Deduction

Lucy Allais

1

“Kant was not the sort of person who had the intellectual courage to face up to a dilemma and reject one alternative in favour of the other. Instead, when he felt himself pulled in opposite directions by conflicting imperatives, his preference was to try to work out some way of satisfying both. This intellectual ‘cowardice’ [...] is the characteristic that led Kant to his most brilliant discoveries” (Falkenstein 1995, 19). This is Lorne Falkenstein’s diagnosis of the impetus of Kant’s intellectual development. Apart from the pejorative language, this seems to me to capture one of the most compelling features of Kant’s thought, as well as being, in general, a philosophical strategy with a good prospect of leading us to the truth. It also seems to me to be a good strategy to use when *interpreting* Kant: when facing the various and sometimes radically opposed interpretations philosophers have given of Kant’s transcendental idealism, we should start by assuming that there are genuine interpretative pulls to the opposed positions, and try to come up with an interpretation that respects them.

As everyone knows, there is no agreement in interpretations of Kant’s transcendental idealism, not even a tendency to convergence, and recent publications continue to represent an astonishingly wide spectrum of views. On the one extreme, we have interpretations which see Kant as a phenomenalist or Berkeleyan idealist about things as they appear to us, and on the other extreme we have deflationary or epistemic interpretations, which do not see Kant as any kind of idealist at all. Here are two examples: Arthur Collins says that “Kant is not an idealist” (Collins 1999, 2), and that “[a]n interpretation that finds a kind of idealism in Kant, that ascribes to him a reduction of objects to mental representations [...] fails to capture the originality, profundity, and merit of his thought” (Collins 1999, 3). On the other side of the spectrum, James Van Cleve says: “As I interpret him, then, Kant’s transcendental idealism is idealism indeed, at least regarding everything in space and time” (Van

L. Allais (✉)

Department of Philosophy, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH, UK; Department of Philosophy, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa
e-mail: l.l.allais@sussex.ac.uk; lucy.allais@wits.ac.za

Cleve 1999, 4), and that “objects in space and time are logical constructions out of perceivers and their states. That makes Kant a phenomenalist” (Van Cleve 1999, 11).¹ I have argued elsewhere that taking seriously the interpretative pulls which support both extreme views enables us to chart a middle road between them which makes sense of the textual evidence that seems to support the extremes.² According to this middle road position, transcendental idealism *is* a form of metaphysical idealism, which says that things as they appear to us depend on our minds, but it is not the extreme form of idealism—Berkeleyan idealism—which says that things exist as ideas *in* the mind. Deflationary interpreters do not see transcendental idealism as an ontological position at all, which of course the strongly idealist interpreters do. Here again, I think we should try to incorporate insights made by both sides. Surely transcendental idealism is a position with both epistemological and metaphysical components. Another set of extremes in approach is between those who, like P.F. Strawson (1966), think that everything that is of value in the *Critique* can be entirely separated off from Kant’s transcendental idealism, and those who feel that seeing Kant’s central arguments as not dependent on or leading to his idealism is to fail to take transcendental idealism seriously, and to miss the coherence of Kant’s work (perhaps Sebastian Gardner [1999] is an example of this approach). I think we should take transcendental idealism seriously for it is clearly key to many of Kant’s arguments and positions in the *Critique*. But it is compatible with this that Kant may have *some* arguments and epistemological insights which are separable from his idealism.

In this article, I briefly outline the middle road interpretation of transcendental idealism which I have been attempting to develop,³ and then begin to look at its relation to the Transcendental Deduction of the categories. Given the less than entirely clear nature of Kant’s argument in the Deduction, the relation between his transcendental idealism and the Deduction is extremely complicated; I give some reasons for thinking that the argument of the Deduction might not depend on transcendental idealism, and that at least one line of thought in the Deduction may be applicable even from the point of view of realism. I do *not* intend to attempt to give an account of the argument of the Deduction as a whole.

2

The middle road version of transcendental idealism I have been trying to develop is one which sees Kant as an *ontological idealist*, since the empirically real world (things as they appear to us) depends on our minds, but *not* as an extreme

¹The debate is not just between phenomenalist and non-idealist interpretations; to mention just two other possible interpretations, Paul Abela (2002) argues that transcendental idealism does not involve idealism because it is an epistemological position, involving the rejection of the so-called given, while Rae Langton (1998) sees transcendental idealism as an ontological position, but one which does not involve any kind of idealism, but rather concerns a distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic properties.

²Allais (2007).

³This is a brief summary of the view I develop in depth in Allais (2007).

Berkeleyan-type idealist, who thinks that empirically real objects exist merely as collections of mental states (organized according to a priori principles and a priori forms of intuition), or something which supervenes on mental states. One of the central challenges to this kind of view is to give an account of a kind of mind-dependence which does not involve existence *in* the mind, and I have attempted to do this by drawing on the analogy with color that Kant suggests in the *Prolegomena* (AA 4: 289).⁴ In the relevant passage, Kant says that the idea that there are some qualities, like color, that belong only to the appearances of things, and not to things as they are in themselves, is commonly accepted. He then says that his view is that all the properties which make up the intuition of an object belong merely to its appearance. Of course, there are many possible views of the ontological status of so-called secondary qualities like color, and the passage is compatible with more than one, leading to different interpretations of what it would mean to say that size and shape are relevantly like a secondary quality account of color. My suggestion is that we need an account of color which is situated within a *direct realist* view of perception, and therefore does not think of colors as properties that exist merely in the mind, but which at the same time allows that some of the properties we directly perceive are mind-dependent, and do not present things as they are in themselves. If such a view is available, we can then explain Kant's position by generalizing this view of secondary qualities to apply to *all* the appearance properties of objects, which is what he suggests in the *Prolegomena* passage. This will give us a view which includes genuine metaphysical mind-dependence (idealism), but not of the extreme, Berkeleyan sort.

Clearly, how we understand secondary qualities will be crucial. If we have an indirect view of perception and locate color in representational mental states which exist merely in the mind, then the analogy will lead to the Berkeleyan view of Kant's idealism. To avoid Berkeleyan idealism, we need an account of secondary qualities situated within a direct realist view of perception. But it is important to see that drawing on a direct realist view of perception to explain the desired view of secondary qualities need *not* lead to denying that Kant is an idealist, so long as we can find a way of making sense of directly perceiving properties, which are properties of outer objects but are mind-dependent properties of outer objects. The direct realism is merely the first step. I draw on the work of John Campbell, a straightforward realist, to illustrate the view of perception within which we should situate the account of secondary qualities we need; he calls this a relational view. The point of the term 'relational', here, is to mark out as essential the idea that the conscious representational mental states which are involved in perceiving something have as their content the actual object perceived, not a representation of it which could be had whether or not the object was present. On the indirect realist view, mental states have representational content, which is perceptual when it has, for example, the

⁴See Allais (2007); cf. Rosefeldt (2007) for a very similar account, as well as Ameriks' contribution to this volume. Van Cleve (1995) argues that no version of the secondary quality analogy enables us to make sense of Kant's idealism. See Putnam (1981) for a different use of the secondary quality analogy.

right causal relations to objects. On the relational or direct view, the content of perceptual states essentially involves the presence of the object to consciousness.

One of the features of Campbell's account that is particularly helpful for our purposes here is the fact that he is trying to do justice to the extent to which our knowledge of *cognitive processing* seems to support indirect realism, and to showing why it need not. This is crucial in a Kantian context because of how active Kant thinks the mind is in constructing our experience of the world; Kant thinks that our minds need to synthesize and organize the sensory input on a variety of levels, and it is by no means obvious that all of these are supposed to lead to idealism. It seems to me that, just as our knowledge of cognitive processing seems to support indirect realism in the contemporary debate, this aspect of Kant's thought seems to, but in fact need not, support seeing Kant as a phenomenalistic idealist. This will be crucial when we come to the Deduction.

Campbell suggests a metaphor to illustrate the relational view of perception: think of viewing something through a pane of glass. For a representationalist, perception will involve images on the glass that represent the things beyond the glass, but for a relational view we see straight through the glass to the objects themselves. As Campbell points out, knowledge of cognitive processing seems to tell us that, unlike a passive pane of glass, the brain is actively involved in constructing a representation of the world, and this seems to threaten the idea that perception can be analogously like seeing through a pane of glass. In response, he suggests the following development of the metaphor:

Suppose we have a medium which, like glass, can be transparent. But suppose that, unlike glass, it is highly volatile, and needs constant adjustment and recalibration if it is to remain transparent in different contexts. Suppose, in fact, that the adjustment required is always sensitive to the finest details of the scene being viewed. The upshot of the adjustment, in each case, is still not the construction of a representation on the medium of the scene being viewed; the upshot of the adjustment is simply that the medium becomes transparent. You might think of visual processing as a bit like that. It is not that the brain is constructing a conscious inner representation whose intrinsic character is independent of the environment. It is, rather, that there is a kind of complex adjustment that the brain has to undergo, in each context, in order that you can be visually related to the things you see around you; so that you can see them, in other words. (Campbell 2002, 119)

The metaphor is supposed to give us an intuitive take on the idea that perception could be direct, despite what we know about cognitive processing. We know, for example, that color and shape are processed in different streams in the brain, and that the information received by the sense organs then needs to be recombined in order for us to perceptually represent an object with both a shape and a color. Campbell's metaphor is supposed to help us to see that we do not have to take this to show that we see the world by producing an inner image in which the color and shape are combined; rather, the idea is that mental processing enables us to directly see the colored and shaped object in the world.

The next step is to find a way of fitting into this account the idea that some of the directly perceived properties of things are mind-dependent, and are not properties things have as they are in themselves, independently of our being able to perceive

them. I suggest extending the metaphor in the following way: imagine that a malfunction in the adjustment mechanism causes the medium to fail to be completely transparent, but instead distorts the shapes of things to some extent, as for example a fishbowl lens might. Just as when the medium is transparent, it is not the case that the distorted things are seen through seeing an image on the glass—it is the things that are directly seen, through the distorted glass. If seeing things transparently essentially involves the presence of the objects, this is also the case when their shapes are seen in a distorted way. However, in this case the things are seen as being, to some extent, different from the way they are, apart from their being seen. If we allow this possibility, then thinking that seeing an object is relational, in the sense that the object is essentially present to consciousness, does not entail that seeing an object is necessarily transparent, in the sense that the way the object is seen as being is the way it is apart from its being seen.

Here we have an account according to which we experience things in ways which are different from the way they are in themselves, and which are mind-dependent in the sense that they do not exist apart from our possible perception. This is exactly what Kant says about things as they appear to us. The next step is to generalize this to *all* the properties of which we have knowledge and experience. This results in an account on which we experience only mind-dependent appearances of things, but these appearances do not exist in the mind like thoughts.

So far, I have not mentioned the specific concerns with apriority that lead Kant to his position. That's because I am trying to explain a general sense in which things as they appear to us could be mind-dependent representations, rather than to give an account of Kant's *argument* for this view. Kant thinks that we could not experience individual objects without experiencing them as located in a spatiotemporal framework, and that the a priori nature of this framework means that it cannot be taken as reflecting mind-independent reality, but rather must be something brought to the world by our minds. If the structure which enables us to experience individual things is not a reflection of the world as it is in itself, neither will the things we are able to perceive through this structure be. To return to the metaphor, imagine that in order to perceive individual objects through the pane of glass, the glass has to have a built-in structure which determines how what we see through the glass is grouped together as objects. It is still the case that we are seeing through the glass, to the world outside our minds, but the way we are seeing it, and even what we are seeing as an object, is now dependent on the way our minds are and does not let us experience objects as they are in themselves.

3

3.1

So far Kant's idealism has been explained in terms of the contributions of the a priori forms of our intuition, and nothing yet has been said about how the categories determine our experience. I now want to move on to make some tentative remarks

about the Transcendental Deduction of the categories. One way in which the relation between the Deduction and transcendental idealism is complicated is that many people think that key sections of the argument in the Deduction depend on transcendental idealism,⁵ but, on the other hand, the most straightforward account of Kant's argument for his transcendental idealism suggests that the idealism *follows* from the *result* of the Deduction. Immediately following the Deduction (A129, B167) Kant presents his standard, central argument for transcendental idealism: that it provides the explanation of our having substantive a priori knowledge. This suggests that the idealism follows from the results of the argument of the Deduction, rather than being assumed by it. This reading straightforwardly parallels the structure of the argument in the Aesthetic, where Kant argues that our being presented with distinct particulars in empirical intuition requires our having an a priori structuring intuition, and then argues that the only explanation of substantive a priori knowledge is that it is not knowledge of something mind-independent, and therefore that space and time are *merely* the a priori forms of our intuition, and so are transcendently ideal. Similarly, it could be that the Deduction is supposed to establish that certain a priori concepts apply to all objects of possible experience; transcendental idealism is supposed to follow as the explanation of our having a priori concepts that apply to the world.

Gardner argues that failing to see the Deduction as depending on transcendental idealism means not taking transcendental idealism seriously, as well as not taking seriously the coherence of Kant's thought (Gardner 1999, 118, 120), and he cites a number of passages which he says show that the argument of the Deduction depends on transcendental idealism (Bxvii, A92–94=B124–127; A95–97; A111; A114; A128–130; B163–164; B166–168; A139=B178; A180–181=B223–224; *Prol.* §§26–30). While all these passages clearly connect transcendental idealism and the categories, it seems to me that apart from one, the order of explanation is the reverse of what Gardner presents: these passages give expression to Kant's official direct argument for transcendental idealism, which follows from our having a priori knowledge, and therefore presumably could not be used as a premise of an argument establishing that we have such knowledge (the exception is A111, which I discuss below⁶). For example, in the B-preface, Kant famously says that

⁵See, for example, Andrew Ward, who argues that, for Kant, the idea of experience of a world without causation is not coherent, “once it has been realised that the objects of perception are *appearances*, and never things in themselves” (Ward 2006, 52). See also Gardner, who says that the Deduction “is an account of how the world is (must be) constructed conceptually on the assumption that the fundamental conceptual features of the objects of our cognition derive from our mode of cognition, rather than being determined by how things are independently of our subjectivity” (Gardner 1999, 120).

⁶However, I do agree with Gardner that there are numerous passages in the Deduction which at least seem to be premised on transcendental idealism, some of which I discuss below. He chooses the passages which most directly link the Deduction with transcendental idealism, but it seems to me that while the link is direct, the order of explanation is the reverse of what he presents it as. Gardner says that seeing the argument of the Deduction as premised on transcendental idealism “goes back to the general case for making the Copernican experiment in philosophy” (Gardner

if we assume that concepts conform to objects, we have difficulty explaining how we could know anything about them *a priori*, whereas this can easily be explained if objects conform to our concepts: the idealism is the *explanation* of our having synthetic a priori knowledge. Simply and roughly put, Kant argues first that our cognition has various a priori conditions, and then says that this is possible only if our minds determine objects, and thus reaches his idealist conclusion. Clearly, thinking that the Deduction is supposed to *lead* to transcendental idealism in no way involves failing to take transcendental idealism seriously, or denying that it is closely bound up with Kant's concern in the Deduction.

Another problem with the relation between the Deduction and transcendental idealism is that, despite the apparently similar role in constituting our experience that Kant attributes to the a priori intuitive and conceptual contributions to experience in the B preface (Bxvii), when we look at the details of the arguments put forward in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic, as well as the conclusions Kant draws from them, this straightforward parallel is no longer so clear.⁷ In terms of the respective roles categories and intuitions play in cognition, the way they feature in the argument for transcendental idealism, and in terms of the explicit conclusions Kant states about a priori forms of intuition and a priori concepts at the ends of the sections in which he argues for them, it is not clear that the categories are supposed to introduce an additional kind of mind-dependent structuring to the objects of experience, parallel to that introduced by the a priori forms of intuition. It is arguable that Kant's aim is to show that the categories are *limited* to spatiotemporal appearances (and therefore to the mind-dependence introduced by space and time), and not that they constitute further mental contributions to the nature of the objects of experience.

The lack of parallel is most obvious with respect to the conclusions Kant presents at the end of the sections in which he argues for a priori forms of intuition and a priori concepts, respectively. At the end of his argument in the Aesthetic, immediately following the argument for space and time being merely our forms of intuition, Kant's explicit conclusion is that space and time are *merely* the a priori forms

1999, 120), but it seems to me that the general case for the Copernican experiment gets the order of explanation the other way around: from a priori knowledge to idealism.

⁷For extremely helpful discussion of the lack of parallel between the categories and a priori intuition see Eric Watkins (2002) and Thomas Pogge (1991), who both argue that this is something to which commentators have not paid enough attention (Watkins 2002, 196; Pogge 1991, 493). Gerold Prauss (1974) is one commentator who does comment on this issue; he seems to see it as a question of presentation, and as a hang-over from the Inaugural Dissertation, in which Kant sees the objects presented to us in sensibility as mind-dependent, but still thinks that reason can give us knowledge of reality in itself (Prauss 1974, 59, 59n.12). But the fact that the full critical position goes beyond the Inaugural Dissertation in denying that reason can give us cognition of things in themselves is compatible with more than one account of the role of the categories: it could be that the categories add an extra 'layer' of mind-dependence, in that they structure objects in a parallel way to the way the a priori forms of intuition do, or it could simply be that the categories are limited to the mind-dependent objects presented to us by sensibility (which still takes us beyond the argument of the Inaugural Dissertation).

of our intuition, and that they represent no features at all of things in themselves (A26=B42). If the categories are supposed to have a parallel status, we should expect him to say, at the end of the Deduction, that they represent no properties at all of things in themselves, but this is not exactly what we find him saying. Instead, immediately following the Analytic, in the section ‘On the ground of the distinction of all objects in general into phenomena and noumena’, Kant says that an important result of the Transcendental Analytic is that the categories cannot be used other than for knowledge of objects of experience (A246=B303). In other words, we can use these a priori concepts only for cognition of spatiotemporal objects, objects which affect our senses. Rather than saying that the categories represent no feature of things in themselves, Kant says that the categories are *limited* to objects that can be given to our spatiotemporal intuition.

Another worry about making the argument of the Deduction assume transcendental idealism is that this might be thought to make the argument too easy, and the result unsatisfying. The argument seems too easy, because it seems that all we need is transcendental idealism plus the metaphysical deduction, and we will already have the results of the transcendental deduction: we think of objects in terms of certain a priori concepts; the objects of experience are appearances which depend on the a priori concepts we use to think about them; therefore these a priori concepts apply to the objects of experience.⁸ On this reading, the result of the Deduction seems unsatisfying, because we wanted to show “how the *subjective conditions of thinking* should have *objective validity*” (A89–90=B122),⁹ which seems to involve showing that these concepts are *more* than simply features of the way we think, and in fact actually apply to objects, the world. Compared with the tortuous argument of the Deduction, the idea that the subjective conditions of thinking apply to objects simply because objects are a function of the subjective conditions of thinking, again, seems much too quick and easy.

On the other hand, a reason to think that the Deduction *does* assume and require transcendental idealism is that it is situated after the Aesthetic, in which the idealism is supposed to be established, and might reasonably be thought to assume the results of the Aesthetic. And there are certainly passages in the Deduction that support thinking that it relies on transcendental idealism; for example, Kant says that “[t]he a priori conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience” (A111). One way of responding to this, which attempts to incorporate the reasons on both sides, is to say that the argument of the Deduction relies on idealism with respect to the forms of

⁸Roughly, Kant’s strategy in the Metaphysical Deduction seems to be to argue (1) that we have certain fundamental ways of thinking; (2) that concepts are ways of synthesizing experience; (3) concepts involve synthesizing experience in the same way that judging involves bringing ideas together in thought; (4) this means that if we have certain fundamental ways of thinking, we will have certain fundamental concepts we will use for organizing our experience. However, it does not follow from this that these concepts actually apply to the world that we experience, and we therefore need a transcendental deduction to demonstrate that they do. But if we start by assuming that experience is a function of the concepts that we use, then it seems that we do already know that these concepts apply to the world that we experience, and the Deduction is unnecessary.

⁹All translations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from the Guyer and Wood edition (Kant 1998).

intuition, but not with respect to the forms of thought. In other words, the argument starts by assuming that we do not have knowledge of things as they are apart from their appearing to us, and that things as they appear to us depend on the a priori form of our intuition, but does not assume that things as they appear to us are determined by the a priori concepts we require for cognition of an objective world.

Another way of seeing the Deduction as assuming only some aspects of transcendental idealism, is to say that it takes as a starting point the idea that we can have knowledge only of objects which are given in experience.¹⁰ Some commentators seem to see this as an account of Kant's transcendental idealism as a whole. For example, Graham Bird says that Kant "is a transcendental idealist because [he thinks] it is quite unwarranted to make claims about objects which are not open to any sort of perceptual inspection"; "Kant's empirically neutral term 'appearance' was thus designed to limit the range of our possible experience to the objects that can be presented to our senses" (Bird 1962, 50, 148).¹¹ Limiting our knowledge to things that can be presented to our senses is clearly a crucial *part* of Kant's position, and constitutes his rejection of transcendent metaphysics, but, on its own, this is an epistemological claim with no commitment to idealism. On my account of *transcendental idealism*, Kant's position goes beyond this, but it is compatible with this that the argument of the Deduction relies on this aspect of the position, and not on *all* aspects of transcendental idealism. It might be that the argument of the Deduction assumes that we can have knowledge only of things given in experience, so it does start by assuming that transcendent metaphysics is impossible, but it does not start by assuming that the world that we experience is determined by our a priori concepts, and has no existence apart from our possible experience of it.¹²

Kant's insistence in the Deduction that the categories relate solely to appearances, and that they do not relate to "objects in general," "without any restriction to

¹⁰This is compatible with the fact that Kant expresses his view by saying that we have knowledge only of appearances, because there is nothing in the notion of things as they appear to us that rules out the way they appear to us matching the way they mind-independently are. Rather, the notion can be seen as simply picking out that class of things, or those aspects of things, of which we have experience—which appear to us. Kant does not simply rely on the notion of things appearing to us in certain ways to establish his idealism, but gives specific arguments as to why he thinks things do not appear to us as they are in themselves.

¹¹Similarly, Dryer claims that when Kant says that the conditions of the possibility of experience are conditions of the possibility of objects of experience, he means "that conditions under which it is possible to secure empirical knowledge are also conditions under which it is possible for what exists to become objects of empirical knowledge" (Dryer 1966, 500; see also 84–85, 506). This fits Kant's claim, at the beginning of the Deduction, that the representation does not make the object possible so far as existence is concerned, but is "still determinant of the object a priori if it is possible through it alone to *cognize something as an object*" (A92=B125). The idea seems to be that the categories are necessary for something to be an object of knowledge, which is a substantive and interesting idea, but not one which implies idealism.

¹²As Longuenesse argues, "whereas the ontology of Aristotelian inspiration defended by Kant's immediate predecessors in German school-philosophy purported to expound, by *a priori* arguments, universal features of things as they are in themselves, Kant's more modest goal is to argue that our understanding is so constituted that it could not come up with any objective representation of things as they present themselves in experience, unless it made use of the concepts expounded in his table of categories" (Longuenesse 2006, 129; see also A247=B303). Kant might think that this

our sensibility” (A139=B178), can be read along these lines. His point is to deny that we can have a priori knowledge of things which are not possible objects of experience (which do not appear to us), and to insist that our concepts require the content given by being presented with objects in intuition. These substantive claims are an important part of Kant’s position, but they need not involve idealism. As noted at the beginning, Kant’s concerns are both epistemological and metaphysical, and we need not insist that every aspect of every argument involves both.

In addition to the idea that the argument of the Deduction need not rely on *all* aspects of transcendental idealism, it is important to notice that Kant does not think that *all* parts of the argument *lead* to idealism. For example, his insistence on the idea that our experience of the world requires synthesis at a variety of levels, from mere perception to empirical concept application,¹³ is not taken by him to lead to idealism, so long as this synthesis happens at the empirical level. Just as we need not take our knowledge of cognitive processing to undermine direct realism, Kant does not conclude merely from his insights into the activity of the mind in processing the input of the senses that this processing could not result in representing things the way they mind-independently are. The fact that the mind must actively process and combine the shape and color input of the senses to represent a tomato as a single round red thing does not mean that the tomato is not, as it is represented as being, a round red thing. Rather than basing his case on a general need for cognitive processing, as Karl Ameriks has stressed, Kant’s argument for his idealism is always based on his specific concerns with apriority: it is when the activity of the mind requires an a priori component, such as a priori synthesis, that it cannot be taken as indicating the way things mind-independently are.¹⁴ A similar point applies to Kant’s claim that concepts express the unity of synthesis (A78=B104): the point surely is meant to apply to *all* concepts, empirical as well as a priori. Kant thinks that all concept application involves, in some sense, a unity in consciousness (A103–104), but does not argue on this basis for idealism.

One line of thought in the Deduction which might be thought to depend on transcendental idealism is Kant’s argument that because appearances are sensible representations and not things in themselves, an object corresponding to and therefore also distinct from cognition would merely be something in general= x , and therefore that the necessity and unity that the object makes necessary must come from an a priori unity in consciousness (A104). However, it might be that even this argument can be read as relying on only *some* aspects of transcendental idealism; in particular, that we can know only objects which are given in experience, and we cannot have knowledge of anything that cannot be experienced. In the B-version of this argument, Kant says that:

line of thought *leads* to his idealism, but it does not depend on it; a realist could reject transcendent metaphysics.

¹³Kant says that combination can never come to us through the senses (B129) and “we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves” (B129), and he does not say that this applies only to the level of a priori combination.

¹⁴Ameriks (1990); see also Ameriks (2006: 74; 2003: 102).

An *object*, however, is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*. Now, however, all unification of representations requires the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity, and consequently is that which makes them into cognitions, and on which even the possibility of the understanding rests. (B137)

This passage (and others like it) might be thought to express the idealist thought that empirical objects exist only as unified representations in minds, and has been taken this way. For example, P.F. Strawson (1966: 91) argues that Kant needs the categories because they are a kind of surrogate for the way that, for a realist, objects constrain our thought; this clearly sees the need for the categories as depending on transcendental idealism. Similarly, Cassam (1987: 367) argues that Kant's claim that the object itself is nothing to us follows from his idealism, and that this is his reason for introducing transcendental synthesis. However, I suggest that there may be another way of reading Kant's thought, which can be briefly and roughly sketched as follows. We start from the assumption that we need to be affected by objects to have cognition of them—that we can have cognition only of objects which appear to us in possible experience. Kant then says that having cognition of an object (being able to apply concepts to objects, and having experience of an objective world) requires a unity in consciousness that has some kind of necessity and universality. But, like both empiricists and rationalists, he thinks that necessity and universality cannot be learnt from experience. Therefore experience of objects requires a unity and necessity that cannot be empirically derived. Further, against rationalists, he thinks that our cognition is limited to objects which present themselves to our experience. This means that the necessity and universality which we need for cognition cannot be a result of insight into the way the world is, and it cannot be acquired from experience, and in this sense the object itself is nothing to us. Our experience of the object cannot provide us with the organizing principles we need to represent something as an object (I say a bit more about this in the next section).

My aim here is not to develop or assess this line of argument, but merely to see how it might relate to Kant's transcendental idealism. What should be noted is that, so far, the argument has made no appeal to idealism, rather, it relies on *receptivity* (the fact that we can have knowledge only of objects which affect our senses) together with the claim that necessity cannot be learned from experience, and the claim that the representation of an object requires a certain kind of necessity and universality. On my reading, if Kant's argument works, even a straightforward realist should agree that experience requires synthesis at the levels of perception and empirical concept application, and even a realist should see that experience of an object requires a unity and necessity in consciousness that cannot be derived from experience. If this is right, the argument assumes the rejection of transcendent metaphysics and the idea that we are receptive creatures who must be affected by things to have knowledge of them, but not necessarily Kant's complete idealist picture. And the argument leads to, rather than assumes, the idea that our minds must make an *a priori* conceptual contribution to experience. On this reading, the key step that we

need to understand the Deduction—the contentious and so far unexplained step—is why we should think that experience of an object, or experience of an objective world requires thinking of objects with a kind of unity and necessity that cannot be given, and that is irreducible and non-empirical. This seems to me exactly the exciting and difficult heart of the argument of the Deduction; in the next section I make some suggestions about the kinds of considerations we might investigate to understand Kant’s idea here.

3.2

Like Ameriks, I see the argument of the Deduction as starting from the assumption that we have empirical cognition, and therefore as not being anti-skeptical (Ameriks 2003). Kant assumes that we have experience of an objective world about which we can think and do science, and asks about the conditions of this. Further, the Deduction is specifically concerned with one aspect of cognition: the conditions under which we can *apply concepts to objects in judgments*. In the Aesthetic, Kant wants to show that a priori intuition is a necessary condition of being presented with distinct particulars in empirical intuition; in the Deduction, he wants to show that a priori concepts are necessary conditions of being able to apply empirical concepts in empirical judgments.¹⁵ This means that what we need to make sense of (at least part of) Kant’s argument is, first, to understand what concept application in general contributes to cognition, and then to understand why this contribution at the empirical level should be thought to depend on the categories—why applying empirical concepts to objects might be thought to require a priori concepts.

There is a fairly common reading, perhaps the standard view, which sees Kant as thinking that the application of concepts, and in particular the categories, is necessary for the basic intentionality of perception, viz., the fact that we are perceptually presented with particulars outside us, things we experience as outside ourselves. This seems to me to leave out one of the layers of complexity in Kant’s thought, and to undermine the point of the Transcendental Aesthetic.¹⁶ Kant clearly states that it is *intuition* through which objects are *given*, and a priori intuition which is necessary for us to be immediately presented with individuals that are experienced as distinct from and outside of me, distinct from each other, as spatially located, and as spatially related (A23=B39).¹⁷ Thus, spatiality is necessary for us to be presented

¹⁵This means that the argument cannot proceed by pointing out the inadequacies of Humean association and concept imagism (this is too soft a target); rather, the opponent should be someone who allows that concepts are rules, but thinks that all we need to make sense of empirical knowledge are empirical concepts/rules.

¹⁶I argue this in detail in Allais (2009).

¹⁷For Kant, intuitions are importantly different from sensations. At least in the first *Critique*, he thinks of sensations as non-intentional, whereas intuitions always present a thing. A creature which had only sensations would not have experience of inner and outer at all, but it is a mistake to think that the next level of achievement would be being aware of having an inner life. Rather, I think Kant’s insight is that a non-concept having creature could perceive things that are outside of it, but could not think about the world as objective, and could not be aware of its own mental life. It was objected to me that a non-concept having creature could not distinguish outer objects from

with objects—for the fact that perception puts us in touch with a world, which, as Kant frequently reiterates, concepts alone cannot do.

It is important to see that thinking that we can be perceptually presented with located particulars independent of the application of concepts is completely compatible with thinking that we do not have determinate reference to an *object* without the categories. Consider an animal whose actions indicate that it sees a located, relatively spatially unified thing, which it can discriminate from other things, which (following spatial boundaries) it can track, and with respect to which it has some expectations of how it will act. Think, for example, of an animal following a moving insect. Attributing to the creature the capacity to perceptually discriminate the thing does not require thinking that it can think of the thing as a persisting and causally unitary substance, or that it can make general use of or attribute to other animals thoughts about the thing and its interactions in a general causal order. A non-concept-having creature, which can discriminate spatial boundaries, can perceive located particulars but it cannot think about them; it cannot attribute properties to them. This means that it cannot investigate their properties in the way that leads to science, it cannot think about things interacting with each other, and it cannot think about existence unperceived. Since it cannot think about and investigate the principles of unity, which distinguish physical objects from mere perceptual particulars (such as shadows or spots of light), it does not have determinate experience of *objects*.

Whether or not it is granted that Kant allows the possibility of perception in the absence of concepts, it seems uncontroversial that without concepts we do not have a relation to an object in the full-blown Kantian sense of something that is thought of as a persisting causally unitary substance whose properties are a function of its causal nature and its past experience. Whether Kant's view requires this level of sophisticated thought for basic perception is a separate question, and most of my argument does not depend on the more controversial claim that it does not. However, I think that if we allow, as seems straightforwardly compatible with the text, that Kant thinks that perceiving located particulars outside of you requires intuition, but is not the same as representing *objects* (persisting causal unities which are thought of as existing unperceived), we get a more interesting view of what concepts add: it is not the basic capacity to perceive particulars but *thought*—the capacity to apply empirical concepts to objects in judgments, and therefore to represent objects as having properties.

Kant says that concepts are what enable us to *think* objects. Concepts, for Kant, are essentially general: grasping a concept essentially means being able to combine it with other concepts in different thoughts. (A subject has not grasped the concepts in the judgment '*a* is *F*' if she is not also able to grasp the thought that *b* is *F*, that *c* could be *F*, that *a* is *G*, and that *a* could be *H*, and so on.) In representing an object as having a property, a subject is representing it as having a feature which, in principle, other things could have. Whether or not it is thought that concepts are

its own perceptions (Thad Metz, personal correspondence). I think the response is to say that it is not clear whether we should think of the non-concept having creature as aware of itself as having sensations, and therefore as aware of its sensations—it is aware of the world, but not of itself as having an inner life.

necessary for a quality to be represented in perceptual experience (to be perceived), it seems clear that in the absence of concepts the quality does not feature in perceptual experience *as a property* (as a general feature, which other things may have). So even if we allow that the redness of an object could present itself in perceptual experience without the perceiver's having color concepts, once the perceiver has color concepts, she can represent the thing's redness in a new way. She can represent it as having a property which other red things have, and which other, non-red, things could have. She thus brings it into relationship with other objects, she recognizes and classifies it, and she can make judgments about it. This, arguably, fundamentally alters the perceptual experience of concept-having creatures: concept-having creatures represent objects as having *general* features.

Adding these general combinatorial possibilities to the experience of the animal is necessary to give it the capacity to think such thoughts as that 'this is the object I was looking at yesterday,' in the absence of which it is not able to think about existence unperceived, or to think about the objective temporal order. At a more basic level, being able to represent an object as having general features is, arguably, necessary to represent it as a determinate object. Distinct perceptual particulars are things which are represented as outside and other than the subject (unlike sensations), but they could be shadows, or spots of light; they need not be objects. Even when the things the non-concept-having creature is perceptually presented with are in fact objects, it is arguably not in a position to represent them *as* objects. For example, on the basis of my being perceptually presented with an apple, I could think either, 'that object is red' or 'that patch is red' or 'that redness is round.' The redness to which roundness may be attributed, the apple to which redness may be attributed, and the patch to which redness may be attributed will have different principles of continuing identity over time, and different properties will be attributable to each of them. Without something that determines what counts as a subject of properties for me, what principles of unity subjects have, etc., it is not determinate what *object* I am thinking about, even though there is a perceptual particular to which I am attending. Kant thinks that the a priori concepts of an object in general determine what counts as an object for me (B128–129), and this is necessary for me to have *thought* about the object, and to attribute properties to it in empirical concept application. Notice that this gives us a perfectly clear sense in which the categories are necessary for anything to be *an object for me*, which is distinct from thinking that the categories are necessary for me to be perceptually presented with a particular.

The idea that these a priori concepts determine what counts as an object for us might be thought to be a clear expression of a kind of idealism. However, I suggest that there might be a way of reading Kant's point as an epistemological point, which a realist could accept. Kant says that when we attribute properties to an object, we are doing more than simply associating or grouping qualities together, we are making a claim about the way the object is. He argues that this involves grouping properties together with something like necessity, but also says that this is not to deny that what properties the object has is contingent: "I do not mean to say

that these representations *necessarily* belong to one another in the empirical intuition, but rather that they belong to one another *in virtue of the necessary unity* of the apperception in the synthesis of intuitions, i.e., in accordance with principles of the objective determination of all representations insofar as cognition can come from them.” (B142) We need to think of the properties which belong together as properties of one object as hanging together in a way that is *not* up to me (which is not simply a function of my subjective association). There is a special kind of unity in the way they hang together, but this unity cannot be a *further representation* we get from experience (just as the unity of self-consciousness cannot be a further perception of some content of the mind). Kant says that:

Objective significance cannot consist in the relation to another representation (of that which one would call the object), for that would simply raise anew the question: How does this representation in turn go beyond itself and acquire objective significance in addition to the subjective significance that is proper to it as a determination of the state of mind? If we investigate what new characteristic is given to our representations by the *relation to an object*, and what is the dignity that they thereby receive, we find that it does nothing beyond making the combination of representations necessary in a certain way, and subjecting them to a rule; and conversely that the objective significance is conferred on our representations only insofar as a certain order in their temporal relation is necessary. (A197=B242)

The unity of an object is not a matter of representing certain properties and then representing them together with some further representation of a unified thing; it is a matter of representing the properties of an object with a certain sort of unity. Kant says that “only in this way does there arise from this relation a *judgment*, i.e., a relation that is *objectively valid*” (B142). Only by synthesizing the representation of ‘body’ and ‘heaviness’ in such a way as to regard them as unified “*in virtue of the necessary unity* of the apperception in the synthesis of intuitions, i.e., in accordance with principles of the objective determination of all representations insofar as cognition can come from them” (B142) do I get an objectively valid judgment. He explains this by contrasting the thoughts ‘If I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight’ and ‘It, the body, *is* heavy,’ where only the latter is objectively valid—it says something truth evaluable about a given object in the world. Kant says that in the second thought, the “two representations are combined in the object, i.e., regardless of any difference in the condition of the subject, and are not merely found together in perception” (B141).

So the claim is that representing objects with a certain kind of unity is necessary for us to be able to make judgments which are objective. Being able to think about something objective, *an object*, requires representing the manifold as united in a certain way. We do not have experience of an object until we have a certain way of unifying the manifold, and having the concept of an object in general is having the concept of a certain way of unifying the manifold. The claim is not that a certain kind of unity in consciousness is necessary for there to be an object, or that it constitutes the object, but that it constitutes the relation of representations to an object. It is necessary for me to experience something as an object. The creature which has merely subjective principles of association may have objects presented in its perceptual experience, but it doesn’t experience them as objects, and it is not in a

position to have referential thought about these objects. So saying that a certain kind of unity of the consciousness of the synthesis of the manifold of intuition constitutes the relation of representations to an object need not be seen as a metaphysical claim about what it is for the object to exist, but rather an epistemological claim about what it is to have a determinate referential thought about an object.

Kant thinks that in order to be able to represent the particulars given in perception as *objects*, to ascribe properties to them and investigate them empirically, we need a framework which provides a unity and necessity that governs the ascription of properties to particulars. Kant does not think that the categories add any determinate content to experience, rather, they contribute a kind of unity without which he thinks that we would not be able to think of objects *as objects*. In order to start ascribing properties to objects, we need to have some governing conception which controls which properties we are prepared to ascribe to the same object. Kant thinks that this requires rules which are a priori and irreducible, and that they are intimately connected to an a priori and irreducible representation of the unity of the self.

My concern here was not to defend, or even outline in proper detail, this part of Kant's argument in the Transcendental Deduction. Rather, my concern was with how it relates to idealism. I have suggested that one key issue we need to understand about the Deduction is why we should think that applying empirical concepts to objects should require concepts or rules containing necessity and universality. Further, I have suggested that at least one line of thought Kant presents in support of the claim that applying empirical concepts to objects depends on the application of a priori concepts does not depend on idealism. Of course, it is compatible with this that this line of thought *leads* to idealism with respect to the contribution of the categories, and my argument is compatible with a number of accounts of the idealism that it could lead to.

However, an alternative to seeing the Deduction as leading to a contribution by the mind to the world that exactly parallels that of the Aesthetic, is to see Kant's point as being simply that the Deduction is limited by the results of the Aesthetic: the categories can be used only for cognition of things that are given in experience. This would not result in weakening Kant's idealism, because it would still be the case that we have knowledge only of mind-dependent appearances, and not of things as they are in themselves. We can use the categories only for cognition of what is given in intuition, and what is given in intuition are mind-dependent appearances. We do not deny that ground-consequence relationships exist in things as they are in themselves, but we can use the concept of causation only to give us knowledge of things that we experience, and these things are thoroughly mind-dependent in the sense that they are dependent on our forms of intuition. We have no insight into necessity in the world as it is independent of us, and we have no grounds for making causal claims about anything other than things which can be given to us in intuition. We have no insight into the nature of substance in general, we simply know that we must experience something persisting. On this reading, the Deduction fits into a thoroughgoing idealist picture, even though, on its own, it neither entails this idealism nor depends on it.

Acknowledgements A version of this article was presented at the conference Kant's Transcendental Logic & Idealism in Amsterdam, May 2008; thanks to the participants for comments, and to Dennis Schulting for inviting me to speak at the conference. For reading and commenting on the manuscript, thanks to Quassim Cassam and Thad Metz.

References

- Abela, P. 2002. *Kant's Empirical Realism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Allais, L. 2007. 'Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45(3): 459–484.
- Allais, L. 2009. 'Kant, Non-Conceptual Content, and the Representation of Space'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47(3): 383–413.
- Ameriks, K. 1990. 'Kant, Fichte, and Short Arguments to Idealism'. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 72: 63–85.
- Ameriks, K. 2003. *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2006. *Kant and the Historical Turn*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bird, G. 1962. *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Campbell, J. 2002. *Reference and Consciousness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cassam, Q. 1987. 'Transcendental Arguments, Transcendental Synthesis and Transcendental Idealism'. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37: 355–378.
- Collins, A. 1999. *Possible Experience*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Dryer, D.P. 1966. *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Falkenstein, L. 1995. *Kant's Intuitionism*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Gardner, S. 1999. *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 2006. 'Kant on *a priori* Concepts: the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories'. In P. Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 129–168.
- Pogge, T. 1991. 'Erscheinungen und Dinge an sich'. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 45: 489–510.
- Prauss, G. 1974. *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag.
- Putnam, H. 1981. *Reason, Truth and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2007. 'Dinge an sich und sekundäre Qualitäten'. In J. Stolzenburg (ed.), *Kant in der Gegenwart*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 167–209.
- Strawson, P.F. 1966. *The Bounds of Sense*. London: Methuen.
- Van Cleve, J. 1995. 'Putnam, Kant and Secondary Qualities'. *Philosophical Papers* 24: 83–109.
- Van Cleve, J. 1999. *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ward, A. 2006. *Kant: The Three Critiques*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Watkins, E. 2002. 'Kant's Transcendental Idealism and the Categories'. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 19: 191–215.

Chapter 6

Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Apperception

Gary Banham

Perhaps the real task is to distinguish between two strands of idealism, one genuinely critical and transcendental, and the other; for all Kant's protestations to the contrary, basically subjective and dogmatic. Let us call the former the idealism of apperception and the latter the idealism of sensibility.¹

Without endorsing the suggestion of Henry Allison that the arguments for idealism that concern sensibility in the *Critique* are thereby subjective and dogmatic I want here to articulate some grounds for thinking that the basis of transcendental idealism should best be understood in relation to the discussion of transcendental apperception. The basis of the argument for seeing transcendental idealism this way will have an unusual structure. I will begin by setting out the grounds for thinking that the relationship of transcendental apperception to the 'I think' is considerably more complicated than is generally presented. The rationale for seeing the distinction between them will begin with the grounds for Kant's criticism of the *cogito* in the second edition treatment of the Paralogisms, a criticism that I will subsequently connect both to the account of judgment in the B-Deduction and to the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience in the *Prolegomena*. Unlike the majority of commentators, I will suggest that the *Prolegomena* distinction harmonizes with that of the B-Deduction and that both put together enable the critique of the *cogito* in the second edition Paralogisms to be comprehensively related to a general argument for transcendental idealism. Whilst this may not be, as the epigraph from Allison suggests, the only genuinely critical and transcendental idealism, it will certainly be *an* argument for transcendental idealism and one that is distinctive compared to the standard treatments of the doctrine in the secondary literature. In the process of setting out this argument I will respond to the alternative accounts of the material covered given by Allison.

G. Banham (✉)

Department of Politics and Philosophy, Manchester Metropolitan University,
Manchester M15 6LL, UK

e-mail: g.banham@mmu.ac.uk

¹Allison (1974: 127).

1 Kant's Criticism of the *Cogito* in the Paralogisms

In an extended footnote in the second edition version of the Paralogisms chapter Kant sets out a series of responses to the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*. Amongst these responses is a claim to the effect that the Cartesian claim is not an inference (as Descartes allegedly intended it to be) as the link between existence and thought is argued instead to be one of identity.² Whilst these claims are contentious in themselves the most surprising, and from my point of view, most important, element of Kant's response is that the 'I think' is an empirical proposition. The first element of this claim is stated as follows:

The 'I think' expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, *i.e.* perception (and thus shows that sensation, which as such belongs to sensibility, lies at the basis of this existential proposition). But the 'I think' precedes the experience which is required to determine the object of perception through the category in respect of time; and the existence here [referred to] is not a category. (B423n.)³

Here Kant connects the 'I think' to perception albeit to an "indeterminate" kind of perception. The reason why the 'I think' is connected to this "indeterminate" sense of perception is indicated to be that it precedes determination by means of schematization. The reason why it is the case that the "existence" here involved does not match that of the categories is due to the fact that categories relate to objects which have determination. The further illumination of this point refers back again to the term "sensation" that was alluded to in the citation above:

An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (*noumenon*), but as something which actually exists, and which in the proposition, 'I think', is denoted as such. (B423n.)

Here the distinction that is at the heart of the doctrine of transcendental idealism is referred to and then denied to be specifically relevant to the point at issue. As Kant repeatedly points out in his resolution of the Antinomies, transcendental idealism is characterized in terms of the distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves.⁴ In this citation, Kant argues there to be a kind of perception that is neither of an appearance nor a thing in itself so that a third level appears to emerge here. This third level is indicated to be the ability of "indeterminate perception" to be related to "something which actually exists" and which is given in the proposition

²The suggestion that the *cogito* is an inference was in fact explicitly rejected by Descartes and pressed by Pierre Gassendi so it is odd that Kant presents it as being Descartes' view that it is an inference. The suggestion of a relationship of identity here appears to be strictly analytic.

³All translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Kemp Smith (Kant 2007).

⁴Characterizations of transcendental idealism as a specific doctrine are given at the following places: A369; A490–491=B518–519; AA 4: 293; AA 4: 337; AA 29: 928; AA 28: 682. Practically all of these references involve what Allison termed the "idealism of sensibility" though the last mentioned is slightly different in involving a contrast between phenomenal and noumenal substance. None however directly refer to transcendental apperception.

of the 'I think'. This actual existent that receives the "indeterminate perception" and notes its receipt of it in some sense in expressing the 'I think' reveals the complexity of the thought that is the 'I think'. The nature of this complexity is next illuminated in Kant's remark that whilst he has stated that the 'I think' is an empirical proposition it does not follow from this that the 'I' in this proposition is an empirical representation. Quite the contrary, the 'I' is "purely intellectual", a point that leads to the concluding sentence of this footnote:

Without some empirical representation to supply the material for thought, the *actus*, 'I think', would not, indeed, take place; but the empirical is only the condition of the application, or of the employment, of the pure intellectual faculty. (B423n.)

The complexity of the 'I think' is thus that whilst the 'I' in this proposition is purely intellectual, the material that enables this 'I' to engage in thought in general is something that is required to emerge for it from without. Now, at the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant states that the "undetermined object of an empirical intuition is entitled *appearance*" (A20=B34) shortly after he has stated that "intuition takes place only in so far as the object is given to us" (A19=B33). The condition of application of the 'I' is that something is given to us as is made clear at B423n. and this would be something in the first place "undetermined" as is the case with appearances rather than phenomena.⁵

Henry Allison's response to this footnote is somewhat confused. On the one hand, Allison recognizes precisely the view excavated in the investigation that we have carried out. So, for example, he correctly writes that "apperception as an actual consciousness of thinking ('something real') always involves an empirical element".⁶ However, on the other hand, Allison also interprets this point in the following more problematic way: "[T]he apprehension of some sensible content (as modification of inner sense) is a necessary condition of the awareness of existence that is presumed to be inseparable from the consciousness of thinking." (Allison 1983, 280) The suggestion that modification of inner sense is inseparable from consciousness of thinking appears to involve a conflation between the 'I think' and inner sense and surely this cannot be the point of B422–423n.? Confusion is further promoted when Allison suggests that Kant makes the same point as is involved in the discussion of the 'I think' as an empirical proposition at B157 when Kant writes that "I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am". This statement at B157 does indeed affirm a position much of the kind we have found displayed at B422–423n. but just as clearly cannot be a statement that describes inner sense or its modification since Kant here is clearly *not* speaking of appearance, which must be involved in a discussion of inner sense. It is time now, however, to try to connect the exposition of the sense of Kant's claim that the 'I think' is an empirical proposition with the argument of the B-Deduction as we will

⁵Cf. the statement at A248–249: "Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phaenomena*."

⁶Allison (1983: 280–281).

find that Allison is correct to relate them to each other, even if his discussion of this relation appears confused.

2 Transcendental Apperception and the Argument of the B-Deduction

That the discussion of transcendental apperception is central to the argument of the B-Deduction is certainly not news since most commentators would assent to it. The question of the role of transcendental apperception in the Deduction of the Categories is however far from a settled one and the relationship between the discussion of transcendental apperception in the argument of the B-Deduction and Kant's central doctrine of transcendental idealism is even less clear. Whilst the majority of commentators begin their response to the B-Deduction with Kant's introduction of the 'I think' in §16, few refer to the opening paragraph §15. Yet it is in the opening paragraph that Kant makes the point that, whilst there has to be receptivity for something to be given, such receptivity is in itself insufficient to produce the combination of the manifold given. This combination requires, so he states, "an act of spontaneity" (B130) that is based on understanding. Having made this first reference to the need for spontaneity Kant subsequently makes a second when he adds that it is not merely that there is a combination that requires such an act of "the self-activity of the subject" (B130); spontaneity is also the production of *unity* of combination as this unity does not simply emerge from combination.

It is after making these two initial distinguishable points concerning the need for spontaneity that Kant goes on to introduce what the title of §16 refers to as an "original" unity of apperception. Kant opens this section with the famous claim that it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations and he goes on to state that the 'I think' is an act of spontaneity. However, what is less frequently noted is that Kant goes on to refer to original apperception as that which *generates* the representation of the 'I think' (B132). This generation of the 'I think' surely relates to the distinction between the purely intellectual representation of the 'I' and its empirical employment as indicated at B422–423n.⁷ Now, it is at this point that Kant begins to offer illumination on the point of what the representation that Cartesians think of as quite distinct from the relationship to sensibility, namely, the 'I think', has to do with such a relation. This connection is made clear when Kant refers to the fact that the analytic unity of consciousness depends upon the presupposition of synthetic unity, a comment again amplified in a footnote.

In this footnote Kant writes concerning the act of thought in general in such a way as to connect it to the synthetic act that is explicitly required for the connection between thought and intuition. This is done in the following way:

If, for instance, I think red in general, I thereby represent to myself a property which (as a characteristic) can be found in something, or can be combined with other representations; that is, only by means of a presupposed possible synthetic unity can I represent to myself

the analytic unity. A representation which is to be thought as common to *different* representations is regarded as belonging to such as have, in addition to it, also something *different*. (B133–134n.)

Here the logical act of thinking species and genera is related to a synthetic combination. The rationale for the connection here is that the logical act requires a sense that what is being represented is a property or characteristic of something. For a thing to have properties or characteristics is for it to be represented as having components that are distinguishable and hence capable also of being combined. This point requires then, just for the logical act in question to take place, a sense that there is a relationship between the identity of characteristics and the different types of thing to which they can belong. This elementary act already involves a consciousness of synthesis and this is the point Kant wishes to make when he states that the synthetic unity of apperception is involved in the “whole of logic” (B134n.). That this is his point is also made clear when in the main text of §16 Kant writes that combination is “an affair of the understanding alone, which itself is nothing but the faculty of combining *a priori*” (B134–135), a combination that requires connection of representations to the unity of apperception.

The suggestion of the *generation* of the ‘I think’ by transcendental apperception is thus surely a generation of combination of the intellectual sense of the ‘I’ with some matter, a combination that is required, as the Cartesians have recognized, for thought in general. However, what the Cartesians precisely did not emphasize but is captured by Kant is that the ‘I think’ is indeed an act of combination, an act that requires reference to intentionality. Kant makes this combination clearer in §16, when he again presents the simple element of the ‘I think’ as purely being the ‘I’ so that complexity emerges from the connection of the ‘I’ to thinking in general. The possibility of this is suggested to be based on receptivity of intuition.

