Resolving a Kantian Problem: Beyond Reconciliation to Formal Unity

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ABSTRACT:

RESOLVING A KANTIAN PROBLEM: BEYOND RECONCILIATION TO FORMAL UNITY

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Kant grounds the possibility of a priori knowledge by reversing the traditional model of cognition. For him, synthetic a priori knowledge is possible only if objects conform to cognition; he “does not see how we can know anything a priori [about objects]” except if “objects conform to cognition”. Kant’s idealism (at least ‘in a nutshell’) consists in this tracing of objectivity back to functions that are, in fact, subjective. This idealism comes at a cost, however. For if we assume that objects conform to our cognition, then we are faced with the ‘thing in itself’, which is the unknowable, wahres Korrelatum (true correlate) of what appears. All kinds of metaphysically heavy problems follow from the introduction of this elusive, utterly transcendent entity. In my thesis, I hope to offer an alternative model to Kant’s own, one that is able to ground the possibility of a priori knowledge without having to resort to an idealism that results in the ‘thing in itself’. Instead of arguing that objects conform to cognition, I will claim that, at the formal level, cognition and its object are the same. They are not in need of reconciliation at all. In one way, I agree with Kant: we know this form of nature a priori because it resides in the mind. Contra Kant, however, I maintain that the objectivity of these forms – i.e. their validity with respect the empirical world – does not result from ‘subjectification’, or the constitution of objects by mind. I argue that his line of thinking develops not into rationalism or into an absolute idealism, but into a different conception of nature altogether.

1 KrV Bxvii.
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Glossary of Abbreviations

TW: Two World Interpretations of Things in Themselves
TTW: Traditional Two World Interpretations of Things in Themselves
NTW: New Two-World Interpretations of Things in Themselves
TA: Two Aspect Interpretations of Things in Themselves
PO: Principle of Opposition
PA: Principle of Agreement
TUA: Transcendental Unity of Apperception
Textual Note:

In this thesis, the works of Immanuel Kant will be cited using the Akademie Edition numbering and the following abbreviations:

**KrV**: Kritik der reinen Vernunft (A: first edition B: second edition)

**Proleg**: Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik.

**KPR**: Kritik der praktischen Vernunft

**KU**: Kritik der Urteilskraft

Note: For other, less central works – e.g. letters, dissertations, and articles – I will simply cite the Akademie citation, which is two numbers divided by a colon. English translations of the Critique of Pure Reason are taken from the Guyer translation (1998).
Introduction

Kant grounds the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition by reversing the traditional model of the mind’s orientation to the world. For him, a priori cognition is possible if objects conform to cognition; he “does not see how we can know anything a priori [about objects]” except if “objects conform to cognition”.\(^2\) Kant’s reconciliatory idealism consists in this tracing of objectivity back to functions that are, in fact, subjective.\(^3\) This idealism comes at a cost, however. For if we assume that objects conform to our cognition, then we are faced with the ‘thing in itself’, which is the unknowable, *wahres Korrelatum* (true correlate) of what appears. All kinds of metaphysically heavy problems follow from the introduction of this elusive, utterly transcendent entity. **In my thesis, I hope to offer an alternative model to Kant’s own, one that is able to ground the possibility of a priori knowledge without having to resort to an idealism that results in the ‘thing in itself’**. Instead of arguing that objects conform to cognition, I will claim that (at the formal level) cognition and its object are the same. They are not, as it were, in need of reconciliation at all. On my ‘non-reconciliatory’ approach, the ideality of a priori forms does not entail the need to reduce the object to the mind, since the mind and object are identical terms in an act of, what I will call, ‘nature’s self-consciousness’, where mind is the act (i.e. the consciousness) and nature – at least in its formality – is the object (i.e. the self). In one way, I am in agreement with Kant: we know this form of nature a priori because it resides in the mind. Unlike Kant, however, the objectivity of these forms – i.e. their validity with respect to the empirical world – does not result from ‘subjectification’, or the constitution of objects by mind. Instead, these forms are objective because being a priori in mind and being ontologically prior in nature amount to the

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\(^2\) KrV Bxvii.

\(^3\) There are, of course, two subjects for Kant: the empirical and the transcendental subject. This thesis is concerned with the latter and not the former. I will specify when the empirical subject is being discussed.
same thing. I will argue that this line of thinking develops, not into rationalism or into an absolute idealism, but into a holomorphic conception of nature. I will then begin to develop this idea by initiating the transfiguration of Kant’s basic and familiar theoretical system.

If by idealism we mean the reduction of world to mind, then this non-reconciliatory position is not an idealism. After all, in order for one term to be reduced to the other, their difference must already be assumed. If by idealism we mean that the world is consistent, or homogenous with thinkable form – i.e. rules for its possibility – then my position is an idealism. The difference with this idealism is that the mind and the world are formally identical. The mind thinks in terms of the structures that underlie and inform worldly objects. The world is not ‘in my mind’ as it were; instead, my mind is in a world, which is, in its very fabric, thinkable.

Broadly speaking, the literature on Kant can be broken into two categories. First, there is scholarship of the ‘analytical’ kind, which (a) interprets, (b) defends, or (c) criticizes Kant’s work at the microscopic level. Second, there is the ‘historical’ kind of investigation, which works to contextualize Kant within a larger cultural and historical framework. Where the shortcoming of the analytical kind is its propensity to ignore the broader implications and arguments of the critical work, it often excels in the articulation and evaluation of architectonic minutiae. Of course, this kind of investigation is highly valuable; indeed, the lasting significance of Kantian philosophy depends on the soundness of its claims, however difficult. That being said, this literature often loses sight of the ‘bigger picture’ and, with it, the philosophical problems that motivated Kant in the first place (e.g. the immateriality of the soul, the nature of God, and the possibility of

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4 Throughout this thesis, I use the word ‘reduction’ to signify the means of reconciliation between mind and world. It is not meant in the sense of translating a set of predicates into the language of fundamental physics, as it is usually used today.


knowledge). Freed from the narrowness of hyper-focus, but at the cost of that very virtue, historical interpreters locate Kant within the development, progress, and fate of these philosophical questions.