Section 17 amplifies this point about the transcendental unity of apperception by arguing that it is the connection of it to the forms of intuition that have been justified in the Transcendental Aesthetic that produces cognition of objects. An example of this is given in the case of geometry:

To know anything in space (for instance, a line), I must *draw* it, and thus synthetically bring into being a determinate combination of the given manifold, so that the unity of this act is at the same time the unity of consciousness (as in the concept of a line); and it is through this unity of consciousness that an object (a determinate space) is first known. (B137–138)

Here the nature of synthetic combination is made clearer since what is given is a set of elements as takes place in drawing. For the drawing to produce something is for there to be a unity of consciousness both in its act of being undertaken and in recognition of the product that emerges. The first act is already a spontaneous element but it is only the second that incorporates *recognition* of the *unity* produced and is thus the second element referred to in §15. The first sense of ‘object’ thus given is however purely that of a given demarcation of space such as the line represents.

Section 18 merely adds to the argument as expounded thus far the general definition of the transcendental unity of apperception that has emerged and a first distinction between it and both empirical apperception and inner sense. The general

definition is that the transcendental unity of apperception is “that unity through which all the manifold given in an intuition is united in a concept of the object” (B139). Whilst this definition harmonizes with the account given thus far, it also extends the account of the transcendental unity of apperception in such a way that it is already clear that a kind of idealist position is emerging. The idealist position that is emerging is clearly connected to the point made by Kant in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique*, when he formulated the so-called ‘Copernican’ turn.⁷ Just as Kant made clear in the Preface that he would instigate an experiment that would involve a change in how our intuition of objects was presented so that the object became dependent on the intuition rather than the intuition dependent on the object so also in this definition of the transcendental unity of apperception the notion of the object itself is now a product of what Kant earlier referred to as the “self-activity of the subject” (B130).

The transcendental unity of apperception is subsequently distinguished from the determination of inner sense as the latter is understood to be merely the way that intuition produces empirical awareness. The empirical unity of apperception would *be* such awareness, an awareness predominantly understood as associative. This distinction between transcendental and empirical apperception also provides the key to §19 in which Kant lays out the connection between logical unity and the transcendental unity of apperception in more detail than was given at B133n., but nevertheless in accord with the earlier passage. Here, Kant lays out a contrast between the objectivity that can be attained by means of judgment and the associative connection that emerges only from empirical combination.⁸ In making this contrast Kant now claims that since judgments are related to original apperception even ones that have empirical and contingent *content* have necessary *form*:

I do not here assert that these representations *necessarily* belong to one another in the empirical intuition, but that they belong to one another *in virtue of the necessary unity* of apperception in the synthesis of intuitions, that is, according to principles of the objective determination of all representations, in so far as knowledge can be acquired by means of these representations—principles which are all derived from the fundamental principle of the transcendental unity of apperception. (B142)

⁷“If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility. Since I cannot rest in these intuitions if they are to become known, but must relate them as representations to something as their object, and determine this latter through them, either I must assume that the *concepts*, by means of which I obtain this determination, conform to the object, or else I assume that the objects, or what is the same thing, that the *experience* in which alone, as given objects, they can be known, conform to the concepts.” (Bxvii) For skepticism concerning whether Kant does mean by this to refer to a Copernican revolution in philosophy see Cohen (1985, Chap. 15).

⁸The empirical combination is here described as “the relation according to laws of the reproductive imagination, which has only subjective validity” (B141) and clearly refers back to the distinction between association and the transcendental ground of reproduction that was made in the A-Deduction at A100–102.

When we make a judgment concerning an empirical intuition, even should this judgment concern something which is intrinsically contingent in it, this judgment itself still asserts a combination that is necessary due to the requirement that the representations in question connect to the condition of unification in general, namely, the intellectual spontaneous unity that is given in the ‘I’ of the ‘I think’. We noted above the connection of this to the emergence of the bare geometrical sense of object and Kant now adds the point that this combination is also what produces the basic sense of *physical* objects:

Thus to say ‘The body is heavy’ is not merely to state that the two representations have always been conjoined in my perception, however often that perception be repeated; what we are asserting is that they are combined *in the object*, no matter what the state of the subject may be. (B142)

The combination at work in the unity of apperception is not subjective in the sense of being susceptible to empirical variation as occurs for combinations of mere association. It is rather at work in the formation of any possible intentional object *and hence* in awareness of what we physically refer to as ‘objects’ in addition. This central claim is ventured even prior to the reference to the means in which the combination in question involves any reference to the categories and is hence idealist in the basic sense of requiring that any sense of ‘objectivity’ that we can have is based on some reference to combinations of pure subjectivity. This is the claim I take to be central to the “idealism of apperception”. What the “idealism of sensibility” adds is the claim concerning the ideality of space and time.

3 Allison, Objectivity and the First Part of the Argument of the B-Deduction

At this point it is useful to clarify the relationship between the argument of §§15–19 of the B-Deduction in my account and that given by Henry Allison. As with Allison’s response to the critique of the *cogito* in the Paralogisms, so also with his account of the first stage of the B-Deduction argument, there is an odd mixture of commentary reflecting recognition of a central point and yet also confusion of it with something quite different. What is evidently close to the picture we have sketched above is the claim that the account of apperception in the B-Deduction “is most properly viewed as a formal model or schema for the analysis of the understanding and its ‘logical’ activities” (Allison 1983, 144). However, given that §15 opens with a contrast between receptivity and spontaneity with the former clearly indicated as connected to intuition, the discussion of space in §17 and the reference to bodies in §19, it seems odd to claim, as Allison does, that “the first part of the B-Deduction abstracts from the nature of sensibility, which means that it also abstracts from the very conditions required to ground synthetic judgments”.⁹ This suggestion is based on Allison’s general account of this part of the argument of the B-Deduction

⁹Allison (2004: 167).

as concerned only with rules for sensible intuition in general without reference to specific claims about the nature of the manifold. Whilst the second part of the argument of the B-Deduction may well involve greater determinacy than the first part, the distinction between them needs a different ground than Allison suggests. Allison also appears not to regard the first part of the argument of the B-Deduction as having any particular idealist implications either. Hence on this ground also our reading departs from his.¹⁰

4 Perception, Judgment and Experience in the *Prolegomena*

Allison does not just divide the argument of the B-Deduction into two halves, he also interpolates between the two halves a discussion of a central doctrine of the *Prolegomena*, a doctrine that I will be suggesting needs to be related to the account of judgment in §19 of the B-Deduction. In arguing for a connection between these two arguments I will be directly opposing Allison's reading, which influentially argues for a cleavage between them and a rejection of the doctrine of the *Prolegomena*. Conversely, I will be arguing that the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience in the *Prolegomena* gives greater determinacy to the points raised at B422–423n. and enables a connection to be made between what is stated in the Paralogisms and in the B-Deduction account of judgment.

In the second part of the *Prolegomena* Kant addresses the question of how pure natural science is possible. This question is itself subsequently refined to produce the enquiry into how “the conditions a priori of the possibility of experience are at the same time the sources from which all the universal laws of nature must be derived” (AA 4: 297)¹¹. Once posed in this fashion, Kant proceeds to an answer to this query by introducing a distinction. The point of the distinction concerns a division between types of empirical judgment with some referred to as having their ground in immediate sense-perception whilst others require “special concepts” (ibid.) in addition.¹² The former judgments, like the associative connections mentioned in §19 of the B-Deduction, are described as having a subjective validity, in contrast to the objective validity ascribed to the judgments of experience, judgments that hence appear to be on a level with the judgments referred to in the B-Deduction.

¹⁰The view that the argument of the B-Deduction should be viewed as having two steps was influentially formulated by Dieter Henrich and Allison specifically sets his reading against that of Henrich. For the classic account of Henrich's view of the distinction between the two parts of the B-Deduction see Henrich (1969).

¹¹All translations of the *Prolegomena* are from Ellington (Kant 1977).

¹²The view that Kant adopts two conceptions of ‘experience’ in the *Critique* is articulated by Lewis White Beck. Beck (1978: 40–41) describes these two kinds of experience as “Lockean” and “Kantian” experience or “L-experience” and “K-experience”. That Beck finds this distinction in the *Critique* makes the appearance of the different types of empirical judgment in the *Prolegomena* less of a novelty and more of an explication of something merely implicit in the *Critique*.

However, whilst there is this initial appearance of a connection between the contrast of the *Prolegomena* and that of the B-Deduction the problem that arises next is that the distinction in the *Prolegomena* involves a difference between a “logical connection” and one that involves “*concepts originally generated in the understanding*” (AA 4: 298). This distinction indicates that there is a reference to the categories in judgments of experience, a reference lacking in judgments of perception. This distinction does not mirror that of the B-Deduction. Furthermore, Kant specifies in the *Prolegomena* that all judgments are initially only judgments of perception and that they only later become judgments of experience by giving them a new reference, viz., to the object. The reference to the object presupposes universal and necessary connections among perceptions. This supposition is involved in judgments of experience. It is after making these preliminary comments that Kant turns to giving examples of the two sorts of judgment.

There are two kinds of examples given of the distinction. The first kind of example provides judgments of perception that are incapable of becoming judgments of experience as they refer “merely to feeling” (AA 4: 299n.).¹³ The crucial point concerning these judgments is that they refer to finding things to be a certain way at a certain time, or to put this another way, only to “my present state of perception” (AA 4: 299). Due to the fact that these judgments are only of feeling *and* only of feeling at a discernible point which is hence intrinsically contingent, such judgments are not capable of telling us about the nature of objects. This dual restriction on the judgment of perception that is incapable of becoming a judgment of experience hence contrasts the two kinds of judgment directly. Judgments of experience have to have a validity that is not restricted to myself alone *and* not be temporally limited in application. In this case: “I desire therefore that I and everybody else should always necessarily connect the same perceptions under the same circumstances” (AA 4: 299).

The distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience is sharpest when Kant is describing judgments of perception that are incapable of becoming judgments of experience. On the basis of it, Kant next undertakes to inquire into the elements of experience in a general way in order to determine how judgments of experience are possible. It is after undertaking this next stage of inquiry that Kant subsequently turns to explicating the possibility of *some* judgments of perception being able to become judgments of experience.

¹³This rationale for the intrinsic impossibility of certain judgments of perception becoming judgments of experience is naturally insufficient in the light of the argument in the *Critique of Judgment* that certain kinds of pleasure are a priori, namely, those that concern purposiveness (AA 5: 187). Due to this, a new distinction becomes necessary between feelings of what is merely agreeable as opposed to pure judgments of taste that have characteristics of universality and necessity. This distinction mirrors that between judgments of perception and experience in a certain way as the judgments of agreeableness are now those incapable of attaining to a priori status. But what follows from this is clearly that some judgments that have a priori status are not, simply by virtue of that alone, capable of being described as ‘judgments of experience’.

The general inquiry distinguishes again between judgment as a spontaneous product of understanding and perception understood as a mere product of the senses. It is after reminding us of this elementary point that the key to the distinction between the two types of judgment is given as the judgment of perception is now described as involving only a comparison of perceptions and a connection in “a consciousness of my state” (AA 4: 300). This kind of judgment that emerges from comparison and connection alone requires connection to a sense of my state and this sense of my state is all that is understood here by “consciousness”. By comparison, in the judgment of experience, the connection of the perceptions takes place by means of reference to “consciousness in general” (AA 4: 300). This connection to “consciousness in general” is surely what was also meant at B423n. by “thought in general”. In other words, if the connection of the perceptions is done by reference to “consciousness in general” then the “purely intellectual” thought of the ‘I’ has intervened as the vehicle of connection. The reference of perceptions to this *is what enables reference to the object*, “no matter what the state of the subject may be” (B142).

On my account, the judgment of experience hence matches what is claimed for judgment in general in its contrast with associative connection in the B-Deduction. What Kant has done in the *Prolegomena* distinction that he does not do in the B-Deduction is refine his conception of judgment in order to distinguish it from a merely empiricist one as when he writes:

Hence it is not, as is commonly imagined, enough for experience to compare perceptions and connect them in consciousness through judgment; there arises no universal validity and necessity, by virtue of which alone consciousness can become objectively valid and be called experience. (AA 4: 300)

More is required to achieve universality than connection and comparison alone. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant argues that what is further required is the addition of a certain subsumption of intuitions under *concepts* (categories).

This general inquiry into the separable contributions of sensibility and understanding subsequently enables a second comparison between judgments of perception and judgments of experience. In this second example, we consider two judgments of perception that *are* capable of being converted into judgments of experience. Before it is possible for the judgment of perception to become a judgment of experience the perception in question has first to be brought under the heading of the concept of understanding. So taking air to be elastic is something we can comprehend in relation to the category of causality. When we present it this way we take the connection of air to elasticity to be a necessary one:

The judgment that air is elastic becomes universally valid and a judgment of experience only because certain judgments precede it which subsume the intuition of air under the concepts of cause and effect; and they thereby determine the perceptions, not merely as regards one another in me, but as regards the form of judging in general (which is here hypothetical), and in this way they render the empirical judgment universally valid. (AA 4: 301)

The transition from the mere comparison and connection involved in the judgment of perception to the universal necessity of the judgment of experience hence requires a transitional stage in which the form of the judgment is altered. The alteration takes place by means of reference to the concepts that make a judgment, which previously had been only empirical, into one that has universal validity. However, exactly the same point is made in §19 of the B-Deduction as already explicated above. In the B-Deduction, as discussed, we have the example of a merely empirical and hence contingent judgment, namely, that “Bodies are heavy”. This judgment, when brought into connection with the necessary unity of apperception, “in the synthesis of intuitions, that is, according to principles of the objective determination of all representations”, there asserts a combination “*in the object*” (B142).

A simpler example is also given of how a judgment of perception becomes converted into a judgment of experience in the example that concerns the relationship between the sun, warmth, and the stone. The judgment of perception is merely: “[W]hen the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm” (AA 4: 301n.). In this case we are asserting an association that we have often observed and hence produce no more than an inductive connection. All that is being asserted in it is that “perceptions are only usually conjoined in this manner” (AA 4: 301n.). This is quite different from a judgment of experience as in the latter case we state “The sun warms the stone” and this asserts not merely a connection of perceptions but the introduction into the connection between them of a universally valid and necessary connection, viz., one that requires the introduction of a category. By this means the judgment of perception becomes one of experience. This again has the same structure as the explanation in the B-Deduction concerning how a merely empirical judgment can become one that has objective validity.¹⁴

5 Allison’s Objections to the Discussion of Judgments of Perception

As we have found with regard to other topics discussed, so also with the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience Allison makes points that are evidently convergent with the analysis we have given but nonetheless produces conclusions that are at variance with it. So, for example, Allison clearly sees that the reference to “consciousness in general” in the discussion of judgments of experience is “the *Prolegomena*’s counterpart to the objective or transcendental

¹⁴Two points are worth adding to this argument. The first is that Kant subsequently refers to a geometrical example as a further indication of the need for a judgment to contain more than mere comparison, namely the principle that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points (AA 4: 301–302). This example is akin to the construction of determinate space at B138. Secondly, the argument concerning judgments of experience is clearly generally aimed at the Humean suggestion that comparison of perceptions alone is sufficient to arrive at judgments of objective validity as is made clear by the way this passage is part of an overall argument that concludes with a justification of the causal principle that has been used in the examples of judgments of experience.

unity of apperception” (Allison 1983, 150). However, it is not the judgment of experience that Allison has difficulty with, but the judgment of perception. Allison suggests initially that Kant has failed to disambiguate two possible senses of subjective validity. In doing so Allison appeals to the account of ‘holding-to-be-true’ that Kant gives in the Doctrine of Method of the *Critique*. However, if we look at this account we find Kant makes a distinction here between subjective and objective sufficiency with the former being treated as conviction for myself and the latter as certainty for everyone (A822=B850), a distinction that appears close to that involved in the difference between judgments of perception that are valid only for me and judgments of experience that are valid for all.

Allison, however, objects to this stating that just because a judgment is subjectively valid in the sense of only referring to the subject it does follow that they are also subjectively valid in the sense of being known to be true or false. As Allison puts this point:

It is true that the table on which I am writing seems to me to be brown, that sugar tastes sweet to me, and so forth. Moreover, the truth value remains even if the scope of the judgment is limited to a particular episode in my mental history: for example, ‘The sugar tasted sweet to Allison at 1:33 P.M. on July 29, 1980’. Finally even though such judgments are about me, I am neither the only person able to formulate them nor the only person for whom they can be true. That sugar tasted sweet to me at a particular time is simply a fact about the world. (1983: 151)

There are a number of problems with this objection. Firstly, in the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience Kant does not mention the concept of truth or invoke an absence of it in the case of judgments of perception. Hence it does not appear at all relevant to claim that the judgments are not distinct as both partake of truth-values, as the question of the presence or absence of truth-values has formed no part of Kant’s discussion. Secondly, the fact that others can formulate truths of the kind stated in Allison’s example does not entail that they can formulate them in relation to the same data in the same way. This point can be made clearer by pointing to the fact that no one else than Allison can verify the claim that the sugar tasted sweet to him at the time given. It is precisely the fact that it is quite possible for sugar to taste sweet to him at one time and not to taste sweet to him at another that makes the judgment of perception distinguishable in principle from the judgment of experience.

However, the basic problem with judgments of perception on Allison’s account does not belong to this point. It is rather that he cannot see how a judgment can be formed, which does not make use of the categories, as is alleged with regard to the judgments of perception. This is clearly due to the fact that the definition of judgment at B141 connected it to the objective unity of apperception. However, the subsequent discussion in this section, of the statement “Bodies are heavy”, required that this judgment, in order to attain objective validity, involve “principles of objective determination of all representations” (B142). It is possible to form this judgment without reference to such objective determination in the associative connection Kant refers to at B142 as producing the statement “If I support a body, I feel an impression of weight”, a statement that entirely accords with the account of judgments

of perception. The contrast between this and the assertion that the body is heavy requires in the latter case the connection between representations and the object and it is this connection that requires the category, whereas the former connection does not require it.¹⁵

What follows from the rescue of this distinction from Allison's criticism? If we look at the distinction again, we see that Kant states in the *Prolegomena* that all judgments begin as judgments of perception (AA 4: 298). If we refer back to the account of B422n., we remember there that there was a reference to "an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e. perception" as the basis of the 'I think'. The conflation of the 'I think' with the transcendental unity of apperception would lead to the conclusion that this indeterminate perception involved the spontaneous combination that includes recognition in the case of the transcendental unity of apperception. However, it is now possible to question this. Rather than the transcendental unity of apperception being taken as equivalent to the 'I think', an equivalence already questionable due to the claim at B132 that the 'I think' is *generated* by the unity of apperception, it might be better to clearly distinguish them. The distinction should, on the combination of the discussion of the *Prolegomena* distinction with the account of B422–423n., take the following form: there is first of all the experience of sensation as such. This experience however does not initially require the reference of such sensation to intuition.¹⁶ Furthermore, "from empirical consciousness to pure consciousness a graduated transition is possible, the real in the former completely vanishing and a merely formal *a priori* consciousness of the manifold in space and time remaining" (B207–208).

Should there be an initial sensation that does not involve the intuitions of space and time, then although there is "something real that is given" it is given in a way that does not register as phenomenon. This 'actually existing' reality prompts an empirical consciousness that subsequently relates the something existent, by means of continuity, to a connection of sorts, even if this were to be merely one of comparison. This would be the basis surely of an empirical apperception, which "is in itself diverse and without relation to the identity of the subject" (B133). The movement from this judgment of perception to a judgment of experience requires the further conjunction of representations by means of a relation to the identity of the subject and that is what the *Prolegomena* referred to as "consciousness in general". Whilst the empirical apperception involves the 'I think' (which is why Kant can call this an "empirical proposition"), the transcendental apperception requires the "consciousness of this synthesis" to be recognized as such.¹⁷

¹⁵In formulating his difficulties with the distinction of the *Prolegomena* Allison is following, as he acknowledges, the argument of Beck (1978).

¹⁶In the *Prolegomena* we find the following: "[S]ensation is not an intuition that *contains* either space or time" (AA 4: 306), a point corroborated in the *Critique*: "[S]ensation is not in itself an objective representation, and since neither the intuition of space nor that of time is to be met with in it, its magnitude is not extensive but *intensive*" (B208).

¹⁷This is effectively recognized by Allison: "[A] consciousness of synthesis (considered as activity as well as product) is a necessary condition of apperception." (Allison 2004, 171)

6 Transcendental Idealism and the Second Part of the B-Deduction

After a general summary of the first part of the Deduction in §20, Kant opens §21 with a statement that a “manifold, contained in an intuition which I call mine, is represented, by means of the synthesis of the understanding, as belonging to the *necessary* unity of self-consciousness; and this is effected by means of the category” (B144). This reference to the category is indicated to show that empirical consciousness is subject to “pure self-consciousness *a priori*” and this is said to mark a beginning of the deduction. The notion that Kant introduces subsequently concerns how the manifold becomes more clearly determinately represented and this he does through the conception of the transcendental synthesis of imagination.¹⁸ The key point for the treatment here concerns the way in which this synthesis enables a greater distinctness between empirical and transcendental consciousness to be drawn.

In §24 Kant discusses the question of the relationship between apperception and inner sense and describes inner sense as a form of intuitive awareness of self which thus requires a passive sense of self through time. The relationship of this passive sense of self to spontaneity requires explication and by means of it we arrive at Kant’s notion of self-affection. Self-affection is the basic meaning of the transcendental synthesis of imagination in a way since imagination, as Kant has earlier described it, is the means by which we can represent an object that is not itself present (B151). The synthesis by means of which self-affection takes place is described as a synthesis that involves nothing but “the unity of the act, of which, as an act, it is conscious to itself” and this is subsequently termed the transcendental synthesis of imagination, an act that the self performs on its own passive component (B153–154).

This synthesis, by means of which the self-affection of the transcendental subject enables the awareness of objects to emerge from a connection between temporality and consciousness, is subsequently set out again, as in §17, by analogy to a process of geometrical construction. After referring to this in terms of circles and lines, however, Kant this time adds a significant addition as he connects this geometrical construction to an account of the representation of time.

Even time itself we cannot represent, save in so far as we attend, in the *drawing* of a straight line (which has to serve as the outer figurative representation of time), merely to the act of the synthesis of the manifold whereby we successively determine inner sense, and in so doing attend to the succession of this determination in inner sense. Motion, as an act of the subject (not as determination of an object), and therefore the synthesis of the manifold in space, first produces this concept of succession—if we abstract from this manifold and attend solely to the act through which we determine the *inner* sense according to its form. The understanding does not, therefore, find in inner sense such a combination of the manifold, but *produces* it, in that it *affects* that sense. (B154–155)

¹⁸I have discussed the question of the transcendental synthesis of imagination in great detail in Banham (2006, Chap. 4). Here I wish only to indicate in very general terms a relationship between the transcendental unity of apperception and the transcendental synthesis of imagination.

Here the construction of space by means of geometry is related firstly to the very possibility of being able to represent time and secondly the nature of the relationship of the transcendental subject to the description of space is taken to be the manner by means of which time can come into existence as a form of the manifold.¹⁹ To form any view of motion requires the transcendental subject to unify the manifold and this is the point of the argument that combination is a product of spontaneity (as Kant already indicated in §15). Here, in articulating the unification of time and space as determinations that require reference of each to the other and both to the action of the transcendental unity of apperception, Kant makes the “idealism of sensibility” dependent on the “idealism of apperception”.

Kant describes the more basic “intellectual synthesis” as a general awareness of the fact that “I am” (B157). This is here presented as a thought and not an intuition though the point here is primarily to make clear that I do not have self-knowledge as there is no intuition of myself save under the effect of determination of passivity by means of the transcendental synthesis of imagination. Due to this empirical awareness is awareness only of a passive appearance. However, more importantly for the reading developed here, is the description at B160–161n. where Kant brings in the distinction between the form of intuition (such as has been provided in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*) and formal intuition (in which unity of the manifold is given). The latter is now stated to presuppose a synthesis but the unity produced by it none the less is argued not to belong to the concept of the understanding but to belong to space and time. Given the picture developed thus far this puzzling argument can be explicated.²⁰ The unity of space and time belongs to them as a priori intuitions but the argument of §24 (to which we are referred at the conclusion of B161n.) made clear that this unity was a product of the original act of self-affection termed the transcendental synthesis of imagination. The basic unification of space and time has to occur for the transcendental unity of apperception and cannot wait for the articulation of categories of the understanding, categories that are in any case ‘vehicles’ of transcendental apperception. For the “indeterminate perception” of B422–423n. to arise is for some form of sensation to be given to the ‘I think’ but for the ‘I think’ to relate to the matter of this perception requires the generation of the unity of the manifold. Only through the continuity of the manifold as asserted in the combination of the moments of appearance of the sensation can there be the possibility of relating to objects but prior to that possibility and as a condition of it there must first be a unification of the manifold. This unification is what permits the subsequent development of the categories so that there can be a division between judgments of perception and judgments of experience.

¹⁹Whilst the model in this passage is very complex there are two points worth adding. Firstly, the view that the representation of time requires space was asserted earlier in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* (A33=B49–50) and is key to the subsequent argument of the Analogies of Experience. Secondly, since the representation of time is by means of space the determination of time will be understood in a primarily spatial manner. The consequences of this latter point for Kantian conceptions of laws of nature would be worth further exploration elsewhere.

²⁰The puzzle of this statement formed a nodal point of the analysis in Banham (2006) though the view of it presented here is distinct from that given there.

The subsequent argument of the B-Deduction develops on the basis of the connection of the categories to this original unity of transcendental apperception. The categories that are grounded on and related to this original unity enable the emergence of objects of empirical intuition.²¹ However, on the grounds of the exposition given here we can now trace the following argument for an “idealism of apperception”. The transcendental unity of apperception is that which originally unifies the manifold, especially that of space and time, prior even to the concepts of understanding (categories) (B161n.). The manner in which this is accomplished is by means of the transcendental unity of imagination, a synthesis that enables the production of awareness of manifolds in general just as it unifies the basic elements of them (a priori intuitions). The subsequent representation of time in which motion is a production of the transcendental act of the subject, a primary act that grounds the constructive possibility of space, enables analogical representation of time. Only through the combination of these elements is there *determinate relation to objects*, an argument that shows that objects are cognized by means of an ineliminable transcendental subject that supersedes in its basic possibilities the very distinction between appearances and things in themselves that can be described by means of its act. Since the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is cardinal for transcendental idealism and since this distinction is grounded in the first instance on the transcendental synthesis of imagination by which original apperception generates the ‘I think’ it follows that transcendental idealism is first and originally an “idealism of apperception”.

By contrast to this argument, the account of Allison prescind from the view that the transcendental synthesis of imagination is an act of self-affection and only presents it in terms of the categories.²² Due to this, Allison’s developed account of the argument of the B-Deduction cannot match his own earlier description of an “idealism of apperception”. The argument presented here does give such an account and on the basis of it the separate arguments of B422–423n., the *Prolegomena* and the B-Deduction have been brought together.

7 Conclusion

It is not the aim of this piece to exhaustively describe transcendental idealism. As any account of it would involve, this one does incorporate the centrality of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves. This account does not

²¹It would require a different and more developed argument to discuss the relationship of the categories to the transcendental unity of apperception in some detail.

²²That reference to the categories is included in Kant’s account of the transcendental synthesis of imagination is clearly stated in the B-Deduction (B152) but, I am suggesting, it is not present at each stage and does not account for how the unity of space and time is something distinct from concepts of the understanding (B161n.). Conversely, the failure to discuss self-affection misses an essential part of the argument of the B-Deduction in order to concentrate only on the question of the categories despite the centrality of a unity other than that of the categories to the very opening of the B-Deduction.

however depend on the specific arguments for the transcendental ideality of space and time given in the Transcendental Aesthetic or the Antinomies but develops instead, in line with an original suggestion of Allison, an “idealism of apperception”. After mentioning this notion, Allison’s subsequent work shrank back from it in favor of a more conventional reading of the Transcendental Deduction as an argument that centers on the categories. That such an argument has also to be given is clear and we have attempted it elsewhere.²³ But here I have undertaken to suggest that there is a distinction between the transcendental unity of apperception and the ‘I think’, a distinction that justifies the suggestion made at B132 that the ‘I think’ is *generated* by the transcendental unity of apperception and further contextualizes the important account of “indeterminate perception” Kant develops in his critique of the *cogito*. Furthermore, this argument gives a rationale for connecting Kant’s distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience with his view of judgment in the B-Deduction rather than severing these arguments in the manner of Allison. For all these reasons the reading given here merits attention as an original and specific way of understanding the function of the argument concerning the transcendental unity of apperception and the overarching claim of transcendental idealism.

References

- Allison, H. 1974. ‘Transcendental Affinity – Kant’s Answer to Hume’. In L. W. Beck (ed.), *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge: Selected Papers from the Third International Kant Congress*. Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel, pp. 119–127.
- Allison, H. 1983. *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Revised & Enlarged edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Banham, G. 2006. *Kant’s Transcendental Imagination*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Beck, L. W. 1978. ‘Did the Sage of Königsberg Have No Dreams? In L. W. Beck, *Essays on Kant and Hume*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 38–60.
- Cohen, B. 1985. *Revolution in Science*. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap.
- Henrich, D. 1969. ‘The Proof-Structure of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction’. *Review of Metaphysics* 22: 640–659.
- Kant, I. 1977. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Trans. and ed. J. Ellington. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Kant, I. 2007. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. N. Kemp Smith. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

²³See again Banham (2006, Chap. 4).

Chapter 7

Marks, Images, and Rules: Concepts and Transcendental Idealism

Steven M. Bayne

In previous projects I have found keeping an eye on differences between the general theory of concepts¹ developed by Kant in the first *Critique* and those developed by his rationalist (typified by Leibniz) and empiricist (typified by Hume) predecessors to be a fruitful approach for both understanding some difficult texts in the first *Critique* and for clarifying how Kant has the resources to resolve some classic problems from early modern philosophy. On the one hand, I have argued elsewhere² that recognizing the importance of Kant's general theory of concepts enables us to see that the Schematism is not some artificial and unnecessary hocus-pocus, but instead is a legitimate requirement of the first *Critique*'s general theory of concepts. On the other hand, I have also argued³ that Kant's general theory of concepts provides him with the means to explain the fundamental misconception that underlies Hume's (and Berkeley's) arguments against abstract ideas.

In this project, my ultimate goal is to figure out the relationship between the first *Critique*'s general theory of concepts and Kant's transcendental idealism. The main question I would like to be able to answer is whether the first *Critique*'s theory of concepts is the key to making Kant's adoption of transcendental idealism possible.⁴ In this project, I hope that by examining Kant's and (some of) his predecessors' theories of concepts we can clarify the relationship between transcendental idealism and the theory of concepts developed in the first *Critique*. In comparing Kant to his predecessors, I hope to be able to shed some light on at least the following questions: Are Kant's predecessors' theories of concepts incompatible with transcendental idealism, or to ask this same question the other way around, do the

S.M. Bayne (✉)

Department of Philosophy, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT 06824, USA

e-mail: sbayne@fairfield.edu

¹I say 'general theory of concepts' here in order to indicate that Kant's theory applies to all concepts not just pure concepts.

²See Bayne (2004: 2–13).

³See Bayne (2008).

⁴I believe it would also be interesting to ask this question in reverse as well—that is, whether it is the adoption of transcendental idealism that makes the first *Critique*'s general theory of concepts possible.

theories of concepts held by Kant's predecessors require transcendental realism? Does Kant's theory of concepts require transcendental idealism or could someone consistently adopt Kant's theory of concepts while also maintaining transcendental realism?

Now before we even get started examining theories of concepts, one might ask why we should think that this avenue is likely to be promising for revealing anything crucial about the nature of transcendental idealism. For me, one interesting reason to believe this is that Kant's theory of concepts as rules seems to be a missing link of sorts. When we think about some of the fundamental elements of transcendental idealism, such as space and time being forms of sensibility, the distinction in kind between intuitions and concepts, and the theory that concepts are rules, it is interesting to note that the first two of the three appear to be found both in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in the Inaugural Dissertation. The theory of concepts as rules developed in the first *Critique*, however, does not seem to be in the Inaugural Dissertation. In the Inaugural Dissertation, when Kant does not yet hold transcendental idealism, he also does not yet appear to have developed the position that concepts are rules.⁵ By the time of the first *Critique*, however, he has both adopted transcendental idealism and developed the theory of concepts as rules. Of course this by itself is not sufficient to establish any dependence relationship between these two positions, but it is enough to indicate that this avenue of research is worthwhile.

1 Concepts as Marks or Images

Two theories of concepts that can be found in Kant's early modern predecessors are those that take concepts to be sets of marks and those that take concepts to be images.⁶ The concepts as marks theory is suggested, perhaps most famously, by

⁵Corey Dyck has suggested to me that although in the Inaugural Dissertation Kant does not explicitly write that concepts are rules, perhaps Kant's characterization there of the concepts of space and time, and the concepts of the understanding, as being abstracted from laws of the mind (e.g., see sections 15 and 8 respectively) amounts to the same thing. I must admit I find this to be an intriguing possibility. I find the suggestion plausible particularly in light of what Kant writes in §4 when he is explaining the distinction between the matter and form of representations of sense. There he writes that the matter is "the *sensation*, and there is also something which may be called the *form*, the *aspect* namely of sensible things which arises according as the various things which affect the senses are co-ordinated by a certain natural law of the mind" (AA 2: 392 [Kant 1992a, 384]). Furthermore, Kant continues, "if the various factors in an object which affect the senses are to coalesce into some representational whole there is needed an internal principle in the mind, in virtue of which those various factors may be clothed with a certain *aspect*, in accordance with stable and innate laws" (AA 2: 393 [Kant 1992a, 385]). At the very least, the idea that an internal principle of the mind is needed in order for various factors to coalesce into a representational whole seems to foreshadow central aspects of Kant's theory of concepts as rules. It would require further investigation to determine whether this turns out to be more than just foreshadowing. If it is more than just foreshadowing, however, then this introduces the intriguing possibility that in the Inaugural Dissertation we would find an example of someone, in this case Kant himself, holding the theory of concepts as rules, while at the same time maintaining transcendental realism.

⁶I do not intend to imply either that these are exhaustive of early modern theories of concepts or that these two theories could not be held in combination.

Leibniz's discussion in 'Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas'. There, when explaining the various levels of cognition, Leibniz writes that

knowledge [*cognitio*] is *clear* when I have the means for recognizing the thing represented. Clear knowledge [*cognitio*], again, is either confused or distinct. It is confused when I cannot enumerate one by one marks sufficient for differentiating a thing from others, even though the thing does indeed have such marks and requisites into which its notion can be resolved. (Leibniz 1989, 24)

Leibniz then tells us that in contrast "a *distinct notion* is like the notion an assayer has of gold, that is, a notion connected with marks and tests sufficient to distinguish a thing from all other similar bodies" (Leibniz 1989, 24). Then, after distinguishing a primitive notion, which he writes is "its own mark", from a composite notion, he tells us that

in composite notions, since, again, the individual marks composing them are sometimes understood clearly but confusedly, like heaviness, color, solubility in *aqua fortis*, and others, which are among the marks of gold, such knowledge of gold may be distinct, yet *inadequate*. (Leibniz 1989, 24)

Although things are somewhat more complicated with Locke,⁷ I think it is also plausible to find the theory of concepts as marks in Locke's discussion of nominal essences. There Locke writes that the nominal essence "*is nothing but that abstract Idea to which the Name is annexed: So that every thing contained in that Idea, is essential to that Sort.*" For example, "*the nominal Essence of Gold, is that complex Idea the word Gold stands for, let it be, for instance, a Body yellow, of a certain weight, malleable, fusible, and fixed*" (Locke 1975, 439). He goes on to write that

essential, and not essential, relate only to our abstract Ideas, and the names annexed to them; which amounts to no more but this, That whatever particular Thing, has not in it those Qualities, which are contained in the abstract Idea, which any general Term stands for, cannot be ranked under that Species, nor be called by that name, since that abstract Idea is the very Essence of that Species. (Locke 1975, 441)

Although in these passages Leibniz and Locke are doing more than simply introducing a theory of concepts, I think the theory of concepts as marks is not hard to pick out. The theory of concepts as marks is simply the view that concepts consist in a set or list of marks or qualities that characterizes or defines an object or type of object.⁸ So for example, the concept I have of the needles of a fir tree includes

⁷One issue that complicates things with Locke is that he is often thought to be an imagist. So, if I am right about finding the concepts as marks theory in Locke, then Locke might turn out to be a case in which the concepts as marks theory is actually held in combination with the concepts as images theory.

⁸I should note that the ambiguity between whether these marks define an object or type of object introduces a subject of some controversy. Whether or not by means of concepts alone we can fully characterize or define a particular object rather than a type of object should be a familiar controversy. According to Leibniz's early view of substance, every substance has a complete notion (or concept). This concept contains all the predicates that are true of the substance. This would mean, theoretically at least, that a particular object could be defined by concepts alone. Kant himself, in his pre-critical Blomberg Logic Lectures, distinguishes between singular concepts and general concepts, where "[i]n the former I think only one thing, but through the latter [. . .] I think that which

the marks ‘flat’, ‘friendly’,⁹ and ‘flexible’.¹⁰ To use one of Leibniz’s and Locke’s standard examples, my concept of gold includes the marks ‘yellow’, ‘heavy’, ‘malleable’, and ‘dissolves in *aqua regia* (a solution of hydrochloric and nitric acids), but not *aqua fortis* (nitric acid)’. The concept I have of a golden retriever includes the marks ‘four legs’, ‘tail’, ‘long yellow hair’, ‘friendly’, ‘low intelligence’, and ‘able to hold three tennis balls in its mouth at the same time’.

Of course concepts can include more or fewer marks. At one time my concept of a golden retriever may not have included the mark ‘able to hold three tennis balls in its mouth’ although now it does. The inclusion of more or fewer marks might possibly be correlated with the distinction between distinct or indistinct concepts—perhaps the more marks I include in my concept, the more distinct it is. On the other hand, it might be that it is best to think of concepts as *ordered* sets of marks. In this case, marks would not just be *lumped* into a set. It might be that some marks are more important (or more essential) than others. For example ‘being able to hold three tennis balls in its mouth’ may be considered to be less essential than ‘long yellow hair’. It could also be that some of the marks in a concept depend in some way on others in the set. For example in my concept of the needles of a fir tree, ‘friendly’ may in fact depend on the combination ‘flat’ and ‘flexible’ (if the needles are flat and flexible, perhaps this means they won’t be sharp and pointy).

As Leibniz and Locke put it, the use to which we put these sets of marks is to be able to distinguish between objects or to rank them under concepts. It is, for example, the set of marks included in my concept of fir needles that enables me to distinguish between fir trees and pine trees as I hike through the woods. When, for example, I recognize the marks ‘yellow’, ‘heavy’, ‘malleable’, and ‘dissolves in *aqua regia*, but not *aqua fortis*’, then I am able to say that the concept of gold applies to an object. If, on the other hand, I am not able to find these marks in an object, then I say that the concept of gold does not apply to it.

There are more details that can be filled in, and I will discuss a few of these later when I contrast Kant’s theory of concepts as rules to the concepts as marks theory, but with this basic description of concepts as marks, I now want to turn to the theory that takes concepts to be images.

The concepts as images theory is suggested by David Hume. In neither the *Treatise* nor the first *Enquiry* does Hume use the word *concept*.¹¹ Instead, when

is common to many things” (AA 24: 257 [Kant 1992b, 205]). By the time Kant fully develops his distinction between concepts and intuitions along with the distinct roles they play in cognition, however, he can no longer allow that the particular objects of theoretical cognition can be fully determined by means of concepts alone.

⁹Meaning they won’t prick your skin if you touch them like the sharp and pointy needles on a pine tree will.

¹⁰Thanks to Harlan Kredit, a ranger at Yellowstone National Park, for teaching me these marks of fir tree needles.

¹¹He does often use the word *conception* to refer to the act of thinking. He also frequently uses the word *notion*, but as far as I can discern, he uses it interchangeably with the word *idea*.

distinguishing between “feeling and thinking,” he distinguishes *impressions* from *ideas*. Hume writes that

[a]ll the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning. (Hume 2000, 7)

Later on Hume makes it clear that this difference in force and vivacity is not just a difference between impressions and ideas, but that “impressions and ideas differ *only* in their strength and vivacity” (Hume 2000, 18; emphasis added). This is due to the fact that “all ideas are deriv’d from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them” (Hume 2000, 18). So, for example, Hume tells us that “[w]hen I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt” (Hume 2000, 8).¹² On Hume’s view ideas truly are images of our impressions.¹³

It is probably not too hard to imagine how this works in the case of our ideas of specific things, such as my idea of the Japanese maple tree outside my study window (I form a specific image copied from the specific impressions I have had). On an imagist theory, however, it may not be so clear how this would work for my general idea of a Japanese maple tree—that is, one that applies to all Japanese maples. Would it be some amorphous image such as Locke describes for the “*general Idea of a Triangle*” which “must be neither Oblique nor Rectangle, neither Equilateral, Equicrural, nor Scalenon; but all and none of these at once” (Locke 1975, 596). Hume, however, argues that such a general idea is an impossibility, for “‘tis utterly impossible to conceive any quantity or quality without forming a precise notion of its degrees” (Hume 2000, 17). When I form the abstract idea of triangle I do not have an amorphous image in my mind. Instead, as with any idea, “[t]he image in the mind is only that of a particular object” (Hume 2000, 18). That is, although my

¹²It is important to note that Hume cannot endorse his copy thesis in full force until he factors in the distinction between simple and complex ideas and impressions. While it turns out that “[a]ll our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv’d from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent,” (Hume 2000, 9; the entire sentence is italicized in the original) complex ideas do not have to exactly represent complex impressions. Since complex ideas are made up of simple ideas, however, it will turn out that complex ideas will have to be exact copies of some set of simple impressions.

¹³Two things to note here. First, *image* must be understood in a broad sense. That is, there is no reason to think that Hume intends to confine ideas to our *visual* perceptions. When we hear a whistle (an auditory impression), the copy of this sound is not a visual image, but instead it would be an auditory image. This of course stretches the normal use of the word *image*, but I’m not sure what other word would serve our purposes any better. Second, John Yolton is a commentator who argued against this traditional view of Hume’s ideas. Yolton (1980) argued that although ideas are “exact representations” of impressions, ideas need not be likened to images. This, however, is clearly a minority position.

idea of triangle applies to all triangles, my actual idea will be of a particular triangle with three angles each of which has some specific degree and three lines each of which has some specific length. Just the same, my idea of Japanese maple tree will be an image of a Japanese maple with fully determinate particular features, but nevertheless this idea applies to all Japanese maples regardless of their particular features.

2 Kant on Concepts

One of Kant's most fundamental assertions is that experience "contains two very heterogeneous elements, namely, a *matter* for cognition from the senses and a certain *form*, to order it, from the inner source of pure intuition and thought" (A86=B118).¹⁴ Intuitions and concepts are, according to Kant, the two distinct necessary elements of all of our cognition. According to Kant, the difference between these two elements is not simply a question of their force and vivacity nor does it "merely concern the form of distinctness or indistinctness, but rather it concerns their source and content" (A44=B61–62). Intuitions arise from our sensibility, while concepts arise from our understanding. Sensibility, for Kant, is the capacity we have that enables us to become aware of objects. Understanding, on the other hand, is the capacity we have that enables our awareness of objects to be organized. Both of these functions are necessary for cognition. Neither sensibility nor understanding can perform the function of the other. No matter how forceful or distinct our intuitions are, they can never function as concepts—instead, our intuitions can be thought of as imagistic representations that provide the specific and determinate content in our cognition. No matter how obscure or confused our thinking is, concepts can never function as intuitions—instead, concepts organize, structure, or unify the content of thought.

Without yet turning to the relationship between theories of concepts and transcendental idealism, it is important to realize that Kant's basic position on the role of concepts as spelled out in the previous paragraph is what formed the basis for his critical response to the theories of concepts as either marks or images. Since Kant's response to a Humean imagist theory is more straightforward, I will begin with his criticism of imagist theories of concepts.

3 Kant on Concepts as Images

According to Kant, if we were to accept Hume's position that concepts are imagistic, then it is simply difficult to see how concepts could attain the generality required to apply to many things. For Kant agrees with Hume that images are not in themselves general representations. Instead, they are particular representations with determinate sets of features (precise degrees of quantity and quality as Hume puts it). If concepts are particular determinate images, then how can they play the role of a general concept? For as Kant puts it,

¹⁴Unless noted otherwise, all translations of Kant's texts are my own.

[n]o image of a triangle would ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. For it would not attain the generality of the concept, which makes it valid for all triangles, right- or oblique-angled, etc., but rather it would always be limited to only one part of this sphere [...]. Still even less does an object of experience or an image of the same ever attain the empirical concept. (A141=B180)

If for example, when I think about triangles, I form a specific determinate image of an equilateral triangle with 61 cm sides, how is this supposed to represent a right triangle with angles of 30, 60, and 90° and sides of 11, 19, and 22 mm? If when I think about golden retrievers I have this fully determinate image of Ginger the golden retriever in my mind, then what will I do when I run across one that can't carry three tennis balls in its mouth, or whose hair is a different shade of yellow, or is twelve and a half centimeters shorter, etc?

Hume's solution as to how a specific determinate image can come to represent an indefinite number of things of the same type, however, is not one that Kant would be inclined to adopt. According to Hume, a specific idea comes to represent a multitude of things by means of custom.¹⁵ Hume tells us that when we notice a resemblance between objects, then even though there are some differences between them, we "apply the same name to all of them" (Hume 2000, 19). After the custom of naming this resemblance has developed, then when we hear this name, the idea of one of the particular resembling objects is produced in the imagination "with all its particular circumstances and proportions" (Hume 2000, 19). Additionally, "that custom produces any other individual [idea], for which we may have occasion" (Hume 2000, 19). For Hume, then, it is the effect of custom on the imagination that allows the "application of ideas beyond their nature" (Hume 2000, 19). Since this solution based on custom forestalls the possibility of the true universality of concepts, however, it is not one Kant would be willing to accept.

4 Kant on Concepts as Marks

Kant's relation to the concepts as marks theory is more complicated than his response to the concepts as images theory. Probably the main issue that complicates things is that in many places Kant appears to adopt the concepts as marks theory. I will mention just two representative examples. When discussing the difference between definitions in mathematics and philosophy in the *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (1764), Kant writes that definitions in philosophy begin with

¹⁵It may be interesting to note that as opposed to Berkeley, Hume acknowledges that there *is something to be explained* about how it is possible for a particular determinate idea to adequately represent all objects of a certain type. Berkeley simply asserts that this does happen. He writes that "I believe we shall acknowledge, that an idea, which considered in itself is particular, becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort" (Berkeley 1982, 13). Yet, as opposed to Locke before him and Hume after him, Berkeley doesn't seem to see why this is problematic. For example with the idea of a triangle he writes that "the particular triangle I consider [...] does equally stand for and represent all rectilinear triangles whatsoever and is in that sense *universal*. All which seems very plain and not to include any difficulty in it" (Berkeley 1982, 15).

the concept of a thing already given, but confused or not sufficiently determinate [*bestimmt*]. I must analyze it, the separated marks together with the given concept compared in all kinds of cases, and make this abstract thought detailed and determinate [*ausführlich und bestimmt*]. Everyone has, for example, a concept of time, but suppose this is to be defined. I must consider this idea in all kinds of connections in order to discover its marks through analysis, to combine various abstracted marks together [to determine] whether they yield a sufficient concept, and to compare them with each other [to determine] whether or not one partly includes another. (AA 2: 276–277)

In *The Blomberg Logic* (based on lectures from the early 1770s) we find:

Those definitions *are nominal* whose marks, taken together, are adequate to the whole concept that we think with the expression of the *definitum*. E.g., if I think and say, Salt is that which is dissolved in water. I do think that in the concept of salt, to be sure, but that is not all the possible characteristics of salt itself. Real *definitiones*, however, are ones whose marks constitute the whole possible concept of the thing. (Kant 1992b, 215; AA 24: 268)

Now if such passages were confined to Kant's pre-critical writings, it would make it easy to tell the story that I was initially tempted to tell when I began this project. That is, that Kant's pre-critical theory of concepts is the concepts as marks theory, but in the critical philosophy Kant develops and adopts the concepts as rules theory.¹⁶ This, however, turns out not to be the case. So, for example in the Jäsche *Logic* we find such claims as:

All our *concepts* are therefore marks and all *thought* is nothing other than a representing through marks. (AA 9: 36)¹⁷

The combination of coordinate marks in the whole of a concept is called an *aggregate*, the combination of subordinate marks a *series*. The former, the aggregation of coordinate marks constitutes the totality of the concept, but which in regard to synthetic empirical concepts can never be completed, but rather is like a straight line *without limits*. (AA 9: 59)

A mark is *sufficient* insofar as it suffices to distinguish the thing at all times from all others; otherwise it is insufficient, as for example the mark of barking for dogs. (AA 9: 60)

In the first *Critique* itself Kant writes that

I can cognize the concept of body in advance analytically through the marks of extension, impenetrability, shape, etc., which are all thought in this concept. But now I expand my cognition and while I look back on the experience from which I had extracted this concept of body, I thus find that weight is also always connected with the above mentioned marks, and consequently add this synthetically as predicate to that concept. (A8=B12)

When writing about representations Kant writes that “an objective perception is cognition (*cognitio*). This is either *intuition* or *concept* (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former is related immediately to the object and is singular [but] the latter mediately,

¹⁶This in turn might make it easier to see the importance of the concepts as rules theory to transcendental idealism.

¹⁷Note here, however, that just twenty pages earlier we find the claim that “[i]t is customary to call sensibility also the *lower* faculty, understanding on the other hand the *higher* faculty, on the ground that sensibility gives the mere material for thought, but the understanding manages [*disponirt*] this material and brings it under rules or concepts.” (AA 9: 36)

by means of a mark, which can be common to several things” (A320=B376–377). Then, in the Doctrine of Method, he writes that

[*t*]o define, as the expression itself shows [*giebt*], really means only as much as to present the complete [*ausführlichen*] original concept of a thing within its boundaries.* [In a footnote Kant tells us: “*Completeness signifies the clarity and sufficiency of marks; boundaries, the precision, that there are no more of these than belong to the complete concept”, S.B.] According to such a demand an *empirical* concept cannot be defined at all but only made *explicit* [*explicit werden*]. For since we have in it only some marks of a certain type of objects of the senses, it is thus never certain whether by the word that signifies the same object one does not think at one time more, at another time fewer marks of the same. Thus in the concept of *gold* one may think, in addition to its weight, color, and malleability, the property that it does not rust, while another perhaps knows nothing about this. (A727–728=B755–756)

What these passages from his critical writings appear to show is that when Kant developed the concepts as rules theory, he did not do so simply as a replacement for the concepts as marks theory. Instead it is best to think of the development of the concepts as rules theory as the completion of the concepts as marks theory. What we need to realize is that if concepts are simply sets of marks, they would not be able to serve the purpose Kant has spelled out for them in the first *Critique*. We saw above that for Kant in the first *Critique*, concepts, as opposed to intuitions, organize, structure, or unify the content of thought. If a concept were simply a set of marks, it is hard to see how it could serve this purpose. A set of essential characteristics (no matter how large) will require something in addition to the marks in order to produce “that unity which constitutes the concept of an object” (A105).¹⁸ According to Kant, that additional something is a rule.¹⁹

5 Concepts as Rules

According to Kant, concepts have both form and content. In the Jäsche Logic, Kant writes that “in every concept *matter* and *form* are to be distinguished” (AA 9: 91).

¹⁸As suggested by an anonymous referee, it may be that for Kant concepts involve more than one type of unity—that is, analytic unity and synthetic unity. Kant most famously examines these types of unity when he discusses the unity of apperception or consciousness. As far as I am aware, however, Kant himself does not explicitly use either the phrase ‘analytic unity of a concept’ or the phrase ‘synthetic unity of a concept’. Nonetheless, although I do not think it would be an easy argument, passages such as the footnote at B133 make it not unreasonable to conclude that Kant does intend to distinguish between the analytic and synthetic unity of a concept. If such a case can be made, the distinction between the analytic and synthetic unity of a concept would correlate with two of the theories of concepts discussed here. On the one hand, what we find in the concepts as marks theory would correspond to the analytic unity of a concept, while the concepts as rules theory would correspond with the synthetic unity of a concept.

¹⁹As an analogy think about flour, water, salt, and yeast as the set of ingredients for bread. These are the essential components or marks of bread. In order to be bread, however, these elements need to be synthetically unified. By themselves, however, the marks for bread do not include any instructions (or rule) for how they go together. This is the job of the recipe. The recipe is not a set of ingredients, but instead it is a rule for how to combine or unify the ingredients into bread.

It is worth noting that this is what makes it possible for a concept to be both a determinate set of marks and at the same time something that serves as a rule. For although the content of a concept is the set of marks thought in it, with regard to its form, a concept is something general that functions as a rule.²⁰ As Kant puts it in the A-Deduction, “[a]ll cognition requires a concept, however imperfect or obscure it may be; but as far as its form is concerned the latter is always something general, and that serves as a rule” (A106).²¹ Concepts serve as rules for bringing about a synthetic unity of a manifold of intuition.²² Kant provides a number of examples and I’ll mention four. First, Kant writes that the pure concept of cause “signifies a special kind of synthesis, when upon something *A* something entirely different *B* is posited according to a rule” (A90=B122). Second, when writing about the mathematical concept of a triangle, Kant writes that

we say we cognize the object if we have effected synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition. This, however, is impossible if the intuition could not have been produced through such a function of synthesis according to a rule that makes the reproduction of the manifold a priori necessary and a concept in which this manifold is united possible. Thus we think of a triangle as an object by being conscious of the composition of three straight lines according to a rule, according to which such an intuition can always be presented. (A105)

Third, when writing about the empirical concept of body, Kant tells us that

the concept of body, according to which the unity of the manifold is thought through it, serves as the rule for our cognition of outer appearances. It can only be a rule of intuitions, however, if it represents in given appearances the necessary reproduction of the manifold of intuitions, [and] consequently the synthetic unity in the consciousness of them. Thus the concept of body makes necessary, in the perception of something outside of us, the representation of extension, and with it that of impenetrability, of shape, etc. (A106)

Finally, when writing about the empirical concept of dog, we learn that on Kant’s view “[t]he concept of a dog signifies a rule according to which my imagination can register the shape of a four-footed animal in general, without being limited to any

²⁰I would like to thank Henry Allison for his helpful suggestions on this issue. His comments, along with what he wrote in [chapter 4](#) of *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* (2004), were what enabled me to see how Kant could consistently hold that concepts are sets of marks while they serve as rules at the same time.

²¹In the Jäsche Logic Kant tells us that with concepts “their form is *generality*” (AA 9: 91). The claim that the form of a concept is generality can also be found in other versions of Kant’s logic lectures. For example see *The Blomberg Logic* §254 (AA 24: 252–254). As far as I am aware, however, it is not until the first *Critique* that Kant connects the form of generality with serving as a rule.

²²I should note that this may not be the only sense in which concepts serve as rules. In *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, Béatrice Longuenesse argues that in addition to a concept serving as “a rule insofar as it is the consciousness of the unity of an act of sensible synthesis or the consciousness of the procedure for generating a sensible intuition,” a concept also serves as a “discursive rule”—that is, “the apodeictic statement of the marks of the concept as a “rule for subsumption” or major premise of a possible syllogism” (Longuenesse 1998, 50). For the purposes of this paper, however, I primarily have in mind only the first sense of serving as a rule.

single particular shape that experience presents to me, or also any possible image which I can produce *in concreto*” (A141=B180).²³

6 Concepts and Transcendental Idealism

At last, it is time to turn to the issue of the relationship between these theories of concepts and transcendental idealism. In order to investigate the relationship between these theories of concepts and transcendental idealism, we need to begin by saying something about the nature of transcendental idealism. As it goes far beyond the scope of this paper, I will not attempt to give a complete definition of transcendental idealism. Instead, I will discuss the two requirements of Kant’s Copernican revolution in metaphysics, as spelled out in the second edition preface of the first *Critique*, as a sort of proto-definition of transcendental idealism.

In the B-preface of the *Critique*, Kant tells us that the study of metaphysics, unlike mathematics and natural science, has not “been able to enter upon the secure path of a science” (Bxiv). With mathematics and natural science, Kant believes that their becoming sciences “can be explained by a sudden revolution in the way of thinking” (Bxii). Furthermore, he believed that by isolating the essential feature common to both of these changes of perspective he would be in a position to make an analogous revolution in the way of thinking in the study of metaphysics and thereby set it on the secure path of a science.

According to Kant, the common realization that both geometers and students of nature had was that “reason only has insight into that which it itself produces according to its own design” (Bxiii). In the case of geometry, for example, Kant tells us that it was put on the path of a science when a geometer realized that he could not gain rational cognition of a geometrical object through simply observing what he found in it. Instead he realized that “in order to know something securely a priori he had to attribute to the thing nothing but what necessarily followed from what he himself had put into it in accordance with its concept” (Bxii). Neither, according to Kant, could the study of physics become a science as long as it was thought that all we needed to do was merely observe the objects of nature. The study of physics was put on the secure path of a science only when physicists realized that although of course “reason must learn from nature, it has to seek in the latter [...] in accordance with what reason itself puts into nature” (Bxiv). So, how does this common insight get applied to the study of metaphysics? It is here that Kant proposes his famous Copernican revolution in metaphysics. In a well-known passage, Kant tells us that

²³This last example is a passage from the Schematism chapter. A full treatment of Kant’s theory of concepts as rules cannot, I think, avoid a discussion of the Schematism chapter. In particular, it seems clear that the relationship between a concept and its schema (both of which are described as being rules) would have to be explained. Such a full treatment, however, I leave for another occasion.

[u]ntil now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them a priori through concepts, whereby our cognition would be extended, have on this assumption come to nothing. Therefore we should once try whether we do not make better progress with the problems of metaphysics if we suppose that the objects must conform to our cognition. (Bxvi)

According to Kant, it is the realization that objects must conform to human cognition that will put the study of metaphysics on the secure path of a science. The supposition that objects conform to human cognition, furthermore, requires two main elements for Kant. The first of these involves the relationship between *intuition* and objects, while the second involves the relationship between *concepts* and objects.

With regard to the relationship between intuition and objects, Kant tells us that “[i]f intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of them a priori; but if the object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can represent this possibility to myself quite well” (Bxvii). This realization is what led Kant to the position that space and time are transcendently ideal. They are “merely a subjective condition of our (human) intuition” (A35=B51), and they are “nothing as soon as we leave aside the condition of the possibility of all experience and take [them] as something that underlies the things in themselves” (A28=B44).

With regard to the relationship between concepts and objects, Kant tells us that if intuitions are to become cognitions, then I

must refer them as representations to something as their object and determine this through them. [T]hus, I can either assume that the *concepts* by which I bring about this determination also conform to the object, and then I am again in the same quandary concerning the way in which I could know anything of them a priori; or I assume the objects, or what is the same thing, the *experience* in which alone they can be cognized (as given objects), conform to these concepts, and thus I at once see an easier solution [. . .]. (Bxvii)

This realization finds its ultimate expression in Kant’s account of the pure concepts of understanding, that is, the a priori concepts that are required for the possibility of experience. It is in this connection that Kant writes that there is a rule of the understanding “I must presuppose in myself even before objects are given to me” and that this rule “is expressed in concepts a priori, according to which all objects of experience thus necessarily conform, and with which they must agree” (Bxvii-xviii). It will be this second component of Kant’s revolutionary supposition that objects must conform to our cognition that will be important for the evaluation of the relationship between theories of concepts and transcendental idealism.²⁴

If either of the alternatives we have discussed is incompatible with transcendental idealism it seems as if it should be the concepts as images theory. There are two main reasons for this. First, if, concepts (or ideas, to use Hume’s terminology) are images

²⁴I think it is worth noting that with regard to the first component of Kant’s supposition that objects must conform to cognition (i.e., the supposition that objects must conform to our faculty of intuition), although I don’t know of any, I don’t see any particular reason that someone who holds concepts to be either images or marks couldn’t at the same time accept Kant’s position that space and time are only subjective conditions of human intuition.

with specific determinate content that are exact copies of objects (or impressions in Hume's terminology),²⁵ then it is difficult to see how objects could conform to concepts, as Kant's Copernican revolution would have it. On an imagist theory of concepts (at least Hume's anyway), as exact copies of impressions or objects, ideas or concepts clearly conform to the objects that are given, rather than making those objects possible. Secondly, if concepts are images that are copies of objects, then we first have to experience an object before we can have the appropriate concept. This in turn would rule out the possibility of any *a priori* concepts. Yet the existence of *a priori* concepts that make experience itself possible is one of the fundamental tenets of transcendental idealism.

How do things stand with the concepts as marks theory? Is it compatible with transcendental idealism? Given what we found two sections back, I should be more specific. What I am interested in is, if it is adopted as the sole theory of concepts,²⁶ whether it is compatible with transcendental idealism. Once again I want to think about how well this theory fits Kant's Copernican hypothesis. With this in mind, I believe the question to ask is where do the marks that make up a concept come from? The marks may not be exact copies of objects as ideas are on an imagist theory, but they still seem to be dependent on the objects. They are marks of the essential characteristics of objects. Objects have these characteristics, we recognize this and subsequently include these marks in our concepts.²⁷ If this is the way the concepts as marks theory works, it seems clear that once again our cognition is conforming to the object and so it does not mesh with the Copernican hypothesis.

The concepts as rules theory, on the other hand, seems designed from the start to be compatible with transcendental idealism. We can see this in the way that the concepts as rules theory seems to go hand in hand with the second part of Kant's Copernican hypothesis, namely the supposition that objects must conform to our concepts. Yet, as long as we are thinking of objects in an ordinary sense it may not be exactly clear how thinking of concepts as rules would make any difference with regard to the supposition that objects conform to our concepts. To appreciate this, however, we just need to remind ourselves that in his transcendental idealism, Kant has a special understanding of what objects are. On Kant's theory, an object "is not

²⁵Hume most clearly makes the identification of objects with impressions in *Treatise*, 1.1.7.4 (Hume 2000, 18). There he writes: "'Tis confest, that no object can appear to the senses; or in other words, that no impression can become present to the mind, without being determin'd in its degrees both of quantity and quality."

²⁶That is to say, not in conjunction with the concepts as rules theory.

²⁷I should say that this is clearly the way things would work on Locke's version. Since all of our ideas come from experience for Locke, it is hard to see how it could be otherwise. Leibniz's version has the potential to be a good deal more complicated. If substances exist because God actualized them based on their complete concepts being included in the best of all possible worlds, then there is a sense in which the substances conform to their concepts. We should be clear, of course, that this is only the way it works for God. For Leibniz, the cognition of finite substances does not determine the substance. We only know existing things through experience. We do not know substances through their complete concepts.

at all a thing in itself, but rather only an appearance, i.e., representation” (A191–192=B236). Representations, in turn, “in so far as they are in these relations (in space and time) connected and determinable according to the rules of the unity of experience are called *objects*” (A494=B522). These rules specify one determinate connection of representations and make it distinguishable from all others. That is to say,

appearance, in contradistinction with the representations of apprehension, can only be represented as an object distinct from them if it stands under a rule, which distinguishes it from every other apprehension, and makes necessary one manner of connection of the manifold. (A191=B236)

We saw above that on the concepts as rules theory, this is precisely what concepts do, that is, they serve as rules for bringing about a synthetic unity of a manifold of intuition. In this way, given Kant’s understanding of the nature of objects, on the concepts as rules theory, concepts turn out to be the rules that make objects possible. As a result, objects would clearly conform to concepts and thus open up the possibility of a priori cognition of them, just as the second part of Kant’s Copernican hypothesis would have it.

Recognizing this close connection between Kant’s Copernican hypothesis and the theory of concepts as rules leads to one of the questions I had hoped to shed some light on in this project; the question, namely, whether the concepts as rules theory is necessary for transcendental idealism? We have seen, based on Kant’s Copernican hypothesis, that transcendental idealism places some very particular requirements on a theory of concepts. As we have seen, the theory of concepts as rules meets these requirements, but does this mean that it is the only theory of concepts that can make sense of these requirements and hence it is necessary for transcendental idealism? Well, in this paper we’ve discussed two alternatives, neither of which can handle the job, but clearly this does not narrow the field down to just one theory of concepts that can handle the job. Yet, given Kant’s understanding of the nature of objects, any theory of concepts that is compatible with transcendental idealism will have to be one that enables a concept to be the sort of thing through which unity in a manifold of intuition can be produced. My suspicion is that any theory of concepts that is able to accomplish this will have to be remarkably similar to the concepts as rules theory—and maybe this gets us very close to concluding that the theory of concepts as rules is necessary for transcendental idealism.

Finally, given once again the close connection between Kant’s Copernican hypothesis and the theory of concepts as rules, I want to turn to the question of whether the theory of concepts as rules is sufficient for transcendental idealism. I believe the answer to this question is no. The most straightforward way to see this is to realize that above when I appealed to the requirements of Kant’s Copernican revolution in order to argue both that an imagistic theory was incompatible with and the concepts as rules theory was necessary for transcendental idealism, I appealed to only the second of the two elements involved in the supposition that objects conform to our cognition—namely, that objects must conform to concepts. As we saw above,

the first element required for the supposition that objects conform to our cognition, however, involves the relationship between intuition and objects. It may be that thinking of concepts as rules gives us a crucial part of what we need for the second element of Kant's Copernican hypothesis (objects conform to concepts), but as long as concepts and intuitions (or understanding and sensibility) are two separate things, it cannot do the same thing for the first element (objects conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition). We saw above, that in regard to this first element of the Copernican hypothesis, Kant holds that space and time are neither things in themselves nor their properties, but are instead the pure forms of human sensible intuition. This position may fit together with Kant's position concerning the understanding in the second element of the Copernican hypothesis, but it is still a separate step. Thus, a particular position concerning the understanding or the nature of concepts will not be sufficient by itself to establish both elements of the Copernican hypothesis. As a result, the theory of concepts as rules will not be sufficient to establish transcendental idealism.

7 Summary

In this article, I have explored the theories of concepts held by Kant and some of his early modern predecessors in order to shed some light on the relationship between Kant's theory of concepts and transcendental idealism. I concluded that there is good reason to think that neither the theory of concepts as images nor concepts as marks would allow us to make sense of Kant's Copernican hypothesis and thus are in that sense incompatible with transcendental idealism. I finally concluded that given the two-pronged nature of Kant's Copernican hypothesis that the theory of concepts as rules that Kant develops in the first *Critique* is not by itself sufficient to establish transcendental idealism, but nonetheless the concepts as rules theory, or something very much like it, is necessary for transcendental idealism.

Acknowledgments I would like to thank Karl Ameriks, Gary Banham, Adrian Bardon, Manfred Baum, Corey Dyck, Christian Onof, Marcel Quarfood, Tobias Rosefeldt, Timothy Rosenkoetter, Dennis Schulting, and Yaron Senderowicz for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I would also like to thank Laura S. Keating for her helpful discussions concerning the content of this paper.

References

- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Revised & Enlarged edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bayne, S. 2004. *Kant on Causation: On the Fivefold Routes to the Principle of Causation*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bayne, S. 2008. 'Abstract General Ideas and Kant's Schematism'. In V. Rohden et al. (eds.), *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants: Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*. Band 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter Verlag, pp. 97–105.
- Berkeley, G. 1982. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. Ed. K. Winkler. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

- Hume, D. 2000. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Eds. D. F. Norton and M. J. Norton. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, I. 1992a. *Theoretical Philosophy (1755–1770)*. Trans. and ed. D. Walford. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 1992b. *Lectures on Logic*. Trans. and ed. J. M. Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leibniz, G. W. 1989. 'Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas'. In R. Ariew and D. Garber (trans. and eds.), *Philosophical Essays*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, pp. 23–27.
- Locke, J. 1975. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 1998. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yolton, J. 1980. 'Hume's Ideas'. *Hume Studies* VI(1): 1–25.

Chapter 8

Discursivity and Transcendental Idealism

Marcel Quarfood

A fundamental tenet of Kant's critical philosophy is that human cognition has two stems, sensibility and understanding. This is stressed early on in the *Critique of Pure Reason*¹ and never lost sight of. The understanding thinks by means of concepts, but in order for us to obtain cognition there must be some independent source of representations that give us access to objects, so that the concepts can be applied to something. This is because concepts are general, and therefore cannot by themselves pick out any particular object. The independent source of representations of objects is sensibility, which provides us with intuitions. Intuitions are singular and immediate representations of objects. In judgments, concepts get reference to objects indirectly, by relating to intuitions that are directly related to objects.

Kant uses the term 'discursivity' to refer to this fundamental fact about our cognitive capacity, the fact that it doesn't provide its own objects by thinking but must rely on sensibility's reception of objects. However, he stresses that this discursive understanding is not the only conceivable kind of understanding. We can without contradiction, at least problematically, conceive of a different understanding, one that would have the capacity of providing its own objects merely by thinking. For such an understanding, thinking and intuiting would be one and the same act. Kant describes this as a divine understanding, which produces its object in the act of thinking, and he uses the idea of such an understanding as a contrast, in order to make clear that our understanding is dependent on the givenness of objects outside of thought. He variously refers to this alternative kind of understanding as 'intellectual intuition', 'intuitive understanding', 'infinite understanding', 'intuitus originarius' and 'archetypal understanding'.²

In this paper, I will look into some of Kant's descriptions of this non-discursive understanding and discuss a couple of questions brought up by these descriptions.

M. Quarfood (✉)

Department of Philosophy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala SE-751 26, Sweden

e-mail: marcel.quarfood@filosofi.uu.se

¹A15=B29; A19=B33. Translations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (referred to as CPR) follow Guyer and Wood (Kant 1997) unless otherwise indicated.

²See for example B72; B307–308; AA 5: 406–408; AA 1: 405; AA 10: 131.

Are Kant's characterizations of the non-discursive understanding in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*³ unified, as I have just described it, or is there rather—as suggested by Eckart Förster (2002)—more than one conception of a non-discursive understanding in Kant? This question is tackled in Section 1. How does reflection on human discursivity bear on the distinction constitutive of transcendental idealism, namely that between appearance and thing in itself? Usually, one looks for the grounds for this distinction in the Transcendental Aesthetic, as that is the place where the identification of time and space as forms of intuition and of objects given in space and time as appearances leads to the contrasting notion of things in themselves. Nonetheless, considering that the understanding as form determines the content given in intuition, discursivity, as a theory of the functioning of the understanding, ought to be most relevant for an account of transcendental idealism. More specifically, I suggest that a closer consideration of the nature of the discursive (concept-using) understanding might explain some peculiarities in Kant's statements on things in themselves. An attempt is made in Section 2 to show the connection between discursivity (using the term now in the somewhat restricted sense of a theory of the structure of conceptuality) and some of these otherwise puzzling statements by Kant about the relation between whole and parts in things in themselves.

1 The Non-Discursive Understanding

In the Critique of Teleological Judgment, in the midst of a discussion of the antinomy between mechanism and teleology as principles for judging organized nature, Kant embarks on a digression about some central points of transcendental idealism. This is the well-known §76, of which Schelling (1907: 94) wrote that “perhaps never have so many deep thoughts been compressed in so few pages” (translation mine). In these pages, Kant offers a most general survey of the human capacity for theoretical cognition as well as of reason as it functions in the practical realm for beings such as us, who possess sensibility as well as reason. These descriptions of the human case are made by means of a contrastive comparison to the cognitive situation of an alternative kind of understanding, an intuitive understanding, and, for the practical case, a reason without sensibility. The discussion is continued in §77, where the contrastive method is applied to the question of teleological judgment in order to show that for a different kind of understanding there would be no necessity in viewing organized beings teleologically. There seems to be a characteristic relation between whole and parts in the organism, a holistic structure that the ordinary procedure of our understanding can't do justice to, since it grasps things in successive steps going from part to whole, and therefore we have to complement this piecemeal cognitive procedure with the idea that the parts are purposively connected to the whole, as this is the only remaining way of accounting for the holistic quality of organized natural

³Translations from the *Critique of Judgment* follow Guyer and Matthews (Kant 2000), henceforth referred to as CJ; page numbers indicate the pagination in AA 5.

objects. A different, non-discursive understanding on the other hand, Kant suggests, might be capable of taking in this whole as such, in a single glance so to speak, so that it could dispense with the teleological viewpoint.

Let's take a closer look at §76. With regard to theoretical cognition, Kant points to the distinction between the possibility and the actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of things as a necessary dichotomy for the human understanding (CJ 401). A bit surprisingly, the very possibility of this distinction is said to lie "in the subject and the nature of its cognitive faculties" (CJ 401). Thus, "if our understanding were intuitive, it would have no objects except what is actual" (CJ 402). This is because concepts, in being general, provide mere possibilities, that is, predicates applicable to possible objects, whereas intuitions present actual objects. If thinking provided its own objects, there would be no difference between the possibility of an object and its actual presence. So modality itself would "collapse"⁴ if the distinction between the two cognitive faculties (understanding and sensibility) were to be abolished.⁵

Kant then considers the consequences for practical philosophy occasioned by the circumstance that we have both reason and sensibility. In line with his views in the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*, he conceives of a reason without sensibility, which would not apprehend the moral law as a duty but would act according to the law by necessity. That morality for us takes the form of a "Seyn-Sollen" rather than a "Seyn" (CJ 403) hangs on the lack of perfection that our possession of sensibility entails.

Finally, there is in §76 a preparatory discussion for the theme of §77 of how a different understanding that did not have to "go from the universal to the particular" (CJ 404) would have no need to distinguish a natural mechanism from a technique of nature (that is, a teleological organization of nature), a distinction that is necessary for our human power of judgment. In §77, Kant begins by explaining that what he has done in §76 is to adduce peculiar characteristics of our cognitive faculty that we are easily "misled into carrying over to the things themselves as objective predicates", though they can only serve as regulative principles (CJ 405). The point of describing an alternative cognitive capacity is thus to isolate principles that may seem to be constitutive for objects, but are merely regulative. The regulativity of the principles is shown precisely by the conceivability of a kind of cognition that

⁴To borrow the expression of Béatrice Longuenesse (2000: 280).

⁵It is interesting to note that the relativization of the categories of modality to the peculiarity of the discursive understanding is itself dependent on a kind of higher level modality. The conceivability of a non-discursive understanding is appealed to in order to show that the distinction between possibility and actuality rests on the nature of our discursive understanding. This conceivability itself, however, must be taken as a kind of possibility, though apparently different from the one that would be abolished if the alternative understanding were to replace our human understanding, since otherwise the alternative wouldn't seem to be possible after all. From the human point of view, the possibility of conceiving a different understanding is a mere logical possibility, that which lacks "real possibility" (see e.g. A244=B302 on the distinction between logical and real possibility). But the possibility of the non-discursive understanding, if it were actual, would be a trivial consequence of its actuality, which in its turn would be sheer necessary. I will not here pursue questions about the levels of modality in Kant. I am indebted to Markku Leppäkoski for making me aware of the complexities of Kantian modality.

doesn't need them. Among such regulative principles—ideas of reason which our understanding cannot keep up with but which it can use if they are restricted to subjective validity—are the assumption of an absolutely necessary being as original ground (*Urgrund*) in the theoretical realm, transcending the distinction between actuality and possibility, and the idea of freedom in practical philosophy.⁶

The discussion then turns to the question of teleological judgment. We need to conceive of an alternative cognitive capacity in order to show that purposiveness as applied to organic nature is merely regulative; that is, we need to conceive of an understanding for which this regulative principle is not needed. This is the non-discursive, intuitive understanding. Such an understanding would be able to reach the particular from a “synthetic universal” (an intuition of a whole as such), whereas the discursive understanding starts from the “analytical universal”, that is, the concept (CJ 407).⁷ What this means in the case of organized nature is that for the intuitive understanding the whole of the organism would be grasped immediately, so that the parts (presumably spatial parts as well as temporal parts in the developmental process) would not be contingently related to the whole but seen as necessarily related to it. For the human discursive understanding it is precisely this contingency in the relation between parts and whole, the fact that we cannot seem to understand how the parts come to compose the particular whole, that forces us to rely on teleological notions of goal-directedness. Teleology can therefore now be identified as a regulative principle, necessary for the discursive understanding only, because its analytical-universal procedure builds up the cognition of a whole from part to part

⁶There is something slightly paradoxical in this: we conceive of a being with intuitive understanding as an absolutely necessary being, but such a being would not itself form that conception since it would need no regulative ideas; similarly, a perfect reason without sensibility would not need the ideas of freedom and duty, though it would be perfectly autonomous and moral. Likewise, the idea of a non-discursive understanding deployed for showing teleology and mechanism to be mere regulative principles leads to the idea of a being that has no conception of either principle (since it apprehends nature in a way that goes beyond that dichotomy) but which itself can be taken to be an original being, i.e., a *purposively* productive being. The enigmatic quality of §§76–77, which ignited the speculative fires of Schelling and Hegel, is connected to an oscillation in the idea of a contrastive faculty. Kant's discussion involves an account of regulative principles, as well as the conception of a being possessing the faculty, and the thought of a supersensible substratum of nature neutral as regards the dichotomies pertaining to our kind of cognition. Hegel took such tensions in Kant's conception of an intuitive understanding to show the need to base philosophy on the standpoint of the intuitive understanding (identified as reason) rather than on the discursive understanding. Kant's claim that human understanding is discursive was for Hegel just an uncritical appeal to empirical psychology (see Hegel's essay *Glauben und Wissen* in Hegel 1968, 341; I thank Dennis Schulting for pointing this out, as well as for the reference). See also Longuenesse (2000: 263): “For Hegel [. . .] the ‘reason’ that asserts intellectual intuition is intellectual intuition itself: God's knowledge”. However, Hegel might think of his appeal to an intuitive understanding as compatible with a discursivity purged of Kantian empiricism; he certainly is no friend of intellectual intuition conceived of as immediate knowledge. (Thanks to Sanja Särman for discussion of this point.)

⁷In OP, AA 22: 81 synthetic universality is identified with totality (*universitas rerum*) and analytical universality with the universality of the concept.

in a spatial whole (by synthesizing sensible data one by one) and from event to event into a temporal whole (by means of causal determination).

Now, what has the analytical-universal of discursivity to do with grasping a natural object part by part? According to Bernhard Rang (1993: 62–67), Kant simply confuses a conceptual relation, namely that the concept of a thing has to be taken as constituted by conceptual “parts” (i.e. concepts such as ‘blue’, ‘hard’, etc.), with a physical relation of real parts to wholes.⁸ However, if the discursive understanding has to build its cognized objects by successive syntheses of data given in intuition, this at least suggests that the syntheses will determine an object little by little. The concepts employed to determine an intuition will never suffice to grasp everything that is given in the manifold of one intuition, and the cognition of a spatial object will have to be constructed from part to whole. Furthermore, if we consider the case of a temporally extended whole, such as an organism in its development, where the early ontogenetic stages toward the development of the complete organism can be taken to be parts of the whole-to-be, discursivity must determine the successively given intuitions as they present themselves in time, little by little, part by part.

Rang also attempts to refute Kant’s claim that analytical universality is necessary for our cognition in general, by appealing to the example of space, which on Kant’s own account is cognized in a holistic way. Space is a “single all-encompassing” whole (A25=B39), the parts of which do not precede the whole but are obtained by limiting the spatial whole. Now, if this is how we cognize space, it might seem as though we are not constrained by the strictures of discursivity after all. I think that far from showing an inconsistency in Kant’s views, however, the example of space is fundamental for grasping the difference between intuition and concept. Intuition presents us with a manifold that is always richer than the concepts that are employed to determine that manifold, in so far as for any sum of conceptual determinations of a given intuitional manifold it will always remain possible to make further conceptual determinations. This is because an intuition is a continuous whole, without ultimate simples, so that there are always parts of the intuition whose content (pure or empirical) has not yet been unified in a concept.⁹ (If we compare intuitions to pictures, this is the technical Kantian way of saying that a picture says more than a thousand words.) This basic character of intuition belongs to any intuition by virtue of its form, i.e., space and time. An important part of the argument for the status of space and time as forms of intuition in the Transcendental Aesthetic consists in demonstrating that they are intuitions and not concepts. This is done by arguing for their continuity: a part of a certain space is always a similarly structured though smaller space, contained together with the surrounding space in the single all-encompassing space. An intuitional unity is thus very different from the unity of a concept. Whereas this latter is composed of independent and detachable parts (the *Merkmale* that the concept is composed of), the unity of the intuition is a continuous

⁸On Rang’s objections to §77, see also Quarfood (2004: 186–188); for a different view see Friebe (2008: 70–74).

⁹Kjosavik (2009) is helpful on this issue.

totality.¹⁰ We recognize in this the difference between the synthetic universality and the analytic universality of §77. The synthetic universality of the non-discursive understanding is precisely the capacity possessed by an understanding that is simultaneously intuitive, a capacity to apprehend by mere thinking a singular object immediately as a whole without any need for synthesizing its content.

But, one may ask, isn't this exactly Rang's point? Space has a completely different mereological structure from that of conceptual composites, namely a synthetic-universal structure, and therefore our cognition of space proves that human cognition isn't limited to the analytical-universal. In answer to that, it should be noted that space is not an ordinary object of cognition. To be sure, Kant speaks of cognition of space with reference to geometry; space itself is however just "the form of outer intuition (formal intuition), but not an actual object that can be outwardly intuited" (B457n., translation modified). Though space is continuous, it is necessary for the discursive understanding to determine its cognition conceptually, and therefore the resulting cognition will be built up meristically (part by part) according to the structure of analytic universality. In the section on the Axioms of Intuition Kant argues that all appearances are extensive magnitudes, and therefore "intuited as aggregates (multitudes of antecedently given parts)", "cognized through successive synthesis (from part to part) in apprehension" (A163=B204).

There are admittedly further questions that arise in this connection, for instance concerning the nature of mathematics. In mathematics we really seem to rely on a kind of non-discursive, intuitive cognition, which is also shown in the experience of spatial orientation, as in the case of incongruent counterparts. Mathematics depends on the possibility of a priori intuition of the forms of time and space. This pure, sensible intuition is perhaps the closest we get in Kant's account of human cognition to an intuitive understanding; although as pure *sensible* intuition mathematics is radically different from a non-sensible intuition. One should also remember that mathematics for Kant is not only intuitive but also dependent on the conceptual determinations of the discursive understanding (via constructions of concepts in intuition). The radical distinction between pure sensible intuition and a non-sensible intuition plays a crucial role in Kant's critique of Plato. According to Kant, it was Plato's realization that mathematics requires intuition and not merely concepts, in conjunction with his ignorance of the formal features of intuition, that led him to the view that we must have innate ectypal copies of the ideas (or *Urbilder*) of a divine intellect.¹¹

I have given a very rough sketch of some points in §§76–77, sections that are notoriously difficult to summarize. If we now compare the intuitive understanding here depicted with that invoked in the B-Deduction of CPR, we notice that its role there is a bit different. In B145, Kant conceives of an understanding that itself

¹⁰“Properly speaking, one should call space not a *compositum* but a *totum*, because its parts are possible only in the whole, and not the whole through the parts” (A438=B466).

¹¹See *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*, in AA 8: especially p. 391. Cf. the discussion of this essay in Serck-Hanssen and Emilsson (2004).

intuits, and therefore has no need for categories, since these are only rules for a thinking that brings the synthesis of the independently given manifold to the unity of apperception. The notion of an alternative cognitive capacity serves the same contrastive function in this case too, but here the contrast between principles that our discursive understanding needs for its cognition and the non-discursive understanding's independence of such principles is not used to argue for the regulativity of these principles, but for their constitutivity. The fact that a problematically conceivable non-discursive understanding would not need the categories is certainly not taken to prove that they are merely regulative and do not determine objects, as is the function of the contrasts in CJ with regard to the status of teleology. The contrastive procedure thus yields different outcomes in the two cases. Kant's account might be thought to be inconsistent in this respect, but I think the dissimilarity can be explained. It is the same contrast between different understandings that is used in both cases: in CPR for deriving a weaker result (that the categories are subjective yet also constitutive of experience), in CJ for deriving a stronger conclusion (that teleology is subjective and merely regulative). As dependent on a peculiar kind of understanding, both kinds of principle are subjective—at least that is what they must be called from the contrasting perspective. But when we compare the principles from the point of view of human cognition, we find that whereas categories constitute objects on the most fundamental level, regulative principles merely regulate empirical research above this level (or at most constitute problematic objects that are conceived of by means of reflection: I'm thinking of organisms as *Naturzwecke*, natural objects conceptualized from a teleological viewpoint). So rather than viewing the different results of the contrasting procedures in the first and the third *Critiques* as indicating inconsistency, one could consider it a case of the same premise being used in different contexts for different conclusions.

So far I have taken for granted that Kant's various descriptions of an alternative cognitive capacity all concern one and the same understanding. But one could wonder if 'intellectual intuition' (as used e.g. in B308, where Kant speaks of an intellectual intuition corresponding to a noumenon in the positive sense) is really the same thing as an 'intuitive understanding'. Isn't the one a kind of intuiting and the other a kind of understanding? It seems, though, that this is a pointless distinction, since in both cases we are to conceive of a unitary cognition for which no difference exists between thinking and intuiting. For a cognitive power of this kind, its activity immediately produces the intuited object; and to ask whether this activity is 'thinking' rather than 'intuition' makes little sense. If we start with the designation 'intuitive understanding', as referring to a kind of understanding, we see that it is intuitive, which means that it produces intuitions. If it is asked what kind of intuitions, the answer must be *intellectual intuitions*, since they are intuitions produced by an understanding (i.e., an intellect). An intuitive understanding is thus a faculty of intellectual intuition.

Nevertheless, Eckart Förster (2002: 177) has challenged this common identification of intellectual intuition and intuitive understanding. In his analysis of CJ §§76–77, he attempts to show that not one but two alternatives to our cognitive capacity are envisaged by Kant. According to Förster, commentators always tend to

assimilate the two alternative conceptions.¹² The first one is the intuitive understanding of §76 that would know of no distinction between actuality and possibility. Such an intuitive understanding is identical to the intellectual intuition in the first *Critique*, and Förster prefers this term for designating this case. It is an understanding that produces its object merely by thinking. The second alternative understanding that Kant conceives of is, according to Förster, the intuitive understanding of §77, negatively defined as non-discursive. It is positively described as synthetic-universal, that is, as able to grasp a whole immediately. Now, Förster's point is that even though Kant speaks of an intuitive understanding in both cases, his descriptions of the capacities in question are not quite the same. Most importantly, whereas the intellectual intuition of the first *Critique* and §76 produces its object, this is not said about the intuitive understanding of §77 that grasps the whole at a glance. This latter one is a non-discursive capacity, hence it doesn't need to compose its cognition part by part, but it has not been stipulated that it must also produce its object.

There is some basis for Förster's claim. On the one hand, there are textual details, such as in §77 where Kant speaks of different understandings in the plural, contrasting "a peculiar character of our understanding in distinction to *other possible ones*"¹³ (CJ 406; my italics). There is also the point that Kant would not seem to need to invoke a productive understanding to make the point he needs in his discussion of the organism. He only needs an understanding that is not analytic-universal in its way of cognizing. But why should this understanding also be thought of as producing its object? To have the relevant contrastive function against our understanding's mechanistic-reductionist procedure, with its concomitant need to be supplemented by teleology, it suffices that the alternative understanding grasps its object immediately and holistically. And that is also how Kant describes its *modus operandi* in §77.

However, things get more complicated when we look closer at Förster's analysis. He finds a certain ambiguity in the conception of a productive intellectual intuition, and the same ambiguity recurs also in the conception of a non-productive intuitive understanding. Förster notices that the intellectual intuition, both in CPR and in CJ, has a double face. It is sometimes described in productive terms, sometimes not. At the end of §77, after having discussed the non-discursive understanding, Kant also speaks of an "intellectual intuition", which cognizes things in themselves (CJ 409). At this point, it is an intellectual intuition that is referred to; not only does Kant say so, but its capacity to cognize things in themselves transcends the mere capacity to take in a whole at one cognitive glance that characterizes the intuitive understanding. This means that there are two kinds of intellectual intuition: the productive one,

¹²An exception (not mentioned by Förster) is McLaughlin (1990: 170), who claims that Kant describes various alternative understandings for various purposes but always calls them "intuitive". See also Westphal (2000: 283–285), who, following Moltke S. Gram, distinguishes between three accounts of an intuitive intellect in Kant: (i) an intellect that knows things in themselves independently of sensibility, (ii) an intellect creating its objects, and (iii) an intellect intuiting nature as a totality.

¹³In German: "von anderen möglichen".

and the one that merely cognizes the thing in itself. Förster points to the discussion in the chapter on Phenomena and Noumena in the first *Critique* as an earlier example of this second kind of intellectual intuition. Here, Kant says that if by a noumenon we mean “an *object of a non-sensible intuition*, then we assume a special kind of intuition, namely intellectual intuition, which, however, is not our own, and the possibility of which we cannot understand, and this would be the noumenon in a *positive sense*” (B307). And he explicitly refers to this non-sensible intuition as an intellectual intuition on the next page.

The same ambiguity between a productive variety and a non-productive one is found also in the intuitive understanding, according to Förster. He points to passages in §77 in which the intuitive understanding is described not just as a non-discursive understanding able to cognize some particular whole immediately, but as an “original understanding” thought of as “cause of the world” (CJ 410). Here, Förster admits, we find a close similarity between the intuitive understanding and a productive intellectual intuition. Förster is thus led to distinguish two aspects in Kant’s description of each type of alternative understanding. We get the following varieties:

1. *Intellectual intuition*, as

- (a) productive, abolishing the distinction between possibility and actuality; and as
- (b) non-sensible intuition of things in themselves.

2. *Intuitive understanding*, as

- (a) synthetic-universal understanding; and as
- (b) original understanding which is the cause of the world.¹⁴

How are we to take this classification? Förster makes a case for the relevance of these distinctions in interpreting the different views of Schelling, Goethe and Hegel on which kind of higher intellectual faculty we can appeal to in philosophy and natural science. This may be right as far as concerns how these thinkers read Kant, but I’m less convinced about these distinctions when it comes to Kant himself. What Förster has shown, I think, is that there is an oscillation between descriptions of the non-human cognitive capacity in terms of production and in terms of immediacy in viewing a whole. But the fact that these two aspects pop up again in *both* the intellectual intuition and in the intuitive understanding *even after* Förster has regimented the distinction between these as different kinds of alternative capacities, indicates that Kant has a general idea of a non-human cognitive capacity, which he uses for various contrastive purposes, sometimes stressing its divine, productive character and sometimes giving a more austere description of its power in terms merely of an

¹⁴Cf. Förster (2002: 179).

immediate holistic viewing.¹⁵ These two aspects tend to be intertwined in Kant's account and are not neatly separable. In any case, the human understanding that contrasts with this problematically conceived non-human capacity will be the discursive, concept-employing understanding which according to §77 operates in a piecemeal fashion and is limited to the analytical-universal.¹⁶

2 Discursivity and Transcendental Idealism

We have thus seen that whereas the non-discursive understanding is thought of as productive or at least as able to grasp things in their totality in an immediate way, without cognitive synthesis, this is not how the discursive human understanding works. The human understanding has to receive objects from a separate source, sensibility. It must determine the intuitions thus given by acts of synthesis, which work in a piecemeal manner, and the objects of cognition that this process results in are not things in themselves, but appearances, things as considered from the point of view of the human understanding. Now the question arises whether this account of the discursive nature of our understanding already constitutes an argument for transcendental idealism. It could be taken as an example of what Karl Ameriks has called "short arguments" for transcendental idealism, that is, arguments that from very general considerations "attempt to establish transcendental idealism [...] without going through the actual long and complex steps that Kant lays out in the [...] *Critique of Pure Reason*" (Ameriks 2001, 168). By describing our understanding as discursive, the conclusion that we do not have cognition of things in themselves seems to follow directly. Now, Ameriks points out that it is implausible to ascribe short arguments to Kant, since his main arguments for transcendental idealism and the distinction between appearances and things in themselves depend on the results of detailed arguments about space and time in the Transcendental Aesthetic.

There are good reasons against viewing discursivity as sufficient for establishing transcendental idealism. For instance, the characterization of the human understanding as discursive is stipulated rather than argued for, although there is some phenomenological evidence for it (such as the consciousness of spontaneity in thinking, the fact that we passively receive sense impressions, and the experience of not being able to produce objects by means of mere thought). Furthermore, without the detailed arguments about space and time being the forms of intuition, it would be

¹⁵According to Förster, Kant didn't clearly separate the intuitive understanding from the intellectual intuition until he saw the use of distinguishing them for handling the question of teleology.

¹⁶McLaughlin (1990: 170) has attempted to differentiate not only between differing alternative understandings but also between 'discursivity' in contrast to intellectual intuition in CPR and in contrast to the intuitive understanding in CJ §77. However, it is implausible in my view that Kant would use a central term like 'discursivity' otherwise than in its basic meaning pertaining to the requirement for concept-employing; and I also think that there is no essential difference between the description of discursivity as analytical-universal in CJ and Kant's descriptions of it in other texts.

difficult to see why discursivity must preclude knowledge of things in themselves. It might be argued that discursivity is compatible with such knowledge, if space and time are real properties of things in themselves, since in that case the requirement for data given in sensibility would not restrict the employment of the understanding to appearances. So, obviously, merely pointing out that the human understanding is discursive is not sufficient for the purpose of establishing transcendental idealism, and the arguments of the Transcendental Aesthetic are essential.

There is thus much to be said for Ameriks' point, but nonetheless there seems to be some truth in the view that discursivity leads to transcendental idealism. I think the best way to accommodate these conflicting views is to acknowledge that discursivity gives a kind of short argument for idealism, but more in the sense of an argument sketch than a full-fledged argument. Pointing to the discursivity of the human understanding and how it contrasts with an intuitive understanding indicates that we are heading for transcendental idealism, but the implications of discursivity need to be spelled out in detail in 'long' arguments in order to give anything like a proof. And such detailed chains of reasoning are not absent in the *Critique*: the Metaphysical Deduction, the Transcendental Deduction, the Schematism and the Principles all offer long arguments, or indeed parts of a single long argument, based on discursivity and not just on the ideality of space and time.

Focusing on the nature of discursivity as a clue for the interpretation of transcendental idealism is largely consonant with the approach of Henry Allison (2004). He has stressed the importance of intellectual conditions for cognition besides the sensible conditions (the forms of intuition). He points to the role of intellectual conditions also for the distinction between things in themselves and appearances, so that we don't one-sidedly think of transcendental idealism as entirely based on the doctrine of the Aesthetic. The intellectual conditions that Allison considers are basically connected to the functions of judging that give rise to the categories.¹⁷ Here, instead of going through the relevant issues in the metaphysical and transcendental deductions pertaining to the nature of judging, I will limit my discussion to an examination of some cases where Kant's statements about things in themselves can be interpreted by means of a consideration of his view on the structure of discursivity, taken as a theory of concepts.

From the description in CJ §77 of the analytical universality of the discursive understanding some information can be gleaned about the structure of thought in isolation. This structure of conceptuality abstractly conceived of on its own might be called discursivity in the logical sense. It corresponds to general logic¹⁸—whereas transcendental logic, as an epistemic logic for application to real objects, is connected to discursivity in the epistemic sense, that is, to the fact that our understanding is dependent on sensibility. As the procedure of thought in cognizing is to

¹⁷Another important study of the role of judging in Kant is Longuenesse (1998).

¹⁸General logic "considers representations [...] merely in respect of the laws according to which the understanding brings them into relation to one another when it thinks, and therefore it deals only with the form of the understanding" (A56=B80).

build up composites of conceptually determined parts, we should expect to find this same compositional *modus operandi* when we conceive of thought in abstraction from sensibility, without intuitional content.¹⁹ And this is actually what we find in some claims of Kant's about things in themselves as consisting of simple parts.²⁰ Consider the following statements:

- (i) [F]or a whole made up of substances thought through the pure understanding it might very well hold that prior to all composition of such substances we must have a simple; but this does not hold for a *totum substantiale phaenomenon*. (A442=B470)
- (ii) Of course, if I know a drop of water as a thing in itself according to all of its inner determinations, I cannot let any one drop count as different from another if the entire concept of the former is identical with that of the latter. (A272=B328)
- (iii) I cannot put such a hand as is seen in the mirror in the place of its original; for if the one was a right hand, then the other in the mirror is a left, and the image of the right ear is a left one, which can never take the place of the former. Now there are no inner differences here that any understanding could merely think; and yet the differences are inner as far as the senses teach [. . .]; one hand's glove cannot be used on the other. [. . .] These objects are surely not representations of things as they are in themselves, and as the pure understanding would cognize them, rather, they are sensory intuitions, i.e., appearances [. . .]. [As regards space] the part is possible only through the whole, which never occurs with things in themselves as objects of the understanding alone, but does occur with mere appearances. (*Prol.*, AA 4: 286 [Kant 2004, 38])

Statement (i) says that for substances as things in themselves, thought by the pure understanding, we might well accept that they are composed of ultimate simples. Statement (ii) is about the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. It apparently claims that this principle is valid for things in themselves. Statements like these, that identify principles valid for things in themselves, have been felt by some commentators to disclose a metaphysical agenda in Kant that transgresses the limits dictated by his official tenet of ignorance of things in themselves.²¹ That Kant accepts such principles for things in themselves would then show that at bottom much of rationalistic metaphysics survives unscathed behind the critical façade.

However, it is easy to see that the conception in (i) of substances as compositions of independent simples is exactly what we should expect given what we know about the structure of discursivity. Concepts consist of discrete parts, *Merkmale*, which are themselves concepts. As Kant claimed early on²² and maintained in CPR,²³ there

¹⁹Note that 'content' has a double application. An intuition is said to give content to concepts (A51=B75: "Thoughts without content are empty"), whereas conceptual content is what is meant when speaking of 'metal' as part of the content of 'gold'.

²⁰For an excellent discussion of the notions of simplicity and composition in the Second Antinomy see Radner (1998).

²¹Cf. Kemp Smith (2003: 419); Van Cleve (1999: 149–150).

²²Cf. the *Prize Essay* (1764): "[T]he analysis will inevitably lead to concepts which are unanalysable" (AA 2: 280 [Kant 2003, 252]).

²³For example, in B40: "[N]o concept, as such, can be thought as if it contained an infinite set of representations *within itself*."

can be but a finite number of concepts in the conceptual content of any concept, so that analysis, the decomposition of concepts, will in principle reach an end, though in practice this is presumably seldom attained. A concept (or analytical-universal in the terminology of CJ §77) considered as a whole is built up from parts that are concepts too. These conceptual parts will be less specific than the whole, i.e., the concept they constitute. This structure is shown in hierarchies of concepts where the more general ones, having less intension, are ordered above the less general ones that are richer in intension (as, for instance, ‘animal’ would be placed above ‘cat’). In such a hierarchy, a concept’s content or intension consists of the concepts above it in the hierarchical ordering.²⁴ A concept or analytical-universal can thus be taken to have as its parts the concepts it contains. Conceptual parts can be thought of independently from the concept they compose (‘animal’ can be thought of independently of ‘cat’, but not the other way around), so the primitive concepts can be said to be “prior to all composition”, like the simples composing the substances in (i). The substances in (i) are “thought through the pure understanding”, which means that this is a conception arrived at by means of abstraction from the application of discursivity to possible objects of intuition. Now, such an abstraction as a theory of conceptual structure disregarding all objects would yield general logic. But in rationalistic ontology it is taken as referring to abstract objects or even to metaphysical things in themselves. So, far from displaying Kant’s deepest commitments in metaphysics, the passage rather shows his diagnosis of how the discursive understanding has to conceive of things metaphysically, when it misunderstands its function, that is, when a comparison and ordering of concepts belonging to general logic is taken to constitute cognition of objects, as if logical comparison were sufficient for transcendental logic.

Statement (ii) presents the principle of identity of indiscernibles. However, contrary to what might seem, Kant does not claim knowledge about a metaphysical law of things in themselves: the law is “simply an analytical rule of comparison of things through mere concepts” (A272=B328).²⁵ “Mere concepts” are concepts in isolation from possible objects of intuition (what I call discursivity in the logical sense). The closely related rule of the indiscernibility of identicals states that things determined in thought with identical predicates are the same, and this would hold for things conceived of as determined entirely by the understanding. But for things as appearances, this rule doesn’t work, since objects with the same conceptual determinations may differ in spatial location and therefore be numerically different (A272=B328). So the point of presenting these rules as valid for things in themselves but not for appearance is not to state a metaphysical truth about noumenal objects, but merely to indicate the deficiency of the rules for individuating objects in experience.

²⁴For more on Kant’s theory of conceptual containment, see Anderson (2005).

²⁵Following the Akademie edition, which follows the fourth German edition of CPR (1794), that has “der” instead of “oder” (“rule of comparison” instead of “rule or comparison”). Nothing much hinges on this emendation, however.

Kant's discussion of the principle of indiscernibility is closely connected to the topic of statement (iii), the problem of incongruent counterparts. As is well known, Kant claims that the phenomenon of incongruent counterparts, for instance a left and a right hand glove, shows that such a feature of space as its orientation cannot be accounted for on a purely conceptual basis.

However, Kant doesn't content himself with the attempt to establish the insufficiency of conceptual relations for grasping spatial orientation. He also states a general principle about things in themselves: that they are never possible through the whole (in contradistinction to space). Now, what is going on here? Why does Kant connect the question of whether spatial orientation can be accounted for by means of concepts alone, or if it requires a theory of pure intuition, to the distinction between thing in itself and appearance?²⁶ And isn't Kant here clearly going beyond the bounds of knowledge—how can one claim ignorance of things in themselves and yet say that a certain kind of mereological organization is impossible for such things in themselves? A step towards an explanation of Kant's seemingly strange strategy in this passage is taken when we construe "things in themselves" in this context as referring to things "as the pure understanding would cognize them", i.e., things as conceived through the structure of thought itself, abstracting from its connection to possible objects. The mistake of the Leibnizian theory of space as conceptual is, for Kant, that it takes the analytical relations of general logic to be sufficient for the description of space and the cognition of spatial objects. While this move neglects the intuitional features of space, it also involves a hypostatizing of conceptual relations, as the understanding is supposed to be capable of cognizing things on its own. These putative objects of a pure understanding would therefore mirror the structure of discursivity. The compositional structure of simples making up wholes is the effect of the analytic-universal spoken of in CJ §77, the peculiarity of the discursive understanding, but the Leibnizian ascribes this structure to things in themselves.

3 Conclusion

In the cases I have been discussing of statements about things in themselves, these 'things' can be seen as hypostatized structures of discursivity. Such structures are taken to yield knowledge of objects because of the assumption that concepts without intuitions are enough for cognition of objects "as they are" (as the Inaugural Dissertation puts it; AA 2: 392). But Kant also thinks that the Ideas of reason can lead to the assumption of things in themselves, such as the substantial soul, through the illusion of reason.

We thus have different employments of the expression 'things in themselves' in Kant, and various conceptions of cognitively non-realizable objects assumed in philosophically mistaken epistemologies. But then we also have positive use for

²⁶Cf. Apel (1923: 118), who sees Kant's linking of the question of the nature of space to the distinction between thing in itself and appearance as "gänzlich verfehlt" and as a remnant of the pre-critical view on intellectual cognition of the Inaugural Dissertation.

some notions of things in themselves, as the thought of the existence of something, “the supersensible real ground for nature” (CJ 409) or “substratum” of nature (CJ 410), that exists independently of the particular way we cognize it through discursivity and our particular forms of intuitions; “as a concept setting limits to sensibility” (A256=B311). And most importantly, the notion of the thing in itself serves as a way of conceiving of the human subject and the realm of morality in practical philosophy, where we switch to a perspective not bounded by the conditions of theoretical cognition. The thing in itself is thus not so much a thing, or a kind of thing, as a term which serves multifarious functions at various places in Kant’s system. It is a concept that arises from reflection on the conditions of cognition from inside cognition rather than from an external (or transcendental realist) vantage point, to a large extent through an investigation of the workings of discursivity, and that subsequently can be applied critically to other philosophical views, as these are charged of confusing appearances and things in themselves.

Acknowledgments I am indebted to the participants at the conference on Kant’s Transcendental Logic and Idealism in Amsterdam 2008, and especially to Dennis Schulting for very helpful comments.