What is more, it is important to point out that analytical interpreters work on Kant’s philosophy itself, and not with its proper subject matter. Guyer, for instance, has many insightful things to say about Kant’s aesthetic, but he says little to nothing about space and time itself.7 And though historical interpreters often do a better job at articulating these ideas per se, they do so always in the context of their development. Adorno, for instance, ingeniously ties Kant back to the Platonic tradition of the divided line without, at the same time, evaluating the simultaneity of nature’s flux and stable sway. Both kinds of literature, therefore, deal either (a) with Kant’s ideas or (b) with the development of these ideas.8 In both cases, it seems, the ideas do not receive proper attention. In the analytical tradition, this is most pronounced in the propensity to either defend or criticize Kant’s position by appealing to its internal, argumentative structure. Here it is mostly a matter of whether or not Kant is being consistent. If he is consistent, then it is a matter of showing how; if not, then how not—in both cases, the subject matter of these arguments is forgotten. In the historical tradition, this neglect occurs mostly because these interpreters expand on what is already uncontroversial in Kant. Given the nature of their method, this results from their need to isolate Kant’s historical significance and, thus, interpret him as history has. Here Kant is often seen as a way to Hegel, Phenomenology, or (post)structuralism.

My approach to Kant is a unique one. Instead of dealing with the subject matter through Kant, I attempt to approach Kant through the subject matter. First and foremost, I am endeavoring to pursue knowledge of this material itself (i.e. space, time, logic, nature, a priori knowledge

7 Guyer 2006, 50-70; Guyer 1987, 350-370.
8 Adorno 1995, 78.
etc.…), albeit from within, though not only within, the Kantian framework. To do this, I will take the central problem in Kant and attempt to solve it by ‘modifying’ his architectonic. Inasmuch as it entails the transformation of the system, ‘modification’ is a topic-focused approach. When the system is altered in order to avoid particular problems, what is said of these topics changes as well. This does not, however, entail the constitution of a new system ex nihlo; insofar as ‘modification’ assumes the prior existence of a machine (in this case, Kant’s critical system), it is not boundlessly creative. In this way, modification utilizes the strengths of both analytic and historical interpretations of Kant without retaining their weaknesses. Given that this approach is focused on the topics themselves, it automatically implicates itself in the broader context without having to sacrifice analytical precision. This allows us to refresh our relationship with Kant without remaining tethered to, nor free from, him. In this way, my approach is an attempt to refocus the scholarship back to what really matters without doing so vacuously. This is my general technique. But how does it play out with regard to a specific problem?

The specific problem that I will be dealing with in my thesis is the Kantian notion of the ‘thing in itself’. Kant famously reversed the relationship between cognition and its object. Unlike his predecessors, who are said to have maintained an epistemological conception in which cognition conforms to the object, Kant postulates the reversal of these roles; instead of cognition conforming to objects, objects are to conform to cognition. The goal of the reversal is to ground the possibility of universal knowledge about the world; if the world conforms to the laws of our cognition, these laws will be mirrored by, and anticipated in, any possible experience. Although Kant’s reversal is ingenious, it has one unnerving result. If objects are informed by cognition, then

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9 KrV Bxvii; (A92/B125; A129).
10 ibid.
11 KrV esp. (A92/B125).
the existence of these objects as they are ‘in themselves’ is entirely unknowable.\textsuperscript{12} Kant is forced to distinguish between ‘our’ world of appearances and a transcendent, unknowable realm of ‘things in themselves’.\textsuperscript{13}

While this division is not problematic per se, it is complicated by Kant’s insistence that things in themselves affect cognition from beyond.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, inasmuch as objects conform to cognition, they must first give themselves to cognition in some way. Now, if objects in themselves are to affect cognition, they must be causally related to cognition’s laws. This too would not be problematic, except that Kant, in concurrence with this theory of affection, insists that ‘causality’ is itself a law of cognition, not a principle of noumena.\textsuperscript{15} Kant’s notion of causality is a subjective category, a cognitive ordinance by which things in themselves are transformed into, and not unveiled in, appearance. How can Kant say that noumena affect us without contradicting himself?

This ‘problem of noumenal affection’ is the central, motivating problem in Kantian philosophy. From the earliest critics (e.g. Jacobi and Hegel) to the more recent (e.g. Strawson, Allison, and Guyer), the problem of affection remains the problematic issue when it comes to the evaluation and relevance of Kant’s critical philosophy. In the literature, there are two, mutually exclusive groups of commentators, each distinct in their treatment, and their understanding of noumena.

On the one side, there are those commentators who support what is called a ‘two-world’ reading of Kant.\textsuperscript{16} These commentators maintain that appearances and noumena are ontologically

\textsuperscript{12} KrV Bxx; (A32/B49); (A255/B311); A288/B344; A494/B522).
\textsuperscript{13} KrV (A42/B59)
\textsuperscript{14} KrV A491/B519 (A567/B595).
\textsuperscript{15} KrV B164; see also (A155/B195; A237/B296; A277/B333). See Van Cleve 1999.
\textsuperscript{16} See Strawson 1966. Guyer 1987; 2006. Van Cleve 1999. Even McDowell, for his part, is a two-world interpreter of Kant; for this, see the footnote on page 43 of McDowell 1994. Many more names could be added to this list as two-world theorists make up the most traditional way of interpreting Kant. Even Kant’s first commentators and critics tended to interpret him this way (see for instance Sassen 2000), especially Jacobi at 169-182. Also, see Kant’s first commentator: Schultz 1995. For a good overview of these two different sides of the argument, see Walker 2010.
distinct kinds of entities; they have different modes of being. Because these commentators preserve an ontological division, however, they are forced to concede to the inherent flaw in Kant’s system. On the other side of the debate, there are commentators who endorse what can be called a ‘two-aspect’ reading. On the ‘two-aspect’ account, an appearance and its noumenal cause are not ontologically distinct – in fact, they are the same entity, considered from two different standpoints of reflection. While the appearance is the object as it is considered in its relation to cognition, the noumenon is the object as it is considered independently of said relation. The distinction is therefore epistemic, not ontological.

In this thesis I will argue that reconciliatory frameworks of mind tend to contradict the possibility of knowledge about the world as it is in itself. This, I will argue, leads to incoherent theories of knowledge. In Kant’s case, this leads to the unsolvable problem of things in themselves. By ‘reconciliatory’ I mean any epistemological framework which sees the need to resolve an essential gap between the mind and world. If truth (as correspondence) is taken to mean “the agreement of cognition with its object”, then any reconciliatory schematic problematizes the possibility of worldly knowledge. By dividing intellectual and worldly substances, the agreement between a concept and a thing is problematized. The possibility of truth, at least as it is traditionally understood, is thereby threatened. To overcome this, reconciliatory frameworks either reduce (a) the mind to the world or (b) the world to the mind. I will call the first position empiricism and the latter, idealism. For now, these terms are meant merely to indicate the method by which the gap between mind and world is supposedly bridged.

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18 KrV A58/B53
In Chapter One, I show how ‘things in themselves’ come about in Kant’s philosophy. In the Second Chapter, I argue that these things are fundamentally problematic, despite the arguments some authors make in their defense. In Chapter Three I locate the source of this problem in the reconciliatory nature of Kant’s initial framework, and in Chapter Four I replace that framework with the outline of an alternative, non-reconciliatory framework. The Fifth, and final, Chapter consists in a response to an objection. Here I will defend a ‘conceptualists’ reading of Kant, which will make room for further study, a few of which I discuss briefly by way of concluding this study.
Chapter One
The Structural Ground of Things in Themselves

This chapter will be devoted to the origin of the notion of things in themselves in Kant’s philosophy. It serves the purpose of building the groundwork for the next two chapters, wherein I will argue that the notion of things in themselves is fundamentally problematic and that it develops according to its own internal, dialectical logic.

In section 1.1 of this chapter, I will show how the notion of a thing in itself is a conceptual result of two Kantian positions that cannot be dismissed without altering the system completely. These are that (a) sensibility is receptive and (b) appearances are ideal. In section 1.2, I will depict how Kant comes to the conclusion that things in themselves are non-spatial and non-temporal. This will prepare the reader for the subsequent discussion in section 1.3, where I will discuss the problems such entities have traditionally created. These problems, and their supposed solutions, will be discussed at length in chapter two. The claim of my thesis, that Kant’s model of mind is fundamentally flawed in virtue of being reconciliatory, depends on things in themselves being problematical. For, as I will argue, it is in virtue of reconciliation, that things in themselves exist.

Section 1.1
The Grounds for Things-In-Themselves in the Aesthetic

Kant’s claim that appearances are grounded in transcendent things, which are neither spatiotemporal nor knowable in themselves, marks what is unique about his transcendental idealism. If idealism were a genus, the existence and purported causality of these noumenal entities – coupled perhaps with the merely formal nature of the ideal structures involved – might comprise the specific difference. It is this feature of Kant’s philosophy that differentiates his idealism from idealisms that are merely subjective or absolute. To this end, Ameriks has pointed out that what makes Kant’s idealism more ‘realistic’ in the austere philosophical sense is the claim that “empirical features are grounded in the natures of things in themselves”. For if appearances are ultimately caused by entities that are mind independent, then ‘reality’ is neither merely subjective nor a reflection of spirit – or some other absolute notion – in itself. While the significance of this feature of Kant’s philosophy cannot be overstated – indeed, without it “I could not find my way

19 Proleg: 375.
20 Ameriks 2003, 40.
into this system”\textsuperscript{21} – neither can its problematic nature. The complications that arise with things in themselves are old and have been the focus of countless debates since the publication of the first Critique.

These problems will be the focus of this part of the thesis, which is divided into three chapters. First, I will explore how the thing in itself originates in the critical system. This is not a historical genealogy, but a philosophical one. In the second chapter, I will explore two traditional ways of interpreting the concept of things in themselves. I will show how, when motivated by a certain problem of noumenal affection (which is itself controversial), these theories dialectically oscillate between one another. They are, therefore, not sufficient for settling the metaphysical problems generated by the introduction of transcendent, causal entities. In the third chapter, I will consider recent interpretations that defend the philosophical coherence of the concept of things in themselves. I will argue that, even if these interpretations were correct (which is itself controversial), the thing in itself would remain a theoretical problem.

The ‘thing in itself’ is a result of two Kantian positions that cannot be vetoed without radically changing his philosophical system. These are that (a) sensibility is receptive and (b) appearances are transcendentally ideal. Kant tells us that human intuition, as the human capacity to receive an object immediately, is essentially sensible, i.e. receptive, and should be distinguished in kind from other, non-receptive forms;\textsuperscript{22} there could be a being, after all, armed with the powers of an intellective intuition.\textsuperscript{23} Given that the thinking of a concept by us is not sufficient to produce an intuition of its object, the receptive nature of human sensibility is accepted as a fact and is not, in contrast to the transcendental ideality of appearance, grounded through thorough

\textsuperscript{21} Jacobi in Sassen 2000, 173.
\textsuperscript{22} KrV A19/B33; A50/B74
\textsuperscript{23} KrV A19/B33; A50/B74; For a discussion of non-sensible intuition see especially B148-149; B307-308.
argumentation. Human beings receive empirical sensations, the undetermined object of which are called appearances; the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called appearance”. What makes these appearances ideal – and indeed, what makes this idealism ‘transcendental’ – is their obedience to the ideal forms of sensibility, i.e. space and time. Though the “weighty reasons” for why these forms are given ideal status will be discussed shortly, the origin of the thing in itself, as a philosophical concept, is already an implicit consequence of this ideality (combined, of course, with the receptive nature of sensibility).

If space and time are forms of sensibility, and sensibility is receptive, then space and time not only logically precede the intuition of objects, they also inform what appears; otherwise, appearance would be non-sensible and would not, therefore, appear to us at all. Since objects of intuition must take on the form of sensibility, appearances – understood as spatiotemporal entities – are transcendentally ideal. In other words, the precondition for their appearance as bodies extended in space and time is their obedience to mental, a priori forms. Since what appears is organized by sensibility, and is thus ideal, sensibility cannot, in the original sense, receive what appears, since appearance signifies prior reception. If it did, an infinite regress would occur; that is, a prior receptivity would always have to be presupposed. Kant writes:

Now since the receptivity of the subject to be affected by objects necessarily precedes all intuitions of these objects, it can be understood how the form of all appearance can be given in the mind prior to all actual perceptions, thus *a priori*, and how as pure intuition, in which all objects must be determined, it can contain principles of their relations prior to all experience.