References

- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Revised & Enlarged edition. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2001. ‘Kant and Short Arguments to Humility’. In P. Cicovacki (ed.), *Kant’s Legacy: Essays in Honor of Lewis White Beck*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, pp. 167–194.
- Anderson, R. L. 2005. ‘The Wolffian Paradigm and its Discontent: Kant’s Containment Definition of Analyticity in Historical Context’. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 87: 22–74.
- Apel, M. 1923. *Kommentar zu Kants Prolegomena*. Zweite, vervollständigte Auflage. Leipzig: Meiner.
- Förster, E. 2002. ‘Die Bedeutung von §§76, 77 der Kritik der Urteilskraft für die Entwicklung der nachkantischen Philosophie, Teil 1’. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 56: 169–190.
- Friebe, C. 2008. ‘Kant’s Ontology of Organisms’. In L. Illetterati and F. Michelini (eds.), *Purpose: Between Nature and Intention*. Frankfurt am Main: Ontos Verlag, pp. 59–74.
- Hegel, G.W.F. 1968. *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 4: *Jenaer kritische Schriften*. Ed. H. Buchner and O. Pöggeler. Hamburg: Meiner.
- Kant, I. 1997. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Ed. P. Guyer and trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2003. *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*. Trans. and ed. D. Walford. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2004. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Revised edition. Trans. and ed. G. Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kemp Smith, N. 2003 [1923]. *A Commentary to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kjosavik, F. 2009. ‘Kant on Geometrical Intuition and the Foundations of Mathematics’. *Kant-Studien* 100: 1–27.
- Longuenesse, B. 1998. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 2000. ‘Point of View of Man or Knowledge of God: Kant and Hegel on Concept, Judgment, and Reason’. In S. Sedgwick (ed.), *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 253–282.

- McLaughlin, P. 1990. *Kant's Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Quarfood, M. 2004. *Transcendental Idealism and the Organism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Radner, M. 1998. 'Unlocking the Second Antinomy: Kant and Wolff'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36: 413–441.
- Rang, B. 1993. 'Zweckmässigkeit, Zweckursächlichkeit und Ganzheitlichkeit in der organischen Natur'. *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 100: 39–71.
- Schelling, F. W. J. 1907. *Werke*, vol. 1. Leipzig: Fritz Eckardt Verlag.
- Serck-Hanssen, C. and E. Emilsson 2004. 'Kant and Plato'. *Sats* 5: 71–82.
- Van Cleve, J. 1999. *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Westphal, K. 2000. 'Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of "the" Intuitive Intellect'. In S. Sedgwick (ed.), *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 283–305.

Chapter 9

Limitation and Idealism: Kant's 'Long' Argument from the Categories

Dennis Schulting

Abbreviations

- PEM Principle of Excluded Middle (*Principium Exclusi Tertii*)
PNC Principle of Non-Contradiction
PTD Principle of Thoroughgoing Determination (*Principium Omnimodaе Determinationis*)
TD Transcendental Deduction of the categories

1 Introduction: Thinking the Thing in Itself and Idealism

The main question to which I want to begin trying to find an answer here is the question what it is that we exactly think, if Kant grants that by means of the pure concepts in abstraction from sensible intuition we can and indeed must still think things in themselves as the ground of the appearances that we cognize as the empirically real objects of experience.¹ Robert Adams believes that “in extending our categories ‘farther than the sensible intuition’ we can think *consistently* about things as they may be in themselves” (Adams 1997, 810). Such an extension would appear to come down to what Kant says is a “transcendental use of a concept”, which “consists in its being related to things in general and in themselves” (A238=B298), and the possibility of which at one point Kant effectively rejects (A246=B303). The question is what this supposedly consistent thought about things in themselves amounts to, if not to the “*real* possibility of such things” (Adams, *ibid.*)? Do the categories

D. Schulting (✉)
Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam,
1012 GC, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: d.schulting@uva.nl

¹Cf. A96; Bxxvi. Most emphatically, A143=B182: “[T]hat which corresponds to the sensation in these [appearances] is the transcendental matter of all objects, as things in themselves (thinghood, reality [*Sachheit, Realität*]).” All translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Guyer and Wood (Kant 1998), except where indicated otherwise.

have a relation at all to an object or do they “only signif[y] the unity of thinking in general” (B314=A259),² by means of which nothing determinate is thought (*Prol.*, AA 4: 355), and thus constitute only a *logical* possibility (B302–303n.)? Or worse, is it all “a mere play” with concepts (A239=B298)?

A related question that I want to investigate is: Does idealism follow from merely *thinking* things in themselves? My answer to this question, which I shall argue here, is a qualified ‘yes’. This has repercussions for the widespread naturalist readings of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, which want to do away with idealism about objects but would like to hold on to what they deem worthwhile in Kant’s transcendental theory,³ or else interpret idealism such that it doesn’t conflict with common sense realism (Wood 2005, 72). My underlying claim is that to do away with idealism or to take the edge off it is to give up transcendental philosophy tout court.

More specifically, without offering what would amount to a short argument as support (cf. Ameriks 2003, 99, 102; Ameriks 2000b, 127, 127n.122—hence the subtitle of my paper), I am going to argue that even in abstraction from the constraints of sensibility, the mere thought of a thing in itself entails idealism. Importantly, this does not constitute a short argument, i.e., an argument to the effect that, as Ameriks has explained in his justified critique of Reinholdian strategies for reading Kant’s idealism, the “mere reflection on the notion of a form of representation is taken to be sufficient for the Unknowability Thesis” (Ameriks 2000b, 128; cf. *ibid.*, 163; cf. Henrich 2004, 372), the latter amounting to the positive claim that we can’t have knowledge of things in themselves. It is not because the object that, as represented, is formally distinguishable from its representation can, trivially, only be represented through a representation and so not as a thing in itself that idealism is entailed. The reason why the thought of a thing in itself implies idealism is not so much conceptual as that it has to do with the nature of a thing in itself. This involves a complex, ‘long’ argument concerning transcendental materiality that is the ground of discursive judgment and thus of the very conceptual elements of possible experience, for which reason the thing in itself can ex hypothesi not be determined as such, that is, *as* it is in itself.⁴ A rather too short exposition of this ‘long’ argument for idealism from the categories follows in Section 5.

In my view, the thing in itself (*de re*) is not *identical* strictly speaking to its being thought by means of mere concepts. I contend that the thought or concept of a thing

²Cf. Adams (1997: 810). Cf. B166n.: “[T]he categories are not restricted in *thinking* by the conditions of our sensible intuition, but have an unbounded field, and only the *cognition* of objects that we think, the determination of the object, requires intuition; in the absence of the latter, the thought of the object can still have its true and useful consequences for the use of the subject’s reason [...].”

³See e.g., Strawson (1966), and more recently Abela (2002) and Westphal (2004). Abela is not dismissive of Kant’s idealism, but he does emphasize that it has no *epistemological* import.

⁴See also Ameriks (2006: 151, 152, esp. 153). Quite rightly, Ameriks relates transcendental idealism to issues regarding the unconditioned.

in itself doesn't exhaust all of the thing's properties, whose essence we thus can't determine or define⁵ (other than its logically deducible characteristics, i.e., the a priori concepts of the understanding which make up the concept of an object *in general*). Crucially, the thing in itself as it is conceived of isn't necessarily how the thing in itself *is* as such. Put differently, the *concept* of a thing in itself doesn't map isomorphically on the thing in itself (*de re*), which is precisely why according to the Critical Kant we are precluded from having knowledge of it through conceptual analysis alone.⁶ Idealism isn't entailed because there is a putative thing that is ideal on the grounds of it being entirely or partly dependent on the *epistemic* or *logical* conditions of its being thought (or being represented, as Reinhold contended; see above), or because the thing in itself is merely the concept of that which remains in abstraction from these conditions. Idealism is entailed rather because discursive thought isn't capable of determining, even *merely* conceptually, the thoroughly determined nature of the putative thing that is being thought.⁷ In fact, the thought or concept of a thing in itself doesn't pick out an object defined in any straightforward sense (other than its transcendental-logical characteristics). The idealism here concerns the inherent limitation of discursive thinking, of our very conceptuality, as a result of which we can't have a determinate concept of a thing in itself. In arguing that idealism affects our very conceptuality, I am going against the suggestion made by Adams (1997: 806) that "Kant sees our possibility of conceiving of things in themselves as drastically limited, in the first instance, by a limitation, *not* of our

⁵Cf. Kant A241ff.=B299ff. We can't in general, i.e., in abstraction from sensible intuition, define (in a real sense) the categories, that is, determine all the marks that constitute the concept. For example, "If I leave out persistence (which is existence at all times), then nothing is left in my concept of substance except the logical representation of the subject, which I try to realize by representing to myself something that can occur solely as subject (without being a predicate of anything). But then it is not only the case that I do not even know of any conditions under which this logical preeminence can be attributed to any sort of thing; it is also the case that absolutely nothing further is to be made of it, and not even the least consequence is to be drawn from it, because by its means no object whatever of the use of this concept is determined, and one therefore does not even know whether the latter means anything at all." The reason that the categories can't be defined is that we would move in a circle as we need the categories to define them (cf. B404).

⁶Precisely the identification of the *concept* of the thing in itself and the *being* of the thing in itself brought Hegel to think that there is no gap at all between thought and being.

⁷It is most interesting to note that, as Manfred Baum pointed out to me in writing, Johann Friedrich Flatt, who was professor of philosophy and Hegel's teacher in the Tübinger Stift, stated in his reply (*Antikritik*), published in the *Philosophisches Magazin*, to a review of his work *Fragmentarische Beyträge zur Bestimmung und Deduction des Begriffes und Grundsatzes der Causalität und zur Grundlegung der natürlichen Theologie; in Beziehung auf die Kantische Philosophie* (Crusius: Frankfurt, Leipzig 1788), which Reinhold published in the *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* of January 3rd 1789, that, contrary to Reinhold's view of the unrepresentability of the thing in itself (which Reinhold even labels an 'Uding'), the most that can be shown is that "keine dem ausser dem Gemüthe vorhandenen Gegenstandes, nach seiner durchgängigen Bestimmung betrachtet, vollkommen entsprechende Vorstellung, für uns möglich sey". (*Philosophisches Magazin* II, 3, 1789, S. 387, published in reprint in *Aetas Kantiana*; emphasis added) Flatt's view may be seen as a precursor of the position that will be defended here. I am much obliged to Manfred Baum for providing me this reference. See further Henrich (2004: 367ff.).

active conceptual faculty, but rather of our passive intuitive faculty". I am not claiming that idealism is not concerned with the limitations of intuition, but I am saying that the limitation *also* already affects our conceptual faculty.⁸

If we relate this to the question regarding the possibility of the categories providing the minimal form of thinking an object in general, thus putatively enabling the thought of things in themselves as they are, in abstraction from sensible constraints, then it seems that, if not all the categories (see B300ff.), at least the categories of quality don't fit this framework, in particular, the category of limitation and concomitantly negation.⁹ It is to an account of these categories that I shall turn to support my claim that idealism follows from discursivity alone. I shall make use of arguments that Kant provides in a transitional section in the Transcendental Dialectic, concerning the Transcendental Ideal, where he speaks of the transcendental prototype or also the thing in itself in its proper metaphysical context (at A576=B604 Kant connects the topic of the transcendental Ideal with "the concept of a thing in itself"). In general, I take Kant to hold the view that "no category is serviceable [*tauglich*]" to determine "objects for our understanding" (B344=A288; notice that here Kant dissociates the concept of a noumenon from the concept of an object).

In close connection with the above set of claims, my general view is that Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves amounts to a distinction between two kinds or classes of 'object' (in the general sense) which map on one ontological realm, namely Being itself, and only one of which is a determinate object for our cognition and only one of which is a completely determined individual, a thing in itself.¹⁰ The one kind of object is not identical to the other, whilst

⁸I am also going against Adickes in this regard, for he writes: "Nicht also in den Kategorien selbst und ihrer positiven Eigenart liegt ein Hindernis das sich der Erkennbarkeit der Dinge an sich durch sie entgegenstellt [. . .]". (Adickes 1924, 70) See for Adickes' views further below (Section 2).

⁹At least some of the categories, like substance and causality, would appear to have a transcendent function, most clearly in practical philosophy. Cf. Martin (1969: 232ff.). See further below (Section 2).

¹⁰Like Van Cleve (1999: 8), I believe that appearances, which he calls "virtual objects" or "intentional objects", have no special kind of being of their own (existing apart from things in themselves). There is just one realm of being, of which appearances, as a distinct class of objects, are part. Van Cleve has a somewhat similar reading as mine; he writes: "My interpretation is nonetheless dualistic in the following sense: the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is a distinction between two separate universes of discourse—not between two ways of discoursing about the same class of objects. If there is a sense in which I believe in one world only, it is [. . .] a world whose *only* denizens are things in themselves." (1999: 150) However, I decline the use of the term 'virtual object', for this would suggest that the object as appearance is a *mere* mental object, which would make Kant's theory of knowledge sound too psychological (or idealist in the empirical sense, which of course Kant strongly disavowed). Appearances are *real*, not virtual, objects that are the spatiotemporal empirical objects of outer sense and so are not 'in us' in an empirical sense. On the other hand, appearances as represented are dependent on our minds' (cognitive) representations and so, as appearances, they 'exist' (in the virtual sense) only when we (cognitively) represent them (there is strong reciprocity between subject and object), or to put it in more Kantian terms, appearances are only objects of *possible* experience, whereas things in themselves

the one object is, in some sense, a delimited part of the other. Furthermore, there is no one-to-one isomorphism between phenomenal object or appearance and thing in itself, which isn't to say that there aren't *any* isomorphisms between the phenomenal and the noumenal (cf. Van Cleve 1999, 158; Henrich 2004, 372). The 'object' is either an appearance as an empirically real object (an object in Kant's sense) or a thing in itself that is transcendentally real, whereby the empirically real object is a limitation of the transcendentally real 'thing', of reality tout court. I note in advance that, whereas the putative real thing in itself is completely individuated and so is an individual (see below Section 5), one isn't licensed to speak of the empirically real object of possible experience (i.e., the appearance) in terms of an individual.¹¹

I thus depart from two-aspect (one object) readings of idealism, either the methodological version espoused by Allison and others or the more recent metaphysical or ontological versions. There is considerable prima facie textual support for two-aspect readings (see Rosefeldt 2007, 170), but I believe both versions run up against identity problems that have to do with their inability to account for the assumption that, apropos of the methodological two-aspect view, two exclusionary perspectives relate to one and the same thing/object and, as to the metaphysical two-aspects or two-properties reading, one and the same thing/object has two different exclusionary sets of properties or, if not expressed in terms of metaphysical properties, is specifiable by "two ways of knowing the same things" (Allais 2006, 160; cf. Frank 1997, 82–83).

My central claim is that idealism is entailed by our very conceptuality, independently even from sensibility. However, I deny that this means that the transcendentally real is an "empty category" or has no "ontological status" (Ameriks 2003, 103). Although I do not believe that the pure thought of a thing in itself has any object for itself (strictly speaking), on my reading the non-ideal, i.e., the thing in itself, still has a greater ontological status than the ideal, i.e., the phenomenal object (cf. Ameriks 2003, 104); that is to say, there is some thing that is substantially more than the phenomenal object of experience. In Section 2, by examining text passages from Kant I amplify a bit the idea that although we must be able notionally to think things in themselves, we can't even conceive, through pure concepts, how they are in themselves in any determinate sense. In Section 3, I consider the recent identity interpretation of the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction presented by Allen Wood, which, unsurprisingly on my reading, I find hugely problematic. In Section 4, I give an all too brief account of the fundamental claim of the Transcendental Deduction

are not so dependent and so exist (in the real sense) distinctly from our representations and also unperceived (cf. A374–375; *Prol.* §52c, AA 4: 341–342; see also A493ff.=B522ff.). I take Van Cleve to mean appearances, not things in themselves, when he says that "the objects in question owe their very existence to being cognized by us" (1999: 5). If any reference to the *esse est percipi* principle should be made in this context (Van Cleve 1999, 9), then we should heed that it holds for appearances as objects of possible experience, not for things in themselves, whose being is not at all dependent on us perceivers (cf. Allison 2004, 40).

¹¹ I thank Manfred Baum for emphasizing this point in discussion. Collins (1999: 15) is therefore wrong to suggest that empirical objects, appearances, can be called individuals.

(TD), which will prepare the ground for the argument of Section 5. In that section, I focus, very broadly, on aspects relating to the Transcendental Ideal in regard to the thing in itself, specifically in regard to the notions of reality and limitation. This provides support for my central claim regarding idealism.

2 Do the Categories Have Meaning Beyond the Bounds of Sensible Experience?

In the concluding sections of the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* Kant writes that “it would be absurd [*Ungereimtheit*] for us to hope that we can know more of any object than belongs to the possible experience of it or lay claim to the least knowledge of how anything not assumed to be an object of possible experience is determined according to the constitution that it has in itself” (*Prolog.* §57, AA 4: 350).¹² The reason for this, Kant says, is that objects are only knowable under certain conditions, i.e., space and time as well as the concepts of the understanding, which “have no other use than to make experience possible” (*ibid.*). Indeed, “if this condition is omitted from the pure concepts of the understanding, they do not determine any object and have no meaning whatever”.¹³

At the end of the Schematism chapter in the *Critique*, Kant asserts that without the schematization of the concepts of pure understanding no relation to objects is provided. He is quite clear as to denying the possibility of “amplify[ing] the previously limited concept”, i.e., the concept limited by a restricting condition concerning sensibility, so that “the categories in their pure significance, without any conditions of sensibility, should hold for things in general, *as they are*, instead of their schemata merely representing them *how they appear*”, and would thus “have a significance independent of all schemata and extending far beyond them”. (B186=A147; cf. Martin 1969, 167) The significance that pure categories could have is only a “logical significance”, concerning “the mere unity of representations”, which yields no “concept¹⁴ of an object”. Kant concludes that “[w]ithout schemata, therefore, the categories are only functions of the understanding for concepts, but do not represent any object. This significance comes to them from sensibility, *which realizes the understanding at the same time as it restricts it*” (B186–187=A147; my emphasis; cf. B253). At B178 Kant is even clearer as to the putative application of categories to things in themselves: “[T]hey cannot pertain to things in themselves (without regard to how and whether they may be given to us) at all [*auf Dinge an sich* [. . .] *gar nicht gehen können*]¹⁵.”

¹²All translations from the *Prolegomena* are from the James Ellington edition (Kant 1977).

¹³Cf. B150; B298 (AA 3: 204.15–20); B300 (3: 205.14–23); A242 (4: 158.29–159.09).

¹⁴In Kant’s own copy of the *Critique*, “cognition [*Erkenntnis*]” is substituted for “concept [*Begriff*]” here.

¹⁵In the Italian Gentile translation *gehen auf* is aptly translated as *riferirsi*, meaning ‘refer to’.

Nevertheless, Kant insists in the same *Prolegomena* passage quoted earlier that it would be “a still greater absurdity if we conceded [*einräumen*] no things in themselves” (AA 4: 351), even though the categories aren’t applicable to things in themselves and so cannot strictly speaking represent them as such. That the categories do not pertain to things in themselves doesn’t, as Kant says, imply there not *being*, in some sense, such things. It isn’t implied by the categories’ inability to apply to a thing in itself that the thing in itself isn’t what it is, whatever it is.

The position that Kant adopts in the *Prolegomena* is consistent with the view that he espouses in the first *Critique*, where Kant acknowledges and indeed considers necessary the extramental being of things in themselves, which appear as and which we determine to be the empirically real objects that we experience. In the *Critique* Kant speaks likewise of the threat of incongruity, for if we weren’t capable of at least thinking things in themselves, “the absurd proposition [would follow] that there is an appearance without anything that appears”. (Bxxvi; cf. *Prolog.* §32, AA 4: 314–315; A251ff.) Apart from the conceptual absurdity of an appearance that has no ground of appearing, it is clear that if there were only objects as appearances, which we can cognize, but no things that are the substrate or ground¹⁶ of these appearances which at various points Kant says are ‘mere representations’, then the central claim of TD that our representations have objective validity or objective reality wouldn’t amount to much and would lack probative force. It is true that in order for representations to have objective reference, by being unified in an objective unity, it is both necessary and formally sufficient for them to be governed by the dual *formal* conditions of knowledge (the pure concepts and pure intuitions), which establish cognition of things merely as appearances. However, there still has to be a *materially* sufficient condition which grounds empirical knowledge of an *actual* given object that is more than just an object in general; and in order to cognize the actuality of things perception is required, i.e., sensation, which, in our experience, is the connecting characteristic to the *thing itself* (B272=A225).¹⁷ Thus if there weren’t things that existed in themselves (in some sense) independently from our minds to which they appear, then we wouldn’t have sensible perception, and a fortiori cognition, of things either. This would uproot the whole project of the analysis of knowledge.¹⁸

¹⁶Cf. AA 29: 857.

¹⁷Cf. B182=A143: “[T]hat which corresponds [*entspricht*] to the sensation in these [appearances] is the transcendental matter of all objects, as things in themselves (thinghood, reality).”

¹⁸One could of course argue that the project in the *Critique* is precisely to demonstrate *that* there are things that exist extramentally, so that the thing’s existence cannot figure as the premise of the argument. This would not only mean that we can’t assume the existence of things, but also that, since it is based on something non-mental that prompts it, we can’t be sure of having sense perception either unless we assume some inner sensation-producing faculty of the mind or God having planted sense ideas in our minds (both of which Descartes suggests are possibilities we can’t rule out). This in turn would invite the familiar transcendental argument strategy, espoused by so many readers of Kant. But I believe that Kant is not trying to demonstrate the existence of extramental things, i.e., *that* they exist, but rather, more modestly and quite like Descartes for that

It seems clear, then, that, as Adickes has demonstrated in his classic *Kant und das Ding an sich* (1924) by canvassing ample textual support in the first *Critique*, the fact that there are in some sense things in themselves apart from their way of appearing to us as cognizers is never in doubt for Kant.¹⁹ However, we should be aware (1) that their existence can only first be *determined* by virtue of the attribution of the modal category of existence, through judgment, so that the existence of things is not guaranteed as a matter of course, as Adickes seems to believe²⁰; we should distinguish between a general claim regarding the independence of things in themselves from our minds and specific claims regarding the fact that particular things in themselves or a singular thing in itself exist(s); (2) that by means of applying the modal category of existence it is only determined *that* things exist; it doesn't tell us anything about the mode in which they exist (for that further categories are needed, not least the categories of quality). Nevertheless, although we do not know things in themselves as we know them in the way that they appear, we do know, by extrapolation, *that* they must exist (in some sense)²¹ independently of the manner in which we intuit them to be, *given* the possibility of experience. As has rightly been noted many times by Karl Ameriks in response to typical objections raised first by Jacobi and then by champions of German Idealism, there is nothing contradictory in claiming to know something, in a very general sense, regarding that which transcends the limits of knowledge as long as we distinguish between kinds of cognition, only one of which yields determinate knowledge.²²

So far so good. It is only at this point that the controversy starts. First, as Adickes, as one of the first as far as I know, pointed out very extensively and very clearly in the course of his aforementioned book, there is a lingering ambiguity in, on the one hand, holding the view, as Kant does, that the categories can have no meaning and

matter, he wants to demonstrate the terms under which our representations acquire the objective reality or validity that connects them to extramental things (A197=B242).

¹⁹See Bird (2006: 554ff.) for an extended critique of Adickes' views.

²⁰Bird (2006: 536, 555ff.) criticizes Adickes on this point, for being too quick in assuming the actual existence of things in themselves. However, Bird wrongly concludes that Kant is not committed to the actual existence of things in themselves. That the *conceivability* of things in themselves does not eo ipso imply their actual existence doesn't mean that they do not actually exist.

²¹Strictly speaking, it is not the thing in itself *as such*, then, that exists, but that of which we determine in judgment that it exists. Existence (as a category) is first bestowed upon the thing by the determinative power of the understanding. But that doesn't mean that the thing so determined doesn't exist mind-independently, nor that it isn't the mind-independent thing in itself *only* that is the denizen of Being. The *determination* of existence in thought shouldn't be conflated with de facto existence.

²²Cf. Ameriks (2000b). Kant makes a clear distinction between thinking or conceiving and knowing (B146); to put it differently, we have no "determinate knowledge [*Bestimmtes Wissen*]" of things in themselves or "pure beings of the understanding [*Verstandeswesen*]" (*Prol.* §32, AA 4: 315; translation amended), but we can still entertain the notion of 'thing in itself' without contradiction. One could also make a distinction between positive knowledge about things in themselves and negative knowledge about them (i.e., knowledge that such and such does not pertain to them), corresponding to Kant's distinction between noumenon in a positive and in a negative sense (problematic use).

do not determine any object outside of the realm of sensible experience and, on the other hand, believing that we must be able at least to *think* the underlying things in themselves that we do not cognize by way of their appearing and so claiming to know at least *something*, if only conceptually, about some thing that transcends the confines of cognition. If we know something about that which transcends the limits of knowledge by thinking it, then it would appear that at least some concepts, if not the pure concepts (categories), are employed in so doing. And this would imply that those concepts must yield *some* meaning and can't be entirely without sense. Indeed, as Kant writes in the section 'Phenomena and Noumena' at B309=A253–254, “if [...] I leave out all intuition, then there still remains the form of thinking, i.e., the way of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition”. Significantly, Kant continues, “[...] the categories extend further than sensible intuition, since they think objects in general without seeing to the particular manner (of sensibility) in which they might be given” (cf. B150). Such passages appear to lend credence to the view espoused by Adams, whom I quoted in the beginning. The gloss we thus need to give on those passages in the *Critique* where Kant seems to stress the *lack* of meaningfulness of the categories in abstraction from their application to sensible intuition is that meaning or reference (*Bedeutung*) must be interpreted as having to do with cognitive relevance in terms of producing assertoric empirical knowledge (B310=A255).²³ Lack of sense (*Sinn* or *Bedeutung*),²⁴ then, doesn't mean utter conceptual or semantic meaninglessness.²⁵ Apart from their necessary empirical

²³Cf. Ameriks (2000a: xxxv n.40). See also Westphal (2004: 46).

²⁴B299. Unlike Frege, Kant doesn't appear to differentiate *Sinn* from *Bedeutung* (cf. Bird 2006, 526ff.).

²⁵Cf. Bird (2006: 529). At A248=B305, Kant makes an ostensibly crucial distinction regarding “pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, [that] have merely transcendental meaning [*Bedeutung*], but are not of any transcendental use [*Gebrauch*]” (translation amended). I thank Tobias Rosefeldt for bringing this passage to my attention in discussion. I take Kant's remark to confirm my view that the categories don't pertain to putative transcendent objects, and nonetheless continue to have some transcendental significance. It's not clear what the categories having meaning beyond the bounds of sense could yield in terms of them having a putative object for themselves, in abstraction from the conditions of sensibility, for, as Kant says in the same passage, “(as merely pure categories) [...] they do not have any use at all if they are separated from all sensibility, i.e., they cannot be applied to *any supposed object at all*” (A248=B305; emphasis added; a bit earlier on, Kant writes: “The merely transcendental use of the categories is [...] in fact no use at all, and has no determinate or even, as far as its form is concerned, determinable object”; see also B343=A287; cf. Willaschek 1998, 332–333). For categories to have an object that is subsumed under them, “a function of the power of judgment [*Urteilkraft*]” is needed, i.e., a schema. “If this condition of the power of judgment (schema) is missing, then all subsumption disappears, for nothing would be given that could be subsumed under the concept.” (B304). What is expressed is “only the thought of an object in general [...] in accordance with different *modi*” (ibid.), i.e., the various pure concepts that together make up the concept of an object in general. The distinction between a logical object thought purely through the categories and an objectively real object would then amount to the distinction between the logical characteristics contained in the concept of an object *in general* and any concrete schematization of such a concept to a particular object, which can only be an object of sensible experience (cf. Grier 2001, 81–83, 89). Kant is clear that “they [i.e., the categories, D.S.] are merely the pure form of the employment of the understanding in regard to objects in general and of thinking [*des Denkens*], yet without *any sort* of object being able to be

significance in the case of knowledge categories still have general significance in terms of providing the concept of an object in general. As Westphal (2004: 43) rightly notes, “[i]f the categories were utterly devoid of content when abstracted from sensibility, there would be no difference between any two (alleged) categorial concepts”.²⁶

Furthermore, in abstraction from the way we cognitively determine a thing, which yields genuine objective knowledge, we are still able to think notionally, or to have at least the notion of, the thing in itself or think up patently transcendent or even impossible objects (cf. A96). And in fact, as indicated earlier, Kant must allow this possibility, if we are to talk sensibly about *appearances* as the objects of our cognition. Also, if we are to talk meaningfully about such prominent things in themselves as the moral self and God, which are objects of Kant’s primary concern even in the first *Critique* but most importantly in the practical context, then he can’t allow that categories (in particular, the relational category of cause) don’t apply *at all* to things beyond possible experience, that is, things in themselves (not least the noumenal self).²⁷

But even in a purely theoretical context the category of substance, say, would appear to have some significance beyond the bounds of sense, if only because, in abstraction from the sensible conditions of empirical knowledge, we can (and must) make sense of the ‘I’ of transcendental apperception, which grounds theoretical knowledge. This ‘I’ refers to *someone* in particular doing the synthesizing, viz., the ‘I’ as a substantial thing in itself, so the noumenal and not the empirical self, rather than to a mere activity (cf. Ameriks 2006, 60; Rosefeldt 2006; Heimsoeth 1984, 247, 259).²⁸ The self-reference at issue in apperception concerns a consciousness of *oneself* doing the action or activity of synthesizing, not a mere consciousness of activity in any general sense²⁹; and, as Kant asserts, “[w]here there

thought or determined through them alone [ohne doch durch sie allein irgend ein Objekt denken oder bestimmen zu können].” (A248=B305; my emphasis; cf. B147) Clearly, a logical “object in general” is not a thing in itself.

²⁶Cf. Westphal (2004: 50–51) on the transcendental significance of the categories.

²⁷Cf. B575 (AA 3: 371.15–19). See also Ameriks (2000b: 191n.4). Cf. Ameriks (2000b: 254n.52; 2003: 149). In general, as Kant affirms in the paragraphs following the sections of the *Prolegomena* quoted at the start of this section, although “we cannot [. . .] beyond all possible experience, form a definite notion [*bestimmten Begriff*] of what things in themselves may be” we are “[y]et [. . .] not at liberty to abstain entirely from inquiring into them” (AA 4: 351).

²⁸See also Kant AA 20: 270, where, interestingly, Kant connects the “logical I” with the “I that I think and intuit” and which only is “a person”, in contrast to the “I that belongs to the object that is intuited by me”, which “is, similarly to other objects outside me, a thing” (trans. T. Humphrey, New York: Abaris 1983).

²⁹Notice, however, that at B157 Kant writes that “in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself [*wie ich an mir selbst bin*], but only *that* I am”. This suggests that in apperception I am not conscious of myself *as* a thing in itself, nor as an object, but only of myself as doing the synthesizing. However, the consciousness of this act of synthesis is a transcendental self-consciousness, not a mere (empirical) consciousness, and so *points* to the noumenal self.

is action, consequently activity and force, there is also substance” (A204=B250; cf. Heimsoeth 1984, 262). Of course, ‘substance’ as pure category, which is first derived from the ‘I’ of apperception, is nothing but a function that, in the context of possible experience, serves to determine something that is relatively permanent or enduring. In abstraction from sensible experience, and so apart from the constraints of space and time, the category is nothing but a *logical* function, which has no object in any strict sense. Nevertheless, the ‘I’ of self-consciousness does point to a more substantial underlying nature than is manifest at the phenomenal level; that is, an ‘I am’ is expressed by it (B422n.; my emphasis). For although one isn’t licensed to positively (categorically) assert its substantiality the ‘I’ that exercises the act of apperception *is* not merely a function of thought that is universally applicable (it’s not a universal, or, a concept strictly speaking [cf. B404=A346]). Again, this is because a particular *someone*—and this someone is not the phenomenal self (cf. B157), which is first grounded on the apperceptive self—has to exercise the function of thought, albeit that I, being the particular someone that apperceives, can’t gain any direct access to my self’s *complete* inner nature, not even, as I claim here, by merely thinking it (the access is immediately intuitive, not conceptual).³⁰

Therefore, a distinction should be heeded between, on the one hand, the necessary *reference* to a subject as a particular (i.e., a thing in itself), not a mere activity, in any self-conscious act of thought or act of apperception (the ‘I’ of apperception) and, on the other hand, the noumenal self itself as a putative fully determinate thing in itself that is the unknowable and indeterminable *ground* of the ‘I’ of apperception and to which the apperceptive ‘I’ refers. The distinction is one between reference and referred, whereby the act of reference is implied in transcendental apperception and the referred is the noumenal self.³¹ It is evident that the noumenal and the *phenomenal* self are not congruent, but I contend that also the noumenal self and

³⁰Ameriks (2000a: 268) has suggested that the reason for thinking that there are real non-spatiotemporal essences might lie in Kant’s belief “that we are familiar with the essences of certain operations, and that in particular logic gives us the essence of our acts and thoughts. [. . .] [T]he (theoretical) characteristics I have *qua* mind, which are just those I have through the acts of synthesis I carry out according to the categories, could in a sense be had without temporality because the categories have a meaning that is non-temporal”. However, the important question I believe is what the “essence of our acts and thoughts” is supposed to amount to other than a mere logical unity of thought, which, true, is necessarily carried out by a subject but, importantly, doesn’t pick out an object (cf. B404=A346), i.e., an individual (a personal being; cf. Ameriks 2000a, 277). The characteristics that are due to me being the subject and operator of my thoughts do not determine me substantially rather than merely qua the unity of the set of logical functions that are operated by me; there is a subsisting transcendental subject of thought here, but this transcendental subject can’t be *equated* with an ‘existing’ numerically identical substance. So (1) the self of pure thought is not simply to be taken as *numerically* identical to the noumenal self (as a thing in itself) and (2) it is not the case that we literally think the latter’s nature merely by thinking (i.e., *through* mere thought, or, as Heimsoeth puts it referring to the Kant of the Lectures on Metaphysics, through immediate intuition [1984: 242–243/1956: 233]). See further Heimsoeth (1984: 247/1956: 236ff.; 253/241; 259–260/245ff.). See also especially Ameriks (2006: 60).

³¹Cf. Heimsoeth (1984: 253ff./1956: 241). Heimsoeth writes: “Pure self-consciousness itself can never appear isolated and pure. This does not in any way say that this empty, impoverished representation cannot provide in itself a completely immediate [*schlechthin unmittelbaren*] and

the logical ‘I’ of apperception need not be, and probably are not, congruent (cf. A356–359). This is not to say that insofar as we speak of the transcendental subject no reference at all is thereby made to a thing in itself, i.e., the noumenal self,³² but what I am implying is that the transcendental subject, qua the logical characteristics of the thinking subject, is not, or at least need not be, *equivalent* to the noumenal self. (Kant’s ‘I’ is not a Cartesian *res cogitans* determined or determinable as a separable substance; it’s merely the thinking thing as a function of combination manifested in discursive thought, i.e., the act of thinking which, to be sure, *expresses* my substantial being or the fact that *I am* [B422n.].³³) Kant is not consistent, however, for at A492 he does seem to identify the transcendental subject and the noumenal self (cf. Ameriks 2000a, 281).

It might be helpful to bring to mind here Kant’s talk of “the substantial [*Substantiale*]” (B441; cf. *Prol.* §46, AA 4: 334), which differs from the notion of ‘substance’ in some important ways.³⁴ The “substantial” is not a bare particular or a propertiless substratum but the notion of an object “which subsists, insofar as one thinks in it [*an ihm*] merely the transcendental subject without any predicates” (B441=A414; translation amended). At A355ff. Kant makes clear,

original contact with my existence in itself [*meinem Sein an sich*] even if it is ever so slim and insufficient for proofs of immortality.” Heimsoeth speaks of “a completely substantial being [*ein ganz substantielles Sein*]”, which to be sure cannot be deduced (“*erschlossen*”) from pure self-consciousness; nevertheless, Heimsoeth says, “a genuine and metaphysically highly significant consciousness of being and activity of the ego in itself [*höchst bedeutsames Daseins- und Handlungsbewußtseins des Ich an sich*] could indeed lie in the ‘I think’ that talks about the subject of consciousness situated prior to all real determination of the *existence* of my concrete self in the context of empirical circumstances”.

³²Cf. Kant, AA 18: 420 (R 6001; 1780s): “The soul is in the transcendental apperception *substantia noumenon*”. See in particular B429: “[I]n the consciousness of myself in mere thinking I am the *being itself*, about which, however, nothing yet is thereby given to me for thinking.” (cf. Ameriks 2006, 59)

³³Cf. B158; *Prol.*, AA 4: 334n., where Kant talks about apperception as “the feeling of an existence”. Heimsoeth rightly asserts: “The consciousness, ‘I am’, that indeed immediately includes the existence of a subject in it may not be immediately seen as knowledge of it. Pure apperception exclusively designates something that exists in fact. But it is *given* neither as an appearance (because it is universally prior to what is given) nor as the entire thing in itself as an intellectually *known* thinking substance—an enduring noumenon. [. . .] This consciousness of existence, pure but bereft of content, lies on the watershed between the absolute being in itself of the subject and the empirical consciousness of the ego.” (1984: 258–259/1956: 244–245) See also Heimsoeth (1984: 266): “Thus there is no nonsensuous, intellectual intuition [*Selbstanschauung*]—as it were, a self-giveness—of the ego [*des Ich*] before the determining act. But there is something *in it* as a real consciousness of legislation and activity [*wirkliches Vollzugs- und Tunsbewußtsein*]. And in it we grasp the being itself [*das Wesen selbst*], not to be sure, as a complete existence [*als fertiges Sein*] and not in its totality, but in immediate expression and self-development. The *substantia noumenon* of one’s own soul shows itself as a real, active existence [*real tätiges Dasein*] without also immediately revealing itself to me.” (The German original is given between parentheses; cf. Heimsoeth 1956, 249–250, and Martin 1969, 211)

³⁴I thank Manfred Baum for pointing me in this direction in discussion. See also Heimsoeth (1956: 74f., 247).

regarding this “transcendental subject”, that “it is obvious that the subject of inherence is designated only transcendently through the I that is appended to thought [*dem Gedanken*], without noting the least property of it, or cognizing or knowing anything at all about it [*oder überhaupt etwas von ihm zu kennen, oder zu wissen*]” (translation amended). This transcendental subject, which is but “a something in general [*Etwas überhaupt*]”, is a simple representation, as it is the concept of something completely undetermined. Through this ‘I’, or the transcendental subject, nothing but “an absolute but logical unity of the subject” is thought, and I do not think, through the ‘I’ of the ‘I think’, the “real simplicity of my subject” (translation amended).

The “substantial” as such cannot be thought, as it is that which is always already presupposed in whichever thoughts we have; that is, it is that *in which* inhere our thoughts or determinations, more in particular, the pure categories as the functions of thought. At B422 Kant asserts that “the subject of the categories cannot, by thinking them [i.e., the categories, D.S.], obtain a concept of itself as an object of the categories”, the reason being that “in order to think them, it must take its pure self-consciousness, which is just what is to be explained, as its ground”. Similarly, at B404=A346, Kant speaks of “the simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation I, of which one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept”. Significantly, “[t]hrough this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts =x, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, *and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept*” (emphasis added).

Quite clearly, then, this “consciousness in itself [*Bewußtsein an sich*] is not even a representation distinguishing a particular object” (B404=A346). If I were to try to determine the properties of the thinking subject, I would be “turn[ing] in a constant circle” as in doing so I would have to make use of it as that which accompanies all of my thoughts. Concluding, the absolute unity and substantiality of the thought of the subject, through the pure categories, don’t tell us anything about the determinate properties of the subject as an object, as substance. As Kant puts it in ‘Some remarks on Ludwig Heinrich Jakob’s *Examination of Mendelssohn’s Morning Hours*’ (2007: 180),³⁵ where he addresses Mendelssohn’s suggestion that we are licensed to think that we know the thing as it is in itself from knowing its external relations, we may well have an “empirical concept of our soul, that it contains mere appearances of the inner sense”, but that doesn’t mean that we thereby have “the *determinate* concept of the subject itself” (emphasis added). As indicated before, it isn’t at all implied that the subject of thought is reducible to the functional unity governing any judging, or is indeed mere impersonal activity (cf. Keller 2001). It is still perfectly justified to ask what the noumenal self is that is the ultimate ground of my thinking or thoughts, which are the predicates that inhere in the unity of the ‘I’; it’s only that, *due to the nature of discursive thought*, I can’t represent my pure being as a

³⁵I thank Manfred Baum for the reference to this minor essay of Kant’s.

determinate subject, “as I am in myself” (B157), solely through the categories. In short, I can’t *determine* my complete self, evidently not with the help of the senses, but also not by any pure (rational) means.

Coming back to the main question: what exactly do we think of the thing in itself, if what we think of it doesn’t have to do with the spatiotemporal properties of a full-fledged object? Does it mean that by virtue of merely thinking the form of an object, without considering the way in which “we intuit them to be” (A42), I think the thing *as it is in itself*? Accordingly, does it mean that since the appearances that are cognized are, as Kant asserts, only empirically real and so transcendently ideal because of the limiting condition of sensibility, that idealism does not affect the way I might *think* the thing in abstraction from the sensible conditions of cognition so that what I think through the pure understanding is the transcendently real thing in itself? In the Inaugural Dissertation, Kant still held the view that the intellect knows things as they are in themselves, such that the pure intellect has its proper intelligible objects, whose essences it knows by purely thinking them (see e.g., AA 2: 392, 384). But this can’t be Kant’s position in the *Critique*, when we know that it was precisely the role and function of the intellect with respect to objects that changed between the Dissertation and the *Critique*.

If we return to the concluding section of the *Prolegomena*, then we find a preliminary answer to the question whether we are able to think the thing in itself *as* the thing in itself. Kant writes (AA 4: 354) that the relation to what lies beyond the bounds [*Grenzen*] of reason (Kant makes a distinction between limits [*Schranken*] and bounds [*Grenzen*] which always point to something positive, “whereas limits contain mere negations”) is a particular one, namely “an actual connection [*wirkliche Verknüpfung*] of a known thing [*des Bekannten*] with one quite unknown [*einem völlig Unbekannten*] (and which will always remain so), and though what is unknown should not become the least more known—which we cannot even hope—yet the notion of this connection must be definite, and capable of being rendered distinct”. Kant is clear that “as we can never cognize these beings of the understanding as they are in themselves, that is, determinately, yet must assume them as regards [*im Verhältnis auf*] the sensible world and connect [*verknüpfen*] them with it by reason, we are at least able to *think this connection* [*Verknüpfung*] by means of such concepts as express their relation to the world of sense”. (emphasis added) What we thus think, when we try to think beyond the limits of sensibility, is the *connection* between what is known through the categories and empirical intuition and that which necessarily lies beyond it. But we don’t think, strictly speaking, *that which* lies beyond it.³⁶

³⁶What we know is the relation (*Verhältnis*) between two “dissimilar things [*unähnliche Dinge*]”, which is an analogical relation. (AA 4: 358)

3 Wood's Identity Interpretation

Recently, an interesting version of the two-aspects reading has been advanced by Allen Wood, which he calls the Identity Interpretation (Wood 2005). Wood's view epitomizes the idea that Kant's notion of discursivity is separable from idealism. Succinctly put, Wood believes that we can *think* the thing in itself *as* it is in itself. According to Wood, Kant's talk of appearances and things in themselves concerns the same object, which is in line with Allison's epistemological one-world reading. However, Wood appears to regard the distinction, not as due to two ways of considering but as having to do with two kinds of properties of the same object that are being referred to (2005: 65); phenomenal properties are aspects of underlying things in themselves, and it is these aspects that we cognize through our forms of perceiving spatiotemporal objects. Wood contends that, although there is no identity between the *sensible characteristics* of appearances and things in themselves, there is identity between, on the one hand, the objects *thought through* the pure concepts of the understanding in abstraction from the sensible features of these objects as appearances and, on the other hand, things in themselves. The "fundamental point" of the identity interpretation, Wood asserts, is "that every appearance is *identical* to a thing in itself, and the distinction is not between two different entities but between two ways of thinking about or referring to the same entity" (2005: 65). Regarding the thinkability of things in themselves Wood further writes:

Although things in themselves cannot be sensed, appearances can be thought through the pure understanding, simply by thinking of them in abstraction from the ways they can appear to us. Thus while the sensible criterion for identity cannot apply across the gulf separating phenomena from noumena, the intelligible criterion can apply. [...] [Kant] seems to regard it as entirely permissible and even inevitable that we should be able to *think* the phenomenal objects around us solely through pure concepts of the understanding, hence as they are in themselves. (2005: 69)

and also:

We call something an appearance insofar as it can be intuited by us and therefore cognized through our understanding; but we can *think* the same thing while abstracting from the relation to our faculties that makes it a possible object of cognition. (2005: 73)³⁷

Wood's interpretation is problematic for three main reasons. (1) It seems to me that Wood's interpretation is flatly contrary to Kant's censure of Leibnizian strategies. Wood appears to do precisely that for which Kant criticizes Leibniz. Kant

³⁷See also Guyer in Wood et al. (2007: 15). Guyer writes: "[Kant] never denies that the categories enter into our *conception* of things in themselves. Therefore, being an epistemic condition, as the categories clearly are, cannot itself be a sufficient reason for exclusion from the concept of things in themselves." Indeed, not from the *concept* of things in themselves, but to my mind it excludes the possible determination of the properties of a thing in itself qua itself (i.e., *as* a thing in itself proper, or the complete set of its properties). Guyer, as so many others, conflates the *concept* of a thing in itself (de dicto) and the thing in itself (de re).

writes: “[F]or him [i.e., Leibniz] appearance was the representation of *the thing in itself*, although distinguished from cognition through the understanding in its logical form [*der logischen Form nach*], since with its customary lack of analysis the former draws a certain mixture of subsidiary representations into the concept of the thing, from which the understanding knows how to abstract.” (A270ff.=B326ff.) Wood, like Leibniz, intellectualizes appearances, which according to Kant amounts to abstracting from the irreducibly sensible properties of appearances.

(2) Wood draws on the Leibnizian principle of the identity of indiscernibles,³⁸ referring to the Amphiboly chapter in the *Critique*. He believes that Kant holds that “when objects are represented in pure understanding, the criterion to be used in individuating them is the Leibnizian one—the identity of indiscernibles—while when they are given to us through the senses, the principle of their individuation is their positions in space”. (Wood 2005, 68; cf. Van Cleve 1999, 149ff.) Kant indeed asserts that if an object is presented with the same inner determinations, “then it is always exactly the same if it counts as an object of pure understanding, not many but only one thing (*numerica identitas*)” (A263=B319). However, although what Kant says here holds true for the putative³⁹ identity of a thing in itself in relation to some other thing, I believe Leibniz’s principle (and Kant’s reference to it) can’t be put to use in trying to establish, as does Wood, the identity of appearances, supposedly thought merely through the understanding, and things in themselves,⁴⁰ that is, to bridge “the gulf separating phenomena from noumena” (Wood 2005, 69), which though is the main point of his identity interpretation.

Incidentally, Wood is ambiguous as to whether the identity relation holds, on the one hand, between the concept or the thinking of the thing in itself “as an object of pure understanding” and the thing in itself or, on the other, between the appearance and the thing in itself.⁴¹ These surely are not the same identity relations, although

³⁸The principle of the identity of indiscernibles =df an object x is identical to an object y , if x has exactly the same properties as y $\{\forall x\forall y(\forall F(Fx\leftrightarrow Fy)\rightarrow x=y)\}$ (cf. Kant A272=B328; B337=A281); this is often paired with the principle of indiscernibility of identicals =df to a thing x are attributed exactly the same properties as are attributed to a thing y , if x and y are identical $\{\forall x\forall y(x=y\rightarrow(Fx\leftrightarrow Fy))\}$. In his critique of Leibniz, Kant famously argues that although the former principle might hold for things in themselves (that is, things in themselves are qualitatively and numerically identical or the same), this does not hold for appearances; two appearances might have the same qualities, but could very well differ qua numerical identity.

³⁹Van Cleve (1999: 292n.41) carefully notes that it is not clear “whether it is Kant’s view that Leibniz’s principles do definitely hold for things in themselves (as he sometimes says), or only that they *would* hold for the noumena in the positive sense, it being problematic whether things in themselves are noumena in that sense. (They are not noumena in the positive sense for us, but may be so for other beings.)” Notice that Kant says of Leibniz’s principle of the identity of indiscernibles that it “holds merely of *concepts* of things in general [*Begriffen der Dinge überhaupt*]” (A272=B328; emphasis added). On the use of the principle of identity of indiscernibles see also Chapter 8 by Quarfood, this volume, and Quarfood (2008: 615ff.).

⁴⁰Cf. Van Cleve (1999: 150; 292n.44).

⁴¹“Is an appearance the very same entity as a thing in itself? [...] the identity interpretation says yes.” (2005: 66); “Once we have abstracted from the sensible—e.g., the spatiotemporal—properties of the object as appearance, hence from our empirical cognition of it, it must be the

it appears that he means the two relations to come down to the same, for the identity is really between the appearance and the thing in itself, once the appearance has been stripped of its appearance properties. But this strikes me as a lot of tautological window dressing. Wood's intention is to enable the conception of thinking *appearances* through the pure understanding (2005: 69), by way of abstracting from their sensible properties, but what he thereby effectively achieves isn't establishing the identity of appearance and thing in itself across the conceptual gulf, but merely the trivial truth that a thing is the same as itself and thus different from something else, for what is an appearance without its 'appearance' features? Moreover, I think, contrary to Wood, that Kant does not endorse the view, neither in the Amphiboly section nor anywhere else, that sheerly by virtue of Leibniz's principle objects are *individuated*, even if the objects concerned are (mere) objects of pure understanding (whatever these amount to) or things in themselves, for that matter.

What I should like to stress here, against Wood's illicit use of the textual evidence, is that Kant's aim in his criticism of Leibniz is not to *partly endorse* Leibniz's principle, viz., insofar as things in themselves are concerned (although he also doesn't explicitly deny its applicability in that restricted case; cf. Martin 1969, 174–175), but rather to point out that Leibniz' principle is to no avail for acquiring knowledge of objects of any sort, since "pure concepts of the understanding yield no knowledge on their own" (AA 20: 280, 282 [Kant 2002, 370–371]); for only in their schematization to sensible experience is cognition of objects *strictae dicta* first possible. This is the reason why Kant writes that "that putative law [Leibniz's principle, D.S.] is no law of nature" but "simply an analytical rule or comparison of things through mere concepts" (A272).⁴²

(3) Wood's assumption of the possibility of thinking things through the pure understanding is based on a mistaken conception of what a pure concept of an object or "an object of pure understanding" amounts to. He conflates the pre-critical and critical view of the intellect's relation to objects. As I pointed out in the last section the pure concept of an object is constrained by the limits of discursive thought as much as our sensible intuition of an object is constrained by the forms of space and time. This means that one isn't licensed to argue that for the critical Kant things in themselves satisfy the conditions under which objects are *thought* (i.e., the intellectual conditions).⁴³ As a result of this, a disparity exists between the object of

same as itself thought solely through pure concepts of the understanding and distinct from any thing which is represented as *other* than it (for instance, from a *different* appearance regarded as it is in itself)" (2005: 69).

⁴²See also Chapter 8 by Quarfood, this volume.

⁴³Cf. Maier (1930: 45–46). Maier writes (quoting A282n.): "Realitates noumena, nur durch den reinen Verstand gedachte und erkennbare Realitäten (wie sie auf dem Standpunkt der Dissertation angenommen werden), die als gegenständliche Korrelate der reinen Kategorie gelten könnten, gibt es nicht, jedenfalls nicht in der Bedeutung von intelligiblen Bestimmungen. Wir können sie *höchstens rein logisch* als positive Prädikate überhaupt, als Bejahungen denken, ohne imstande zu sein, 'ein Beispiel von dergleichen reiner und sinnenfreier Realität' anzuführen." (emphasis added)

pure understanding, which is a mere transcendental object and constrained by the a priori concepts that come with discursivity, and the thing in itself; this disparity can't be bridged by means of any speculative attempt of putting to use metaphysical principles (e.g., Leibniz's identity principle).