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24 KrV Bxxvii*.  
25 KrV A20, B34.  
26 Immanuel Kant 2000, 30; 108. Proleg; 376  
27 Proleg; 289.  
28 KrV A26/B42  
29 KrV A27/B44.  
30 Ibid. 159. KrV A26/B42.
This passage equates the prior “receptivity of the subject”, its capacity to be “affected by objects”, with the a priori nature of spatiotemporal forms, thereby indicating the ideality of (what turn out to be) empirically real – but transcendentally ideal – appearances.\(^{31}\) Passages like this prohibit us from identifying ‘appearance’ as (at least the original) correlate of sensibility, i.e. as that which “affects the mind in a certain way”.\(^{32}\) Simply put, the spatial structure of appearance, coupled with the sensible nature of space, entails the unoriginal nature of appearance, and the prior affectivity by what Kant problematically calls the “true correlate” (\textit{wahres Korrelatum}) of sensibility.\(^{33}\) Appearances cannot be the ‘true correlate’ because they are spatiotemporal and, thus, presuppose the prior receptivity of the true correlate and the conversion of it into the language of possible experience. The ‘\textit{wahres Korrelatum}’ is not, therefore, an appearance in any sense. What the receptivity of sensibility originally receives cannot itself be an appearance. For if appearances are transcendentally ideal – i.e. if they are “representations of our sensibility” – then they cannot be the “true correlate” of sensibility, which is essentially receptive.\(^{34}\)

In this way, the thing in itself is a consequence of (a) sensibility’s receptivity and (b) the ideality of appearance, which is the result of the subjectification or idealization of space and time. Kant himself understood it this way. In the preface to the B edition, he calls the limitation of knowledge to what appears the “very strange result” of his Copernican hypothesis, which is the hypothesis that objects are oriented to the forms of cognition.\(^{35}\) There he writes that, “cognition reaches appearances only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual for itself but uncognized by us”.\(^{36}\) As that which guarantees the receptive nature of sensibility, the ‘\textit{wahres Korrelatum}’ must

\(^{31}\) KrV A28/ B44. See also, pp. 430-431. KrV A378-379. Here they are empirically real because they obey categorical laws.

\(^{32}\) KrV A19/B33.

\(^{33}\) KrV A30/B45.

\(^{34}\) KrV A30, B45.

\(^{35}\) KrV Bxix.

\(^{36}\) KrV Bxix.
affect it – it must be “actual”; as the correlate of sensibility, however, it must be unconditioned by it – it must be “uncognized” by intuition.37

Two very important questions arise immediately. First, why must space and time be ideal determinations? Second, even if they must be ideal, why can’t they also be real, applying to things in themselves?

For Kant, the notion of a real space and time is problematic for many reasons. While it would be impossible to do complete justice to all of these arguments here, it will be enough to give a brief sketch of the central arguments offered in the first part of the critique. The indirect arguments for the ideality of spacetime in the dialectic – in the antinomies specifically – will be briefly mentioned later. Kant’s core defense is in the Aesthetic.

Kant thinks that there are two possible concepts of real spacetime. If they are real, they must be confined to what is real, and what is real is restricted to what is intrinsic and the relations between what is intrinsic. If they are real, space and time must be either absolute, i.e. Newtonian, or products of relations between simples, i.e. Leibnizian. They must, therefore, be either “actual entities”38 themselves or products of the relations between actual entities, which are “abstracted from experience though confusedly”.39 But does Kant really think that these are the only ways for space and time to be real? For reasons that become clear only later in the Critique, I think that he does. At A573, Kant claims that “the proposition everything existing is thoroughly determined signifies not only that if every given pair of opposed predicates, but every pair of possible predicates, one of them must always apply to it”.40 Thus, if space and time exist, then they are

37 KrV Bxix.
38 KrV A39/B50.
39 KrV A39/B50.
40 KrV A573/B601.
thoroughly determined. But if they are thoroughly determined, then they cannot be both absolute and relative; they must be one or the other.

First, Kant thinks that the Newtonian notion of absolute spacetime is dubious because it posits “two eternal and infinite self-subsisting non-entities (space and time), which are there present (yet without there being anything real) only in order to comprehend everything real in themselves”.\textsuperscript{41} Prima facie, this does not look like an argument at all; it appears as though Kant is merely saying that Newtonians posit P, and P is absurd, therefore not P. Indeed, in the first Critique Kant’s focused criticism is directed primarily toward Leibnizian space, which (we will discover) cannot “offer any ground for the possibility of a priori mathematical assertions”.\textsuperscript{42} Does Kant offer an argument against absolute space? His first focused argument appears in the dissertation of 1770. There he writes,

\begin{quote}
As for the first fabrication of reason [i.e. absolute space]: since it invents an infinite number of true relations without there being any beings which are related to one another it belongs to the world of fable.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

Kant’s issue with absolute space (and time for that matter) is that, if emptied of content, space will in principle still contain relations without there being anything to support those relations. As Mary Domski has pointed out, the absolutist afflicts their “characterization with an unacceptable and essentially contradictory metaphysics according to which space is an existing, self-subsisting non-entity”.\textsuperscript{44} While a close reading of Newton’s points in \textit{De Gravitatione} is not possible here, the fact that they are metaphysically problematic is obvious. For instance, Newton writes that, though

\textsuperscript{41} KrV. A39/B56.  
\textsuperscript{42} KrV. A40/B57.  
\textsuperscript{43} AK 2:403.  
\textsuperscript{44} Domski 2013, 440.
space can be “distinguished into parts”, it is not itself a body,\textsuperscript{45} nor can it be experienced since “space [both] exists and…is not an entity of any sort”.\textsuperscript{46}

Kant’s rejection of relational spacetime – i.e. the view that space is merely an “order of co-existences just as time is an order of successions”\textsuperscript{47} – is much more precise. More importantly, it leads into Kant’s famous argument from geometry (and mathematics). In an important section, Kant claims that if space and time “only inhere” in things – i.e. if they are to be merely derived from “relations of appearances” – then they would be known a posteriori.\textsuperscript{48} Kant rejects this for two reasons. First, he argues that, since relations between appearances presuppose space, space itself cannot be derived from said relations.\textsuperscript{49} If space and time were both (a) known a posteriori and (b) derivative or merely relational, then they would be “creatures of the imagination, the origin of which must really be sought in experience”.\textsuperscript{50} Furthermore, if they are derivative and originate empirically, then they are merely abstracted relations. But space and time cannot be abstracted from these relations since these relations assume them. They cannot, therefore, be cognized a posteriori. Abstracting away all objects in space, we are still left with an intuition of space as the condition of appearance; space cannot, therefore, be abstracted from appearance since appearance presupposes space. Space (and time) are, therefore, a priori conditions for the possibility of appearances and cannot, therefore, be supervenient on, or derived from, them.\textsuperscript{51}

The next argument I will consider is the argument from geometry. Briefly, this runs as follows:

\textsuperscript{45} Newton in Huggett 1999, 110-11.
\textsuperscript{46} Domski 2013, 442.
\textsuperscript{47} Leibniz 1976, 682.
\textsuperscript{48} KrV A40/B57; A48/B65.
\textsuperscript{49} KrV A23/B38.
\textsuperscript{50} KrV. A40/B57.
\textsuperscript{51} This is not a recreation of Kant’s argument exactly as it appears. For Kant, there is an added premise, namely, that “in order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me (außer mich) …the representations of space must already be [the ground] (muss die Vorstellung des Raumes schon zum Grunde liegen)”. 
1) Geometry (and mathematics generally) is a science composed of synthetic a priori truths.\textsuperscript{52}
2) Given that they are a priori, they are universal and necessary.\textsuperscript{53}
3) Given that they are synthetic, they are authenticated by intuition.\textsuperscript{54}
4) Universal and Necessary judgements cannot be derived from experience.
5) First Conclusion: Geometry cannot be derived from empirical intuitions.
6) Geometric propositions are constructed from intuitions of space.\textsuperscript{55}
7) Second Conclusion: space is an a priori intuition.

If space were represented or cognized a posteriori, then the science of space – i.e. geometry – would not yield universal or necessary truths. As Allison notes, “the a priori and intuitive character of the representation of space is a necessary condition of the possibility of geometry”.\textsuperscript{56} In this respect, the argument from geometry derives its ontological claim that space is a pure, a priori form of intuition from the epistemological claim that mathematical propositions, which are universally and necessarily true, are synthetic and a priori. The kind of knowledge we have about space reveals the kind of thing that space has to be. But why must the a priori form of space also be the space of external experience? Is it not possible that geometry is merely a subjective enterprise, having nothing to do with spatial objects outside of us? For Kant this would create many problems. Most importantly, it would entail that geometry did not apply to objects of experience – it would be merely subjective and would, for that reason, not comprise a science of universal and necessary truths. This is textually evident in many places. At A40, Kant writes that if space is not cognizable a priori then

\begin{quote}
[it] can neither offer any ground for the possibility of a priori mathematical cognitions (since [it] lack[s] a true and objectively valid a priori intuition), nor can [it] bring the propositions of experience into necessary accord with those assertions.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52} KrV A24/B39; A10/B14; especially B16.
\textsuperscript{53} KrV B2, B4 -6.
\textsuperscript{54} KrV. A155/B194:
\textsuperscript{55} KrV A715/B743.
\textsuperscript{56} Allison 1983, 99.
\textsuperscript{57} KrV A40/B57.
This quote illustrates that the proper notion of space must perform two tasks. First, it must offer an a priori region of intuition, where geometrical objects can be constructed according to concepts. Second, it must explain how the world of experience conforms to this intuitive form. Kant satisfies the first requirement through his claim that space and time are pure forms of intuition. Kant satisfies the second through his Copernican hypothesis, which states that “we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them”.\(^{58}\) As Allison notes, Kant’s Copernican hypothesis results in the denial of the “possibility of an a priori intuition of something existing in itself”.\(^{59}\) If space must both ground the a priori science of geometry and apply structurally to the empirical world then it must be a contribution of the mind. For if the world conforms to our pure forms of intuition (which are space and time), then it obeys the structures of geometric extension universally and necessarily.

Van Cleve has remarked on the old criticism of this claim made by Russell and G.E. Moore. Briefly, the criticism is that if space and time are subjective conditions – i.e. if they are ideal – then they are contingent. According to Russell, they are contingent because they belong to a subject that is, itself, contingent. In *The Problems of Philosophy* he writes that,

Apart from the minor grounds on which Kant’s philosophy may be criticized, there is one which seems fatal to any attempt to deal with the problem of a priori knowledge by this method. The thing to be accounted for is our certainty that the facts must always conform to logic and arithmetic. To say that logic and arithmetic are contributed by us does not account for this. Our nature is as much a fact of the existing world as anything, and there can be no certainty that it will remain constant. It might happen, if Kant is right, that tomorrow our nature would so change as to make two and two become five. The possibility never seems to have occurred to him yet it is one which utterly destroys the certainty and universality which he is anxious to vindicate.\(^{60}\)

\(^{58}\) KrV Bxviii.  
\(^{59}\) Allison 1983, 108.  
\(^{60}\) Russell 1980, 49.
Is this criticism as crushing as it seems to be? Van Cleve responds on Kant’s behalf by arguing that, although Kant did indeed give the “necessary truths of geometer a contingent grounding”, this does not entail that they are entirely contingent. Instead they are not “necessarily necessary”; they may be necessary truths in our world – i.e. in a world constituted by our kinds of mind – but they are not universal and necessary in all worlds. On the one hand, I think that Van Cleve’s point is a good one. Kant himself constantly reiterates that our kind of intuition (the sensible kind) is not the only possible kind. Presumably, for a being with intellectual intuition, for whom the world is neither spatial nor temporal, geo-mathematical propositions would have no truth – indeed, they would have no form from which to be constructed.

While more can be said about this issue, it is enough to mention that Kant’s claim about arithmetical necessity is controversial. Experience “tells us, to be sure, what is, but never that it must necessarily be thus and not otherwise”. The synthetic a priori knowledge we have of space-time – i.e. of what is and cannot be otherwise – is symptomatic of its ontological difference from objects of experience, which are, in essence, contingent. For Kant, the kind of knowledge we have of an object is indicative of the nature of that object. If a judgment’s truth is universal and necessary then it is true in virtue of either (a) a concept or, as it turns out, in virtue of (b) a priori forms. The objects of universal and necessary judgment cannot, as it were, be abstracted from experience, for then what is necessary and universal about them would be contingent. Since “experience never gives its judgments true or strict but only ever assumed universality (through induction)”, the universality of our synthetic a priori knowledge about space-time is, as it were, already a clue to its nature: “necessity and strict universality are therefore secure indications of an a priori

61 Van Cleve 1999, 38.
63 KrV A27/B43; B145.
64 KrV A1.
cognition”. If space and time belonged to things in themselves, and were thus responsible for properties of extension and change, then our knowledge of them would in principle be a posteriori. Since our knowledge of space and time is universal and necessary, space and time cannot belong to the empirical objects in themselves; otherwise, they would be empirical objects and would, thus, befall the happenstance of contingency. It is, therefore, precisely because of the kind of knowledge that we possess that Kant is forced to reverse the epistemic dichotomy and, in so doing, revolutionize our conception of the ontological nature of spacetime. Insofar as the necessity and universality of aesthetic structures cannot be known a posteriori and, given that our knowledge of space-time is a priori, the hypostatization of spacetime would, in Kant’s view, contradict its very nature.