Nevertheless, at A249, quoted by Wood (2005: 65), Kant seems to suggest that the thing in itself is the object of the understanding, which is the object of "a cognition [. . .] in which no sensibility is encountered" and which would refer to a different "world" (*mundus intelligibilis*) (ibid.), "a world thought in spirit (perhaps also even intuited)" (A250). However, first, Kant argues that it would here, in the same passage, concern an object of a non-sensible intuition; earlier he refers to intellectual intuition. Clearly, Kant *hypothesizes* here about a pure employment of the understanding, that is, "a pure and yet objectively valid [use of the categories]". But he soon makes clear that the object to which "through the understanding" our representations are "in fact related" is indeed "only the transcendental object", a "something=x, of which we know nothing at all nor can know anything in general (in accordance with the current constitution of our understanding), but is rather something that can serve only as a correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition, by means of which the understanding unifies that [*dasselbe*, i.e., the manifold, D.S.] in the concept of an object".⁴⁴ Significantly, then, the transcendental object is nothing in abstraction from sensibility (cf. A277=B333; A109). Kant continues:

This transcendental object cannot even be separated from the sensible data, for then nothing would remain through which it would be thought. It is therefore no object of cognition in itself [*Gegenstand der Erkenntnis an sich selbst*] [. . .] *Just for this reason, then, the categories do not represent any special object given to the understanding alone*, but rather serve only to determine the transcendental object (the concept of something in general) through that which is given in sensibility, in order thereby to cognize appearances empirically under concepts of objects. (A251; emphasis added)

This gainsays Wood's contention that through the pure use of the understanding, through mere concepts, we are able to think the thing in itself as it is, for clearly, as Kant notes, the "categories do not represent any special object *given to the understanding alone*". The thing in itself, i.e., "that which is given in sensibility", is only indirectly related to the understanding. The concept of a noumenon results from the "thinking of something in general, *in which I abstract from all form of sensible intuition*". Does this mean that I thus represent a pure object, i.e., the thing as it is in itself? No. Kant insists:

[I]n order for a noumenon to signify a true object, to be distinguished from all phenomena, it is not enough that I liberate my thoughts from all conditions of sensible intuition, but I must in addition have ground to assume another kind of intuition than this sensible one, under which such an object could be given; for otherwise my thought is empty, even though free of contradiction. [. . .] [*A*] *though our thinking can abstract from that sensibility, the question*

⁴⁴See on the different senses of Kant's notion of 'transcendental object' Willaschek (1998: 333–335).

still remains whether it is not then a mere form of a concept and whether any object at all is left over after this separation. The object to which I relate appearance in general is the transcendental object, i.e., the entirely undetermined thought of something in general. This cannot be called the noumenon; for I do not know anything about what it is in itself; and have no concept of it except merely that of the object of a sensible intuition in general [...]. I cannot think it through any categories. (A252; emphasis added; cf. B306–307)

For the critical Kant, the pure (unschematized) concept of an object does *not* map, one to one, on the thing in terms of its in-itself nature. In fact, the pure concept of an object does not have any object or thing for itself. Kant clearly links this limiting fact to the nature of the functions of our thought. Kant writes towards the end of the Amphiboly section:

If by merely intelligible objects we understand those things that are thought through pure categories, without any schema of sensibility, then things of this sort are impossible. For the condition of the objective use of all our concepts of the understanding is merely the manner of our sensible intuition, through which objects are given to us, and, if we abstract from the latter, *then the former have no relation at all to any sort of object.* Indeed, even if one would assume another sort of intuition than this our sensible one, our functions for thinking would still be without any significance in regard to it. (B342=A286; emphasis added)

This, as Kant continues, doesn't exclude the problematic notion of a noumenon, noumenon in the negative sense, but we cannot "assume beyond appearances objects of pure thinking, i.e., noumena, since those do not have any positive significance that can be given. [...] Thinking in itself, to be sure, is not a product of the senses, and to this extent is also not limited by them, *but it is not on that account immediately of any independent and pure use, without assistance from sensibility, for it is in that case without an object.*" (B343=A287; emphasis added) There cannot be a positive argument to the effect that we may infer that, when we abstract from the sensible constraints of the knowledge of an object, there obtains an identity between the object thought through the pure concepts and a putative thing in itself, "[f]or one must concede that the categories alone are not sufficient for the cognition of things in themselves [*allein noch nicht zur Erkenntnis der Dinge an sich zureichen*]" (ibid.). This is Kant's clearest statement regarding the alleged possibility of thinking, through the categories, things in themselves (cf. also B306=307). The pure concept of an object is nothing but the set of the purely logical characteristics which make up that concept, i.e., the categories; and, as we also know from Kant's arguments in the Paralogisms regarding the nature of the self (see again above Section 2), these do not determine an object.

Wood crucially neglects the difference between the pre-critical concept of an object (whereby, as I said earlier, the Kant of the Dissertation holds that the intellect cognizes the intelligible object) and the critical concept of an object which may be said to correspond with a noumenon *in a negative sense only*. The pure understanding of an object (or an appearance) is not isomorphically related, and a fortiori identical, to a thing in itself by way of its mere intellectual grasp, by entertaining the notion of a thing in itself or by abstracting from the appearance properties of an object. This means that, strictly speaking, things in themselves cannot even be

thought as such in any significant, determinate sense.⁴⁵ What *is* thought about things in themselves are merely noumena in a negative sense (i.e., empty concepts, or at least concepts without any positive ontological reference, or ‘Bedeutung’ as Kant would say). The positive content of our thoughts of things in themselves consists, as Kant pointed out in the *Prolegomena* passage quoted earlier (Section 2), merely of (analogical) relations or “connections” between our knowledge and what lies beyond its limits, what is “quite unknown”.

As a run-up to discussing those aspects of the Transcendental Ideal central to my topic, I now turn to my all too brief account of the Transcendental Deduction.

4 Objective Determination in the Transcendental Deduction

In the Transcendental Deduction of the categories (TD) Kant expounds the necessary conditions which must be satisfied to enable the sense of an object as object, which at the same time enables the experience of such an object (B197; A111). Kant asserts, controversially, that this dual possibility, that is, the possibility of the experience of an object and the possibility of an object itself, of objectivity tout court, is grounded in one unconditional subjective principle, which he calls the principle of transcendental apperception. This principle is transcendental self-consciousness insofar as it concerns the thinking, judging subject who is conscious of her own representations, which she regards as her own and as such apperceives or takes as belonging together.

It is the central claim of TD that the form in which transcendental apperception, in that it is the pure function constitutive of discursive thought, determines the logical relation of concepts in general, also is the necessary form in which it gives unity to the manifold of representations in an intuition, representations which in some way are related to the thing that is perceived and judged about. This notion is expressed most fundamentally and succinctly in the so-called *Leitfaden* passage (A79=B104–105).

This is not the place to expand on the perplexing issues surrounding this controversial passage, which concern the way how the *Leitfaden* should be read in regard to deriving the categories from the forms of judgment and how the deduction of the categories in TD ties in with the former (see for an outline of such an account Schulting 2008).⁴⁶ What is important to emphasize here is that to the extent in which the unitary form of the intuited object, by means of a synthetic unity of the representations that one has, is determined as such in the unifying act of transcendental apperception, one is licensed to say that the set of functions of transcendental self-consciousness—the “same function” of which Kant speaks in the *Leitfaden* passage—which are the rules for the unity of consciousness, is the

⁴⁵Cf. e.g., *Prol.*, AA 4: 359, where interestingly Kant asserts, regarding one prominent thing-in-itself, that “the Supreme Being is quite inscrutable and *even unthinkable* in any determinate way [auf bestimmte Weise sogar undenkbar] as to what it is in itself” (emphasis added).

⁴⁶I address the many issues involved here in Schulting (forthcoming).

original, subjective ground of knowledge itself, that is, of objectively valid cognition. Indeed, transcendental self-consciousness is the very ground or, as Kant says in a *Reflexion* from the 1770s, the “original” of an object in general.⁴⁷ It is for this reason that Kant calls the principle of self-consciousness the original-synthetic principle of apperception (subheading §16), for it is both the ground of the conceptual form of a judgment, which is established by means of an analytic unity of the representations in their purely conceptual relation of subordination, and the ground of the unity of a manifold of representations in intuition. The original synthesis of apperception grounds, in one act, both the analytic and synthetic unity of representations, by whose complex relation a judgment is characterized. To put it shortly, a judgment is an objective unity of representations, whereby ‘objective’ should be seen in terms of a qualitative unity that is established by the synthetic function that grounds both analytic and synthetic unities of representations.

So when Kant claims that this objective unity of apperception, which is the definition of judgment, is the ground of our concept of an object, and thus constitutes an object (B137), “not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object but rather something under which every intuition must stand *in order to become an object for me*”, he makes a claim to having established not merely the necessary conditions for the object to be an object of experience or thought, but also the sufficient condition for the object to *be* an object for me. Object is a function of judgment. Obviously, as Kant affirms, we do not produce the thing as to its existence (*dem Dasein nach* [A92=B125; B72]), in the same way that one may say, a bit awkwardly perhaps, that judgment ‘produces’ the object qua its necessary form, viz., as an object in general. We should further notice that the concept of an object, even if only in very general terms, can only be made concrete, if we explain subsequently the necessary application of the set of functions, the categories, that make up the concept of an object, to appearances in an *empirical* intuition. Concrete knowledge *strictae dicta* is only possible when the categories are schematized.

On account of the probative force of the argument in TD Kant limits the domain of possible knowledge, and hence the domain of what we determine to be an object. What can be analytically shown to be an object for cognition *eo ipso* determines what can’t be so shown. The object, *as object*, is only knowable to the extent that the categories are applied to sensible intuition and regard the phenomenally substantial thing in space and time. The thing that is determined as the object of our judgment is *ex hypothesi* not the thing as it may be apart from the very general properties that it must have if it is to be an object of our judgment.⁴⁸ That is to say, inasmuch as the categories provide the necessary and sufficient conditions

⁴⁷Cf. R 4674, AA 17: 646 (from the Duisburg Nachlass). Kant writes further that “the mind [*das Gemüth*] is for itself the archetype [*Urbild*] of [the possibility] of [...] synthesis” (AA 17: 647). Guyer and Wood underestimate Kant’s claim by maintaining that it is about merely an *analogy* between the way I conceive of myself and the way I must conceive of objects (cf. Guyer and Wood, ‘Introduction’, in Kant 1998, 54).

⁴⁸This concerns what Kant calls the “Sachheit”, “das Reale” of a thing (B182=A143; B207ff.). At B182 Kant explicitly associates “reality” with the “thinghood” of things in themselves as regards their “transcendental matter”.

for the knowledge of an object *in general*, they do not provide us with the sufficient conditions for the knowledge of any particular existent thing as an individual. The only access that we have to the existing thing appears to be the a posteriori determinable sensations that are the result of the thing's affecting our sense organs (and hence our minds) (cf. again B72). Kant's distinction between appearance and thing in itself is not the arbitrary distinction for which it is often lambasted, but issues from the very conceptual limits of discursively determining the properties of an individual. We just can't know, in any a priori way, what the properties of a thing as it is in itself *could* be, unless we encountered them in an empirical experience or else they mysteriously "migrate[d] into my faculty of representation" (*Prol.* §9, AA 4: 282; but notice that Kant doubts even the possibility of its a posteriori cognition).

Put differently, even though by means of judgment we are fully capable of determining, through the forms of the understanding and intuition, the very general properties that any particular object must have, and so indicate its formally necessary and sufficient conditions if it is to be an object of our knowledge, we can't possibly synthetically grasp *all* of its possible properties, even essential ones, that make up the *particular* thing's essence. Given the nature of our discursive form of thought, it isn't possible to determine, in a given empirical judgment (in experience) nor in a consecutive series of empirical judgments, to exhaustively determine the thing that we judge about. A judgment is always a relative positing of predicates which to be sure can be linked with other predicates, through syllogistic reasoning, indefinitely, such that our knowledge of the object of our judgments gradually increases. Only to the extent that under the conditions of an identical apperceiving subject of judgment (the self-conscious representer) a unity has been brought into the manifold of representations in a "certain intuition" (B132), as Kant says, one can say that one knows an object, that is, the something in general = x (the transcendental object [A109; cf. A104; A613–614=B641–642]), which is the correlate of the unity of my representations. This means that only those representations that, at any given time, are occurrently apprehended determine an object for judgment.⁴⁹ For any series of predicates attributed to the transcendental object of one's judgment, a synthesis must be performed in order to bring those predicates into a unity with all other predicates attributed.⁵⁰

This is all very general and needs elaborating, something I would have to leave for another occasion. What I'm going to do next is to concentrate, also very broadly, on one class of categories in particular, i.e., the categories of quality (reality,

⁴⁹That is, that I judge that something x is 'oblong' and 'flat' and not that I judge that e.g., it is 'rust-encrusted' and 'bulky', which are also possible predicates attributable to the object of my current judgment, e.g., the large steel plate that I perceive (perhaps, whilst abstracting from the aesthetic connotations and being a welder by profession, I am gazing at one of Richard Serra's massive constructions).

⁵⁰Put in a nutshell, the knowledge that I can have of an object, of which I can acquire a priori insight that can thus be analytically demonstrated, concerns the knowledge of an object, insofar as, as Kant says in the B-preface (Bvxiiii), I have put certain, both intuitive and conceptual, forms into it.

negation and limitation), in the context of my theme of the relation between pure thought and idealism. It is these categories that make clear that the categories are only serviceable in regard to objects of experience, that is, phenomenal objects, and not intelligible or noumenal objects. Simply put, these categories make clear that I can't even have, through the pure understanding, a definite notion of a thing in itself. To connect this even more intimately to the issue of idealism, in the next section I address relevant aspects of Kant's account of the *prototypon transcendental* in the Transcendental Dialectic, where he speaks of the 'thing in itself' in its proper metaphysical context.

5 The Transcendental Ideal and Limitation

In the third chapter of the second book of the Transcendental Dialectic, which is about the Ideal of pure reason and forms the transition to the critique of the proofs of God's existence, Kant provides what I believe is the key to a proper understanding of the relation between the object as a phenomenon or appearance and the thing in itself, and thus the putative possibility of thinking, through the pure categories, the latter. There, Kant explains that a thing in itself is an individual (*individuum*) in terms of a metaphysical or ontological substrate, which is completely or thoroughly determined. This concerns the ground of the object that is determined through the categories of the understanding (notice again that, for Kant, the object of experience, the appearance, is *not* an individual, although at A582=B610 he does appear to suggest the contrary).

We saw earlier that the conditions of the possible experience of an object are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the object of experience (B197=A158; A111), for other than things in themselves objects depend on possible experience for their being objects (cf. AA 20: 274). The principle of possible experience of objects is analytic (B135) and hence, from the probative force of the analysis of the concept of an object, the limits of what can be determined *as object* are thereby defined. The non-trivial tautology in regard to the epistemological determination of the form of an object (i.e., the object for us [A582=B610]), which is grounded on a priori synthesis, rests itself on a further synthesis of a particular kind. At A578=B606 Kant speaks of a "synthesis of the manifold in respect of its content" (translation Kemp Smith) as concerning "all the possibility of things" (cf. B600). This synthesis, other than the synthesis brought about by the synthetic act of the understanding regarding the manifold of intuition, is a "sum total of all possibility [*Inbegriff aller Möglichkeit*]" (A573=B601) or an "all of reality [*All der Realität*]" (A576=B604). Significantly, Kant also speaks of the "material for all possibility [*Materie zu aller Möglichkeit*]" (A573=B601, translation amended; cf. A267=B323).⁵¹

⁵¹Amazingly, Longuenesse suggests that the critical philosophy made this view irrelevant (!) (Longuenesse 2005, 213n.5). According to Longuenesse, it's not reality, as matter, that precedes form, but form (a priori forms of sensibility) that precedes matter (2005: 213).

This means that the a priori necessary form of the object of knowledge or experience presupposes, logically, that the matter which enables the very knowledge of an object, that is, without which it wouldn't be possible in the first place to have a priori synthetic knowledge of it, is *transcendentally given* (it concerns certain "data"; A573=B601).⁵² We are not talking here about the de facto givenness of sensations, which are the concrete empirical matter or content of any appearance (B34=A20), that is, the *empirically* given, but about the *transcendentally* given matter ("transcendental matter" [A143=B182]), which corresponds in some way to the sensations that are the empirically given content of appearances. The transcendental *form* of an object presupposes ex hypothesi, insofar as the object's possibility is concerned, the transcendental *content* or *matter* of all possible properties of the thing that is being determined as the object of experience. It is this transcendently given matter which makes the thing *materially* possible. It is that which individuates the thing as what it is. It concerns the "complete material condition of its possibility [*vollständige materiale Bedingung seiner Möglichkeit*]" (A576=B604).⁵³ The forms of the understanding, the categories, alone can't satisfy this material condition.

How can this condition be further characterized? Now the application of each concept rests essentially on the principle of excluded middle PEM (*principium exclusi tertii*), which comes down to the principle that of any arbitrary predicate F either F or $\neg F$ be attributed to the object (formally: $\forall x[Fx \vee \neg Fx]$).⁵⁴ This principle, which is the minimally required condition for knowledge of objects, hangs together with the principle of determination or more precisely "the principle of determinability [*Grundsätze der Bestimmbarkeit*]", which states that of each predicate F a further predicate can be attributed. That is, each given predicate F is further determinable by at least one of two contradictorily opposed predicates G or $\neg G$ (formally: $\forall x[Fx \rightarrow (Gx \vee \neg Gx)]$) (cf. A571=B599; AA 1: 391: "*Determinare est ponere praedicatum cum exclusione oppositi*"). However, as Kant writes at B601, when we are concerned with something that exists, a thing rather than a predicate alone, there is not just a *logical* determination of predicates, whereby of each *given* pair of opposed

⁵²This is one of the reasons motivating Kant to distinguish between the form of the known object (appearance) and the thing itself.

⁵³Longuenesse (2005: 227–228) assumes that for Kant the form of possibility precedes matter. She seems to forget to distinguish, first, between the necessary form of possible objects of experience, where indeed possibility precedes actuality, and the a posteriori givenness of the material, sensible content that is a precondition of experience at all and so precedes necessary form of possibility. Furthermore, let's not fail to recall that in matters metaphysical Kant adheres to an essentially Aristotelian view of matter as *preceding* form; hence, Kant speaks of "material for [zu] all possibility" (A573=B601). On the other hand, Longuenesse would appear to be right in holding that in the Transcendental Analytic, from the transcendental perspective, form precedes matter, for on the Copernican view everything has to be conceived from within the form that reason puts into things (Bxvii).

⁵⁴Although formally distinct from it, PEM (in propositional logic: $A \vee \neg A$) in its turn rests ultimately on the principle of non-contradiction PNC ($\forall x[\neg(Fx \wedge \neg Fx)]$) or, in propositional logic, $\neg(A \wedge \neg A)$). PEM grounds the logical necessity of a cognition, whereas PNC determines its logical possibility (cf. Jäsche Logic, in Kant 1992, 560).

predicates always only one can be attributed, but also of a transcendental comparison of the *thing itself* with all of its possible predicates, that is, a *real* determination of the thing in relation to all possible predicates that belong to it. In this case, of all possible predicates F each F or its contradictorily opposed $\neg F$ *must* be predicated, for things that are the *objects* of predication, rather than mere predicates, are thoroughly determined individuals. It concerns the existing object qua its ‘being’ or essence (its thinghood, A574=B603), thus the existing object as thing in itself, which if we were to know it completely we would know in terms of all its possible predicates or properties.⁵⁵

The determination of a concept falls under the generality (*universalitas*) of the principle of non-contradiction PNC (and, equally, PEM; A572=B600n.).⁵⁶ But the determinability of a thing, qua its ‘being’, falls under totality (*universitas*) or the “sum total [*Inbegriff*]” of all possible predicates predicable of it (see B600n.). This totality or “sum total [*Inbegriff*]” of all possible predicates—Kant also calls it “the whole of possibility [*gesamte Möglichkeit*]” at A572=B600—must be understood in terms of a maximally possible increase of determinacy. That is to say, one must see it as a standard or exemplar of a completely determined individual, not in terms of a mere aggregate or set of predicates (in the Schulphilosophie the sum total [*Inbegriff*] concerns the essentialia or internal possibility of a thing, or also *Realität*).⁵⁷ This standard is exactly applicable to one thing, which Kant calls the “*Ideal* of pure Reason” (B602; cf. B596, where Kant speaks of an “*idea in individuo*”: it concerns the prototype of an individual⁵⁸). Only in this case, that is, in the case of a thing in itself (B604), is the concept completely determined and does it apply to its object fully. This idea is of course not a concept of the understanding (a category, or even the set of categories), which effectively represents it through an empirical intuition, or purely through concepts alone, even though it is true that any thing that is the object of judgment falls under the *category* of totality (cf. Heimsoeth 1969, 429), which makes the determinate appearance of the thing a *relatively* individuated whole of perceptions, i.e., an empirical object (cf. A582=B610).

The concept, therefore, of a thing in the metaphysical sense—viz., a thing realiter, a *Sache*—rests on the metaphysical principle of thoroughgoing determination PTD (*principium omnimodae determinationis*).⁵⁹ PTD is the metaphysical principle of the individuation of things.⁶⁰ This principle, which concerns the logically material (not: empirical) content of determinative knowledge, must be seen in connection

⁵⁵More precisely, as Longuenesse writes, “[i]f one could have cognition of the exhaustive division of the ‘infinite sphere of all possible determinations’, and could exhaustively specify all the sub-spheres to which the thing belongs *and* to which it does *not* belong, then one would know the thing in its complete determination and, thus, as the *individual* thing it is” (1998: 295).

⁵⁶See regarding universality also Jäsche Logic, §21 in AA 9: 102, 103 (Kant 1992, 599).

⁵⁷See Maier (1930).

⁵⁸See also Chapter 12 by Verburgt, this volume.

⁵⁹Cf. A571=B599. Cf. R 5270–5274, AA 18: 138–140.

⁶⁰Cf. Longuenesse (2005: 216).

with “a common correlate” (B600n.), that is, the collective possible predicates applicable to the thing. The actuality of an object as appearance (determined by virtue of the categories) is grounded upon a disjunction of the set of actually attributed predicates from the greater set of all its possible predicates (as individual or thing in itself). The determination of an actual object in fact occurs by means of the category of limitation, which is the combination of the categories of reality and negation—a thing is determined through *negation*, which results in a *limitation* of the transcendently given *reality*.⁶¹

The thoroughly determined thing or individual, “is a transcendental *ideal* which is the ground of the thoroughgoing determination that is necessarily encountered in everything existing, and which constitutes the supreme and complete material condition of its possibility, to which all thinking of objects in general must, as regards the content of that thinking, be traced back” (A576=B604). In other words, in any determination by the understanding, the individual as transcendental Ideal of a thing in itself is always already presupposed as metaphysical ground. The appearances as objects of possible experience are as it were ectypa, copies or negations, of the prototype (*prototypon*) that the thing in itself is, and from which they take their “matter [*Stoff*] for their possibility” (A578=B606). This matter must be transcendently affirmed for what is effectively determined as the object of cognition to be an existing thing at all; it gives it its thinghood, its reality (B602). Wolfram Högbe (1989: 63, 65) speaks aptly of “prädikative Protoplasma” or also the “Protogegenstand”, or likewise, with a hint of Heideggerian etymology, “Unterstand aller Gegenstände der Prädikation”.

Objective determination of a thing occurs by means of the categories of quality, in particular, through a negation of the thinghood or reality of a thing in its complete determinacy, which amounts to a limitation of the sum total of all possible predicates, i.e., a limitation of transcendental matter (B111: “[L]imitation is nothing other than reality combined with negation”).⁶² Anneliese Maier (1930: 41) circumscribes this somewhat graphically by saying that “wir durch Schranken oder Negationen aus dem unendlichen All der Realität die Mannigfaltigkeit der endlichen Dinge gleichsam herausmodellieren [. . .]”. This limitation of the transcendental matter (of the *illimitatum*, as it were, of the all of reality) determines the unitary manifold of sensations, which constitutes the *realitas phenomenon* or the matter of appearances that is the result of the thing in itself affecting our sensibility and is effectively determined through the category of reality. Kant asserts that transcendental negation, which is nothing as such or “not-being in itself” (B602) and as such indicates a “lack” (A575=B603), is logically preceded by transcendental affirmation, which expresses Being itself (A574–575=B602–603). The Being that is transcendently affirmed in any objective determination by virtue of the negative quality inherent

⁶¹Cf. the Spinozist dictum *omnis determinatio est negatio*, which is quoted by Hegel in a similar context in 1985, 101. Cf. Kant, R 5905, AA 18: 380.

⁶²In R 3063, AA 16: 638, Kant likens infinite judgment to judgment of determination. Cf. A576ff.=B604ff. and AA 1: 395. See further Longuenesse (1998: 294ff.).

to judgment is “reality (thinghood) [...] through [which] alone [...] are objects Something (things)” (A574=B602).⁶³

Transcendental affirmation concerns the Being that is affirmed in any arbitrary logical predication, irrespective of a *logically* affirmative or negative predication. In an affirmative predication the something= x of predication is *determined* as a “Something”, as a really existing thing, whilst a negative predication indicates a determinative denying or negating of this Something, and so implies a “lack” (notice that this is not negation as category, which is in fact the determination as such).

At this point, the question might arise as to whether in determining an object of experience we in fact attribute a predicate to the thing in itself that appears to us. That is to say, are the predicates that are being predicated of a thing by virtue of a limitation of all its possible predicates the properties of *the very thing in itself*? This is important to know, as one would expect a determinative judgment to result in the determination of the thing judged about. It is here that deciding on the truth of either the two-object or two-aspect reading of Kant’s idealism becomes pertinent. In answering this question, we must first note that Kant’s theory of judgment is not a theory of ontological predication. Contrary to Wolff and others in the School metaphysics (Baumgarten and Meier, in particular), Kant rejects the view that predicates relate directly to the thing (or the *Sache*) of which is judged that it is so and so (cf. A68=B93) or that we would be able to apply in a judgment a *conceptus infimus* which would determine the individual completely (cf. A655ff.=B683ff.).⁶⁴ Kant denies that there can be singular concepts, for we have no lowest species.⁶⁵

Although in judgment a truth-value is attached to the relation between concept and thing, the resulting correspondence is not a one-to-one or immediate relation between the predicates in a proposition and the thing’s properties. This means that the determinate object of judgment is not numerically the same as the transcendental

⁶³Reich (2001: 185) associates this explicitly with the category of reality. Transcendental affirmation could be labeled original affirmation. A determinate negation (‘is not’) cannot be thought without already having presupposed (originally) its opposite. Negation “signifies a mere lack” of Being (A575=B603). Cf. R 5270, AA 18: 138.

⁶⁴Cf. Longuenesse (1998: 293). See in regard to the notion of *conceptus infimus* Stuhlmann-Laeisz (1976: 78ff.). Van Cleve is therefore mistaken, when he states the following: “An upholder of Kant’s system must [...] either admit that the pure categories do apply to things in themselves, or else maintain that *things in themselves are never the subject matters of any true judgments*. But the sentence I just italicized expresses a negative and universal judgment; if the sentence is true, the corresponding pure categories must have application to things in themselves.” (Van Cleve 1999, 138) Van Cleve is wrong, for the categories have no application in the sense that they would determine things in themselves; the predicate in Van Cleve’s sentence is only predicated of *the concept* ‘things in themselves’, not of the thing(s) in itself/themselves that would be the underlying substrate of this concept. As with any other judgment, the substrate is an x , for which in this case there is no experience possible, hence no determination, and a fortiori no real application of the categories (in their schematized sense). It is perfectly possible to formulate judgments about *the concept* of ‘thing in itself’, but never to actually apply the categories so as to determine the thing in itself *de re*.

⁶⁵Cf. Jäsche Logic in Kant (1992: 565, 595); see also Chapter 8 by Quarfood, this volume.

substratum, out of which by means of limitation its determinacy is carved as it were. The determinate object is by implication not identical to the thing in itself as the thoroughly determined individual, for although in judgment I do determine the thing that is the substrate (the transcendental object= x) of my judgment, *what* I determine of it concerns only the modes in which it appears to me, mediated by the forms of space and time.⁶⁶ Determinations relate to the thing as accidents relate to substance (cf. A186=B229). That which I predicate of a thing is the property of the thing itself, but only insofar as the thing appears to me, as an object in space and time and as such as the object of my judging, not *as* thing in itself.⁶⁷

Thus, the determination that I give to the thing, in judgment, is strictly speaking a determination of it *qua* appearance, not *as* thing in itself. This is not an arbitrary thought on Kant's part, but follows analytically from the constraints of discursive judgment, which sees determination in terms of limitation of sets of predicates. (Put differently, the property or set of properties determined is only one or a subset of the set of all possible properties of the thing.) What is also at issue here is how the thing in itself should be seen as the ground of the appearance, and not as an aggregate of phenomenal objects as derivative beings that are somehow contained in an alleged objectively real *ens originarium* (cf. A579=B607).

Does the above analysis decide in favor of the two-aspects reading of idealism in its metaphysical version? I think not, for the two-aspects reading illicitly assumes the numerical identity or sameness of the thing across the noumenal and phenomenal realms. Disregarding even the fact that the thing in itself concerns an *ens rationis*, not an *empirically given* thing, the determinate set of predicates attributed to the thing judged constitute an object that is numerically different from the complete set of possible (!) predicates that constitutes the thing as it is in itself. Two-aspects readings of the transcendental distinction, either of the metaphysical or methodological kind, can't account for this constitutive difference. Both interpretations fail to grasp the implications of Kant's theory of discursive logic for the status of the object to which the judging intellect relates. They also fail to understand the very concept of determination.

Béatrice Longuenesse⁶⁸ appears to sidestep the idealism issue and thus the question regarding the identity of the thing in itself altogether by espousing a thoroughly

⁶⁶Strictly speaking, as Kant indeed points out at the end of the section regarding the Transcendental Ideal, the limitation by means of which "objects of the senses" are determined in an *empirical* judgment is a limitation, not merely of "the sum total of all possibility" (A573=B601), but of "the material for the possibility of all objects of sense", i.e., "the one all-encompassing experience", "in which the real in all appearances is given" (A581ff.=B609ff.). Limitation here indicates the schematized use of the category as applied to objects of possible experience.

⁶⁷Cf. Kjosavik (2008: 393), who points out, somewhat vaguely but in essence correctly, that the "imposition" of an objective structure, through synthesis, is not "directly upon a thing in itself", but rather "upon a matter that is given to us" (Kjosavik quotes AA 8: 215).

⁶⁸See Longuenesse (2005); Longuenesse differentiates between "legitimate (critical)" and "illegitimate (intellectualist) uses of the principle of complete determination" (2005: 213). She talks about a "critical reduction", i.e., the disentangling of the principle as well as the notion of the whole of reality "from rationalist illusion" (2005: 214). See also Longuenesse (1998: 308ff.).

empirical-realist view of the transcendental Ideal. She reads PTD in such a way that it would merely concern the comparability of one object of experience with another, with every other possible, object of experience, that is to say, in terms of the totality of *possible experience*—presumably relying on Kant’s suggestions in this direction at the end of the chapter on the Transcendental Ideal (B609ff.).⁶⁹ Longuenesse emphasizes the one sphere of which there are subspheres as the whole of objects of possible, empirical, experience, not as the *omnitudo realitatis* in a transcendental sense (see Longuenesse 2005).⁷⁰ That is to say, in her view, the *totum realitatis* “is a sensible, conceptually indeterminate whole necessarily presupposed as the background of any empirical given” (Longuenesse 1998, 308; cf. 2005, 223). However, this can only be partly correct, since the sum total of the thing’s predicates of which Kant speaks, is not coextensive with the putative totality of “the predicates of appearance” (A581=B609). Even if all of the spatiotemporal, sensibly experienceable, properties of all appearances were to be determined, it would still not be tantamount to the complete determination of the thing in itself. This is confirmed by Kant in the *Prolegomena*, when he asserts that the “[t]he sensible world is nothing but a chain of appearances connected according to universal laws”, which “has therefore no subsistence by itself” and “is actually not the thing in itself and consequently must point to that which contains the ground [*den Grund*] of this appearance, to beings [*Wesen*] which cannot be cognized merely as appearances, but as things in themselves” (AA 4: 354; translation amended; cf. *ibid.*, 353).

Longuenesse (2005: 218) appears to regard the object of experience as the individual thing that is completely determinable, and although Kant does speak of thoroughgoing determination of an object of sense (A581=B609–A582=B610), I believe the passage as a whole should be read as saying that “the thing itself (in appearance), namely the real” is the transcendental object, which we subsequently determine, by means of what would be the *schematized* category of limitation applied to the sensible spatiotemporal material, as the object of experience.

⁶⁹Cf. Adickes’ critique of Cohen’s neo-Kantian notion of the “Inbegriff der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse” (Adickes 1924, 34n.). Longuenesse writes: “The infinite sphere whose division would yield all concepts of possible entities, in which infinite judgment thinks the object thought under its subject-concept is then the infinite sphere of the concept: ‘object given in space and time’, that is to say ‘object of experience’.” (2005: 218; cf. 1998: 297)

⁷⁰Cf. Longuenesse (1998: 296). She speaks of the “infinite sphere of all possible determination” in terms of a “merely logical representation”, “logical space”. Although it is true, of course, that Kant criticized the hypostatization of the totality of possible determinations, so the “all of reality”, into an *ens realissimum* that would contain all these determinations, he doesn’t thereby mean such a totality to be “merely logical”. To the contrary, the logical space of all possible determinations has an ontological thrust, which is why Kant asserts that the concept of such a completely determined object is “transcendent” (A571=B599) and serves as transcendental Ideal. Longuenesse rejects the conclusion from the “logical (conceptual) primacy of reality to its *ontological* primacy” (1998: 308), but she simply confuses ontology with empirical reality, or actuality, here.

Although reality for us is always “empirical reality” (A582=B610), this doesn’t mean, for Kant, that all reality is reducible to it.⁷¹

Remarkably, Longuenesse also claims that the principle of complete determination (or PTD) is not a new principle, but one that “Kant could have given as a corollary of the principle of all synthetic judgments” (2005: 219), as a principle of the understanding. Longuenesse’s reading of PTD illustrates what a thoroughgoing empirical realism, which shows no particular interest in the metaphysical issues surrounding Kant’s idealism, results in, viz., a reduction of the thing in itself to the whole of possible *experience*, to the sensible world. Longuenesse’s view contradicts Kant’s differentiation between what makes a thing a thing or a “Something” (A574=B602) and the way in which appearances are the determinate objects of experience. She makes the basic mistake of conflating the material (metaphysical) conditions for the synthetic transcendental content necessary for the determination of things as such and the transcendental (epistemological) conditions for the necessary form of any object if it is to be an object of experience.

As in TD it was made clear that the analytic principle of self-consciousness rests on a synthesis of intuitive content, which thus establishes the concept of an object in general, the principle of possible experience itself likewise necessarily rests on a synthesis of the “the data, the material so to speak, or the transcendental content, for the possibility and the thoroughgoing determination of all things”, what Kant calls the “transcendental substratum” (B603). The latter synthesis is governed by PTD. This explains the necessary presupposition of the thing in itself (*res per se considerata*) as the ground of an appearance (Bxxvii), with which it surely can’t be identified. For the “transcendental substratum” is not the whole of possible experience, even though the whole of possible experience is presupposed, as Kant says, as “the material for the possibility of all *objects of the senses*” (A582=B609–610; emphasis added).⁷²

6 Conclusion

Whereas Longuenesse’s apparent reduction of the thing in itself to the totality of experience wholly neglects Kant’s idealism, the current treatments of the topic, in either their two-object or two-aspect form, fail to recognize the limits imposed by our very discursivity in that these interpretations assume the object’s identity across the transcendental boundary. Contrary to this assumption, the object as appearance

⁷¹The passage that appears to lend support to Longuenesse’s reading I believe should be read as suggesting that we distinguish between “the thing itself (*in* appearance), namely the real” (emphasis mine) and “the real *of* all appearances [*das Reale aller Erscheinungen*]” (A582=B609; emphasis mine; the Guyer/Wood translation is not precise here, by rendering the last passage as “the real in all appearances”), whereby two kinds of reality are distinguished: empirical reality and reality tout court, i.e., Being (A574=B602), or, the “All of reality” (A575=B603).

⁷²See further on Longuenesse’s reading of the transcendental Ideal Chapter 12 by Verburgt, this volume.

is not numerically the same as the thing in itself, not even if we abstract from the appearance's properties and consider the thing merely through concepts, as Wood would have it, nor is it the case that purely through thinking the thing in itself we would thereby be able to pick out a noumenal object, as Adams suggests. As I have explained, this relates to Kant's conception of a thing in itself as having to do with its complete determination, which we can only grasp notionally, that is, as an Ideal of Reason. Kant clearly states that "in order to cognize a thing completely one has to cognize everything possible and determine the thing through it, whether affirmatively or negatively", which for human beings is impossible. He continues: "Thoroughgoing determination is consequently a concept that we can never exhibit *in concreto* in its totality, and thus is grounded on an idea which has its seat solely in reason, which prescribes to the understanding the rule of its complete use." (A573=B601).

What would be known "completely", were we to determine a thing qua its "Being [*Sachheit*]" (602) as such—putatively by means of the categories of quality, in particular reality—would be the whole of its possible predicates. We do know, when we judge that something is the case or that some x has the property F , that the something= x exists insofar as we are affected by it and apply the (schematized) category of reality, but we do not thereby, even merely conceptually, grasp the thing as it is in itself in abstraction from the way that, in judgment, we apply the schematized categories of quality to spatiotemporal objects. Such a mere conceptual grasp of the complete thing in itself, other than notionally, would appear to be *logically* impossible, for it would mean that our discursive synthesis in predication is identical to the *complete* synthesis of the thing's possible predicates. Now, what is completely determined, the thing in itself, is ipso facto no longer determinable. Therefore, that which is objectively determined through limitation cannot, by implication, be numerically identical to that from which what is objectively determined is delimited, that is, to the illimitative real or the thing in itself, for the relation is one between parts and whole.

This, it seems to me, refutes the idea that what in abstraction from sensibility we think, through the pure concepts, as general rules for the objective determination of representations that constitutes the object of knowledge, would be the thing in itself as such, namely the thoroughly determined individual that is in fact the very ground of the possibility of employing the pure concepts in predication so as first to have the concept of an object. Thus, the categories don't, by themselves, determine any individuated thing or object for the understanding alone.

Acknowledgments I want to thank Karl Ameriks, Manfred Baum, Christian Onof, Marcel Quarfood, Tobias Rosefeldt, Jacco Verburgt and especially Michiel van Lambalgen for feedback and valuable comments in discussion and writing.

References

- Abela, P. 2002. *Kant's Empirical Realism*. Oxford: Clarendon.
 Adams, R. 1997. 'Things in Themselves'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LVII(4): 801–825.

- Adickes, E. 1924. *Kant und das Ding an sich*. Berlin: Pan.
- Allais, L. 2006. 'Intrinsic Natures: A Critique of Langton on Kant'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXXIII(1): 143–169.
- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Revised & Enlarged edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2000a. *Kant's Theory of Mind*. New edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2000b. *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2003. *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2006. *Kant and the Historical Turn*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bird, G. 2006. *The Revolutionary Kant*. Chicago and LaSalle, IL: Open Court.
- Collins, A. 1999. *Possible Experience. Understanding Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Frank, M. 1997. *Unendliche Annäherung. Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik*. Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp.
- Grier, M. 2001. *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. 1985. *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: die Lehre vom Sein (1832)*. In *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 21. Eds. F. Hogemann and W. Jaeschke. Hamburg: Meiner.
- Heimsoeth, H. 1956. *Studien zur Philosophie Immanuel Kants. Metaphysische Ursprünge und Ontologische Grundlagen*. Cologne: Kölner Universitätsverlag.
- Heimsoeth, H. 1969. *Transzendente Dialektik. Ein Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Dritter Teil. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Heimsoeth, H. 1984. 'Consciousness of Personality and the Thing in Itself in Kant's Philosophy'. In M. Gram (ed.), *Kant: Disputed Questions*. 2nd edition. Atascadero: Ridgeview, pp. 237–276.
- Henrich, D. 2004. *Grundlegung aus dem Ich*, Band 1. Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp.
- Hogrebe, W. 1989. *Prädikation und Genesis*. Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp.
- Kant, I. 1977. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Present Itself as a Science*. Trans. and ed. P. Carus, rev. J. Ellington. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Kant, I. 1992. *Lectures on Logic*. Trans. and ed. J. M. Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2002. *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*. Trans. and ed. H. Allison et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2007. *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Trans. and ed. G. Zöllner et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keller, P. 2001. *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kjosavik, F. 2008. 'Appearances, Things in Themselves and Transcendental Idealism'. In V. Rohden et al. (eds.), *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants. Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Band 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 385–396.
- Longuenesse, B. 1998. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 2005. *Kant on the Human Standpoint*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maier, A. 1930. *Kants Qualitätskategorien*. Berlin: Pan.
- Martin, G. 1969. *Immanuel Kant. Ontologie und Wissenschaftstheorie*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Quarfoot, M. 2008. 'Knowledge of Things in Themselves and Kant's Theory of Concepts'. In V. Rohden et al. (eds.), *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants. Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Band 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 615–623.
- Reich, K. 2001. *Gesammelte Schriften*. Ed. M. Baum. Hamburg: Meiner.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2006. 'Kants Ich als Gegenstand'. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 54(2): 277–293.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2007. 'Dinge an sich und sekundäre Qualitäten'. In J. Stolzenburg (ed.), *Kant in der Gegenwart*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 167–209.

- Schulting, D. 2008. 'Deducing the Categories of Modality and Relation – Reich Revisited'. In V. Rohden et al. (eds.), *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants. Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Band 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 691–702.
- Schulting, D. forthcoming. *Kant's Deduction From Apperception. On Explaining the Categories*.
- Strawson, P. F. 1966. *The Bounds of Sense*. London: Methuen.
- Stuhlmann-Laeisz, R. 1976. *Kants Logik*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
- Van Cleve, J. 1999. *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Westphal, K. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willaschek, M. 1998. 'Phaenomena/Noumena und die Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe'. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds.), *Immanuel Kant. Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 325–351.
- Wood, A. 2005. *Kant*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wood, A., Guyer, P., Allison, H. E. 2007. 'Debating Allison on Transcendental Idealism'. *Kantian Review* 12(2): 1–39.

Part III
Transcendental Idealism &
The Thing in Itself

Chapter 10

Appearance, Thing-in-Itself, and the Problem of the Skeptical Hypothesis

Dietmar H. Heidemann

Abbreviations

ED Empirical Dualism
TD Transcendental Dualism

1 Introduction

The recent debate on skepticism has devoted much attention to the question of whether or not the problem of skepticism is an intuitive one. An intuitive problem can be described as one that (a) occurs automatically as soon as we start to reflect upon certain concepts, ideas or theories, and (b) is plausible insofar as it does not seem to presuppose a great deal of theoretical reasoning. If skepticism were an intuitive problem, there would be no chance to overcome philosophical doubt. For in this case we would automatically be confronted with skepticism as soon as we start reflecting upon the possibility of knowledge, such that philosophical doubt is plausible insofar as we are able to understand it without presupposing the whole theoretical background the problem may involve.¹

Many skeptics take advantage of the seemingly intuitive or natural character of the skeptical problem in favor of the skeptical claim they put forward: We cannot know whether our beliefs are true. This is the reason why skeptics very often make use of skeptical hypotheses, for a skeptical hypothesis seems to be an ideal representative of an intuitive argument. A skeptical hypothesis can be defined as an

D.H. Heidemann (✉)

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Luxembourg, L-7720
Walferdange, Luxembourg
e-mail: dietmar.heidemann@uni.lu

¹Cf. Williams' (1996: xiiff.) account of skepticism as an intuitive problem. Hume is a classic example of someone who takes (external world) skepticism to be an intuitive or natural problem since it is a "malady" "which can never be radically cur'd." (Hume 1978, 218).

abstract description of a non-excludable radically skeptical possibility.² The dream argument and the evil demon argument are classical examples of that hypothesis. Accordingly, reality might be radically different from what we believe it is because we cannot rule out that we are constantly dreaming or that we are radically deceived in our beliefs. What both arguments put forward seems to be intuitively clear: we can directly understand this reasoning because they picture or illustrate *prima facie* plausible thought experiments. However, even the best analysis of our beliefs does not put us in a position to decide whether the skeptical hypothesis is true or false.

Though skeptical hypotheses are in fact intuitive, they cannot be taken to be totally innocent, for a skeptical hypothesis presupposes at least the possibility that reality is totally different from what we believe. This involves three assumptions: First, we are not able to know with certainty that or how reality is different from what we believe. Second, truth is independent of our beliefs, i.e., that our beliefs do not constitute reality. Third, the causal assumption that our beliefs might be brought about through something that is epistemically inaccessible to us.³

In different ways, Kant's transcendental idealism has been accused of giving rise to skeptical consequences because the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself implicitly rests on a skeptical hypothesis or is structurally comparable to a skeptical hypothesis. Kant apparently agrees that, first, we cannot know what reality truly is since we can only cognize appearances; secondly, since things in themselves represent true, non-subjective reality and since they are independent of our cognitive capacities Kant seems to hold a realistic conception of truth; thirdly, since Kant seems to claim that appearances are caused by things in themselves that are epistemically inaccessible to us, he also seems to make a causal assumption in the aforementioned sense.

The thesis defended in this article is that transcendental idealism does not yield skeptical consequences since the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself cannot be understood in terms of the skeptical hypothesis. Kant rather demonstrates that radical skeptical doubts concerning external reality like those of the skeptical hypothesis presuppose transcendental realism, the theory according to which external objects exist in a strong ontological sense as things in themselves independently of our cognitive capacities. I proceed in three steps: In order to prepare my argument I first briefly summarize, in [Section 2](#), the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself. In [Section 3](#), I then show that the interpretation of that distinction in terms of the skeptical hypothesis presupposes transcendental realism and that transcendental realism is incompatible with transcendental idealism. In [Section 4](#), I discuss possible objections to my argument. Note that my aim is not to show that transcendental idealism is true but that a skeptical reading of that theory has to be ruled out in order to make sense of Kant's distinction between appearance and

²The formal structure of an argument based on the skeptical hypothesis (*sh*) looks like this: (1) I do not know that not-*sh*; (2) If I do not know that not-*sh*, I do not know that *p*; (3) conclusion: I do not know that *p*.

³There would be much more to say about how skeptical hypotheses work and what they presuppose, but one can take these three features as their major characteristics. On skeptical hypotheses in more detail see Williams (1996: 79ff.), Bonjour (1985: 179ff.), and Nozick (1981: 198ff.; 263ff.).

thing-in-itself. For if we cannot, in principle, rule out the skeptical reading of this distinction, any discussion of the correct interpretation of transcendental idealism would be pointless.

2 Appearance and Thing-in-Itself

From the very beginning, transcendental idealism has been associated with skepticism. In the famous 1782 review of the first *Critique*, Feder and Garve for example judge that transcendental idealism transforms external reality into nothing but representations.⁴ Five years later in his book *Ueber Raum und Caussalitaet*, Feder again maintains that Kant denies the existence of external reality: “Doesn’t he [Kant] dispute all too sceptically the existence of bodies outside the representation?” (Feder 1787, xxviii; translation mine).⁵ The same line of criticism can be found in Hamann, who in his *Metakritik* (1784) accuses Kant of “Zweifelsucht [*obsession with doubt*]”.⁶ Similarly, Schulze declares, in his *Aenesidemus* from 1792, the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself to express nothing but Berkeley’s *esse est percipi*, an objection Strawson also finds quite obvious.⁷ In publications between 1788 and 1792 in the *Philosophisches Magazin*, of which he was editor, the Kant critic Eberhard claims with respect to the doctrine of the unknowability of things in themselves that transcendental idealism is in fact identical with Humean and even Pyrrhonian skepticism, a criticism also put forward by Hegel (especially in the *Encyclopedia*). Equally, Tiedemann in his *Theaetet oder ueber das menschliche Wissen* maintains that Kant is skeptical about “whether our representations have their real objects outside themselves and outside us” (Tiedemann 1794, 9; translation mine). Most famously, Jacobi writes in *David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus* (1787) that without the presupposition of the thing-in-itself he cannot enter the Kantian system and with that presupposition he cannot remain in it because in transcendental idealism subjective appearances (“subjective[.] Erscheinungen”) depend on objects outside us as things in themselves (“Gegenständen außer uns als Dingen an sich”), i.e., as their unknown causes (Jacobi 1976, 304ff.). This list is not complete by far and, moreover, similar objections can be found in the present-day literature.⁸

Almost all of these criticisms take offence at one and the same problem: the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself. This shouldn’t surprise us. More than once Kant himself gives rise to a fundamental misunderstanding of this distinction. This is most obvious in his various definitions of ‘transcendental idealism’ as the doctrine

⁴Cf. Garve and Feder (1991).

⁵Cf. Feder (1787, §§ 2; 14; 15; 16ff.; 25).

⁶Cf. Hamann (1951: 284).

⁷Cf. Schulze (1911: 10ff.; 197ff.; 223ff.).

⁸Cf. Heidemann (1998).

that everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself. [...] Space itself [...] together with time, and, with both, all appearances, are not things, but rather nothing but representations, and they cannot exist at all outside our mind. (A490–492=B518–520)⁹

In the fourth Paralogism in the first *Critique* it reads similarly:

I understand by the transcendental idealism of all appearances the doctrine that they are all together to be regarded as mere representations and not as things in themselves [...]. (A369)

Likewise in the *Prolegomena* Kant declares:

Idealism consists in the claim that there are none other than thinking beings; the other things that we believe we perceive in intuition are only representations in thinking beings, to which in fact no object existing outside these beings corresponds. I say in opposition: There are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves, but are acquainted only with their appearances, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses. (AA 4: 288–289 [Kant 2002, 84])

It seems as if Kant were saying here that what we perceive are not real objects in space and time and nothing over and above representations of objects as opposed to things in themselves as real objects. However, we cannot cognize whether the latter really exist. Although one might find these definitions or descriptions of transcendental idealism confusing, one thing should be unquestionable: Kant is not a skeptic by intention. On the other hand, the question is whether he is one by implication. This is what needs clarification.

To start with, it is important to see that the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is an epistemological distinction. It is epistemological because Kant introduces both concepts with respect to sources of knowledge rather than presents a semantic analysis of perceptual terms or an ontological analysis of external reality and its categorial determinations. As a result of the make-up and epistemic cooperation of our cognitive faculties, sensibility and understanding, we “can have cognition of no object as a thing-in-itself, but only insofar as it is an object of sensible intuition, i.e., as an appearance; from which follows the limitation of all even possible speculative cognition of reason to mere objects of experience” (Bxxvi).

That cognition is limited to objects of experience is a conclusion that follows from the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself on the basis of the theory of sensibility and understanding. The distinction is introduced in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. There, Kant develops a theory of pure sensibility as an independent source of knowledge. His claim is that what we refer to in sensibility is a single object since intuition is the only way in which we are able to directly refer to objects

⁹All translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Guyer and Wood (Kant 1998).

in sensibility; and intuition is *repraesentatio singularis*, singular representation, because it can only refer to *single* objects. There are pure intuitions, as in geometry, and empirical intuitions, as in sense perception. Only the latter can represent appearances, because geometrical, or more generally, mathematical objects are constructed and therefore determined objects. This is why Kant defines “appearance” as the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition” (A20=B34).

However, in transcendental idealism it is not possible to conceive of an appearance as “mere illusion” (B69), because both concepts, appearance and illusion, are used in different ways, indeed they refer to different objects. The concept of ‘appearance’ is used to designate objects and their properties depending on the kind of intuition of the subject “in the relation of the given object to it” (B69). The point here is that what appears, the object and its properties, is really given. Hence we can attribute the predicates of appearances like color or smell to objects in space. By contrast, the concept of ‘illusion’ cannot be attributed to the object because illusion is something that only pertains to the subject. Therefore, in transcendental idealism appearances cannot be reduced to mere illusions, though we can be under an illusion.

The complementary concept ‘thing-in-itself’ is introduced in the Transcendental Aesthetic as well. Although his terminology is not particularly clear, Kant distinguishes between thing-in-itself in the empirical sense and thing-in-itself in the non-empirical sense. Thing-in-itself, in the empirical sense, is the object existing in space. It is this object that has properties and therefore causes representations in us. It is called ‘appearance’ because we represent it according to subjective conditions of sensibility. Since our way of perceiving depends on subjective conditions of sensibility, we can at least conceive of objects that might be perceived in a way that is totally different from these conditions, different from space and time as forms of our intuition. What we are conceiving in this case is not the thing-in-itself in the empirical sense but the thing-in-itself in the non-empirical sense. At most times, Kant just calls it ‘thing-in-itself’. Things in themselves, in this sense, do not exist in space; they do not have properties we could perceive and they therefore do not cause appearances.

In the second edition of the first *Critique*, Kant specifies that this non-spatial thing-in-itself is the noumenon or object of thought and can be taken as “noumenon in the negative sense” or “noumenon in a positive sense” (B307). The “noumenon in a positive sense” is the “object of a non-sensible intuition, [...] a special kind of intuition, namely intellectual intuition, which, however, is not our own, and the possibility of which we cannot understand” (B307). Here, Kant thinks of objects of traditional metaphysics like God, unextended simple parts, the spiritual soul, monads, etc. Since our intuition is a sensible, not an intellectual intuition, we cannot cognize these objects, although it is reasonable to conceive of them. “Noumenon in the negative sense” is the thing insofar as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, an object we think of when we abstract from space and time as forms of intuition, i.e., a thing “the understanding must think without this relation to our kind of intuition” (B307). Likewise, in this case we cannot cognize such an object for our

intuition is spatiotemporal. Since the “noumenon in the negative sense” is not a contradictory concept Kant calls it a “boundary concept, in order to limit the pretension of sensibility” (B311)—and of the understanding, one might add. Hence, according to the second edition of the first *Critique*, the concept “thing-in-itself” breaks up into the thing-in-itself in the *empirical* sense and the thing-in-itself in the *non-empirical* sense. The latter is the *noumenon* and is subdivided by Kant into the noumenon in the *positive* sense and the noumenon in the *negative* sense.

The epistemological or ontological status of the thing-in-itself, especially with respect to ‘appearance’, is highly controversial. The standard criticism is that, contrary to what the doctrine teaches, in transcendental idealism things in themselves are the underlying grounds of appearances or affect the senses and thereby produce appearances. This causal account of the relation between appearance and thing-in-itself seems to be supported by various places where Kant seems to suggest this view, e.g., in the *Prolegomena*:

In fact, if we view the objects of the senses as mere appearances, as is fitting, then we thereby admit at the very same time that a thing in itself underlies them, although we are not acquainted with this thing as it may be constituted in itself, but only with its appearance, i.e., with the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something. Therefore the understanding, just by the fact that it accepts appearances, also admits to the existence of things in themselves, and to that extent we can say that the representation of such beings as underlie the appearance, hence of mere intelligible beings, is not merely permitted but also unavoidable. (AA 4: 314–315 [Kant 2002, 107 ff.])

There is no doubt that statements like this one can be (mis)understood in terms of a causal relation between appearances and things in themselves. As we will see later in greater detail, it is the causal account of this relation that motivates the skeptical interpretation of the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself. On the other hand, at most places where Kant talks about appearance and thing-in-itself he explicitly points out that transcendental idealism cannot be identified with “common idealism that itself doubts or denies the existence of external things” (A491=B519).¹⁰ As some commentators believe, the expression ‘external things’ in transcendental idealism refers to ‘things in themselves’. For this reason they have taken Kant’s aim in the Refutation of Idealism (B274–279) in the second edition of the first *Critique* to be a positive proof of the existence of things in themselves.¹¹ This view is clearly untenable, even if one argues that it depends on the correct interpretation of the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, which is at the very heart of transcendental idealism.

The battle over transcendental idealism has been dominated by the dispute between two-worlders and one-worlders.¹² Two-worlders agree with respect to what the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is about. According to the two-world view of transcendental idealism, it is a distinction between two disjointed

¹⁰For a detailed discussion of the differences between transcendental and ‘common’ or metaphysical idealism see Heidemann (1998: 100ff.).

¹¹For example, Hoyos Jaramillo (1995) and Vaihinger (1884).

¹²Cf. Van Cleve (1999: 143ff.) and Collins (1999: 173ff.).

sets of real objects and humans can have knowledge of only one of them, which is appearances. By contrast, the one-worlders only agree with respect to what the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is *not* about, i.e., they deny that it is one between two ontologically separate classes or kinds of object; on everything else they more or less disagree. Nowadays, the two-world view seems outdated. This is the reason why the controversy over transcendental idealism no longer takes place between the two-worlders and the one-worlders but has become a dispute among the one-worlders themselves. For more than three decades, one-worlders have focused mainly on the discussion of versions of the so-called double-aspect view, prominently defended by Prauss¹³ and Allison.¹⁴ Recent Kant research has produced a number of new, stimulating interpretations of Kant's theory such as Van Cleve's¹⁵ phenomenalist reading, Collins'¹⁶ subjectivist reading, Langton's¹⁷ metaphysical reading or, more recently, Rosefeldt's¹⁸ dispositionalist reading and Allais'¹⁹ reading of transcendental idealism along the lines of a direct theory of perception. This article is not concerned with these highly instructive accounts. It rather focuses on the question whether or not a skeptical reading of the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is possible. For in order to be in a position to decide which of these accounts of transcendental idealism is the correct one, this question has to be answered first.

3 Empirical Dualism and Transcendental Dualism

According to my thesis, it is inadmissible to interpret the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself in terms of the skeptical hypothesis. What should be clear by now is that the Kantian distinction at least makes sense beyond any skeptical allegation, although how it is interpreted might be fundamentally different. Of course, this is not sufficient for maintaining that the distinction does not yield skeptical consequences. Therefore, my thesis needs further backup. Once again, my aim is not to prove that Kant's distinction is unquestionable. My claim rather is that a reading of transcendental idealism in terms of the skeptical hypothesis is inconsistent with Kant's view. I contend that ruling out this reading is a precondition for taking the theory seriously.

In what follows, I reconstruct the argument by means of which it becomes clear that the skeptical reading of the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself presupposes transcendental realism, the theory according to which objects

¹³Cf. Prauss (1974: 32 ff.).

¹⁴Cf. Allison (2004: 50–73).

¹⁵Cf. Van Cleve (1999: 71 ff.; 123 ff.; 134 ff.).

¹⁶Cf. Collins (1999: 8 ff.; 20–30).

¹⁷Cf. Langton (1998: 12 ff.).

¹⁸Cf. Rosefeldt (2007: 184 ff.).

¹⁹Cf. Allais (2007: 468 ff.) and Allais (2004: 670 ff.).

outside perception are things in themselves. Kant presents this argument with the help of a systematic confrontation of transcendental idealism and empirical realism, on the one hand, and transcendental realism and empirical idealism on the other. With respect to the problem of the skeptical hypothesis, the most important point is that transcendental realism establishes a causal connection between appearance and thing-in-itself, whereas according to transcendental idealism there is no such connection since we cannot ascribe causal properties to things in themselves; in transcendental idealism things in themselves do not even exist in space outside us.

In the fourth Paralogism of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A366ff.) Kant outlines a Cartesian scenario. Against the backdrop of this scenario he presents a systematic comparison of competing conceptions of idealism and realism. The fourth paralogism of transcendental psychology consists in the following argument: Our knowledge concerning the existence of external objects rests on a causal inference from the perceptual representation of an external object to the actually existing external object in itself outside us. Since causal inferences of this sort are doubtful, we cannot know whether our beliefs about the external world are true and whether external objects really exist at all. For the “cause of given perceptions” (A366), the external object, could in principle be produced by the perceiver herself, for example, as a product of the imagination or of the inner sense. Thus, we cannot be sure whether external objects really exist. The only indubitable object is the object of inner self-perception, “I myself with all my representations” (A368), for I am immediately aware of myself and the representations I have.

According to Kant, this reasoning rests on false metaphysical premises. The main reason why doubt about the existence of external reality turns out to be unwarranted is that inner as well as outer perception is *immediate*. For Kant, the immediate reference to objects of outer perception demonstrates that objects of outer sense do not exist “independently of us and our sensibility” (A369). This secures our cognition of them because in sensibility we directly refer to external reality, that is, we do not have to causally infer from inner perceptions the real existence of external objects. Kant is not saying that referential immediacy is a sufficient criterion for eliminating any doubt about external reality. However, referential immediacy prevents doubts about external reality due to causal inference.

Immediacy of outer perception is the crucial point for Kant. This becomes clear from the paradigmatic differentiation between what he calls ‘empirical dualism’ consisting of transcendental idealism and empirical realism, on the one hand, and ‘transcendental dualism’ consisting of transcendental realism and empirical idealism, on the other (A379, A369ff.). According to Kant, it is transcendental, not empirical, dualism that yields skeptical consequences.

3.1 Empirical Dualism

Empirical Dualism is composed of transcendental idealism and empirical realism. As we have seen, in transcendental idealism objects of outer perception are represented as appearances, and not as things in themselves. Furthermore, space and time

are not things in themselves or properties of things in themselves but pure forms of our sensible intuition. This is, for Kant, the main reason why outer perception is immediate and does not rest on causal inferences from sense perceptions to external objects that are, in principle, out of reach of our cognitive capacities. The theory naturally connected with transcendental idealism is empirical realism, according to which the objects of outer perception are *real* only insofar as they are empirically given objects in space and time. The theory that specifies the conditions of possible experience is transcendental idealism: Accordingly, objects considered as things in themselves existing independently of our sensibility are not empirically real because “matter”, as Kant puts it,

is only a species of representations (intuition), which are called external, not as if they related to objects that are external in themselves but because they relate perceptions to space, where all things are external to one another, but that space itself is in us. (A370)

The misleading formulation “a species of representations” doesn’t transform empirical realism into metaphysical idealism, a skeptical form of idealism that identifies external reality with representations. Kant maintains that in transcendental idealism external objects are real, just as they are intuited in space as “extended beings” (A492=B520). Moreover, objects do exist in “world-space even if no human being has ever perceived them or ever will perceive them” (A496=B524). This kind of realism, with respect to external objects, does not make Kant a representationalist or indirect realist. On the contrary, Kant’s emphasis on the representational character of external reality indicates that the concept of reality depends on the conceptual framework of transcendental idealism, which grounds empirical realism. One can therefore characterize empirical realism as direct realism. Accordingly, we do not infer the existence of external objects from inner perceptions as their causal effects since in sense perception we are directly related to external reality. Again, Kant does not argue that empirical or direct realism can ensure us external reality since hallucinations or illusions are always possible (A375–377). Yet empirical realism overcomes the fundamental deficiency of indirect realism, i.e., representationalism.²⁰ One can summarize empirical dualism according to three theoretical aspects:

Empirical Dualism (ED): Transcendental idealism and empirical realism

ED-1: External objects exist independently of our cognitive capacities as extended bodies in space outside us
= *ontological independence*

²⁰The transcendental idealist does, of course, not deny that there is a causal relation between mind and world, that is, between representations and external objects. However, the transcendental idealist denies that we know about the *existence* of external objects by means of a causal inference from representations to things outside us. In perception we are rather directly aware of the existence of the external object. Unfortunately, Kant does not tell us a lot about the character of this unmediated relation, and how exactly the (direct) empirical realist explains the possibility of hallucinations or illusions.

ED-2: In outer perception we have immediate access to external reality; what is real for us depends on our epistemic capacities or the conceptual framework that we accept respectively

= *epistemic dependence*

ED-3: Our external beliefs are true insofar as there is an empirical coherence between them, depending on transcendental conditions of cognition; there is no causal correspondence between our mind and a mind-independent world of things in themselves

= *truth-theoretical coherence*²¹

That Kant holds a coherence theory of truth might strike one as rather controversial. However, it isn't if it is taken transcendently. Kant presupposes the traditional correspondence theory or "nominal definition of truth, namely that it is the agreement of cognition with its objects", as "granted and presupposed" (A58=B82). The term "granted" does not mean that Kant accepts the correspondence theory as indisputable. He rather regards this theory as self-evident because, for him, correspondence to the external world is a necessary condition of true beliefs about the external world. However, a "general criterion of truth" cannot be proven because there is nothing general, which "was valid of all cognitions without any distinction among their objects" (A58=B83). In some passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant alludes to "transcendental truth" (A146=B185; A222=B269), which consists in the objective reality of the concepts of pure understanding and "precedes all empirical truth" (A146=B185). At least *empirical* truth Kant understands in the way of the coherence theory:

In space and time, however, the empirical truth of appearances is satisfactorily secured, and sufficiently distinguished from its kinship with dreams, if both are correctly and thoroughly connected up according to empirical laws in one experience. [. . .] [F]or everything is actual that stands in one context with a perception in accordance with the laws of the empirical progression. (A492–493=B520–521)

Behind this statement lies the second postulate of "empirical thinking in general": "That which is connected with the material conditions of experience (of sensation) is actual." (A218=B266; cf. A225ff.=B272ff.). In short, this principle of pure understanding prescribes that the concept of reality or existence only applies to external objects if and only if they are possible or actual objects of our spatiotemporal system of experience, regardless whether we know them directly or indirectly. If, at this point, one leaves out of consideration the actual meaning of transcendental truth as objective validity, one can see that Kant's conception of empirical truth in the sense of empirical reality proceeds from a special transcendental version of the coherence theory of truth. Accordingly, true is what coheres with the concepts and forms that govern our experience. A number of passages from Kant's lectures on logic support this view.

²¹ For a clear account of the contemporary (scientific) relevance of such an account of idealism and realism in particular with respect to the "completeness principle" see Brittan (2001).

In the lectures on logic, as in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant raises objections to the correspondence concept of truth. He argues as follows: In order to determine truth as correspondence one must realize the correspondence of cognition with its object. However, in order to be able to compare the object with cognition we already have to know the object. Therefore, properly speaking there is no scrutiny of the correspondence between object and cognition but within cognition itself. This amounts to a skeptical circle. Thus, it is circular to define rules of truth by already making use of these rules.²² Despite these difficulties, in the so-called Vienna Logic Kant defines two criteria of truth: “1.) agreement of cognition with its object. 2.) agreement with itself” (AA 24/2: 823; translation mine). Accordingly, the latter is a necessary criterion of truth, because true cognition is never allowed to contradict itself. At any rate, as mentioned above, a “general criterion of truth” (A58=B83) cannot exist since this would require a formal generality of the criterion, which could never be satisfied by any object.

3.2 *Transcendental Dualism*

Transcendental Dualism is composed of transcendental realism and empirical idealism. A transcendental realist regards external appearances as things in themselves, as external objects “which would exist independently of us and our sensibility” (A369). The reason for this is that transcendental realism takes space and time to be “something given in themselves” (A369), e.g., like absolute Newtonian space and time. According to transcendental realism, objects of outer perception are external objects in themselves in a strong sense; that is to say, in transcendental realism the meaning or objective validity of the concept of reality by no means depends on a conceptual framework theory. Moreover, unlike empirical realism, transcendental realism does not establish a justificatory relation between what is real and what can be cognized. Hence, the transcendental realist must regard outer perceptions as effects caused by things in themselves existing outside in space, and space *not* being a subjective condition of human intuition. Since in transcendental realism the relation between cause and effect of outer perception is not conceptually governed by a priori concepts as in the transcendental theory of experience, the representation of an external object cannot with certainty be attributed to its cause, the external object in space. From this Kant concludes that a transcendental realist must admit that in her theory outer perception could be nothing but “a mere play of our inner sense” (A368), or nothing over and above a dream.

This is the reason why in the end transcendental realism coincides with empirical idealism. Empirical idealism is the theory that concedes the fact of outer experience, but leaves open whether “the object corresponding” (A371) to a representation really exists. Therefore, in transcendental realism and empirical idealism we cannot

²²Cf. Logic Blomberg, AA 24/1: 81 ff.; Logic Philippi; AA 24/1: 386 ff. See also Logic Dohna-Wundlacken, AA 24/2: 718 ff. and Vienna Logic, AA 24/2: 822.

know whether our beliefs about the external world are true, because it is uncertain whether our representations of external reality have corresponding external objects as their perceptual causes. Now, since the transcendental realist advocates the (absolute) existence of space and time in themselves independently of conditions of sensibility, she creates a gap between the representation of an object *in us* and the represented object in itself *outside us*. Kant claims that as long as the transcendental realist maintains that external reality exists in itself outside us she cannot close this gap. Analogously to empirical dualism, one can characterize transcendental dualism according to three theoretical aspects:

Transcendental Dualism (TD): Transcendental realism and empirical idealism

TD-1: External objects are mind-independent, extended objects in themselves in space outside us; they exist independently of our cognitive capacity

= *ontological independence*

TD-2: Our knowledge of external objects is mediated through causal effects of things in themselves outside us on our cognitive apparatus; what is real does not depend on our epistemic capacities or the conceptual framework we accept

= *epistemic independence*

TD-3: External reality is in a strong sense mind-independent; our beliefs about the external world correspond to external reality in virtue of a causal connection between representations and external objects

= *truth-theoretical correspondence*.²³

Consequently, empirical and transcendental dualism clearly contradict each other. If transcendental idealism, and hence empirical realism, is true, then transcendental realism and empirical idealism must be false. Since Kant, of course, claims that transcendental idealism is true he claims to have shown by indirect proof that transcendental realism is false. What does this mean with respect to the problem of the skeptical hypothesis? At the outset, I mentioned three assumptions characteristic of skeptical hypotheses: First, that we are not able to know with certainty that and how reality is different from what we believe; second, that truth is independent of our beliefs; and third, that our beliefs about the external world are caused by something that is epistemically inaccessible to us. The question that must be answered now is whether transcendental idealism or transcendental realism respectively is committed to any of these assumptions.

Transcendental idealism is clearly not committed to any of these assumptions. First, transcendental idealism does not hold that we are not able to know with certainty that or how reality is different from what we believe because this assumption presupposes that reality is independent, in the strong ontological sense, of our cognitive capacities. By contrast, transcendental idealism holds that, although the existence of external objects does not ontologically depend on the beliefs we hold,

²³Empirical and transcendental dualism correspond to what the early Putnam (1981: 49ff., 72ff.), called internal and metaphysical realism. Hence, an internal idealist subscribes to ontological independence, epistemic dependence and truth-theoretical coherence, whereas a metaphysical realist subscribes to ontological independence, epistemic independence and truth-theoretical correspondence. Cf. Heidemann (2004: 283ff.). See also Van Cleve (1999: 214ff.).

external reality is epistemically dependent on our cognitive capacities. We only have knowledge of appearances as representations of external objects and external objects are not things in themselves. Of course, this argument already presupposes the truth of transcendental idealism, and it therefore is not particularly strong. Secondly, since, according to Kant, empirical truth depends on the connection “with the material conditions of experience” (A218=B266), which boils down to a transcendental version of coherentism, in transcendental idealism truth is not independent of our beliefs. Third, in transcendental idealism beliefs about the external world are not caused by something that is epistemically inaccessible to us, for everything that can possibly have a causal effect on us is appearance and not thing-in-itself. Since appearances are epistemically accessible to us and do not represent things in themselves, the latter cannot be regarded as the unknown cause of hallucinations or illusions.

With respect to the question whether the Kantian distinction between appearances and things in themselves can be interpreted in terms of the skeptical hypotheses this point is most important. As in the evil demon argument, the skeptical hypothesis must assume that there is possibly something, e.g., the evil demon, that has causal properties and is able to induce false beliefs about the external world in us. However, we are unable to epistemically access this object and that is why we cannot know whether our beliefs are true.

According to Kant, this line of thought depends in particular on two unjustified presuppositions: First, that there are things in themselves independent of our cognitive capacities in space outside us; secondly, that things in themselves are causally efficacious—two presuppositions the skeptic needs in order to get the hypothesis going, for without a possibly existing, unknowable cause of our representations it would lose its force. The Kantian distinction between appearances and things in themselves does not allow for the application of either the predicate ‘existence’ or the concept of causality to things in themselves. Only objects represented as appearances and not as things in themselves do exist and can have causal effects on us. As long as we can reach these objects in the possible progress of experience we can have epistemic access to them and in this sense they are empirically real.

Therefore, it should be clear that one cannot conceive of the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself in terms of the skeptical hypothesis. The skeptical hypothesis rather gets its impetus from within transcendental realism. For from Kant’s account it follows, first, that in this theory we cannot know with certainty that and how reality is different from what we believe. Secondly, from the correspondence theory of truth in transcendental realism it follows that in this theory truth is independent of our beliefs. And third, as the transcendental realist regards reality as independent of our cognitive capacities she must accept the possibility that our beliefs about the external world are caused by something that is epistemically inaccessible to us. Again, the impossibility of acquiring knowledge of the cause of our beliefs about the external world is the major theoretical constituent of the skeptical hypothesis that is compatible only with transcendental realism, but not with transcendental idealism. This is the reason why Kant explicitly emphasizes that transcendental dualism, consisting of transcendental realism and

empirical idealism, “while assuming the proper reality of space, denies the existence of extended beings in it, or at least finds this existence doubtful, and so in this respect admits no satisfactory provable distinction between dream and truth.” (A491=B519) Consequently, transcendental realism is the theoretical precondition for the skeptical hypothesis, but this theory is false since transcendental idealism shows that external objects are appearances and not things in themselves. Hence, the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself in transcendental idealism is not a skeptical one; by contrast, in transcendental realism it necessarily is. The conclusion, therefore, is that transcendental idealism is a skeptical position neither by intention nor by inclusion.

4 Three Objections

Kant’s strategy to deal with skepticism seems to be similar to Williams’ strategy to dispense with “unnatural doubts” (Williams 1996). Kant shows that the skeptic’s theoretical commitment is to transcendental realism and that transcendental realism has to be replaced by transcendental idealism in order to avoid skepticism. In a similar strategic way, Williams argues that the skeptic has to presuppose “epistemological realism” (Williams 1996, 67 ff.), i.e., a foundationalist account of epistemic justification in order to promote her “unnatural doubts”. If we replace “epistemological realism” with contextualism, “unnatural doubts” can be avoided. In both cases, the argument depends, of course, on the truth of the alternative theory, i.e., transcendental idealism or contextualism respectively. This concern is reflected in the first of three objections that one could raise to my argument for a non-skeptical reading of Kant’s distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself.

- (1) The first objection is that I offered a merely immanent interpretation simply presupposing that transcendental idealism is the correct theory to have. This criticism does not hold since my concern was not to prove the truth of transcendental idealism across the board. My aim rather was to show that it is possible to offer a non-skeptical reading of Kant’s distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself. And it seems to me that such a reading is possible. Of course, what is required in addition to that is a positive proof of transcendental idealism. But this is beyond the scope of this article.
- (2) The second, more systematic objection argues that since the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is highly problematic we should simply give it up. This would release us from difficult interpretive problems. Nevertheless, as can be seen from the history of philosophy, for example from Plato’s theory of forms, Pyrrhonian skepticism, or even Leibniz’ conception of matter as *phenomenon bene fundatum*, as well as contemporary theory of knowledge, the concept of appearance is a fundamental philosophical concept, a concept we need in order to be able to understand basic epistemological problems like those of outer perception. This, of course, involves additional problems, which I have not discussed in this article. Kant’s transcendental idealism is one alternative among others to react to that situation.

- (3) The third objection argues that there is a fundamental inconsistency in my solution to the problem that follows from a deep conflict within transcendental idealism itself. Whereas Kant claims, as a result of the Transcendental Deduction and the Schematism in the first *Critique*, that the category of causality cannot legitimately be applied to things in themselves, he seems to contradict this claim in his resolution of the Third Antinomy, the antinomy of freedom (cf. A532ff.=560ff.). There, he argues that although every event in nature is determined by a congeneric cause in space and time we can, at least in principle, conceive of human actions as effects due to causes that are not congeneric. That is to say, the causes of human actions can be regarded as spontaneous, free causes, as causes that are in themselves undetermined. This seems to conflict with Kant's view that the category of causality cannot be legitimately applied to things in themselves as causes of appearances. Now I wouldn't deny that there are fundamental problems with Kant's resolution of the Third Antinomy. However, the point is that in the Third Antinomy Kant only claims that freedom is conceivable, not that it is cognizable.

References

- Allais, L. 2004. 'Kant's One World. Interpreting Transcendental Idealism'. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12: 655–684.
- Allais, L. 2007. 'Kant's Idealism and the Secondary Quality Analogy'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45: 459–484.
- Allison, H. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Enlarged and Revised edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- BonJour, L. 1985. *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brittan, G. 2001. 'Transcendental Idealism, Empirical Realism, and the Completeness Principle'. In V. Gerhardt, R.-P. Horstmann and R. Schumacher (eds.), *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung. Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses Berlin 2000*, Vol. 2. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, pp. 541–548.
- Collins, A. 1999. *Possible Experience. Understanding Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Feder, J. G. H. 1787. *Ueber Raum und Causalitaet. Zur Pruefung der Kantischen Philosophie*. Göttingen: Dieterich.
- Garve, C., Feder, J. G. H. 1991. *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*. Göttingen 1770–82. 3. Stück, den 19. Januar 1782. S. 40–48; Riga. *Critik der reinen Vernunft*. Von Imman. Kant. 1781. 856 S. Octav. In *Rezensionen zur Kantischen Philosophie 1781–87*. Ed. A. Landau. Bebra: Landau, pp. 10–17.
- Hamann, J.G. 1951. 'Metakritik über den Purismus der Vernunft'. In J. G. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. III. Wien: Herder, pp. 280–289.
- Heidemann, D. 1998. *Kant und das Problem des metaphysischen Idealismus*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
- Heidemann, D. 2004. 'Metaphysik und Realismus in der Erkenntnistheorie. Eine Problemanalyse bei Kant und Putnam'. In K. Gloy (ed.), *Unser Zeitalter – ein postmetaphysisches?*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, pp. 277–290.
- Hoyos Jaramillo, L. 1995. *Kant und die Idealismusfrage. Eine Untersuchung über Kants Widerlegung des Idealismus*. Mainz: Gardez.
- Hume, D. 1978. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Second Edition. Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Jacobi, F. H. 1976. 'David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus'. In F. H. Jacobi, *Werke*, Vol. II. Ed. F. Roth and F. Köppen, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 2002. *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*. Trans. and ed. H. Allison and P. Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility. Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nozick, R. 1981. *Philosophical Explanations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prauss, G. 1974. *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*. 2nd edition. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Putnam, H. 1981. *Reason, Truth and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2007. 'Dinge an sich und sekundäre Qualitäten'. In J. Stolzenberg (ed.), *Kant in der Gegenwart*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, pp. 167–209.
- Schulze, G. E. 1911. *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementar-Philosophie. Nebst einer Vertheidigung des Skepticismus gegen die Anmaassungen der Vernunftkritik (1792)*. Berlin: Reuther & Reichard.
- Tiedemann, D. 1794. *Theaetet oder ueber das menschliche Wissen. Ein Beytrag zur Vernunftkritik*. Frankfurt am Main: Varrentrapp & Wenner.
- Vaihinger, H. 1884. 'Zu Kants Widerlegung des Idealismus'. In *Straßburger Abhandlungen zur Philosophie (Eduard Zeller zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage)*, pp. 85–164.
- Van Cleve, J. 1999. *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, M. 1996. *Unnatural Doubts. Epistemological Realism and the Basis of Skepticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chapter 11

Thinking the In-itself and Its Relation to Appearances

Christian Onof

Abbreviations

CTP	Causal Theory of Perception
TI	Transcendental Idealism
TR	Transcendental Realism
TUA	Transcendental Unity of Apperception

The impetus for this paper is the question of how to think of the in-itself and its role in Transcendental Idealism.¹ This is only an issue if Kant's claim that the in-itself exists has more than a methodological meaning, so the paper will start by emphasizing the metaphysical dimension of the enterprise of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR). To examine the question of the in-itself naturally leads to taking a stance on the meaning of Transcendental Idealism (TI), so the paper will address this issue too, particularly with reference to the interpretations prevalent in the literature. The bulk of the paper, however, will focus upon the specific issue of how to understand what it is for something to be in-itself, on the basis of how we are affected by it.²

There are two broad strands in the interpretation of TI. The first views the distinction between the realm of what is transcendently real, i.e., usually referred to as the domain of things in themselves, and what are appearances in a transcendental sense as a merely epistemic distinction. That is, insofar as objects are intelligible only in terms of the point of view of a knower, it is possible to consider reality independently of this point of view, and this latter is the transcendently real. One version of this view has it that the point of view of a knower is that of a subject endowed with conceptual capacities, so that a transcendental distinction between transcendently real and appearance arises from the mere fact that concepts are

C. Onof (✉)

Department of Philosophy, School of Social Science, Birkbeck College, University of London, London WC1E 7HX, UK
e-mail: c.onof@imperial.ac.uk

¹Note that I tend to avoid the term 'thing in itself' on the grounds that we naturally think of thinghood in terms of objects, which, as I shall show, is not helpful.

²As we shall see, this involves thinking the in-itself under the category of causality.

employed. As Ameriks (2003: 102) points out, what is puzzling about this approach is that it in effect claims that, from the mere fact that a concept holds of something real, this reality gets demoted to the status of appearance. Such short arguments to TI also do not do justice to the nature of TI as presented by Kant in CPR (see Guyer 1987) insofar as it clearly connects TI to the sensible nature of our intuition.

Another version of this view of TI is sensitive to this point insofar as it takes the distinction between the in-itself and appearances to arise from the nature of our particular cognitive faculties. This version of TI, on the contrary, has considerable textual support, insofar as Kant presents his first arguments for TI in the Transcendental Aesthetic, where it follows from the ideality of space and time. Typically, this leads to a view of things in themselves as the same objects as empirical objects, but viewed independently of the sensible conditions required for knowledge, as in Matthews, Prauss and Allison's work. Opposed to such epistemic interpretations of TI are those that view it as making metaphysical claims as to the existence of things in themselves (e.g., Walker and Walsh). Exponents of this view generally conclude to the failure of TI as a coherent metaphysical position.³ In this paper, I want to emphasize the metaphysical dimension of TI and how, when properly understood, this supports a claim regarding the existence of the in-itself. This will lead me to consider a position which denies both that things in themselves can be understood as the same objects as empirical ones, and that they can be understood as different objects.

1 The Metaphysical Content of the Doctrine of Transcendental Idealism

In the following, I understand a philosophical position to be metaphysical insofar as it involves claims about the nature of reality. As we shall see, in Kant's work, these are not claims about the existence of certain entities (i.e., ontological claims), but rather about how one should view reality insofar as one is a subject of discursive knowledge. My thesis that TI is not merely an epistemic but also a metaphysical position rests upon the following three claims. TI is metaphysical in the assumption it makes. It is metaphysical in its methodology. It is metaphysical in the kind of conclusions it draws. As we shall see on a first examination of these claims, only the second is uncontroversial. A further examination will be needed to support the other two claims and thereby lead to the existence claim for the in-itself.

Let us examine these three claims about the metaphysical nature of TI in turn. First, as announced in the Preface of CPR, Kant takes himself to be addressing the question of how something can be an object of knowledge for me by considering a new approach (that of the Copernican Revolution), namely by supposing that the object has to conform to my cognition. Thus Kant is proposing to "assume that the objects, or what is the same thing, the *experience* in which alone they can be cognized (as given objects) conforms to" the concepts I have of these objects

³There are some exceptions though, historically with Heimsoeth and more recently Aquila (1979).

(Bxvii).⁴ Now this proposal to examine if one can make better progress with “the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition” (Bxvi) only makes sense if what I am dealing with, is knowledge of something which is not a purely mental product. That is, Kant’s question only makes sense if there is a metaphysical assumption, namely that there is some reality that is external to the mind. Why? Well, if there were no such assumption, the whole Copernican enterprise of the *Critique* would be pointless, insofar as my cognition and its object would be identified: the issue of which conforms to which would be meaningless.

Nevertheless, one could still complain that what we are providing here are meta-philosophical grounds for the claim that we have to assume that something exists independently of our cognition. This leaves it open to an objector to wave aside such grounds and claim that the assumption of an external reality is dogmatic, or that these grounds do not establish the existence of some reality in-itself. I shall examine this point below.

Second, and expanding from the previous point, let us recall the nature of the problem that Kant addresses in CPR. The background to that problem is stated in the famous letter to Marcus Herz (21 February 1772), namely, “What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call ‘representation’ to the object?” (AA 10: 130; translation mine) Examining such a question could, in principle, merely amount to an analysis of this relation of representation. That is, it could amount to analyzing the structure of our experience of the world to show, in the light of certain basic features of our experience, that this experience has to be one of objects in causal relations for instance. However, by the time Kant writes the Preface to CPR, he makes it clear that more is at stake here: he realizes that in order to identify a ground for what relates a representation to an object, it is necessary to rethink the notion of object itself. That is, Kant’s enterprise is inherently metaphysical insofar as his epistemological investigation is inextricably bound up with a metaphysical investigation into the nature of the objects of our knowledge.

Third, if we now look at the nature of the position that Kant arrives at as a result of his critical investigation, there is no consensus as to the extent to which Kant’s enterprise can be said to be metaphysical. A first group of commentators is made up of Kantian scholars who find that his conclusions involve ontological claims. Among them are commentators who believe that TI is a hopelessly confused or ill-supported doctrine (Prichard, Strawson, Guyer). Typically, these commentators find among some of Kant’s transcendental arguments useful ways of deriving metaphysical conclusions aimed at refuting the skeptic. Other commentators (e.g., Aquila) take TI seriously as defining distinct ontological domains. By contrast, as discussed above, a second group of Kantian scholars (Allison, Matthews, Prauss⁵) view TI as metaphysical only in the minimal sense that it carves out the realm of appearances as the domain of empirical reality, with the realm of the in-itself defined methodologically by exclusion. The in-itself is thus identified as the realm of the

⁴Translations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Guyer and Wood (Kant 1997).

⁵Rogerson’s (1993) anti-realist reading of CPR also belongs here.

same things considered independently of our sensibility. The knowing subject has access to the empirical aspect of objects, which defines the realm of appearances, thereby leaving room for viewing another aspect of such objects, namely how they are in themselves. This interpretation of the doctrine of TI as one of “epistemological modesty”, as Guyer (1987: 333) has labeled it, has however been questioned by many commentators (e.g., Ameriks, Guyer) on the grounds that Kant apparently refers to two distinct types of objects (Guyer 1987, 334–335), and arguably makes ontological claims about non-empirical objects (Ameriks 2003, 104; Wood 1978).

These textual issues aside, this epistemic interpretation runs into problems in its own attempt to derive the weak metaphysical conclusion that there is a way in which things exist in themselves. Robinson (1994: 421) points out that the possibility of considering things under another aspect needs to be justified. For, as he points out, in the case of the Pietà, I can consider it “as a great work of art, a lump of marble [. . .], but to consider it as a rocket or mathematical formula is just to be mistaken”. In the case of the in-itself and appearances, the two aspects in question are, moreover, defined by mutually exclusive properties: non-sensible versus spatiotemporal properties. Or if the in-itself aspect is, on the contrary, defined by simply taking away properties of the appearance,⁶ Gardner (1999: 293) points out that a similar problem arises. How do we know, once we have taken away the sensible properties of things, that we are left with anything at all? This question needs to be answered, else one might be concerned that the situation is as with the number ‘2’ and the property of being even: take away the property and nothing is left. The only way of dealing with this issue, it would seem,⁷ would involve claiming:

- (a) that the spatiotemporal properties of appearances are not essential to objects in the way that evenness is essential to the number ‘2’;
- (b) all objects have non-sensible properties, and these can be grasped when the object is viewed under another aspect.

Kant’s text itself raises this question in the Phenomena and Noumena chapter of CPR. As Willaschek (1998: 334–335) emphasizes, Kant introduces the negative conception of ‘noumenon’ by abstracting from our sensible intuition of objects (A253–254=B309). But that such a procedure should leave us with an object (noumenon) could only be decided if we could assume another type of intuition to which such objects would be given (A254=B310). But we have no grounds for this assumption.

⁶This would amount to a clear privileging of the ‘in-itself’ aspect, which Aquila (1979) takes to be the only consistent way of understanding the two-aspect view. I am sympathetic to this point, but not to the consequence that Aquila draws from this, namely that this ultimately reduces to the two-object view.

⁷Allison deals with this issue by emphasizing that his is a methodological distinction between the in-itself and appearances. This however does not address the core of the problem. As Robinson (1994: 422) points out, we need some justification for claiming that the same thing can have properties which are mutually exclusive.

If one wants to go further than Kant's claims in this passage in thinking the in-itself, it cannot be insofar as one is considering the in-itself through the epistemological concept of the noumenon, i.e., what can be grasped when stripping appearances of the contribution of sensibility: Kant explicitly warns against this (A255=B310). Rather, it requires viewing the in-itself in its role as *ground* of appearances. That is, it requires taking on board the first claim I made above, namely about the assumed existence of something that is not produced by the mind, and which therefore has properties that are independent of the a priori forms of sensibility. But if this assumption supports a metaphysical understanding of TI, this can hardly be used to defend the two-aspect interpretation of TI as it is presented by Allison.⁸ Moreover, Kant himself indicates that, although it is possible to think of an empirical object by abstracting from all forms of sensible intuition, the question arises "whether it is not then a mere form of a concept and whether any object at all is left over after this separation" (A252–253).

2 Issues of Dogmatism and Irrelevance

In this paper, I want to show that a starting point for an understanding of the framework of TI involves a proper grasp of the metaphysical basis. To this end, let us clarify to what extent the assumption of existence of some non-mental reality can indeed be defended against the objections I raised above. Namely, I shall refute the claim of its purported dogmatism and show how the claim that it is necessary to think that something exists in-itself is grounded.

That the claim it is necessary to think that there is some extra-mental reality is not just a dogmatic assertion, can be seen from the two following considerations. First, at the beginning of the Aesthetic, Kant defines an intuition as a representation that relates directly to an object, and adds that implicit in the claim that we have such intuitions is the claim that "the object is given to us" (A19=B33). This does not amount to a simple dogmatic assertion of the existence of an external reality, but to a claim about the nature of our intuitive representations as relating directly to an object. And it is used in typical Kantian fashion as the starting point for a

⁸Prauss (1974: 42–43) and Allison (2004: 51–52) make much of textual evidence they claim points to a single-object double-aspect view. This is the fact that 'thing in itself', i.e. 'Ding an sich (selbst)' is arguably a short form for 'thing considered in-itself', i.e. 'Ding an sich selbst betrachtet'. This interpretation suggests that it is the same things which are at stake here as in the empirical realm, but considered as they are in themselves. As Ameriks (2003: 77) points out, many commentators have shown that some passages rather "imply the traditional adjectival interpretation (B164; A504/B532f.)". Additionally, consider the following. Take two empirical objects *x* and *y* which are identical but have different spatial locations. One must therefore posit *X* and *Y* which are the same objects with a different bunch of properties, as things in themselves. Now either *X* and *Y* are identical or they are not. If they are not identical, why is it that they give rise to the same appearances? If they are identical, how is it that their appearances are numerically different: they have exactly the same intrinsic (and the same extrinsic) properties, so what is it about them that accounts for their numerical difference (which does amount to distinct indexical properties)?

small transcendental argument. Namely: “[T]his, in turn, is possible only if it [i.e., the object] affects the mind in a certain way” (ibid.). That is, we here have the first transcendental condition identified in CPR, and it is not one which pertains to transcendental features of a cognitive subject. Rather, it claims that a condition for the possibility of intuitions is that an object should affect the faculty of sensibility. This is clearly a metaphysical claim that is not a mere dogmatic assertion, but the outcome of transcendental reflection.

Still, the starting point for this argument, much as it is presented in epistemic form, does contain a covert metaphysical assumption, namely that the ‘object’ to which the intuition refers is not simply a product of the subject’s mind, i.e., an imagined one. This point is important insofar as Kant wants his idealism to be distinguished from some absolute idealism *à la* Berkeley. That it is not addressed in the first edition of the *Critique* confirms the extent to which his purpose can hardly have been the refutation of skepticism per se. In the second edition, with the Refutation of Idealism, he sets out on the contrary to “establish that we have *experience* and not merely *imagination* of outer things” (B275). This certainly dispels any doubt that Kant would happily have made an even covert dogmatic assertion about the existence of some external reality.

For all that it is not dogmatic, does this amount to a grounded claim that something exists in-itself? Here, I shall not draw on the Refutation of Idealism, because Kant’s many references to things in themselves in which their existence seems unproblematic (e.g., A251–252; A696=B724) suggests that grounds for this claim must be present in the A-edition. I would therefore like to return to the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic (A19–20=B33–34) to bring out such grounds.

Several commentators (Gardner 1999, 287; Westphal 2004, 52ff.) propose that ‘object’ in this passage cannot refer to an empirical object, “the elementary pre-suppositions of which are at this point being analysed”. For Gardner, reference to objects “demands to be read as referring to things in themselves” (Gardner 1999, 287). What Gardner is implying is that there is indeed a threat of circularity if objects, which have not yet been identified through their transcendental conditions, are assumed to be given at the outset of an investigation that purports to establish these conditions. Such an interpretation, moreover, has strong textual support in the *Prolegomena* where Kant claims, against idealism, that “[t]here are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves” and further, Kant refers to “the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses” (*Prol.* §13, Remark 2, AA 4: 289 [Kant 1950]; another relevant passage is *Prol.* §32, AA 4: 314–315).

But there are textual difficulties with the identification of objects with things in themselves in the passage in question in the *Critique*, as the result of the different meanings that seem to accrue to the word ‘object’ in this passage. Thus, a few lines further, Kant states that the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called appearance” (A20=B34 [AA 4: 29.22–23; AA 3: 50.4–5]). Given that a number of interpreters want to avoid the metaphysical implications of the identification of the affecting object with a thing in itself (Longuenesse 1998), it is useful for our purposes to clarify the different meanings of the word ‘object’ here.

First, note that, when the word ‘object’ is first used in the Aesthetic, no distinction things-in-themselves/appearances is in place. The quote just mentioned represents the first reference to an ‘appearance’. If this militates against understanding the reference of the ‘object’ prior to this quote to be an appearance, it does nothing to support the view that it refers to the thing in itself. Rather, it seems methodologically appropriate to view it as having a completely indeterminate reference.

That is, our understanding of ‘object’ at this point must be based upon our pre-philosophical, and therefore pre-critical, grasp of this notion. This is the ‘object’ of a naively realist metaphysical stance. What this leaves us with is the task of re-interpreting the claim that the object affects our faculty of sensibility in the light of the subsequent setting up of the framework of TI.⁹ That is, what can be said about what affects sensibility now that the distinction things-in-themselves/appearances is in place?

Kant makes a number of statements in the *Critique* relating to the faculty of sensibility’s being affected (e.g., A68=B93; B129). Here, the question of interpretation within the framework of TI becomes important. We find Kant talking, in B207, of “the real of the sensation [. . .] by which one can only be conscious that the subject is affected”, and in A253=B309 he claims that “through mere intuition nothing at all is thought, and that this affection of sensibility in me does not constitute any relation of such representation to any object at all”. In such passages, it is claimed that something about which nothing further is said, affects our faculty of sensibility. But additionally, here as in other passages (e.g., A494=B522), he brings out the fact that there is no representation of a *determinate object* through mere intuition. With these two distinct claims, Kant identifies, first, something indeterminate *that is not even characterized as an object*,¹⁰ which affects our faculty of sensibility, and second, an indeterminate object of our intuitive representation.¹¹ The *difference between the two indeterminacies* is that the second calls for further determination, insofar as it is that of an object (A267=B323): this indeterminacy is an *under-determination*. By contrast, by not characterizing the first as an object,¹² Kant is indicating that, rather than an under-determined object, something *essentially indeterminate* is at stake here, which TI characterizes as unknowable.

⁹This methodology is consistent with Kant’s method of separating and differentiating so as to isolate that which is the object of the investigation. Thus, in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, he starts off with a pre-philosophical grasp of the good, and separates out the notion of the good in his philosophical analysis. Similarly here, the critical understanding of what it is to be an object emerges from a starting point in which this notion is grasped pre-critically, by differentiating it from the undetermined object of intuition and from the realist’s notion of an object as thing in itself.

¹⁰Below, I return to Kant’s claim that this is something one “relates to an object in general” (B207).

¹¹The determinacy I refer to is conceptual determinacy. As Longuenesse (2005: 215) points out, in the Jäsche Logic Kant also refers to intuitions as “thoroughly determinate cognitions” (AA 9: 99n.). But this usage of ‘determinacy’ in CPR refers to conceptual determinacy (see e.g. A20=B34).

¹²Later, we will see that Kant does refer to the ground of affection in terms of the *general* notion of ‘transcendental object’, but this is not an *undetermined* object.

We are now in a position to conclude that, just as the ‘object’ of our empirical intuitions, as indefinite, is independent of our conceptual apparatus, that which affects our sensibility in the first place is independent of our sensibility. It is therefore properly viewed as *in-itself*, where this denotes that it is independent of the conditions required for it to be an object of knowledge, i.e., sensibility (later we will examine to what extent it is *independent of the whole of our cognition*). This therefore supports the view that the *Critique*’s initial metaphysical claim that is made explicit in the short transcendental argument discussed above amounts to the claim that something exists in-itself,¹³ and that this is the ground of affection.

So in moving from the pre-critical realist stance of perceptual acquaintance with an object affecting me, which underpins the text at the beginning of the Aesthetic, to a critical understanding of this relation, the pre-critical object is replaced by two different types of indeterminacy that both denote what is essential to what it is to be an object, namely the ‘distance’ to the subject of knowledge and her representations. On the one hand, the manifold of sensations is represented in intuition as *that which is to be determined as object*, which means determined as *independent of any particular sensible representation of it*. On the other hand, the ground of affection is viewed as *that which is essentially indeterminate* insofar as it is *independent of sensible representations as such*.

This total independence of the ground of affection from my receptivity is the pre-condition for something to be given to me, so that I can constitute an object of knowledge. That is, the ‘distance’ which exists between this ground and my cognition is a pre-condition of the possibility of having a ‘distance’ between any particular representation of mine and an object it refers to.¹⁴ But, conversely, this ‘distance’ to the ground of affection can only be understood in terms of that which is thereby constituted between the subject and the object of knowledge. That is, it is only insofar as I cognize an object that I have some (purely notional) grasp of the in-itself that is the ground of affection. So, the existence of the in-itself as ground of affection emerges as a *transcendental condition* of the cognition of objects: it is necessary for their cognition, but also only makes sense in terms of this transcendental role. In this way, a metaphysical claim is indeed made, but it does not amount to an ontological assertion since it is only insofar as it is a condition of knowledge that the in-itself must be said to exist. Unconditional claims such as are found in ontology are thus replaced by metaphysical claims related to conditions of knowledge.

However, unlike the forms of sensibility or the categories, the existence of the in-itself is not a condition of any particular feature of our conscious experience or knowledge, but rather of there being objective knowledge at all. In this sense, my claim that the in-itself must be thought of as existing differs from Rescher’s (2000: 15) understanding of the same claim. While he assigns it a merely regulative status, I view this existence claim as lying at the heart of the constitution of objectivity.

¹³Note that this is different from ‘some thing-in-itself exists’.

¹⁴The term ‘distance’ is used insofar as it is useful to describe the phenomenology of the epistemic relation to an intentional object and the lack of any such relation to something in-itself.

3 Revisiting the Text from the Beginning of the Aesthetic

These conclusions will only go through, however, if they provide a cogent interpretation of *the whole* of the text at the beginning of the Aesthetic (A19–21=B33–35). Returning to this text, we find the need to reinterpret the starting point: *yes*, intuitions refer immediately to appearances, but *no*, these are not objects in the full-blown sense defined later. They are less than an object. This distinction is only possible because of the two senses of appearance in CPR, a first sense referring to what is immediately given in intuition, and the other referring to the phenomenon. Thus, the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called appearance” (A20=B34).

But what Kant describes as an object that affects the faculty of sensibility by producing sensation cannot refer to the same understanding of ‘object’ on this reading. This is because TI introduces a definition of ‘object’ which *excludes* reality in-itself from being grasped as such. Insofar as this reality is independent of the sensible conditions required for knowledge, it cannot be known. Bearing in mind the passages where Kant distances himself from a use of ‘object’ to refer to this ground (e.g., A253=B309), how can we interpret his doing just that at the opening of the Aesthetic?

By using the word ‘object’ prior to the critical examination of conditions of objectivity, Kant cannot be taken to affirm anything about the nature of the ground in question. Rather, this word is used as a way of thinking or talking of something as this ground, that is, it is a use of ‘object’ which means ‘something in general that is not accessible to the senses’. This is what Kant later properly calls the “transcendental object” (A109), or noumenon in the negative sense (A255=B310–311). And indeed, we find Kant using the term ‘transcendental object’ precisely in this way, once the framework of TI is in place. Thus, “we can call the merely intelligible cause of appearances in general the transcendental object, merely so that we may have something corresponding to sensibility as a receptivity. To this transcendental object we can ascribe the whole extent and connection of our possible perceptions, and say that it is given in itself prior to all experience” (A494=B522). Thus the understanding “thinks of an object in itself, [...] as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance” (A288=B344).

This use of the terminology ‘transcendental object’ to refer to the in-itself as ground (cf. Allison 1968, 177) is, according to what we said above, not in conflict with its use as the ground of objectivity in the Transcendental Deduction (A109), contrary to what some commentators have claimed (Gardner 1999, 155). For it follows from the above that it is insofar as we take ourselves to be affected by something that lies beyond our senses (referred to as the transcendental object), that the material is available for a synthesis of representations whose unity is referred to something that is independent of our particular perceptions (transcendental object), and thereby determines an (empirical) object.¹⁵ The two uses of the term

¹⁵This receives further support in the *Opus postumum*, where Kant states that the “thing in itself = x is not an object given to the senses, but only the principle of synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the

‘transcendental object’ reflect the sense in which, if the transcendental constitution of objectivity is to be possible, there is a requirement for something transcendent: the ‘distance’ of any particular representation to an object it refers to is made possible through an absolute ‘distance’ of our receptive cognition to something which is independent of it.¹⁶ This can be explained as follows:

- (1) The determination of an empirical object as phenomenon is achieved through a synthetic judgement.
- (2) Such a judgement differs from an analytic judgement in that a concept is joined to another which is not contained in it: a synthetic judgement requires going beyond a concept to join it to another.
- (3) Going beyond the content of one concept to join it to another is only possible insofar as there is an object which sanctions this link: the object provides the locus of the co-instantiation of these synthetically linked concepts.
- (4) There is a (formal) *condition for this synthesis* as object-constituting. This is that the co-instantiation of the synthetically linked conceptual representations be referred to something=X, which lies beyond these representations. This is the transcendental object as providing the ground for the to-be-determined object.
- (5) There is a (material) *condition for this object-constituting* synthesis, which is itself a condition of the formal condition (4).¹⁷ That is, there must be an intuitive representation of the locus of this co-instantiation (or of some other state of affairs that is connected to it in accordance with the Analogies, A225=B272). This means that a manifold in intuition is required, which is brought together in the synthesis. For objects of outer sense, this condition is fulfilled insofar as the subject thereby takes herself to be affected, and this affection has its ground in the transcendental object.
- (6) From (4) and (5), it follows that the transcendental object provides, as the totally indeterminate ground of affection, the material ground for an object-constituting synthesis, insofar as the transcendental object, as defining the to-be-determined object, is posited by the subject of cognition.

This interdependence of the two roles of the transcendental object explains Gardner’s claim that “[t]he existence of things in themselves *qua* ground of appearance is the unique case in which philosophical reflection is entitled to

manifold of sensible intuition in general, and of the law of its coordination” (OP, AA 22: 33.23–26 [Kant 1993, 175]). Beiser (2002: 212–214) explains that this does not amount to a denial of reality in-itself, but to a clarification of its role within transcendental philosophy.

¹⁶This amounts to a more metaphysically committed take on Allison’s claim that “the indispensable role of material condition of [discursive] cognition must be assigned to something considered as it is in itself, apart from this epistemic relation and, therefore, as a merely transcendental object” (Allison 2004, 68).

¹⁷The link is best understood in terms of the Transcendental Unity of Apperception (TUA), which I do not discuss here for greater simplicity. TUA, as correlate of the transcendental object, has an analytic unity which contains a synthesis, and requires consciousness of it (cf. B133).

move from the conditioned to the unconditioned, and its entitlement to do so in this instance is interdependent with its lack of entitlement in every other, more determinate context” (Gardner 1999, 289; see also Ameriks 2006, 153).