Does this criticism of real spacetime affect both relational and absolute positions or only one? In her recent article Mary Domski argues that it applies only to the Leibnizian position; she even goes so far to argue that Newton “could establish the necessary [geometrical] features of space, because he accepted the correct representation of space as distinct from objects as well as the proper a priori and constructive methods for investigating space”. In the *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770, and later in the first Critique, it is evident that Kant’s ‘geometric criticism’ is leveled mainly against the Leibnizian position. It is also evident in the same texts that Kant’s denunciation of absolute space is made for different reasons. In the *Dissertation* Kant condemns absolutist notions, not because they are unable to support the universal and necessary nature of geometry, but because (a) they are metaphysically problematic non-entities (as noted before) and because (b) “they put a slight impediment in the way of certain concepts of reasons, or concepts

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65 KrV B3.
66 Deleuze 1984, viii.
67 Domski 2013, 447.
68 AK 2:404.
relating to noumena, and which are in any case particularly inaccessible to the understanding…”.

We have seen the first echoed in the first Critique, but (as Domski points out) the second is there as well. There, Kant writes that the absolutist “succeeded in opening the field of appearances for mathematical assertions; however, they themselves become very confused as to precisely these conditions if the understanding would go beyond this field”. It seems that Domski might be correct. Kant seems to argue that, while Newtonian notions of space do in fact ground geometry, they fall prey to the metaphysical requirements of the void. Is this correct?

For both Newton and Kant, space is a condition of the possibility of objects. For Newton, it is real and for Kant it is ideal. In both cases, the priority of space guarantees the necessary obedience to its necessary structure by objects. For since in both cases space is a prior condition and not a supervening growth – i.e. since it is a condition of the possibility of objects – its geometric architecture can be anticipated in any and all objects. As Domski argues, “the absolutist correctly represents…space as a priori—as prior to and distinct from bodies, and as that which makes appearances possible”. But this is where things get problematic. While Domski is correct to argue that space is a prior condition for objects, this does not mean that it is a priori. For Kant space’s being prior to objects is an ontological claim, and not necessarily an epistemological one. Being a priori, on the other hand, is an epistemological claim with ontological consequences. For Newton, space might be prior to objects, but is it really known a priori? Domski herself admits that, for Newton, “the idea of space investigated in geometry is an idea abstracted from our experience with bodies”. If this is the case, it is difficult to see how this geometry, although a

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69 Ibid.
70 KrV A40/B57.
71 Domski 2013, 442.
72 KrV Bxviii.
73 Domski 2013, 443.
prior condition for objects, would be knowable a priori. Furthermore, Kant’s claim is that if space is a prior condition of experience it cannot be known empirically since knowing it empirically would presuppose it. If space is a prior condition of all appearance – which Kant claims it is – then it must be known either (a) a priori or (b) from concepts abstracted from the existing objects.

If (b) were true, then not only would our geometry become merely empirical, but we would be charged with the difficult task of representing objects in space before space itself was represented; (a) must, therefore, be true – we must intuit space a priori. But here a question would still remain: why can’t we know real absolute space a priori? As Allison has pointed out, for this to be possible there must be some kind of “pre-established harmony” between “this idea of space and space itself”, which is metaphysically problematic.

It seems to me that, while it is the not the biggest problem facing the Newtonian, the problem of geometry exists in a modified form. For the Leibnizian, geometry is contingent because it is abstracted from a space that is supervenient on entities more fundamental. For the Newtonian, geometry is indeed the necessary structural condition of material objects in themselves but the propositions cannot be known synthetically a priori. This is because, for Kant, if objects are in themselves geometrical, then they are in principle knowable only empirically, and geometry would then be contingent:

If there did not lie in you a faculty for intuiting a priori; if this subjective condition regarding form were not at the same time the universal a priori condition under which alone the object of this outer intuition is itself possible, if the object (the triangle) were something in itself without relation to your subject: then how could you say that what necessarily lies in your subjective conditions for constructing a triangle must also pertain to the triangle itself…If, therefore, space (and time as well) were not a mere form of your intuition that contains a priori conditions under which alone things could be outer objects for you, which are nothing in themselves…then you could make out absolutely nothing out synthetic and a priori about other objects.

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75 KrV A48/B65.
Kant’s criticism here does not leave the absolutist unscathed. Because they are realists, Newtonians cannot explain how subjective arithmetical entities, which are knowable synthetically a priori, cohere with reality. Even if it were granted that a geometric science had been worked out entirely, it would be impossible to know why such geometry applied to the world itself. Sure, one could argue for a pre-established harmony between these terms, but that comes with metaphysical problems Kant is not willing to admit. Unless the space grounding our geometry is transcendentally ideal – i.e. unless the obedience to a priori forms makes the appearing world possible – nothing can be known about that space synthetically a priori. As conditions of the possibility of appearing, space and time cannot be derived from appearances. As the sciences of these conditions, neither can geometry and math. Their universal and necessary natures confirm this.

There are at least two more arguments Kant offers for the ideality of space. First, there is the argument from incongruent counterparts. Second, there is the indirect argument presented in the antinomies. The argument from incongruent counterparts is controversial and concerns the nature of space only. It is controversial because Kant used this argument in order to support 3 different conclusions. First, in the 1768 essay “Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Differentiation of Regions in Space” it was utilized for the purpose of supporting the Newtonian notion of absolute space. Later, in the dissertation of 1770, the argument supports the claim that “incongruity can only be apprehended by a certain pure intuition” and that space was not a concept. Finally, in the Prolegomena of 1789, it supports the ideality of space and the non-spatiality of things in themselves. It is also controversial because the argument is altogether

76 KrV A40.
77 See Allison 1983, 100. Also, Buroker in Van Cleeve and Frederick 1991, 316-317.
78 AK 2:403.
79 Proleg: 286.
absent in both editions of the first *Critique*. This is especially surprising given that in 1786 – a year before the second edition was published – Herman Pistorius offered an early version ‘neglected alternative’, i.e. the view that, though space and time must be a priori intuitions, “none of this precludes the possibility that the concepts of space and time can also have an objective foundation”. If the argument from incongruent counterparts does in fact prove that space and time cannot be determinations of things in themselves (as Kant purports in the Prolegomena), its absence in the Critique is mystifying. What is the argument?