Before moving on, note that it is an epistemic investigation, which leads to separating out these different meanings of the word ‘object’. That this identifies different notions of reality is clear. But it is hard to see how this distinction between reality in-itself and appearances could amount to the segregation of completely *distinct ontological domains*, as a strong two-object interpretation would have it. For what was essentially an undifferentiated pre-critical notion of object has been revised so as to distinguish appearances from reality in-itself on epistemic grounds. This suggests appearances do not constitute an ontological domain separate from the in-itself. Additionally, the fact that the notion of ‘transcendental object’ can be used both to refer to the ground of affection, and to the indeterminate X to which the unity of the synthesis of our representations is referred so as to constitute the phenomenon, does not leave any room for distinguishing two distinct ontological realms.¹⁸

4 Beyond the Bounds of Possible Knowledge?

There remains a worry, however, in that these claims, even though they are consistent with the starting point of Kant’s critical investigation, are nevertheless in conflict with the bounds of knowledge set up by the framework of TI. To mitigate worries on this front, first note that the relation of grounding is completely unknown to us. Still, one can view the grounding relation in terms of the category of *causality*. Ameriks (2006: 147) points out that Kant explicitly refers to the “existence of pure causal relations between things in themselves and phenomena”, in particular at A534=B562. Even though it is an indeterminate causal relation, this still amounts to an application of the category of causality beyond possible experience,¹⁹ and this is where Jacobi’s criticism is relevant: it seems that one needs this relation of affection as ground for the cognitive process analyzed in the *Critique*, but that it also exceeds what I can know.

To see that the two claims in question do not amount to knowledge of the unconditioned, we need only note that:

- (a) The ground that affects the senses is not determined in any way apart from its standing in an (indeterminate) causal relation. And, as Kant says in the *Critique of Judgment*, to claim that something causes something else is not to determine it: “When we name a cause after the concept we have of its effect (though only

¹⁸This should not, however, be seen as grounds for adopting a double-aspect theory. The fact that the same notion of transcendental object is used to refer both to the ground of affection, and to the bare substrate of the to-be-determined object, lends no support to this view. For no object is identified through this notion: it is the bare x that stands beyond my representation.

¹⁹As to the worry that the categories have no meaning without a manifold in intuition, Kant claims (A247=B304) that they enable the thought of objects. They thus merely have “transcendental significance” (A248=B305).

with regard to the relation it has to this effect), we are not trying to determine intrinsically the inner character of this cause, by the properties that we can know solely from such causes and that experience must give us” (CJ, AA 5: 457; translation Pluhar [Kant 1987]).

- (b) The existence of the in-itself is independent of any judgement and therefore of any application of the categories. It is true that the judgement that claims this existence is determined under the categories of modality, but this does not amount to a conceptual determination of the thing, since modal categories “do not augment the concept to which they are applied in the least” (A219=B266; see also R 5229, AA 18: 126.7–8).
- (c) The kind of knowledge this amounts to is not knowledge of objects, but knowledge of the conditions of objectivity, which is obtained through transcendental reflection (A260=B136; cf. Buroker 1981, 112). As explained above, this means in particular that no ontological claim of existence is being made here. Rather, what is claimed is that the assumption of the existence of the in-itself is a requirement for there to be objective knowledge, for beings with our discursive understanding.²⁰

5 Saying More About Affection and the In-itself

Having, in the above, criticized both the two-object and the two-aspect interpretations, I have also interpreted the in-itself as ground of affection through the concept of the ‘transcendental object’, which is also referred to as the ‘noumenon’ in the negative sense in the B-edition. This provides one answer to the question of how to think the in-itself. This way of thinking the in-itself as that which is essentially indeterminate certainly reflects the limits of our cognitive capacities. But is there more to this indeterminacy? To answer this question, we need to investigate further how to grasp the in-itself and its relation to appearances.

Since the use of ‘object’ in ‘transcendental object’ only enables us to think or talk about the ground of affection, the question arises whether some other notion of ‘object’ would be appropriate to characterize the in-itself. Such a notion of ‘object’

²⁰One way of looking at this is to say that transcendental reflection yields conditions which appear to be of the type: (I have knowledge of objects) \rightarrow (T is true). This would, together with the truth of the premise (I have knowledge of objects), yield the truth of T. The problem with this representation of the structure of an argument in transcendental reflection is that it is made without any attention to the conditions under which the component clauses are meaningful. The premise that I have knowledge of objects refers to an ‘I’ which is not a constitutive part of the empirical world, but also not something which has reality in-itself. It cannot therefore be taken as describing a ‘fact’ in the way the realist would take it. Rather, it is the statement of the very existence of a particular world of experience. Also, the conclusion is actually related to a possible subject of cognition, and not about a pre-given domain of reality. As a result, it seems more appropriate to represent transcendental reflection as stating: $(\forall c) (c \text{ is a discursive cognizer}) \rightarrow [(c \text{ has knowledge of objects}) \rightarrow (T(c) \text{ is true})]$ where the dependence of *T* upon the subject of cognition is made explicit. This dependence is, e.g., in the case at hand, that of the notion of the in-itself upon its transcendental role as ground of affection.

would imply a cognitive mode of access different from ours. The question is important for an interpretation of TI in which the claim that something exists in-itself is taken seriously, i.e., not merely in a methodological sense, since it raises the issue of the conditions under which one could refer to such reality. Of course, since the framework of TI forbids any knowledge of the in-itself, this question cannot be given a proper answer. What we do know, as Gardner (1999: 296) points out, is that what is required is a non-intentional sense of 'object'. In the following, I shall suggest that one can further clarify what it is not, and thereby fully articulate the meaning of the indeterminacy of the ground of affection.

To this end, I want to work my way back from the intuitive representation that arises as a result of affection, to its ground. The question is: what can be said about how reference to the in-itself would be possible for some understanding? In formulating this question, we must bear in mind the fact that this question is of course asked by a being with a certain kind of cognition, namely a discursive one. So, the answer belongs to transcendental reflection. That is, it will be about what, *from the point of view of a discursive understanding*, is involved in some understanding referring to the in-itself. This *transcendental investigation* into how the in-itself can be thought to be graspable will shed further light upon why it is that one cannot refer to the ground of affection as an object in the sense defined by TI, and thereby lead to some general conclusions about TI.

As a starting point, let us consider the content of the intuitive representation of the manifold. This manifold in intuition is a representation in space and time which arises when the subject is affected by sensations. When this empirical manifold is brought under a concept, the normativity of this cognitive act is grounded in the transcendental unity of apperception. Unlike previous empiricist theories, it is not grounded upon a causal link from an external object to an abstracted conceptual determination via the impressions the object makes upon the senses. Unlike previous rationalist theories, it is not grounded upon a harmony (e.g., guaranteed by God) between the perceiver's ideas and conceptual determinations in the object. This means that judging that the manifold falls under concept *x* is not grounded upon any conceptually determinate feature of the manifold which is presented to the subject, or that is foisted upon his awareness in perception.

Such a theory therefore requires the ability to identify a non-conceptual manifold in intuition as a distinct component of the cognitive process, if all cognition is to be accounted for in this way. We thus find, at the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic, that Kant proceeds by the method of isolation in separating out the intuitive dimension from what is sensation and what is conceptual when one has a sensory representation (A19–21=B33–35; A320=B376; Kitcher 1990, 40). Note, although I shall not mention this with every use of the notion of conceptual determination, that the concepts that are at stake here are those that determine an object, i.e., those that are applied under the categories of quantity, quality or relation.²¹

²¹ Having clarified that the content of intuitions is non-conceptual (see Abela 2002), I would like to clarify why, in a transcendentially idealistic framework, this means that they are not determinate in terms of our discursive concepts. In a way, this point is obvious, but it is perhaps not sufficiently appreciated in what sense it implies a different notion of non-conceptual content from that used in a transcendentially realist setting. In such a setting, if we now claim that the immediate content of

I now want to suggest one can argue from the conceptual indeterminacy of the content of an intuitive representation to the conceptual indeterminacy of its ground. To do this, I shall, as above, make use of the representation of this grounding relation as one of causality, in line with Kant's own statements on this matter (A494=B522).

I claim that if something is conceptually determinate,²² a causal link will transfer this determinacy to the effect. This claim can only be justified by looking at contexts in which the category of causality is applied to a manifold in sensibility since we can have no knowledge of other applications of this category. Here, using the Causal Theory of Perception (CTP) in a transcendently realist setting as illustration is helpful. For, given the a priori forms of sensibility, the ground of affection in TI is sufficient to account for the nature of the manifold in intuition, just as CTP (Grice 1961) claims that the perceived object's causal link to the perceptual experience is sufficient to account for the content of this experience.²³

If we examine CTP's causal link between the object and the perceptual content, and therefore place ourselves in a Transcendently Realistic (TR) setting, the reliability of perceptual knowledge consists just in this: that an alteration of the causing

the perceptual experience is non-conceptual (e.g. see Martin 1992, Peacocke 2001), this content must, however be *conceptually determinate*. Why? Perceptual knowledge can only be acquired insofar as conceptual judgements can be formed whose truth will lie in their adequacy for the non-conceptual content of the perceptual experience. But in this realist setting, the direction of fit is from reality to knowledge. Which concepts are adequate to represent this content is a matter that must be determined by the content itself. That is, this content must be conceptually determinate. An easy way of understanding this is of considering the content of an image. This is visual content, but its features are conceptually determinate, e.g. there are well-defined colours, shapes, locations, etc. These correspond to what is conceptually determinate in this non-conceptual content of the image. Additionally, if a causal theory of perception is adopted, the determinacy of the content follows from the fact that this theory accounts for how conceptually determinate objects give rise to perceptual judgements. If we now turn to the TI setting, let us assume that the non-conceptual content of an intuitive representation were conceptually determinate. Insofar as the subject is aware of this content, the conceptual features of the content would determine which concepts it is appropriate to apply to it, as in the realist case above. But this is incompatible with a proper understanding of Kant's Copernican revolution which has it that the normativity of knowledge lies in the unity which the subject imposes upon her representations. For Kant, knowledge is a "whole of compared and connected representations" (A97). Insofar as a subject's spontaneity is required for the conceptual determination of the manifold in intuition, the concepts that are appropriate for objective knowledge of a particular object cannot be given through his receptive faculty. It is therefore clear that non-conceptual content within a TI framework is also not conceptually determinate.

²²The determinacy of the cause involves a determinacy of its causal power, and therefore of the type of causal link that brings about the effect in question. Acknowledgment is due to an anonymous reviewer who drew my attention to the need to clarify this issue.

²³By drawing on CTP, I am not taking it as correct, or indeed, as a tool for the interpretation of Kant's account of perception. Rather, I am using it to draw an analogy between (a) the transcendental-idealist account of how the in-itself acts as ground of the manifold of intuitive representations, whereby this manifold provides the material condition for perceptual knowledge of an appearance of that which is in-itself; and (b) the transcendental-realist account of how the object *o* that is seen has a causal impact upon the perceiver *S*, which provides the material for *S*'s claim that she perceives *o*. In this analogy, CTP is taken, minimally, to be claiming that "for all perceivers *S* and objects or visual arrays *o*, *S* sees *o* if *o* is a cause of *S*'s seeing" (Vision 1995, 9).

object leads to a corresponding alteration of the perceptual content. This correspondence means that the properties of the object give rise to appropriately related conceptual features of the perceptual content, where the appropriateness is defined in terms of the circumstances characterizing the particular perceptual experience. With this TR causal set-up, if I am told I shall have a perceptual experience which is indeterminate in terms of its color, e.g., red or green, I shall conclude, all things being equal, that the object causing the experience has ‘red-causing’ or ‘green-causing’ properties. That is, conceptual indeterminacy of the content brought about through perception can only be achieved through conceptual indeterminacy of its ground.²⁴

The claim that the absence of conceptual determination of the effect can only be brought about by some lack of determination of its cause has been supported by considering the analogy with CTP. To give independent grounds for this claim might require an in-depth analysis of the pure category of causality. On the other hand, however, this is not warranted by Kant’s view that “[f]rom the concept of a cause as a pure category [...] I will not find out anything more than that it is something that allows an inference to the existence of something else” (A243=B301). Additionally, such an analysis is not possible within the scope of this paper. So, to further support the claim, consider the following. If an object is determined under the categories of quantity, a number can be assigned to it. Suppose now that the object’s existence has a causal effect. How can one assess the contributions to the effect of any individual unit that constitutes the cause?

To do so, one need only consider what happens when this particular unit is withdrawn from the cause. There are three possibilities. First, the contribution of this unit is found to define some part of the effect, so that the latter can thereby be separated out into units (in particular: one unit, if this part is the whole). Second, the contribution of this unit amounts to the obtaining of a certain property of the whole of the effect. Third, if neither of these is true, the unit in question has no effect and is therefore not actually constitutive of the cause: the cause has to be redefined. In the first case, the effect is determined under the categories of quantity (as a number of parts are identified), while in the second, it is determined under the categories of quality (as the reality or negation of the instantiation of a property is determined). So, it would appear that a determination of the cause in terms of quantity should

²⁴As noted previously, I am using CTP for comparative purposes only. Insofar as Kant arguably holds such a theory as an empirical account of perceptual knowledge, it is important briefly to clarify how this is compatible with the transcendental account in terms of affection. In the latter, *some conceptually indeterminate in-itself* has a causal impact upon the faculty of sensibility whereby a manifold of sensations constitutes the content of an intuitive representation. In the empirical account, the *conceptually determinate object* can be viewed as empirically in a causal relation with the occurrence in time of a mental state whose content is a determinate representation, that of the object. That is, the empirical account is an empirical realist one in which the content of my mental state is explained in terms of the object as its cause. In the transcendental account, the representation is involved through its transcendental function as condition for cognition, while in the second, it is taken as a mental event in inner sense. These two accounts therefore have complementary roles and are not in conflict.

lead to a determination of the effect in terms of either quantity or quality. So a lack of determination of the effect entails a lack of determination of the cause. This corroborates the view that the in-itself as ground of affection is not to be grasped as conceptually determinate.²⁵ And indeed, we find Kant saying that it is “independent of all concepts of experience” (A566=B594), and elsewhere, that an understanding which intuitively uses no categories (B45).

6 What Does the Conceptual Indeterminacy of the In-itself Mean?

Our investigation into how the in-itself could be understood has identified a negative condition, namely that it is not by using discursive concepts that it could so be grasped referentially by any faculty of understanding.

A concern here is that this negative claim about the in-itself seems to make it even more mysterious. I am going to suggest however that the conceptual indeterminacy of the in-itself is not to be understood as a *lack*, such as that of the conceptually undetermined object of intuition discussed above, but rather as a *surplus*. To do so, consider the determination of the manifold as it is discussed in the A-version of the Transcendental Deduction, and let us consider the example of the manifold of a set of parts of a tree that has been chopped up and which lie on the grass. As Carson (unpublished) explains, using the Transcendental Deduction in the A-edition, the synthesis of apprehension involves the identification of a set of units. Here, the different sections of the tree are viewed as such units. These units are then gathered by the synthesis of reproduction and brought under the concept ‘tree’ by the synthesis of recognition. Importantly for our purposes, a condition for anything to be taken as a unit is that it be homogeneous with other units. So, the conceptual determination: ‘This is a tree’, abstracts from the differences between units.

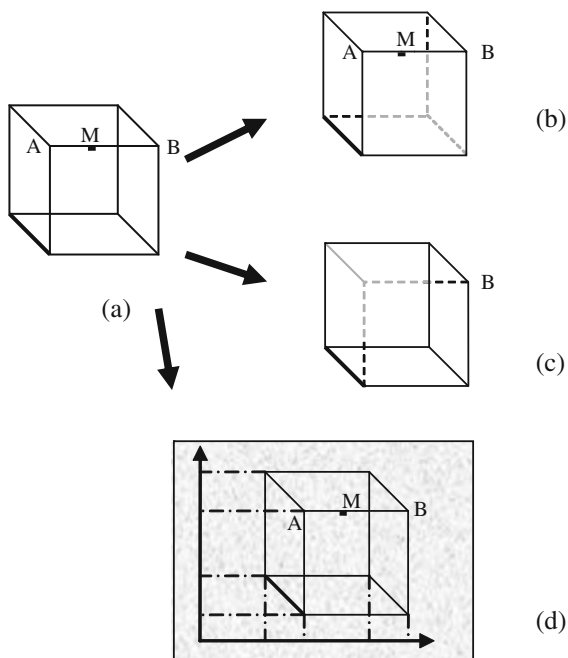
The B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction tells a similar story. Kant introduces the notion of figurative synthesis. Friedman (1992: 121) identifies this synthesis as allowing for the adding of units. Sutherland (2006: 542) emphasizes how it enables the composition of homogeneous magnitudes (cf. B201n.). Aside from strictly mathematical cases, such composition requires the determination of units by abstracting from differences between what are to count as these units. In both texts, what the determination of units sets aside is the *surplus of content* of the intuitive representation as compared with what the concepts can capture.

That this surplus of content gets reduced through further determination can be seen as follows. The further judgement: ‘This tree has a thick trunk’ involves

²⁵One might object that conceptual determinacy could, in some sense, be lost for me in the formation of the content of the manifold in intuition, insofar as it would not be part of what I am conscious of. This, however would lead to skepticism. Indeed, it would imply that there are conceptual truths about appearances (here understood as the mere manifold in intuition) that exist independently of my cognition, but to which I have no access. This would, of course, be thoroughly in conflict with the spirit of Kant’s critical epistemology.

taking some units which correspond to the trunk, but now considering them as units by abstracting from all *but their size*. Kant does not discuss the issue of how successive conceptual determinations are related, although this topic is touched upon by some commentators (Simon 2007). Briefly, I want to note that what is needed is for an intuitive representation to be available, which features the surplus of content over that which is already conceptually determined (e.g., as ‘tree’), but simultaneously encapsulates this conceptual determination as it is applied to the manifold. The *conceptualized intuition* will therefore feature the wealth of the content of pre-conceptual intuition, together with a ‘tagging’ of what was already unified in the cognitive act of synthesis under the concept ‘tree’. This means that a conceptualized intuition is a hybrid representation which presents the intuitive content *from the perspective of certain conceptual determinations*. This makes it available for further conceptualizations which will be compatible with the previous ones, precisely because these have already defined a perspective from which any further conceptualizations can be carried out. Note that this point echoes Spinoza’s dictum that all determination is negation. By applying conceptual determinations to the manifold in intuition, we close down possibilities of applying other concepts which are thereby excluded. The notion of the normativity of a conceptual determination as that of a *perspective* on the real will be important for the final part of the paper, so let me briefly illustrate it with a geometric example.

Consider the following plane figure (based upon Kitcher’s Necker Cube example [1990: 76]).



The perception of a set of lines/points produces a representation in intuition (a) of a bunch of lines that intersect at different points.²⁶ Either through prompting, or spontaneously, the viewer is then inclined to bring this manifold under a concept of cube with segment [A,B] at the front (b), or a cube with [A,B] at the rear (c), or indeed, to force himself to consider these points as lying on a plane (d). Assume the first conceptualization of the manifold in intuition. If I consider point M towards the middle of segment [A,B], I can no longer consider it as a point among lines, for it is now located towards the center of the top of the front face of a cube. Some manifoldness has been 'lost' in the process: the figure in (b) is now unified in such a way that I cannot, for instance, conceptualize it as (c) without returning to (a). So, any new conceptualizations, in which certain specificities of each line of the cube are distinguished (e.g., the greater thickness of one of the sides of the cube) can only be carried out within the perspective set by the first conceptualization. This illustrates the normativity of the perspective defined by the application of geometric concepts.

I think a case can be made for the claim that the surplus of content of the raw as opposed to the conceptualized intuition will always exist.²⁷ First, Kant claims in the *Jäsche Logic* (AA 9: 97n., 99n.) that conceptual determination is never complete, which distinguishes an object from "individual things, or individuals" (*ibid.*). Second, it would seem that no pure units will ever be given through the senses, unlike in mathematical representations. So, to consider two distinct parts of an intuitive representation as units, either involves abstracting from some differences between the units, or, if no further differences can be found between them (imagine identical beads), no finite set of concepts will be fully adequate to the wealth of content that the phenomenal character of the manifold of sensation provides.

One might object that infinite conceptual determination would capture this content. But this would amount to a concept with an infinite number of marks, which is excluded by Kant when he discusses the infinity of space in the *Aesthetic* (A25=B40). Since the content of an intuitive representation exceeds what can be exhausted by conceptual determination, this therefore supports the view that no

²⁶Note that it could be argued that there is no such intermediate step, and indeed, I agree that such a step is not necessary. It is however certainly possible that there should be such a step, particularly if one has drawn the figure as part of some larger figure. It would then not immediately appear as three-dimensional.

²⁷More could be said here by reference to the *Critique of Judgment*. As this is beyond the scope of this article, I shall merely make the following two remarks. First, insofar as no concepts, i.e., finite sets of marks (A137=B176) can grasp the total content of an intuition, the latter may lend itself to the experience of the mathematically sublime. This would be the case if it were viewed as having an infinitely differentiated content (i.e., grasped differently from a cognitive act which precisely abstracts from such an infinity to bring the intuition under a finite set of marks characteristic of a concept). Second, this wealth of content is also a condition of the possibility of the experience of beauty. Were it possible to exhaust the intuitive content with concepts, the free play of the imagination and the understanding required by the experience of beauty (CJ, AA 5: 217) would be restricted in a way which is not compatible with the free character of the interaction of the faculties in this aesthetic experience.

concept²⁸ of our faculty of understanding would be appropriate to *grasp the ground of this intuitive representation*.²⁹

To further support this suggestion for which there is no direct textual evidence in Kant's first *Critique*, I propose briefly to turn to Leibniz for help in how to grasp the in-itself. Indeed, since what is at stake is a purely intelligible grasp of the in-itself, it is of use to recall Kant's Leibnizian background, and indeed to look at how Kant describes Leibniz's theory of relations in the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection. He points out that in Leibniz's transcendently real framework a substance, as "object of the pure understanding [...] must have inner determinations and forces that pertain to its inner reality", which Kant contrasts with the determinations of substances in space "which are nothing but relations" (A265=B321). Once such inner determinations of things taken as things in themselves are given, their relations are grounded in them: "Leibniz first assumed things (monads) [...], in order subsequently to ground on that their outer relation" (A267=B323). Although the Amphiboly refers to the concept of substance which, according to the argument above, should not be used to grasp the in-itself, the important lesson we learn is that a Leibnizian way of grasping the in-itself that Kant would arguably endorse on purely logical grounds, emphasizes the dependence of relational properties upon intrinsic properties of the relata. This makes intrinsic properties key to any grasp of the in-itself, in line with Kant's view that this grasp involves "thinking it as a thing determinable by its distinguishing and inner predicates" (A565=B593). But, as we have just been reminded, the conceptual determinations of objects in space are merely relational properties. So the surplus of the non-conceptual in-itself as compared with a conceptually determinate object lies in the fact that the in-itself is endowed with an intrinsic nature.

Another way of looking at this is to note that the in-itself is a fully individuated particular, unlike an empirical object. That is, a property of the in-itself characterizes it as a particular. But a property characterizing something as a particular is essentially distinct from what a conceptual determination can grasp, insofar as the latter characterizes a thing insofar as it shares a characteristic with other things. Particulars can have relational properties that are derivable from their intrinsic non-relational properties. But conceptual properties are extrinsic in the sense that they are dependent upon a perspective being defined. For it is only from a certain perspective that a classification of things under a common concept can be defined: things are only

²⁸It could however be thought in relation to our cognition under the category of possibility, as that which provides the possibility which the conceptual determinations will transform into actual determinations of an object (see [Chapter 9](#) by Schulting, this volume).

²⁹Here, note Descartes' 'causal non-inferiority principle', as Catherine Wilson calls it: "[T]here must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect; for where can the effect acquire its reality, if not from its cause?" (Descartes 1996, 27) This could be used to support the non-conceptual determinacy of the in-itself if it is to give rise to intuitive content which represents a surplus in comparison with conceptually determinate content.

similar *in certain respects*. There are therefore no conceptually determinate properties of the in-itself *qua in-itself*.³⁰ This claim, which amounts to another way of supporting the conceptual indeterminacy of the in-itself, shows what the above surplus of content amounts to.³¹ The surplus of content that lies in the grasp of the in-itself in comparison with that of a determinate empirical object is the surplus of a full characterization of some thing as the particular it is, as opposed to a judgement which brings it under a universal categorial concept.

We therefore have the non-conceptual nature of the in-itself understood in terms of intrinsic properties, which characterize it as the particular that it is. There is no space here to enter into a detailed discussion about the understanding of ‘intrinsic’ that is at stake here.³² As already indicated, the notion of intrinsic properties I propose entails that relational properties of the in-itself are dependent upon them, where the notion of dependence can be specified as one of logical supervenience: an understanding that grasps all the intrinsic properties would thereby have access to all the relational properties. As a result, this differs from Langton’s (1998) understanding of the in-itself as characterized by intrinsic properties, insofar as relational properties are, for her, not derivable from intrinsic properties (cf. Allais 2006). And indeed, hers is an interpretation of Kant’s TI as a form of realism since relational properties of the in-itself constitute the world of appearances.³³

³⁰What makes this claim perhaps seem surprising, is our tendency to think of the in-itself in terms of the intentional notion of object which empirical objectivity rests upon. An empirical object is not a particular. Rather it is the locus of a cluster of conceptual properties, a finite set of which are determined at any point in time. The limit of an infinite determination which would exhaust what is represented intuitively is, I would claim, an ideal that amounts to an empirical counterpart of the notion of a particular in-itself.

³¹Note that some support for this claim can be found in Kant’s understanding of God’s perspective upon the in-itself (e.g., OP, AA 22: 342.15–16). The key feature of this view is that the nature of the particular is derivable from the grasp of the whole. But a conceptual determination of some thing can never be derived from a conceptual determination of the whole it belongs to—rather the opposite is true. As a result, the properties of the particular are not graspable with concepts.

³²What can however be helpful in grasping these intrinsic properties is to note that they give rise to the surplus of content of the manifold of intuition as compared with any conceptualizations thereof. The latter, I would argue, is closely bound up with what is often described as the intrinsic nature of the properties of our phenomenal experience (here phenomenal refers to the ‘what it is like’ aspect of our conscious experience). These properties are best understood as characterizing the fact of being affected. It is open to a Kantian to view these properties as relational properties between something in-itself and some notion of noumenal self.

³³Langton’s ground for a realistic interpretation of Kant lies in her understanding of the in-itself as the substance of which spatiotemporal characteristics (of appearances) are the relational properties. This is based upon an understanding of substance that is at odds with Kant’s theory of experience, as Allais points out (Allais 2006, 149–150). Although Allais does not develop this point, it seems that Langton’s error is made possible by a problem with Kant’s definition of the pure category of substance, which involves the claim that it is that which cannot be thought of as a determination of anything else. This is not obviously warranted by the nature of the function of the unity of judgement from which it is derived (see Melnick 1973, 67). And it opens the door for a very absolutist conception of the schematized category as the substratum of all that is real (A181=B255), which *prima facie* would seem better described as an Idea of Reason, i.e., a regulative rather than

7 Some Thoughts on Transcendental Idealism

What does the above entail for the meaning of the separation of appearances from the in-itself which characterizes TI? I have introduced the primary role of the in-itself as being that of the ground of affection and claimed that there must be something in-itself playing this role if the investigation of CPR is to make sense. Note that this is what Allen Wood (2005) refers to as the ‘causality interpretation’ of the distinction between the in-itself and appearances. Wood claims that such an interpretation is also necessarily a ‘non-identity’ interpretation insofar as “if a given appearance—say this chair—is grounded on or caused by some thing in itself, then at the very least, it cannot be identical with that very thing that grounds or causes it” (2005: 64). It seems to me that, when using the pure category of causality which corresponds to the hypothetical function of the unity of judgements, such a conclusion is drawn too hastily. After all, if one can talk of an empirical object’s properties viewed under its chemical aspect, as grounded in its properties when viewed under its micro-physical (atomic) aspect, one could also talk of a thing having properties that belong to it under a spatiotemporal aspect grounded in its intrinsic properties as thing in itself.

However, there are other reasons to reject the two-aspect interpretation, as we saw above. The way in which the non-empirical aspect has been characterized, namely in terms of non-conceptual properties which provide an excess of content over any conceptual determination, implies that what is in-itself could not be identified through the spatiotemporal identification of the *same object* in its empirical incarnation. The identity of objects across the two aspects is therefore to be rejected.

Although this points to a two-object interpretation of TI, we also saw that there are no grounds for viewing the investigation of CPR as opening up an ontological distinction between two different domains of objects. To specify what would seem a satisfactory interpretation in view of the discussion in this paper, I would like to make the following points which shed light on how the in-itself is to be viewed in relation to the appearance. We have noted above that the primary role of the in-itself is to serve as ground of affection. It is however the case that in the *Critique* at least two other roles can be identified for the in-itself. First, it serves as that of which the empirical object is the appearance (A251), and it can be thought using the problematic concept of noumenon (A252). Let us briefly see how these roles can be understood.

First, recall the transcendental conditions of objectivity which Kant identifies. As I understand it, there are two types of conditions: (a) that something in-itself affect sensibility; (b) that the resulting manifold in space and time be brought to a unity (transcendental unity of apperception) which defines the unity of the world of

a constitutive concept. In any case, what the First Analogy claims is that a notion of substance is constitutive of the world of appearances, while Langton, on the contrary, has it that the world of appearances is constituted around a notion of substance that is inaccessible to our knowledge, i.e., the in-itself. This contradicts Kant’s whole understanding of what it is for something to be an object, by ‘dogmatically’ introducing a notion of substance from outside the domain of experience.

appearances and the knowledge thereof, which unity is defined in particular in terms of the Principles of the Understanding (Engstrom 2006, 19). How does this relate to the possible use of the word ‘appearance’ to describe the relation of the in-itself and the empirical object? The only clue we have as to how to use this word is in an empirical context. And here we find that, if I see a broken shape when my stick is immersed in water, this shape is viewed as the appearance of the stick insofar as the stick is causally involved in the perception of the broken shape. The reality in-itself, which affects sensibility, is thus that of which the empirical object that I determine from the resulting manifold, is properly called the appearance. And this accounts for Kant’s use of the word appearance (in its objective sense) as involving a relation to the in-itself (A249=A251).

Second, if we now add that the ground of affection could not be referred to using the concepts that our discursive faculty of understanding can grasp or produce, we are left with the possibility that this ground should be graspable by another type of understanding. As we saw, these properties characterize it in its individuality. How can we make sense of an intelligible representation of something which captures everything that characterizes the particular that is represented? Such a representation would, in effect, have something like the wealth characteristic of the content of our sensible intuitions, while simultaneously making its object intelligible. This representation would be described in terms of what is grasped by an *intuitive understanding*. To further see what is involved, note that such an understanding’s representation has to capture all that characterizes the object in its particularity. If there is no feature of the object which is not captured ‘as it is’ by the representation, the representation is indiscernible from its object. Insofar as the identity of indiscernibles applies to the in-itself (on purely conceptual grounds—see A272=B328), the representation is therefore identical with its object. That is, such an understanding creates its objects through thinking them (B145). This understanding is also referred to by Kant as a non-sensible, *intellectual intuition* (A256=B311–312; B308).³⁴

Kant introduces the concept of noumenon as the object of such an intellectual intuition. This concept has two aspects. First, Kant explains the boundary concept of noumenon as follows: “The concept of a noumenon, i.e., of a thing that is not to be thought of as an object of the senses but rather as a thing in itself [. . .] is not at all contradictory [. . .]. Further, this concept is necessary in order not to extend sensible intuition to things in themselves” (A254=B310). When Kant forbids the use of ‘noumenon’ in the positive sense, this is insofar as something like an intellectual intuition “lies absolutely outside our faculty of cognition” (B308). As we saw earlier, although “the concept of a *noumenon*, taken merely problematically, remains not only admissible, but even unavoidable”, “an understanding to which

³⁴I agree with Quarfood’s (Chapter 8, this volume) criticism of Förster’s attempt to distinguish between an intuitive understanding and an intellectual intuition. Quarfood’s analysis of discursivity, which draws on material in the *Critique of Judgment*, and his claim that concepts used to determine an intuition will never suffice to completely grasp its content, are particularly congenial to the views I have been putting forward.

it would belong is itself a problem” (A256=B311). In this way, Kant is keen to distance himself from his earlier view in the Inaugural Dissertation, that the understanding alone could enable knowledge of intelligible objects by means of concepts, i.e., without any intuition.

But with regard to the issue of how to *grasp* the in-itself whose existence as ground of affection is established, a somewhat modified notion of noumenon makes a positive contribution. That is, the in-itself could be thought of as reality from a different (albeit problematic) perspective, namely that of an intellectual intuition. This notion of noumenon is modified in the sense that it is now no longer understood as obtained by stripping an object of our sensible intuition from its sensible characteristics to produce a putative object of the understanding. This led to a positive notion of noumenon, about which Kant warns us that any knowledge claim would be illusory, as we saw earlier (A254=B309). On the contrary, the proposal is to view the noumenon as the ground of affection. This paper has sought to bring out this notion of noumenon as object of an understanding that would not only not require sensible intuition, but also not use discursive concepts.³⁵

What is suggested here is that a positive although merely problematic concept of noumenon through which the in-itself can be thought must refer to a faculty of understanding that uses non-discursive concepts and is intuitive, and thereby creates its objects. This leads to a view first suggested by Hoke Robinson (1994), that the difference between the in-itself, at least in its role as ground of affection, and appearances is one of perspective. This view retains the most important attractive feature of the two-aspect interpretation, namely that the in-itself is the same reality, but viewed in itself, while avoiding its least attractive feature, namely its positing of non-spatiotemporal properties for objects identified only through spatiotemporal determinations (Guyer 1987, 338).

This faculty’s non-discursive concepts enable a grasp of something in-itself in its individuality. This entails that the intellectual intuition in question should be able to grasp all the particular properties that characterize the something in question in its individuality. As a result, if such an understanding grasps all of reality in-itself in its individuality, the unity of its understanding implies that it is able to grasp how the particular is derivable from the whole. This characterizes God’s perspective according to Kant (cf. R 6174, AA 18: 478.19–20). Such a perspective, from which the multiplicity of the particular is viewed as contained in the unity of the whole, is opposed to discursive universality which, on the contrary, is grasped as unity within a multiplicity (cf. OP, AA 22: 342.15–16).

³⁵Here, I disagree with Allison who claims that “the thought of things as they are in themselves does, as Paul [Guyer] suggests, involve an abstraction of sorts, but not from *all* relation to our epistemic conditions” (in Wood et al. 2007, 35). Rather, this understanding of the in-itself points to the limits of our concepts just as Kant indicates for his notion of noumenon: “[A]lthough beings of understanding certainly correspond to the beings of sense, and there may even be beings of understanding to which our sensible faculty of intuition has no relation at all, our concepts of understanding [. . .] do not reach these in the least” (B308–309).

So, we have two different perspectives, that of the discursive understanding, and that of a problematic intuitive understanding. What are they perspectives upon? Reality, whereby that reality is constituted in both cases by the understanding in question: in the first case, it is thus constituted in terms of its objectivity, not its existence. In the second, objects are not at stake, and this reality is constituted in terms of its existence (B138–139). These two perspectives complement one another, but each has a priority. The second gives an account of the ground of what affects the sensibility of a discursive cognition. It is only, however, from the point of view of the first that the second can be thought as possible.

8 Conclusion

This paper has sought to bring out the legitimacy of thinking the in-itself as the ground of appearances, rather than as the empirical object stripped of its spatiotemporal properties as two-aspect theorists would have it. Insofar as the existence of the in-itself is thus viewed as a key constitutive requirement of objectivity, this is a metaphysical interpretation of transcendental idealism. But it does not thereby identify a separate ontological realm for the in-itself apart from the realm of empirical objects. Rather, there is one ontological domain of reality upon which different perspectives are possible. That our world of empirical objects is one such perspective on the in-itself, is manifested in the fact that the content of the manifold in intuition always exceeds what can be grasped through conceptual determinations. We can only think of the in-itself as graspable by an understanding which does not make use of concepts, and has an immediate, intuitive access to the in-itself.

Acknowledgments I am grateful to Manfred Baum and Gary Banham for comments on a previous oral version of this paper, and indebted to Dennis Schulting and his in-depth knowledge of the literature for commenting on this paper with thoughtful insights.

References

- Abela, P. 2002. *Kant's Empirical Realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allais, L. 2006. 'Intrinsic Natures: A Critique of Langton on Kant'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73(1): 143–169.
- Allison, H. 1968. 'Kant's Concept of the Transcendental Object'. *Kant-Studien* 59: 165–186.
- Allison, H. 2000. 'Where Have All the Categories Gone? Reflections on Longuenesse's Reading of Kant's Transcendental Deduction'. *Inquiry* 43(1): 67–80.
- Allison, H. 2004. *Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. Enlarged and Revised edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2003. *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 2006. *Kant and the Historical Turn*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aquila, R. 1979. 'Things in Themselves and Appearances: Intentionality and Reality in Kant'. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 61: 293–308.
- Beiser, F. 2002. *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buroker, J. 1981. *Space and Incongruence. The Origin of Kant's Idealism*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Carson, E. unpublished. 'Arithmetic and the Possibility of Experience'.

- Descartes, R. 1996. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Trans. and ed. J. Cottingham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Engstrom, S. 2006. 'Understanding and Sensibility'. *Inquiry* 49(1): 2–25.
- Friedman, M. 1992. *Kant and the Exact Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gardner, S. 1999. *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Routledge.
- Grice, H. P. 1961. 'The Causal Theory of Perception'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 35: 121–152.
- Guyer, P. 1987. *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 1950. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Trans. L. W. Beck. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Kant, I. 1987. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. W. Pluhar. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Kant, I. 1993. *Opus Postumum*. Ed. E. Förster and trans. E. Förster and M. Rosen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. 1997. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitcher, P. 1990. *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 1998. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Trans. C. T. Wolfe. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 2005. *Kant on the Human Standpoint*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Martin, M. 1992. 'Perception, Concepts, and Memory'. *Philosophical Review* 101(4): 745–763.
- Melnick, A. 1973. *Kant's Analogies of Experience*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Peacocke, C. 2001. 'Does Perception Have a Non-Conceptual Content?' *Journal of Philosophy* 98: 239–264.
- Pruss, G. 1974. *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Rescher, N. 2000. *Kant and the Reach of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, H. 1994. 'Two perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32(3): 411–441.
- Rogerson, K. F. 1993. 'Kantian Ontology'. *Kant-Studien* 84(1): 3–24.
- Simon, J. 2007. 'Kant, la compréhension et la langue de la philosophie'. In C. Berner and F. Capeillères (eds.), *Kant et les Kantismes dans la philosophie contemporaine 1804–2004*. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, pp. 235–246.
- Sutherland, D. 2006. 'Kant on Arithmetic, Algebra, and the Theory of Proportions'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44(4): 533–558.
- Vision, G. 1995. *Problems of Vision*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Westphal, K. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willaschek, M. 1998. 'Phaenomena/Noumena und die Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe'. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds.), *Immanuel Kant: Kritik des reinen Vernunft*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 325–352.
- Wood, A. 1978. *Kant's Rational Theology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Wood, A. 2005. *Kant*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wood, A. et al. 2007. 'Debating Allison on Transcendental Idealism'. *Kantian Review* 12(2): 1–39.

Chapter 12

How to Account for Reason's Interest in an Ultimate Prototype?

A Note on Kant's Doctrine of the Transcendental Ideal

Jacco Verburgt

1 Introduction

The topic or theme of 'idealism' in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is commonly linked to well-known and much debated issues such as, first and foremost, Kant's theory of the transcendental ideality of space and time, involving of course the crucial distinction between appearance and thing in itself; secondly, the issue of Kant's occasional criticism of what he, at some point in the second edition, coins 'material' idealism, covering both Descartes' 'problematic' idealism and Berkeley's 'dogmatic' idealism,¹ as opposed, thirdly, to the terms 'formal', 'critical', and 'transcendental' that supposedly characterize Kant's own idealism. In this article, I will only indirectly address some of these issues, focusing primarily on Kant's less debated doctrine of the transcendental ideal, including his reading of the principle of thoroughgoing² determination, for which this ideal is supposed to serve as the prototype, as discussed explicitly in section 2 of the third chapter of the second book of the *Transcendental Dialectic*, entitled 'On the Transcendental Ideal (*Prototypon transcendentalis*)'.

Nevertheless, I do think that the section on the Transcendental Ideal may be particularly relevant and instructive for discussions on the topic of Kant's idealism in the first *Critique*. One could, for instance, point to Kant's explication of the notion of the thing in itself—obviously a key notion in many discussions concerning idealism—in terms of the transcendental ideal, that is, in terms of a "transcendental substratum" that denotes nothing other than the idea of an "all of reality [*All der Realität, omnitudo realitatis*]", or a "possession of all reality [*Allbesitz der Realität*]", through which the concept of a thing in itself is represented by reason

J. Verburgt (✉)

Faculty of Philosophy, VU University Amsterdam, 1081 HV, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: jhp.verburgt@ph.vu.nl

¹Cf. B274–275.

²The German term 'durchgängig' can be translated into English by the terms 'thoroughgoing' and 'complete'; in this paper, I will use both terms synonymously. Cf. also Longuenesse (2005: 215n.).

as a thoroughly determined individual.³ But, instead of getting right into a close reading of the text, let me start by posing a more general and obvious question: to which problem (or problems) is Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal, and the principle of thoroughgoing determination with which it deals, actually supposed to deliver a solution? In my view, this question is not so easy to answer. In fact, commentators have quite different views on the status, function and genesis of Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal.⁴ They seem to agree mainly on the fact that, in the text of the section on the Transcendental Ideal, the different levels of Kant's argumentation, sometimes formulated together in a single sentence,⁵ are not seldom difficult to discern.⁶

In this paper, I want to explore the rather straightforward thesis that Kant is not just attempting to rebut or unmask the rationalist (mis)understanding of the ideas and principles of reason (e.g., the principle of complete determination and its corresponding ideal), but at the same time to give a positive—regulative or non-regulative⁷—account of them at the level of the first *Critique*. In a sense, Kant seems

³ Please allow me to quote, in German, the whole passage at A575–576=B603–604: “Wenn [. . .] der durchgängigen Bestimmung in unserer Vernunft ein transscendentales Substratum zum Grunde gelegt wird, welches gleichsam den ganzen Vorrath des Stoffes, daher alle mögliche Prädicate der Dinge genommen werden können, enthält, so ist dieses Substratum nichts anders, als die Idee von einem All der Realität (*omnitude realitatis*). Alle wahre Verneinungen sind alsdann nichts als *Schranken*, welches sie nicht genannt werden könnten, wenn nicht das Unbeschränkte (das All) zum Grunde läge.

Es ist aber auch durch diesen Allbesitz der Realität der Begriff eines *Dinges an sich selbst* als durchgängig bestimmt vorgestellt, und der Begriff eines entis realissimi ist der Begriff eines einzelnen Wesens, weil von allen möglichen entgegengesetzten Prädicaten eines, nämlich das, was zum Sein schlechthin gehört, in seiner Bestimmung angetroffen wird. Also ist es ein transscendentales *Ideal*, welches der durchgängigen Bestimmung, die nothwendig bei allem, was existirt, angetroffen wird, zum Grunde liegt und die oberste und vollständige materiale Bedingung seiner Möglichkeit ausmacht, auf welcher alles Denken der Gegenstände überhaupt ihrem Inhalte nach zurückgeführt werden muß. Es ist aber auch das einzige eigentliche Ideal, dessen die menschliche Vernunft fähig ist, weil nur in diesem einzigen Falle ein an sich allgemeiner Begriff von einem Dinge durch sich selbst durchgängig bestimmt und als die Vorstellung von einem Individuum erkannt wird.”—Note that, for Kant, the idea of an *omnitude realitatis* is the one single genuine ideal of which reason is capable. According to Caimi (1995: 540), “[i]n the case of the *omnitude realitatis*, and in no other case, the idea of reason, along with its regulative function, produces the complete determination of what is thought of in the idea.” (Cf. also Heimsoeth 1969, 442–443; and Ferrari 1998, 499–500).—English translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Guyer and Wood (Kant 1998).

⁴Cf. Heimsoeth (1969) and Ferrari (1998).

⁵Cf. e.g., B608=A580.

⁶Cf. Ferrari (1998: 497–498).

⁷Caimi (1995: 539ff.) distinguishes between the regulative and non-regulative function of the transcendental ideal in Kant's theoretical philosophy. In fact, he claims that the non-regulative function is “perhaps the distinctive function of the ideal.” (539) On the one hand, “[w]e might seem to be faced with a threefold choice: (1) accepting a solely regulative function of the ideal; (2) regarding the ideal as an empty concept deprived of all meaning, or else (3) hypostatizing it in an illegitimate way.” (539) On the other hand, however, “there remains a fourth alternative that has been overlooked: according to it, the ideal of reason fills a function of its own.” (539) This fourth,

to be forced to give such a positive account of the ideas and principles of reason, given his theory of pure reason in the Transcendental Dialectic. Therefore, in the next section of this article, I give a brief outline of the general framework and context of Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal by recalling some basic elements of his theory of pure reason. Subsequently, by way of contrast and further exploration, I devote the third section of this paper to a discussion of Béatrice Longuenesse's interpretation of the section on the Transcendental Ideal, in [chapter 8](#) of her book *Kant on the Human Standpoint* (2005), entitled 'The Transcendental Ideal, and the Unity of the Critical System', a chapter which forms a revision of her earlier paper with the same title (Longuenesse 1995). Finally, in the fourth and concluding section, I recapitulate my findings from the previous sections.

2 Revisiting Kant's Theory of Pure Reason

It seems fair to say that Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal must be situated, on the one hand, against the background of his theory of pure reason as the seat of a transcendental illusion (in the two Introductions to the Transcendental Dialectic)⁸ and, on the other hand, in relation to his reflections (in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic) on the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason and on the final aim of the natural dialectic of human reason.⁹ It also seems clear that Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal is exclusively linked to the

non-regulative function of the transcendental ideal consists in the fact that "the prototypen transcendentalis shows that all other objects are conditioned" (541) and that "the empty ideal keeps the place of the absent God" (542). Klimek (2005: 163) seems to propose yet another non-regulative interpretation of the transcendental ideal, namely a critical-theological one: "Kant kritisiert [...] nicht nur mögliche Beweise für das Dasein eines allerrealsten Wesens, eines unbewegten Bewegers oder eines Welterschöpfers, sondern zeigt auch, wie sich bereits in die Konstitution des Begriffs vom *ens realissimum*, der den übrigen rationalistischen Gottesbegriffen zugrunde liegt, Fehler einschlichen. Kant hat bekanntlich dennoch versucht, die aus der Rationaltheologie seiner Vorgänger vererbten Begriffe in eine Theologie des „Als-ob“ zu überführen. Da allerdings erstens die erkenntnistheoretisch bestimmte regulative Funktion der rationaltheologisch überlieferten Ideen alles andere als offensichtlich ist und sich zweitens jene tradierten Begriffe als *erschlichen* und nicht etwa als *erschlossen* herausstellen werden, scheint uns ein alternativer, *kritischer* „theologischer“ Grundbegriff eine angemessenere Konsequenz der kantischen Kritik zu sein als eine alternative Interpretation der tradierten Begriffe."—I will not go into the details of Caimi's and Klimek's interesting arguments here; rather, I just want to underline that Kant needs to account for the transcendental ideal beyond its mere negative or polemic connotations with respect to rationalist metaphysics, especially of course rational theology.

⁸As to the complex relation between the first and the second Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic, see Theis (1985: 136–137).

⁹Cf. e.g., Ferrari (1998: 491–492).

ideas and principles of *reason*¹⁰ and at best only indirectly or analogously¹¹ to the understanding, its constitutive categories and principles. Recall Kant's opening definition of an ideal from the first section of the third chapter of the Transcendental Dialectic: "[S]omething that seems to be even further removed from objective reality than the idea is what I call the *ideal*, by which I understand the idea not merely *in concreto* but *in individuo*, i.e., as an individual thing which is determinable, or even determined, through the idea alone." (A568=B596) Similarly, thoroughgoing determination is defined as "a concept that we can never exhibit *in concreto* in its totality, and thus is grounded on an idea which has its seat solely in reason, which prescribes to the understanding the rule of its complete use" (A573=B601). Recall also that Kant at some point stresses the fact that the object of reason's ideal "is to be found only in reason," not signifying "the objective relation of an actual object to other things, but only that of an *idea* to *concepts*" (A578–579=B606–607). As Kant puts it in the second part of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, the ideal of reason is only an "object in the idea",¹² or a "scheme"¹³ for a regulative principle such as that of thoroughgoing determination.¹⁴

In my view, one of the central interpretive difficulties of the Transcendental Dialectic stems from the fact that the transcendental illusion that, according to Kant, grounds and explains the necessary dialectical (hence illegitimate) reasoning

¹⁰Sometimes confusingly, Kant uses the term 'Verstand' in a broad sense—i.e., "im alten übergreifenden Sinne (intellectus)", according to Heimsoeth (1969: 456n. 78)—to signify reason and in a narrow sense to signify pure understanding. Cf. also Klimek (2005: 4 ff.), who consistently talks about "Verstand im weiteren Sinne" and "Verstand im engeren Sinn".

¹¹Cf. e.g., A665=B693.

¹²Cf. e.g., A670–671=B698–699 and A697–698=B725–726 ("ein Wesen in der Idee"). And Caimi (1995: 540–541): "The ideal is an object, but only an *object in the idea*. Having this *object in the idea* does not mean that the idea must refer to an independent object; for the object in the idea has no actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*). [...] The objective reality of the object in the idea is not its actual existence [...]. The object in the idea is real inasmuch as it is the content (or theme) of a concept of reason. [...] The ideal is [...] an object in the idea; it is an object without existence outside the concept of reason. Its being is that of a content of the idea. [...] As an object in the idea, empty, though not devoid of meaning, the ideal has a function of its own. This function might be presented as the following: The ideal serves to keep empty the place of the Absolute; that is, it serves to represent precisely the absence of content in the concept: the absence of God."

¹³Cf. e.g., A674=B702, A679=B707, A682–684=B710–712, A697=B725, and A699=B727. Cf. also Horstmann (1998: 535) and Caimi (1995: 539): "The ideal works as a scheme of the complete determination of empirical objects; this scheme is thought by means of the idea of the *omnitudo realitatis*. Every idea holds, within an accomplished and perfect unity, those synthetic actions necessary for the further, gradual production of the rational unity of empirical knowledge; in the particular case of the idea of the *omnitudo realitatis* the accomplished and perfect synthetic unity thought in it is the complete synthesis of all realities (that is, of all positive predicates)."

¹⁴Cf. e.g., A571=B599: "The aim of reason with its ideal is [...] a thoroughgoing determination in accordance with a priori rules; hence it thinks for itself an object that is to be thoroughly determinable in accordance with principles, even though the sufficient conditions for this are absent from experience, and thus the concept itself is transcendent."

of rational metaphysics is inherent to pure reason itself¹⁵ and must still be critically accounted for on the theoretical level of the first *Critique*. Put somewhat differently, Kant's critique of *metaphysica specialis* (in this context of course especially rational theology) seems to involve illuminating the basis in pure reason itself for drawing erroneous metaphysical conclusions, despite the fact that the use of concepts beyond the boundaries of sensibility has already been shown to be illegitimate in the Transcendental Analytic, i.e., in Kant's critique of *metaphysica generalis*.

Therefore, let me first recall some basic elements of Kant's theory of pure reason from the second Introduction of the Transcendental Dialectic. Generally speaking, reason has a capacity for syllogistic and logical reasoning, i.e., the formal capacity of subsuming propositions under ever more general principles in order to systematize, unify, and bring to completion the knowledge given through the ('real') use of the understanding. Clearly, reason in the syllogism (*Vernunftschluß*) is not dealing with intuitions (in order to bring them under rules, as the understanding does with its categories and principles) but primarily with concepts and judgments, i.e., with the understanding and its judgments themselves.¹⁶ As Kant points out, "[t]he unity of reason is therefore not the unity of a possible experience, but essentially different from that, which is the unity of understanding" (A307=B363). Further, "reason in its logical use seeks the universal condition of its judgment (its conclusion), and the syllogism is nothing but a judgment mediated by the subsumption of its condition under a general rule (the major premise)" (A307=B364). Now, since this rule is itself once again exposed to the same attempt of reason, so that the condition of its condition has to be sought, it is clear that "the proper principle [*Grundsatz*] of reason in general (in its logical use) is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed" (A307=B364). However, this logical maxim cannot become "a principle [*Prinzipium*] of *pure reason* unless we assume that when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection)".¹⁷ Kant famously calls it the "supreme principle of pure reason".¹⁸ It thus seems to be quite fundamental to the project of the Transcendental Dialectic that the demand (*Forderung*)¹⁹ or need (*Bedürfnis*)²⁰ for the systematic unity and completeness of knowledge, and ultimately for the unconditioned, belongs to the very nature and calling of pure reason.²¹

¹⁵Cf. Theis (1985: 136): "Ce n'est que dans la mesure où Kant peut montrer qu'il appartient à l'essence même de la raison de donner lieu à l'illusion qu'il est légitime de critiquer les discours métaphysiques traditionnels comme étant des discours *inévitables* dialectiques."

¹⁶Cf. A306–307=B363.

¹⁷A307–308=B364.

¹⁸A308=B365.

¹⁹Cf. A305=B362 *et passim*.

²⁰Cf. e.g., A309=B365–366 and A583=B611.

²¹Cf. Caimi (1995: 542–543): "Therefore, the ideal should be assumed not only as a regulative principle, but also as a metaphysical aim of knowledge. [...] The ideal should be assumed *as empty*. [...] On assuming the ideal, we assert the aim of reason. Yet, by assuming it as being an *object*

On the other hand, in the first Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant has identified pure reason as the seat of what he calls transcendental illusion. Kant describes the cause of this transcendental illusion in the following way: “[I]n our reason [. . .] there lie fundamental rules and maxims for its use, which look entirely like objective principles, and through them it comes about that the subjective necessity of a certain connection of our concepts on behalf of the understanding is taken for an objective necessity, of the determination of things in themselves”.²² Thus, Kant claims that it is a peculiar feature of pure reason that it takes its own subjective principles and interests to hold ‘objectively’. Reason even seems to be presented here by Kant as having the capacity or tendency to tear down the boundaries enforced in the Transcendental Analytic, i.e., to use and apply its principles in a transcendent rather than transcendental (or immanent) way.²³ In my view, one of the complicating factors in the project of the Transcendental Dialectic stems from Kant’s repeated assertion that transcendental illusion, contrary to empirical and logical illusions, is not an artificial or avoidable one, but a natural and unavoidable one that “irremediably [*unhintertreiblich*]” attaches to human reason.²⁴ It clearly involves a peculiar kind of illusion because it can never be avoided, “just as little as the astronomer can prevent the rising moon from appearing larger to him, even when he is not deceived by this illusion”.²⁵ Therefore, in the same context, Kant states that the Transcendental Dialectic is limited to uncovering the illusion in the transcendent judgments by which rationalist metaphysics is characterized. That is to say, the Transcendental Dialectic can never bring about that transcendental illusion (unlike empirical or logical illusions) should disappear and cease to be an illusion—even if one is not deceived by it.

At the beginning of the first part of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic Kant even asserts the indispensability of transcendental illusion, namely for reason (i.e., understanding in the broad sense) to go beyond given experience, while at the same time reaffirming that this illusion can be prevented from deceiving. On the one hand, Kant signals that, although all our inferences that would carry beyond the field of possible experience are deceptive and groundless (thus also confirming the previous results of the Transcendental Analytic), “human reason has a natural propensity to overstep these boundaries, and that transcendental ideas are just as natural to it as the categories are to the understanding, although with this difference, that just as the categories lead to truth, i.e., to the agreement of our concepts with their objects, the ideas effect a mere, but irresistible, illusion, deception by which

in the idea, we acknowledge that we do not know that object and that, therefore, it is an empty object to our knowledge. The unconditioned itself (God) is posited (assumed) *as unknowable*, so that reason does not need to resign its own calling which compels it to seek the unconditioned. But any apparent success in this search is rejected in advance; thus the authenticity of metaphysical endeavour is safeguarded. Such an endeavour should be aimed at the unattainable as such, thereby excluding all alleged achievement.”

²²A297=B353; translation slightly adjusted.

²³Cf. A296=B352–353.

²⁴Cf. A297–298=B354 and A339=B397; and Klimek (2005: 164).

²⁵A297=B354; cf. also Grier (2001: 3–4, 127 ff.).

one can hardly resist even through the most acute criticism" (A642=B670). On the other hand, Kant famously states that, although transcendental ideas are never of constitutive use, "they have an excellent and indispensable necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, which, although it is only an idea (*focus imaginarius*) [. . .] nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension" (A644=B672). Of course, according to Kant, it is thus that arises the deception, as if these lines of direction were shot out from an object lying outside the field of possible empirical cognition; but "this illusion (which can be prevented from deceiving) is nevertheless indispensably necessary if besides the objects before our eyes we want to see those that lie far in the background, i.e., when [. . .] the understanding [in the broad sense, J.V.] wants to go beyond every given experience (beyond this part of the whole of possible experience), and hence wants to take the measure of its greatest possible and uttermost extension." (A644–645=B672–673)

Similar to his quite complex argumentation regarding the transcendental illusion, Kant also does not simply dismiss the supreme principle of pure reason as an illusory one. How, indeed, would he be able to? In the seventh section of the second chapter of the *Transcendental Dialectic*, Kant rather seems to replace and correct the earlier ontological formulation of the principle (at A308=B365, quoted above) by another one: "If the conditioned is given, then through it a regress in the series of all conditions for it is given to us as a problem [*daß, wenn das Bedingte gegeben ist, uns eben dadurch ein Regressus in der Reihe aller Bedingungen zu demselben aufgeben sei*]."²⁶ Thus formulated as what Kant calls an analytic proposition ("beyond any fear of a transcendental criticism") and a logical postulate of reason ("to follow that connection of a concept with its conditions [. . .] and to continue it as far as possible"),²⁷ the unconditioned can only be considered a task or an end, that is, by definition not given in any possible and cognizable experience. Ultimately, it even seems to be an idea belonging to the very project of pure reason's self-critique, the first *Critique* being its grounding articulation. Susan Neiman quite rightly points out that:

The idea of the Unconditioned is required as the end towards which our actions are directed; were this idea to be changed to knowledge, our very nature would change. While this argument appears most clearly in the second *Critique's* discussion of the worth of moral actions, it can easily be applied to all forms of intellectual activity as well. If the regulative idea of intelligibility is a condition of human inquiry, a constitutive version would undermine it: inquiry could neither be free nor natural if the idea were given. The Unconditioned can only perform its function as an idea: to secure it would be to loose it. This is a structural, not an external feature of the idea: both knowledge, and morality, are internally related to something which cannot be contained in them. [. . .] The idea that *two* things fill the mind with awe and wonder—our consciousness of our place in the presence of nature, and our capacity to transcend the very forces which reveal our insignificance within it—is basic to Kant's description of the human condition. One cannot read his work without being aware of his conviction in the importance of balancing the demands of nature and freedom, but

²⁶ A498=B526; cf. also Klimek (2005: 34–35).

²⁷ A498=B526.

scholars have traditionally looked to the second, or even the third *Critique* to provide the latter. Proper understanding of the Unconditioned allows us to read the first *Critique* itself as grounding, and giving equal force to both. Architectonically speaking, this requires us to view the “Dialectic” not as an application of epistemological conclusions already drawn in the “Analytic”, but as an independent element which is necessary to the work as a whole. [...] While it is true that the “Analytic” is concerned with what we can know, the “Dialectic” with what we cannot, only the assumption that reason’s proper task is one of *knowledge* of its objects should lead one to conclude that the “Dialectic’s” task is therefore a negative one. For if the “Dialectic” describes the kinds of errors reason makes in seeking knowledge of the Unconditioned, it tells us just as surely what role the Unconditioned ought to play.²⁸

In the next section, some of the issues raised in this quote—such as the grounding role of the first *Critique* and the relation between the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic—will be discussed further. But let me first recapitulate by relating Kant’s theory of pure reason in the Transcendental Dialectic to the text of the section on the Transcendental Ideal. In my view, Kant aims to show the illegitimacy of the transcendent judgments and dialectic inferences of *metaphysica specialis*, especially rational theology, by arguing that it is unwittingly caught in a deceptive (transcendental) illusion and in an (ontological) misunderstanding of the supreme principle of pure reason—while *at the same time* being obliged by his theory of pure reason to give his own positive account of this illusion and this principle.

Now, this twofold task can be linked to an important passage toward the end of the section on the Transcendental Ideal: “It is not enough to describe the procedure of our reason and its dialectic; one must also seek to discover its sources, so as to be able to explain this illusion itself, as a phenomenon of the understanding [in the broad sense, J.V.]; for the ideal we are talking about is grounded on a natural and not a merely arbitrary idea.” (A581=B609) The importance of this remark should not be underestimated, not least since, immediately hereafter, Kant formulates his central question regarding the way reason naturally and unavoidably proceeds: “How does reason come to regard all the possibility of things as derived from a single possibility, namely that of the highest reality, and thereupon to presuppose these possibilities as contained in a particular original being?”²⁹ It is this question that Kant seeks to answer by explaining how, indeed, it happens that reason regards all possibility of things as derived from one single fundamental possibility and presupposes this to be contained in an individual or particular *Urwesen*. Put somewhat differently, why does reason have “the urgent need to presuppose something that the understanding could take as the complete ground for the thoroughgoing determination of its concepts” (A583=B611)? How to explain—not just to describe³⁰—such an urgent need of reason? Indeed, how to account for a positive interest of reason in an ultimate ideal or prototype?

²⁸Neiman (1995: 517–518).

²⁹A581=B609; translation slightly modified.

³⁰Cf. Klimek (2005: 1, quoting from AA 17: 242).

3 On Longuenesse's Interpretation

After this brief outline of Kant's theory of pure reason, I now turn to Longuenesse's reading of the section on the Transcendental Ideal in order to explore further my thesis. I start with some remarks on Longuenesse's initial motivation and question in undertaking an analysis of the principle of complete determination (3.1). Second, I discuss some of her distinctions concerning the concept of the transcendental ideal at work in Kant's text (3.2). And finally, I address some of her more specific claims and suggestions, particularly with regard to the relation between the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic (3.3).

3.1 Longuenesse's "initial motivation" in undertaking an analysis of the principle of complete determination is her "surprise at the way Kant introduces this principle" (2005: 10). Why the surprise? What is surprising about it? Longuenesse writes: "According to Kant, this principle is at work in generating the rationalist idea of an *ens realissimum* (most real being) represented as the source of all reality in finite things. One might think that the illusion Kant denounces in the idea he also denounces in the principle on which the idea depends. But at the beginning of the chapter on the Transcendental Ideal, the principle is presented without any kind of disclaimer on Kant's part." (10) Clearly, Longuenesse is right to say that Kant denounces—or wants to rebut—the *rationalist* reading of the principle of complete determination. However, Kant does attach importance to the principle *as such*, as well as to the idea of an *ens realissimum*, albeit of course for different reasons and on the basis of his own reading (briefly outlined in the previous section). And I think that, for Kant, there need not be any disclaimer, at least not in advance, insofar as he seems to take for granted that the principle can be accounted for in a non-rationalist way.

Interestingly, Longuenesse also explicitly formulates her "initial question" concerning the principle of complete determination: "[I]s there a critical, legitimate version of the principle, to which Kant claims one can retreat once its illusory, illegitimate interpretation is properly undermined on the basis of the critical standpoint established in the Transcendental Analytic?" (10) In my view, this question is quite intriguing. For Longuenesse, it almost seems a rhetorical one since she immediately affirms it: "I argue that indeed there is." (10) Looking at the formulation of the question, however, a few remarks are in place.

First, is it really enough, for Kant, that the illusory and illegitimate interpretation of the principle of complete determination is *undermined* on the basis of the critical standpoint established in the Transcendental Analytic? In the previous section, I have argued that it belongs to the task of the Transcendental Dialectic that the transcendental illusion itself, rooted in reason, has to be *explained*. Much depends too on what is meant by the phrase "the critical standpoint established in the Transcendental Analytic". Does it imply that the standpoint or viewpoint of the Transcendental Dialectic is not critical, or only in a negative or undermining sense? The term "retreat" that Longuenesse uses seems in any case to suggest that there is already a critical interpretation of the principle of complete determination at hand on the level of the Transcendental Analytic. Indeed, does it imply that the section on

the Transcendental Ideal can and should be understood from—or even be reduced to—the standpoint of the Transcendental Analytic?

Secondly, perhaps not surprising given her initial motivation and question, Longuenesse wants to argue “that Kant’s claims concerning the unavoidable and epistemically indispensable character of what he calls the illusions of reason, especially the illusion carried by the Transcendental Ideal, are not well supported” (10). However, instead of entering into the difficulties related to the issue of transcendental illusion, especially with respect to the transcendental ideal, Longuenesse claims that “the appendix to the Transcendental Analytic (On the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection), together with the account of systematicity in the First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, provide enough tools to dispel the purported inevitability of the theological illusion expounded in the Transcendental Ideal.” (10) In this paper, I will not go into these particular claims concerning the relation between the Appendix of the Transcendental Analytic and the First Introduction to the third *Critique*. I only want to note, on the one hand, that Longuenesse does not take into account that, according to Kant, the transcendental illusion, though unavoidable and inevitable, can be prevented from deceiving.³¹ On the other hand, I want to point out the fact that Longuenesse concludes her chapter by formulating a question that still remains to be answered: “There remained the question: why is Kant so intent on asserting, again and again, the necessity of the idea [the idea of an *ens realissimum*, J.V.], the unavoidable illusion it carries, and even the positive, regulative role it plays in cognition?” (235) Clearly, Longuenesse did not deal with this question in her analysis in [chapter 8](#) of her book. She just leaves the reader with the suggestion “that none of this would be necessary unless Kant was intent on maintaining its role for practical reason. The unity of theoretical and practical reason is what drives the admissions of theoretical reason itself.” (235) In my view, however, Kant’s talk of the idea of an *ens realissimum*, and the unavoidable illusion it carries, cannot be understood as ‘only’ maintaining a future role for practical reason, precisely *because* of the unity of theoretical and practical reason, i.e., because of his theory of pure reason as such.³² Kant’s discourse has to be understood already, and primarily, on the theoretical and grounding level of the first *Critique*. That is why Kant needs to give another—regulative or non-regulative³³—account of the ideas and principles of reason. To what extent Kant’s arguments for such a positive account are convincing is, of course, still another matter.

A final remark concerns the fact that Longuenesse, in accordance with the title of her book, is defending what she calls Kant’s human standpoint: “I defend Kant’s ‘human standpoint’ as laid out in the Transcendental Analytic of the *Critique of*

³¹Cf. again A297=B354 and A644=B672.

³²As to the unity of theoretical and practical reason, resulting from Kant’s conception of pure reason itself see e.g. Neiman (1995, esp. 517–518, from which I have quoted above).

³³As to the distinction between a regulative and a non-regulative function of the ideal of pure reason see footnote 7 above.

Pure Reason and the *Critique of Judgment* against what I take to be the unnecessary concessions (however cautious and limited these are) that Kant makes, in the Transcendental Dialectic, to a view where the human standpoint is defined in necessary relation to (albeit also in contrast with) divine understanding and agency.” (11) Apparently, according to Longuenesse, Kant's human standpoint is to be identified, rather exclusively, with the standpoint of the Transcendental Analytic and the third *Critique*, not with the standpoint of the Transcendental Dialectic since the latter is supposed to involve unnecessary and obsolete concessions to some sort of theological reasoning. In my view, such an identification involves a rather artificial contrast between the Analytic and the Dialectic. In fact, why should Kant's references to theological concepts not be an essential or integral part of his human standpoint—if only to show that, as Caimi puts it, the transcendental ideal serves “to keep empty the place of the Absolute”, i.e., “to represent precisely the absence of content in the concept: the absence of God”?³⁴

3.2 It seems to me that one of the most interesting points in Longuenesse's reading of the section on the Transcendental Ideal relates to her insight that the principle of complete determination is “susceptible to different interpretations” (211). In fact, she argues, there are two different readings of the principle of complete determination at work in Kant's text: on the one hand, “a legitimate, critical interpretation, which emerges from the Transcendental Analytic as a whole” (Longuenesse is relying here on a remark at B609, which I discuss in a moment); and on the other hand, “an interpretation in the context of rational metaphysics, from which Kant inherits the principle in the first place”—a context in which, as Longuenesse puts it, complete determination means “complete determination by the intellect alone”.³⁵ And this rationalist or rationalistic interpretation is

one to which reason, according to Kant, is inevitably drawn, and which leads to the dialectical reasoning that Kant calls the “Transcendental Ideal”, in accordance with the illusory principle stated at the beginning of the Transcendental Dialectic: “If the conditioned is given, then the totality of its conditions is also given.” In this case: if the limited realities are given, then the absolutely unlimited *totum realitatis* is also given. This *totum realitatis* is then posited as a distinct being, the ground of all finite reality: the *ens realissimum* of rational theology.³⁶

In this quote, Longuenesse clearly relates the different key concepts—the concept of the transcendental ideal (identified here with dialectical reasoning), the supreme principle of pure reason (which she simply calls illusory), the ideas of a *totum realitatis* and an *ens realissimum*—to Kant's critique of rational theology. In a corresponding footnote, however, Longuenesse signals that the term ‘transcendental ideal’ is used by Kant in two different senses: “Kant sometimes calls ‘Transcendental Ideal’ the reasoning that leads to the representation and hypostatization (positing as an existing object) of an *ens realissimum*”, but “he more often

³⁴Caimi (1995: 541).

³⁵Longuenesse (2005: 211).

³⁶Longuenesse (2005: 212). Cf. also Klimek (2005: 31–39).

calls that representation itself, as an archetype and source of all reality, ‘the Ideal of pure reason’ [...].³⁷ In the first case, obviously, the rationalist’s illegitimate dialectical reasoning as such is envisaged; in the latter case, on the contrary, only the ideal of pure reason itself, not the dialectical reasoning, seems to be envisaged—thus leaving open, it seems to me, the possibility and necessity of another account of pure reason’s inherent need or demand for, or interest in, an ultimate ideal or prototype.

Similarly, Longuenesse discerns two different uses of the principle of complete determination: on the one hand, an illegitimate or intellectualist (i.e., rationalistic) use of the principle, the illusory character of which, according to A581=B609, needs to be described and explained; on the other hand, Kant’s own legitimate or critical use of the principle, resulting from what Longuenesse calls a “critical reduction” (212–214)—a reduction showing “what the principle of complete determination and the related notion of a whole of reality amount to, once they are disentangled from the rationalist illusion” (214). Interestingly, Longuenesse also speaks of “the transcendental ideal proper”, i.e., “the pure concept of an *ens realissimum* whose origin Kant traces back to an unavoidable and, once properly recognized, ultimately beneficial illusion of reason” (214). Apparently, for Longuenesse, despite her previous assertion that Kant’s claims concerning the unavoidable and indispensable character of transcendental illusion are not well supported, there seem to be not only two discernable readings and uses of the principle of complete determination at work in Kant’s text, but also two corresponding meanings of the transcendental ideal: a proper one, once it is correctly recognized as an ultimately beneficial illusion, viz., after the critical reduction Kant allegedly undertakes; and an improper one, before this reduction, namely the dialectical reasoning of the rationalist theologian.

3.3 Despite these instructive distinctions, Longuenesse’s line of argument tends to assert, as we have seen, that the principle of complete determination can and should be understood from the “critical standpoint” of the Transcendental Analytic (and the third *Critique*). For this reason, she points repeatedly to Kant’s remark on how to answer his question regarding the way reason naturally and unavoidably proceeds. I have quoted this question in the previous section: “How does reason come to regard all the possibility of things as derived from a single possibility, namely that of the highest reality, and thereupon to presuppose these possibilities as contained in a particular original being?” (A581=B609) Directly hereafter Kant gives the following indication as to the question’s answer: “The answer suggests itself on the basis of the discussions of the Transcendental Analytic themselves.” (A581=B609)

This remark plays quite an important role in Longuenesse’s argumentation. She takes it to indicate not only that “we can find in the Transcendental Analytic the resources for a critical interpretation of the ‘principle of complete determination’

³⁷Longuenesse (2005: 212n.3); Longuenesse points to A568=B596, A569=B597, and A574=B602.

formulated at the beginning [of the section on the Transcendental Ideal, J.V.]” (223). She also claims to find “the resources for a representation of the *totum realitatis* conditioning the application of the principle that would conform to the restrictions of the use of the understanding in cognition established in the Transcendental Analytic” (223). Further, she suggests that, “according to this critical interpretation, the whole of reality that grounds the representation of the complete determination of things is the indeterminate whole of reality given in space and time, presupposed in any empirical use of the understanding giving rise to discursively represented *realities* or positive determinations of things (as appearances)” (223). And, finally, she argues that the principle of complete determination is “not only a principle that pure reason, when abstracted from all relation to the senses, holds to be true of things in general”; it is also a principle “Kant holds to be true of things *as* appearances” (234).

Therefore, before drawing conclusions, let's take a closer look at some of Longuenesse's arguments in support of these claims and suggestions. The first thing to note, then, is her thesis that Kant can already affirm and adopt (or could have affirmed and adopted) a principle of complete determination on the basis and *in the context of* the Transcendental Analytic (though, clearly, the principle is not treated explicitly there). In fact, according to Longuenesse, the question why Kant admits the principle of complete determination, next to the logical principles of contradiction and excluded middle, can already be answered from the standpoint of the Transcendental Analytic by pointing to “the role assigned to infinite judgments in the table of logical functions of judgment” and “the role of the unity of apperception, and ultimately, of the unity of experience, in the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories” (217). As a result, Longuenesse seems to interpret the principle of complete determination as the comparability of any singular or individual *object of experience* with another (every other possible) object of experience, in terms of a totality of *possible experience*. Take the following quote:

Kant can affirm on his own, critical grounds a “principle of complete determination”: any singular object of experience is fully determinate by virtue of its being comparable to every other possible object, i.e., by virtue of its belonging in the infinite sphere of the concept: “object of experience”, in which its concept can be related to all other concepts either positively or negatively. Contrary to what was the case for rationalist metaphysics, it is not necessary to suppose that the totality of possible predicates be actually given (in God's infinite understanding) to assert that every thing is either positively or negatively determined in relation to every predicate. It is sufficient to have shown that the form of our understanding is such that necessarily, any determination of an individual thing (namely, any mark of the concept under which we cognize it) determines it positively or negatively relative to all the concepts defining the possible subspheres of the one infinite sphere of the concept: “object of possible experience,” or “object given in space and time”.³⁸

In order to support her comparability thesis with textual evidence from the section on the Transcendental Ideal, Longuenesse seems to rely on the combination of mainly two text passages. The first concerns Kant's explanation, in the final

³⁸Longuenesse (2005: 218).

paragraph, as to why the idea of the sum total of all reality (*Idee vom Inbegriffe aller Realität*) is being unjustifiably hypostasized, namely “because we dialectically transform the *distributive* unity of the use of the understanding in experience [*die distributive Einheit des Erfahrungsgebrauch des Verstandes*], into the *collective* unity of a whole of experience [*die kollektive Einheit eines Erfahrungsganzen*]; and from this whole we think up an individual thing containing in itself all empirical reality [. . .]” (A582=B610). The second text passage concerns the phrase that “an object of sense can be thoroughly determined only if it is compared with all predicates of appearance and is represented through them either affirmatively or negatively” (A581=B609). Combined with what she reads as Kant’s notion of distributivity, Longuenesse takes this phrase to relate “every positive predicate of empirical things to the distributive use of the understanding in experience, and therefore, the merely distributive, not collective, totality of discursively reflected positive determinations” (221). In my view, it is not quite accidental that the *distributive unity of the use* of the understanding in experience is being reduced here to the *distributive use* of the understanding in experience, and wrongly quoted as “the distributive use of the understanding in empirical knowledge” (220). Longuenesse tries to read the distinction between distributive and collective unity predominantly, if not exclusively, in terms of the Analytic, thus disregarding that the idea of a collective unity posited by *reason* (or understanding in the broad sense) has not only a negative meaning for Kant—in the obvious sense of being non-constitutive or non-determinative—but also a positive, that is, a regulative one.³⁹

The reason for reading these complex text passages in this way can be linked also to the fact that, besides introducing the concept of a distributive totality of discursively reflected positive determinations, Longuenesse draws a distinction between this “discursively thought whole of realities or positive determinations”, on the one hand, and an “experientially presupposed whole of reality”, on the other (221). She illustrates this latter concept by giving the following quote:

But because that which constitutes the thing itself (in appearance), namely the real, has to be given, without which it could not be thought at all, but that in which the real in all appearances is given is the one all-encompassing experience [*die einige allbefassende Erfahrung*], the material for the possibility of all objects of sense [*die Materie zur Möglichkeit aller Gegenstände der Sinne*] has to be presupposed as given in one sum total [*in einem Inbegriffe*]; and all possibility of empirical objects, their differences from one another and

³⁹Heimsoeth (1969: 457n. 80) rightly suggests that the distinction between distributive and collective unity at A582=B610 should be linked to A643–644=B671–672, a passage at the beginning of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic where Kant gives an account of this distinction in terms of the concepts ‘constitutive’ and ‘regulative’: “Reason never relates directly to an object, but solely to the understanding and by means of it to reason’s own empirical use, hence it does not *create* any concepts (of object) but only *orders* them and gives them that unity which they can have in their greatest possible extension, i.e., in relation to the totality of series; the understanding does not look to this totality at all, but only to the connection *through which series* of conditions always *come about* according to concepts. Thus reason really has as object only the understanding and its purposive application, and just as the understanding unites the manifold into an object through concepts, so reason on its side unites the manifold of concepts through ideas by positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the understanding’s actions, which are otherwise concerned only with distributive unity.” (B671–672)

their thoroughgoing determination, can rest only on the limitation [*Einschränkung*] of this sum total. Now in fact no other objects except those of sense can be given to us, and they can be given nowhere except in the context of a possible experience; consequently, nothing is an object *for us* unless it presupposes the sum total of all empirical knowledge [*den Inbegriff aller empirischen Realität*] as condition of its possibility. (A581–582=B609–610)

Much could be said about these two rather complicated sentences, perhaps particularly regarding the notions of “all-encompassing experience”, “material”, and “limitation”.⁴⁰ I refrain from doing so here; I confine myself to a critical analysis of Longuenesse's line of argument. She takes Kant to be stating in the quote that “every empirical thing, as given in intuition, is related in experience to a presupposed whole of reality” (222). Moreover, she seems to identify this concept of a presupposed whole of reality with the notion of collectivity from the final paragraph. In doing so, she appears to read the transformation of distributivity into the collectivity in terms of the distinction between a discursively thought whole of realities or positive determinations and an experientially presupposed whole of reality. Longuenesse states: “Such a transformation [. . .] is the transformation of the never-ending progress of the discursive use of the understanding into the (illusory representation of) a given totality of conceptual determinations of objects of experience. This illusory representation of a ‘collective whole of realities’ is ultimately hypostatized (posited as a distinct being) into the representation of an *ens realissimum*, as the single ground of all reality.” (222) In my view, despite Longuenesse's mostly convincing arguments and clarifying distinctions, it remains unclear in her account that Kant is not so much dealing with the distributive or discursive use of the pure understanding, nor merely with a discursively thought whole of realities, nor simply with an experientially presupposed whole of reality, but rather with the problem of a defect (*Mangel*) in reason's power of judgment, namely its propensity to unjustly transform the distributive unity of the use of the understanding into the collective unity of an ontologically hypostatized whole of experience—instead of a regulative, collective unity *for the sake of* the thoroughgoing use of the understanding.⁴¹

Along the same lines, Longuenesse even asserts that the principle of complete determination is “not a new principle, in the context of the first *Critique*”; it is a principle that Kant could already have given as “a corollary of the principle of all synthetic judgments” (219), i.e., at the level of the Transcendental Analytic.⁴²

⁴⁰See notably Chapter 9 by Schulting, this volume.

⁴¹Cf. A642–643=B670–671 and footnote 39 above.

⁴²Contrary, e.g., to Rohs (1978: 172–173): “Der Grundsatz betrifft [. . .] nicht die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit überhaupt von Erfahrung, sondern die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit einer *vollständigen* Erfahrung. Der Grundsatz muß gelten, wenn es möglich sein soll, etwas *vollständig* zu erkennen. Man darf vielleicht im Sinne Kants sogar sagen, daß dieser Grundsatz das einzige synthetische Urteil a priori ist, das zu den anderen Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung noch hinzutreten muß, wenn nicht nur überhaupt objektive Erkenntnis, sondern sogar eine vollständige Erkenntnis von etwas möglich sein soll. Dies erklärt, warum der Grundsatz nicht in die Analytik gehört: er ist keine Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung als solcher. Objektive Erkenntnis wäre auch dann möglich, wenn dieser Grundsatz nicht gälte. Aber es gäbe dann keine vollständige Erkenntnis [. . .]. Die vollständige Erkenntnis eines Gegenstandes ist [. . .] nach Kant eine Vernunftidee. [. . .] Die Möglichkeit einer vollständigen Erkenntnis ist nicht im „Verstand“

She supports this assertion by pointing to a well-known phrase from the chapter on the System of all Principles of the Pure Understanding, namely that “the conditions of the *possibility of experience* in general are at the same time conditions of the *possibility of the objects of experience*” (A158=B197; cf. also A111). In a footnote, Longuenesse explains that she does not take the two principles to be identical; but she does take the principle of complete determination “to follow from [...] (the principle of the possibility of experience) once it is understood that the latter includes the role of infinite and disjunctive judgment in reflecting objects under concepts and thus coming up with representations of individuated objects for our intuitions” (219n.). Notice that, beyond the difference between infinite and disjunctive judgments, the principle of complete determination seems here to be considered a kind of subcategory or a lower-order principle, because it is in principle deducible from a higher principle of the pure understanding. Moreover, Longuenesse explicitly asserts that “rationalist metaphysicians have run away with an illusory version of a perfectly sound principle of *cognition*” (219; my italics). This is highly surprising—since it turns out that Longuenesse indeed takes the principle of thoroughgoing determination for a principle of the pure *understanding*, that is, “a perfectly sound principle of *cognition*”. Such a reading seems highly implausible given, for instance, Kant’s aforementioned definition that thoroughgoing determination concerns “a concept that [...] is grounded on an idea which has its seat solely in *reason*, which prescribes to the *understanding* the rule of its complete use” (A573=B601; my italics).

In sum, there are clear tendencies in Longuenesse’s reading of the principle of complete determination, and the related ideas of reason, that seem rather problematic and not well supported by Kant’s text. I have discussed some of them in this section. Let me close by briefly dwelling on one fundamental reason why it is important to point out the somewhat problematic nature of her reading. Kant explicitly states, in the second Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic, that “[t]he unity of reason is [...] not the unity of a possible experience, but essentially different from that, which is the unity of understanding” (A307=B363). In my view, this phrase should be taken seriously. Consequently, the principle of complete determination seems not to concern the conditions of the possibility of experience *in general*, but rather the conditions of the possibility of a *complete* experience. The principle of complete determination must be valid, it seems to me, only insofar as a thing be determined and cognized *completely*. Therefore, it need and indeed could not be treated by Kant in the context of the Transcendental Analytic. It belongs to the context of Transcendental Dialectic, if only because it cannot be deduced or inferred from a constitutive principle (or category) of the pure understanding. And it cannot be deduced from any such principle of the pure understanding since it is a principle of reason for, that is, already presupposed by, the complete use of the (pure) understanding.

begründet, d.h. dort, wo überhaupt die Möglichkeit objektiver Erkenntnis begründet ist. Diese Idee trägt zur objektiven Gültigkeit unserer Erkenntnis nichts bei; dennoch wird durch sie dem Verstand eine Regel vorgeschrieben.”

4 Conclusion

In the first section of this paper, I have put forward the thesis that Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal contains a twofold task: it not only aims to unmask the rationalist misunderstanding of the principle of complete determination and its corresponding ideal, but at the same time to give a positive account of them at the theoretical and grounding level of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the second section, I have tried to explore and support this thesis by arguing that, notwithstanding textual ambiguities and philosophical difficulties, Kant needs to give such a positive account because it follows from his theory of pure reason in the Introductions to the Transcendental Dialectic. In the third section, by way of contrast and further exploration, I have discussed some problematic tendencies in Longuenesse's reading of the section on the Transcendental Ideal. I have tried to show that her reading, although it offers many interesting and original insights, ultimately runs (and even seems to deliberately take) the risk of contaminating fundamental distinctions in Kant's transcendental philosophy and his doctrine of idealism—such as the distinctions between reason and understanding, between the regulative and the constitutive, and between things in themselves and appearances—and, simultaneously, the risk of introducing (unwittingly or not) discordant empiricist or realist presuppositions into Kant's text. In her challenging quest for a “critical version” of the principle of complete determination in terms of the Transcendental Analytic, Longuenesse doesn't seem to fully appreciate the Transcendental Dialectic in its own right and critical potential, as an integral part of the first *Critique's* Logic, while she tends to reduce Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideal to the negative task of rebutting rational theology, thus risking to conceal the true aims (or problems) of the doctrine itself. Let me therefore conclude by saying that a discussion of Kant's conception of idealism should not be confined to issues regarding the transcendental ideality of space and time, nor to issues concerning the constitutive role of the understanding in cognizing spatiotemporal objects. A proper account of Kant's idealism should also consider reason's own transcendental ideal or prototype and its proper function in the process of reason's self-constraining critique.

Acknowledgments I thank Dennis Schulting for his valuable comments and our very pleasurable collaboration in preparing this volume.

References

- Caimi, M. 1995. 'On a Non-regulative Function of the Ideal of Pure Reason'. In H. Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eight International Kant Congress Memphis 1995*, Vol. I. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, pp. 539–549.
- Ferrari, J. 1998. 'Das Ideal der reinen Vernunft (A567/B595–A642/B670)'. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds.), *Immanuel Kant. Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Klassiker Auslegen, Bd. 17/18. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 491–523.
- Grier, M. 2001. *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Heimsoeth, H. 1969. *Transzendente Dialektik. Ein Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Dritter Teil. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Horstmann, R.-P. 1998. 'Der Anhang zur transzendentalen Dialektik (A642/B670–A704/B732)'. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds.), *Immanuel Kant. Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Klassiker Auslegen, Bd. 17/18. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 525–545.
- Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klimek, N. 2005. *Kants System der transzendentalen Ideen*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
- Longuenesse, B. 1995. 'The Transcendental Ideal and the Unity of the Critical System'. In H. Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eight International Kant Congress Memphis 1995*, Vol. I. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, pp. 521–537.
- Longuenesse, B. 2005. *Kant on the Human Standpoint*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Neiman, S. 1995. 'Understanding the Unconditioned'. In H. Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eight International Kant Congress Memphis 1995*, Vol. I. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, pp. 505–519.
- Rohs, P. 1978. 'Kants Prinzip der durchgängigen Bestimmung alles Seienden'. *Kant-Studien* 69(2): 170–180.
- Theis, R. 1985. 'De l'illusion transcendantale'. *Kant-Studien* 76(2): 119–137.

Index

A

Abela, P., 92, 160, 223
Adams, R. M., 23, 159–161, 167, 189
Adickes, E., 1, 162, 166, 187
Affection, 22, 122–124, 217–218, 220–226, 231–233
 ground of, 217–218, 220–224, 226, 231–233
Allais, L., 2–3, 7, 9–16, 21, 30, 39, 163, 201, 230
Allison, H., 1–2, 4–8, 22, 29, 55, 109, 111, 115, 119–121, 124–125, 153, 163, 173–175, 201, 214–215, 219–220, 233
All possible predicates, 183–184
All of reality, 181, 184, 187–188, 233, 237
Ameriks, K., 3, 6, 16–22, 93, 100, 102, 152–153, 160, 163, 166–170, 212, 214–215, 221
Analytical universal, 146–148, 152–153, 155
Anderson, R. L., 155
Antinomies, 4, 38, 59, 62, 82–86, 110, 125, 144, 154, 209
Apel, M., 156
Appearance, 10–11, 18, 29, 35, 40, 55, 57–60, 63, 66, 97–100, 154, 165, 173–175, 198, 200 *et passim*
 as mere representation, 55, 57–60, 165, 198
Apperception
 transcendental, 19, 109–125, 168–170, 178
 unity of, 68–70, 112–115, 119–125, 135, 149, 168, 176, 179, 220, 223, 231, 249
Aquila, R., 212–214
Archetype, 143, 179, 248
Aristotle, 62, 64, 99, 182

B

Baumgarten, A., 63, 65–66, 185
Beck, J. S., 17–18
Beck, L. W., 116, 121

Beiser, F., 36, 220
Bennett, J., 3
Berkeley, G., 16–17, 36, 55, 91–93, 127, 133, 197, 216, 237
Bird, G., 1, 99, 166–167
BonJour, L., 196
Brandt, R., 74
Brittan, G., 204
Buroker, J., 222

C

Caimi, M., 238–241, 247
Campbell, J., 93–94
Caropreso, P., 3
Cassam, Q., 101
Categories
 of modality, 145, 222
 of quality, 162, 166, 180, 184, 189, 223, 225
 of quantity, 223, 225
 of relation, 168, 223
Cohen, B., 114
Collective unity, 250–251
 of a whole of experience, 250–251
Collins, A., 3, 9, 14, 23, 91, 163, 200–201
Copernican
 hypothesis, viii, 139–141
 revolution, 114, 137, 139–140, 212, 224
 turn, 114
Crusius, 65

D

Deduction, 10, 18–19, 23, 56, 66–68, 77–78, 83, 85, 91–106, 109, 111–112, 114–119, 122–125, 136, 148, 153, 161, 163, 178–181
 See also Transcendental Deduction
Delaney, C. F., 43

Descartes, R., 36, 56, 59, 110, 112–113, 165, 170, 202, 229, 237

Determination

complete, 183, 186–189, 238, 240, 245, 247–249, 251–253
thoroughgoing, 183–184, 187–189, 238, 240, 244, 251–252

Direct theory of perception, 9, 93, 201

Discursive/non-discursive understanding, 80, 143–153, 155–156, 222–223, 234

Discursivity, 2, 143–157, 162, 173, 176, 232

Disposition, 16, 77

Dispositionalist reading (of idealism), 7, 23, 201

Distributive unity, 250–251
of the use of the understanding, 250–251

Dryer, D. P., 99

Dual aspect reading (of idealism), 8, 14

See also Two-aspect reading

Dualism

empirical, 201–208
transcendental, 201–208

E

Eberhard, J. A., 17, 37, 63, 197

Ectypa, 148, 184

Eliminativism, 31, 41–42, 44–45

Emilsson, E., 148

Engstrom, S., 232

Ens rationis, 186

Epistemic condition, 2, 5–7, 173, 233

Epistemological reading (of idealism), 3–8, 17

Esse est percipi, 17, 163, 197

Euler, L., 76

Evidentialism, 19

Existence, 16–19, 34–36, 39–42, 46, 48, 56–61, 66, 72, 75, 93, 103–104, 110–111, 163, 165–166, 170, 179, 197–198, 200, 202–204, 206–208, 212–213, 215–216, 218, 220–222, 225, 233–234, 240

Extrinsic, *see* Properties

F

Falkenstein, L., 23, 91

Feder, J. G. H., 16, 55–56, 58, 61–62, 197

Ferrari, J., 238–239

Flatt, J. F., 161

Förster, E., 144, 149–152, 232

Frank, M., 163

Freedom, 22, 34, 42, 46, 49–50, 52, 146, 209, 243

as relational, 22, 46

Frege, G., 167

Friebe, C., 7, 13–16, 147

Friedman, M., 226

G

Gardner, S., 92, 96, 214, 216, 219–221, 223

Garve, C., 16–17, 55–56, 58, 197

Gassendi, P., 110

General logic, 64, 153, 155–156

Ginsborg, H., 76

God (*ens realissimum*), 6, 11–12, 16, 34, 37, 43, 47–48, 56, 63, 139, 165, 168, 187, 199, 223, 239–240, 242, 245–248, 251

Goethe, J. W., 151

Greene, B., 45

Grice, H. P., 224

Grier, M., 1, 167, 242

Ground of appearances, 73, 82, 84–85, 87, 215, 234

Guyer, P., 3–7, 10, 29, 84, 173, 175, 179, 212–214, 233

H

Hamann, J. G., 197

Hanna, R., 3, 41–52

Hegel, G. W. F., v–vi, 19–21, 36, 48, 146, 151, 161, 184, 197

Heimsoeth, H., 14, 21, 168–170, 183, 212, 238, 240, 250

Henrich, D., 75, 116, 160–161, 163

Herz, M., 213

Hogrebe, W., 184

Horstmann, R.-P., 240

Hoyos Jaramillo, L., 200

Hume, D., 36, 102, 119, 127, 130–133, 138–139, 195, 197

Humility, 22, 30

I

Ideal, the (transcendental), 38, 162, 181, 183–184, 189, 237–253

Idealism

dogmatic, 56, 237
empirical, 56, 58–59, 202, 205–206, 208
formal, 17, 32
material, 17, 66, 237
problematic, 237
transcendental, 4–6, 14 *et passim*

Ideality, 17, 21, 30–40, 58, 62, 66, 86, 115, 153, 212, 237, 253

Idea of reason, 87, 146, 156, 230, 238–240, 252

Ideas, 85, 92, 98, 127, 129, 131, 133, 138–139, 148, 165, 223, 242–243, 250

Identity interpretation (of idealism), 23, 163, 173–178, 231
 Images, 94–95, 127–141, 154, 224
 concepts as, 129–130, 132–133, 138, 141
 Individual, 21, 80, 102, 129, 133, 162–163, 169, 180–181, 183–187, 189, 228, 232–233, 238, 240, 244, 249–250
 Individuation, 72, 87, 174, 183
 Inner determinations, 13, 21, 154, 174, 229
 Intrinsic, *see* Properties
 Intuitive understanding (intellectual intuition), 80, 143–144, 146, 148–153, 170, 176, 199, 232–234
 Irreducibility, 22
 Isomorphism, 163
 In-itself, 11, 22, 177, 195–209, 211–226, 229–234
 See also Thing in itself

J

Jacobi, F., v, 166, 197, 221

K

Keller, P., 171
 Kemp Smith, N., 154
 Kitcher, P., 223, 227
 Kjosavik, F., 13, 147, 186
 Klimek, N., 239–240, 242–244, 247

L

Langton, R., 2–3, 10–13, 20–23, 39, 46–47, 92, 201, 230–231
 Leibniz, G. W., 21, 36–37, 129–130, 139, 156, 173–176, 208, 229
 Leibniz' principle, 175–176
 See also Principle of the identity of indiscernibles
 Limitation, 159–189, 198, 251
 category of, 162, 184, 187
 Limiting concept, 5
 noumenon as a, 5
 Locke, J., 31, 116, 129–131, 133, 139
 Longuenesse, B., 99, 136, 145–146, 153, 181–188, 217, 237, 239, 245–253

M

Maier, A., 175, 183–184
 Marks (*Merkmale*), 68, 127–141, 147, 154, 161, 228, 249
 concepts as, 128–135, 139, 141
 Martin, G., 11, 162, 164, 170, 175
 Martin, M., 224
 Material for all possibility, 181–182
 McDowell, J., 29–30

McGinn, C., 30
 McLaughlin, P., 150, 152
 Meier, G. F., 63
 Melnick, A., 230
 Mendelssohn, M., 171
 Mental representation/state, 9–11, 17, 19, 39, 77, 91, 93, 225
Metaphysica generalis, 241
Metaphysica specialis, 241, 244
 Methodological reading (of idealism), 1, 3, 9, 12, 163
 Mind-dependence, 9–10, 16, 59, 93–95, 97, 106
 Mind-external, 10
 Mind-independent, 1, 9–10, 16, 58, 60, 95–96, 99–100, 166, 204, 206
 Monad, 36, 60, 199, 229
Mundus intelligibilis, 11, 176
Mundus sensibilis, 11

N

Naturalism, 8, 41–45, 47, 49, 160
 Negation, 162, 172, 181, 184–185, 225, 227
 Neiman, S., 243–244, 246
 Nonreductive materialism, 41
 Noumenal causality, 1
 Noumenalism, 10, 12, 47
 Noumenal self, 168–171, 230
 Noumenon, 5, 8, 10–13, 22, 44–46, 63, 110, 149, 151, 162, 166, 170, 173–178, 199–200, 214, 219, 222, 231–233
 Nozick, R., 196
 Numerical identity, 11, 13–14, 174, 186

O

Objectivity, 6, 33, 35, 55–70, 79, 114–116, 178, 218–220, 222, 230–231, 234
Ommitudo realitatis, 187, 237–238, 240
 One-world, 9–11, 173, 200–201
 Ontology, 1, 4–5, 34, 42–43, 45, 63–66, 99, 155, 187, 218
 Original ground (*Urgrund*), 146

P

Paralogisms, 55, 59, 109–112, 115–116, 177, 198, 202
 Peacocke, C., 224
 Phenomenalism
 analytical, 18–19
 ontological, 18–19
 Phenomenalist, 6, 9–11, 16–17, 19, 92, 201
 Phenomena and Noumena (*Critique*), 63, 98, 151, 167, 214

- Phenomenon, 8, 13, 20–22, 37, 44–46, 52, 57, 59–61, 66–67, 86, 111, 121, 156, 173–174, 176, 181, 184, 208, 219–221, 244
- Plato, 36, 148, 208
- Pogge, T., 97
- Prauss, G., 1, 3, 11, 13, 97, 201, 212–213, 215
- Predicates (*praedicata*)
 general, 63–65
 inner, 21, 229
- Predication
 affirmative, 185
 negative, 185
- Prichard, H., 213
- Principle of complete determination, 186, 188, 238, 245, 247–249, 251–253
- Principle of determinability, 182
- Principle of excluded middle (PEM), 182–183
- Principle of the identity of indiscernibles, 154, 174, 232
- Principle of non-contradiction (PNC), 182–183
- Principle of pure reason, 241, 243–244, 247
- Principle of thoroughgoing determination (PTD), 183, 187–189, 238, 252
- Properties
 dispositional, 7, 31
 extrinsic, 15, 20, 92, 215, 229
 intrinsic, 15, 20–22, 46–47, 92, 229–231
 noumenal, 41, 43, 46
 phenomenal, 33, 173
 relational, 22, 229–230
- Property dualism, 2
- Prototype, 162, 183–184, 237–253
 interest of reason in a, 244
- Purposiveness of nature, 72–74, 86
- Putnam, H., 93, 206
- Q**
- Qualities
 intrinsic, 20
 primary, 63
 secondary, 6, 9, 30, 63, 93
- Quarfood, M., 2, 7–8, 13, 22–23, 174
- R**
- Radner, M., 154
- Rang, B., 147
- Rational psychology, 39, 49, 56, 58
- Realism
 direct, 93–94, 100, 203
 empirical, 4, 19, 41, 52, 188, 202–203, 205–206
 manifest, 41–44, 46–47
 scientific, 31–32, 41, 43–44, 46
 transcendental, 4–5, 66, 128, 196, 201–202, 205–208, 211
- Reality
 empirical, 29, 187–188, 204, 213, 250
 transcendental, 21, 34–35, 38, 47, 50
- Receptivity, 21–23, 101, 112–113, 115, 218–219
- Refutation of Idealism, 11, 36, 58, 200, 216
- Reich, K., 185
- Reinhold, K. L., 19–20, 161
- Relational, 12, 20–23, 39, 46, 48, 93–95, 168, 229–230
- Representationalism, 9, 94, 203
- Rescher, N., 218
- Restriction thesis, 4–5, 7, 21
- Robinson, H., 13, 15, 214, 233
- Rogerson, K., 213
- Rohs, P., 251
- Rosefeldt, T., 7, 9, 13, 23, 30, 93, 163, 168, 201
- Rules, 64, 73, 78–79, 102, 105–106, 116, 127–141, 155, 175, 178, 189, 205, 240–241, 243, 252
 concepts as, 128, 130, 134–137, 139–141
- S**
- Schelling, F. W. J., 144, 146, 151
- Schulze, G. E., 197
- Scientism, 42
- Secondary quality analogy, 9, 93
- Sellars, W., 43–45
- Serck-Hanssen, C., 148
- Short argument, 17, 19–23, 38, 40, 152–153, 160, 212
 metaphysical, 19–23
- Simon, J., 227
- Skepticism, 36, 40, 58, 102, 114, 195–209, 216, 226
- Soul, 6, 11–12, 16, 34, 56, 60, 78, 131, 156, 170–171, 199
- Spatiality, 4–6, 8, 12, 15–17, 20, 31–32, 35, 37–40, 43–52, 58, 95, 97–98, 102, 146–148, 187, 231
- Species argument, 17, 20
- Speciesism, 47–48
- Spinoza, B., 8, 48, 184, 227
- Strawson, P. F., vi, 3, 17, 92, 101, 160, 197, 213
- Stroud, B., 30–31
- Stuhlmann-Laeisz, R., 185
- Subject-dependence, 14–16
- Subject-independence, 14
- Substantial, the, 170–171
- Substrate, 66, 165, 181, 185–186, 221

- Substratum, 84–86, 146, 157, 170, 186, 188, 230, 237–238
 transcendental, 84, 237–238
 Sum total (*Inbegriff*), 181, 183–187, 250–251
 Supersensible, the, 72–73, 81–87, 157
 Sutherland, D., 226
 Synthesis, 18–19, 67–70, 100–101, 105–106, 113–114, 119, 121–124, 136, 148–149, 152, 168–169, 179–181, 186, 188–189, 219–221, 226–227, 240
 Synthetic universal, 146, 148, 150–151
- T**
 Theis, R., 239, 241
 Theology, 49, 239, 241, 244, 247, 253
 Thing considered in-itself, 215
 Thing in general, 5, 65–66, 159–165, 167–168
 Thing in itself, 13–16, 35, 37–40, 58–61, 81–82, 110, 150–157, 159–166, 168–170, 172–181, 183–189, 195–209, 215–219, 237
 Thought-entity (*Gedankending*), 21
 Tiedemann, D., 197
 Transcendental affirmation, 184–185
 Transcendental Deduction, 18, 23, 67–68, 77, 91–107, 125, 153, 163, 178–181, 209, 219, 226, 249
 Transcendental distinction, 1–2, 12, 14, 186, 211
 Transcendental idea, 242–243
 Transcendental illusion, 239–240, 242–246, 248
 Transcendental logic, 62–64, 66, 153, 155, 161
 Transcendental matter, 159, 165, 179, 182, 184
 Transcendental object, 5, 176–177, 180, 186–187, 217, 219–222
 Transcendental subject, 122–124, 169–171
 Transcendental turn, 2
- Two-aspect, 2–3, 6–16, 23, 163, 173, 185–186, 188, 214–215, 222, 231, 233–234
 Two-aspect reading (of idealism), 2–3, 7–16, 163, 185
 metaphysical, 2–3, 14, 163, 185
 Two-object, 2, 11, 185, 188, 214, 221–222, 231
 Two-world, 2–3, 6, 8, 11, 15, 17, 23, 200–201
- U**
 Unconditioned, the, 160, 221, 241–244
 Unity of reason, 241, 252
 Unknowability thesis, 7, 20, 22, 160
- V**
 Vaihinger, H., 200
 Van Cleve, J., 3, 6, 16–19, 91–93, 154, 162–163, 174, 185, 200–201, 206
 Vision, G., 224
- W**
 Wagner, H., 11–12, 22
 Walker, R., 212
 Walsh, W., 212
 Ward, A., 96
 Warren, D., 13, 22–23
 Watkins, E., 97
 Westphal, K., 3, 7–8, 22, 150, 160, 167–168, 216
 Whole and parts, 144
 Wicks, R., 83
 Willaschek, M., 13, 167, 176, 214
 Williams, M., 195–196, 208
 Wolff, Ch, 56, 63–64, 66, 68, 185
 Wood, A., 4, 23, 29, 160, 173–178, 189, 214, 231
- Y**
 Yolton, J., 131