Here I will focus on the argument for the mere ideality of space as presented in the Prolegomena. Kant argues that there can be two spatial objects – e.g. a right and a left hand – in which “no internal differences” can be determined “by thinking alone”. And yet, though these two hands are discursively identical, they are not congruent – “the left hand cannot be enclosed in the same bounds as the right one” or vice versa. For Kant, if these hands were things in themselves, they would be cognizable through the understanding alone, i.e. they would be intelligible entities. If these were intelligible entities, however, they would be indiscernible and could not, therefore, be numerically distinct. What incongruent counterparts show, however, is that it is possible for two indiscernible entities to be numerically distinct. This contradicts the Leibnizian principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which states: “there is no such thing as two individuals indiscernible from each other”. It seems that, at least in the Prolegomena, Kant accedes to the Leibnizian claim that things in themselves are purely intelligible, and therefore exhausted by their conceptual description, i.e. “as some pure understanding would cognize

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80 Pistorius in Sassen 2000, 97.
81 Proleg: 286.
82 Proleg: 286.
83 Proleg: 286.
84 Leibniz 1969, 687.
them”. This claim is shown to be incompatible with incongruence. The conclusion is not that things in themselves are conceptually indeterminate, but that spatial objects are not things in themselves. As Allison has pointed out, this argument “only really proves we cannot regard these objects [in themselves] as Leibnizian monads”. It does not, in other words, show that things in themselves cannot be spatial in the Newtonian sense – indeed, Kant himself used the argument from incongruence to defend a notion of absolute space.

Incongruence also poses a problem to the other Leibnizian claim that all spatial relations are reducible to, and derived from, non-relational properties. This means “not only that non-relational properties are ontologically prior to relations, but also that relational propositions are, in principle, reducible”. Incongruent counterparts, however, exhibit relations that are irreducible, i.e. that are not derivative of non-relational entities (for if they were reducible, they would be ultimately conceptually exhausted). These irreducible relations are those by which two indiscernibles differ numerically; these differences cannot, therefore, be attributed to simple substances to which these extended substances are reduced (i.e. to monads) – they must be explained in terms of their relation to space, which must exist independently of and prior to objects. For the Kant of 1768 this prior space was real and absolute: “our considerations [of incongruence] makes it plain that the determinations of space are not consequences of the positions of matter relative to each other…on the contrary, the latter are the consequences of the former”. For the Kant of 1770, on the other hand, this prior space was a pure intuition; given that incongruent counterparts cannot be differentiated conceptually, “it is…clear that in these cases the difference …can only be

85 Proleg: 286
87 Buroker 1991, 327.
89 Proleg: 383.
apprehended by a certain pure intuition”.

In either case, these irreducible relations end up supporting the claim in the Prolegomena that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal instead of the claim that they are irreducibly relational.

Van Cleve formalizes this argument for idealist as follows:

1) No existent entities stand in completely irreducible relations.
2) Spatial figures stand in some irreducible relations.
3) Therefore, spatial figures are not genuinely existent entities.

While this may be the best example of the overall argument from incongruence I still think it is highly problematic. Van Cleve maintains that premise (1) (called the ‘reducibility premise’) is not a dogmatic claim about things in themselves; it is a principle that “simply…holds for existents as such”. I think that this is a difficult premise to maintain for two reasons. First, though he is making a distinction between ‘existents’ and ‘things in themselves’, the latter would still be a species of the former. For Kant things in themselves have to be existents: “for otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears”.

Thus, the reducibility premise would apply, either directly or mediatly, to things in themselves. But this leads to the second dilemma. If this reducibility premise applies to things in themselves – if relations between non-sensible entities are reducible – then we are saying something about noumena in the positive sense, i.e. as an object of an intellectual intuition. And “one must concede that the categories alone are not sufficient for the cognition of things in themselves, and without the data of sensibility they would be merely subjective forms of the unity of understanding”. On the one hand, I can agree with Van Cleve that, for Kant, appearances are nothing but relations;

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91 AK 2: 403.
93 Ibid.
94 KrV Bxxvii. See also Proleg: 293.
95 KrV A287/B343.
indeed, when he writes that “I…have nothing absolutely but only comparatively internal, which itself in turn consists of outer relations” this claim becomes uncontroversial.\textsuperscript{96} I also agree that things in themselves cannot be objects that are merely ‘apart from relation’.\textsuperscript{97} I disagree, however, with the claim that his statements about things in themselves are merely negative, e.g. that their relations are reducible. Norman Kemp Smith points out that the argument from incongruent counterparts has dogmatic premises: “in this section of the \textit{Prolegomena} Kant has unconsciously reverted to his Dogmatic standpoint in the dissertation, and is interpreting understanding in the illegitimate manner which he so explicitly denounces in … the amphiboly”.\textsuperscript{98} For Kemp Smith, this return to dogmatism was reversed by the release of the second edition of the first Critique, explaining the absence of the argument.\textsuperscript{99}

\textbf{Section 1.2}

\textit{On the Non-Spatial and Non-Temporal Nature of Things in Themselves}

These are some of the arguments Kant offers for the ideality of space. The question remains: why must space and time be merely ideal? Why must things in themselves have neither temporal nor spatial determinations? There is, after all, the possibility of the neglected alternative. For “even if the concept of space cannot be abstracted from experience, it does not follow that space isn’t a feature of reality that exists independently of human minds”.\textsuperscript{100} There are commentators, such as Ameriks, who contend that no complete argument for the non-spatiality of things in themselves is offered in the \textit{Transcendental Aesthetic}. This is why, according to such a view, “the clinching argument for Kant’s idealism…seems to require the antinomies”.\textsuperscript{101} In the antinomies, Kant argues

\textsuperscript{96} KrV A276/B332
\textsuperscript{97} Van Cleve 1991, 347.
\textsuperscript{98} Kemp Smith in Van Cleve 1991, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid. Adams 1997 would disagree with Kemp Smith here. He thinks that, for Kant, we might be able to know that things in themselves are composed of none but reducible relations – it might even be an analytic claim about objects of intellectual intuition (811).
\textsuperscript{100} Dicker 2004, 39.
\textsuperscript{101} Ameriks 2003, 30.
that, if we attribute space and time to things in themselves, then reason will become mired in the irresolvable problems arising from its own tendency (however natural) to posit two dialectically conflicting unconditioned conditions that both transcend, and limit, the bounds of all possible experience.¹⁰² Even if Ameriks is right, however, and the antimonies are required to complete the task started in the Aesthetic, Kant himself would not agree. In the Antinomies, Kant writes that he has “sufficiently proved in the Transcendental Aesthetic that everything intuited in space and time…have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself”.¹⁰³ Following Kant’s word, I will present Kant’s argument for the non-spatiality of things in themselves as articulated in the Transcendental Aesthetic, in the section Conclusions from the above Concepts:

Space represents no property at all of any things in themselves nor any relation of them to each other, i.e. no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and that would remain even if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of intuition. For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited a priori.¹⁰⁴

How does this argument work? Kant begins with the conclusion that space does not attach to objects in themselves. If we somehow subtracted the structural effects of the mind from the world – i.e. if we withdrew the subjective forms from the informed materials – space (and time) would be gone. The argument for this conclusion is decidedly too quick, and is summarized in a single sentence: “neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain”.¹⁰⁵ How does this premise support the weighty conclusion? It seems that all we can conclude from this premise is that we cannot intuit the relative or absolute determinations of objects a priori, not that things in themselves cannot be spatial. The possibility

¹⁰² KrV A486/B514-A488/B516; A505/B533.
¹⁰³ KrV A491/B519.
¹⁰⁴ KrV A26/B42.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
remains that space may be both an a priori intuition that cannot be abstracted from experience, and that it is a real determination of things in themselves.

Many think that Kant’s argument is incomplete here:

P1: Neither things in themselves, nor their determinations can be intuited a priori.
P2: Space is a determination of spatial things.
P3: The form of space is intuited a priori.
C2: Space cannot be a determination of things in themselves.

P1 I take to be uncontroversial. Here I am just repeating Kant’s claim at A26 that we cannot intuit relative or absolute determinations prior to the existence of the objects. Hogan summarizes this claim with clarity when he writes: “the claim seems to be that we cannot have knowledge of the constitution of a mind-independent entity before we know that it exists”.\(^{106}\)

If things in themselves are mind independent (which they are), then we cannot know whether they are absolute or relative prior to our acquaintance with them. This is stated with more clarity in the Prolegomena: “if our intuition had to be of the kind that represented things as they are in themselves, then absolutely no intuition a priori would take place, but would always be empirical”.\(^{107}\) We cannot intuit objects external to the mind prior to them being given. The second premise is simply the claim that, since space is a form of empirical objects a priori, it determines them. Space is not only prior to the objects found therein, it is also a fundamental structure grounding their possibility. P3 is a mere re-iteration of Kant’s central argument for the ideality of space; namely, that space is discerned a priori because, as a condition of the possibility of experience, its prior intuition presupposed in, and by, all experience.\(^{108}\)

Very few scholars consider this argument to be a successful one. Most significantly, it does not seem to rule out the possibility of the neglected alternative. It is possible both that (a) space

\(^{106}\) Hogan 2009, 356.
\(^{107}\) Proleg 282.
\(^{108}\) KrV A24/B38,
determines things in themselves and that (b) our a priori intuition of its structure is not derived empirically.\textsuperscript{109} Space could be both a mental form and a determination of things in themselves. Allais has recently attempted to avoid this problem by offering an argument from the receptivity of sensibility. Her argument is that, since mind independent objects can be intuited only by affecting us, space as an a priori intuition cannot result from receptivity. Since it cannot result from receptivity, space cannot represent objects as they are in themselves.\textsuperscript{110} Because the intuition of space cannot result empirically through sensibility being affected, it cannot “exist independently of our representing it”.\textsuperscript{111} In response to this, Guyer has pointed out that this does not, in fact, circumvent the problem of the neglected alternative: “it leaves open the possibility that space and time are mind-independent things, even if our a priori intuitions of space and time are not produced by the influence of such mind-independent things”.\textsuperscript{112} Even though our a priori intuition of space possible in virtue of it being a subjective form, and not an empirical given, it is nevertheless still conceivable that things in themselves are spatial. Allais responds to this problem, by emphasising the immediacy of intuition. Intuitions do not refer to something beyond themselves, but present their objects immediately. As an a priori intuition, space is actually present to us, and cannot (as an intuition) be outside of its being given; therefore, no determinations of things in themselves are represented a priori. Guyer claims in response that this begs the question: “her claim that intuitions contain their objects is her definition of intuition, her interpretation of what Kant means by immediacy, yet Kant’s argument for transcendental idealism cannot rest solely on a definition…”\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{109} Guyer 2016, 267:
\textsuperscript{110} Allais 2015, 195.
\textsuperscript{111} Allais 2015, 195.
\textsuperscript{112} Guyer 2016, 267.
\textsuperscript{113} Guyer 2016, 267.
Guyer himself argues that the argument for the non-spatiality of things in themselves must be situated in the context of geometry. His claim is that if space belonged to things in themselves, their geometric structures would not be necessary: “the argument is that what we know a priori we know to be necessarily true, and that we can know synthetic necessary truths only about our own representations, not about things that exist independently of our representations”.\textsuperscript{114} He writes that while our “access to something that lies within us” is a necessary condition of a priori knowledge, this dormancy is “not sufficient to prove that such a feature is merely a subjective form of representing”.\textsuperscript{115} Guyer then shows that, if space and time belonged to things in themselves, they would belong only contingently, i.e. not necessarily; spatiotemporal forms would not have universal necessity.\textsuperscript{116} And since “on Kant’s conception, spatiality cannot be necessarily true of some objects (representations) and contingently true of some other things (things in themselves)”, it must be concluded that space and time are merely subjective and cannot determine things in themselves.\textsuperscript{117} The implicit premise of this argument is that, if space and time belonged to things in themselves, then they (things in themselves) would in principle be knowable only a posteriori. For Kant, a priori knowledge about what is in itself is impossible. As cited earlier, “the claim seems to be that we cannot have knowledge of the constitution of a mind-independent entity before we know that it exists”.\textsuperscript{118} Since we do have universal and necessary knowledge, space and time cannot be in principle known a posteriori and, therefore, cannot belong to things in themselves (since belonging to things in themselves and being knowable a posteriori would, where space and time is concerned, amount to the same thing). Thus, to have universal and necessary knowledge,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid, 270.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid, p. 358.
\item \textsuperscript{116} And according to Kant, if you have one, you have the other.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Guyer 1987, 358.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Hogan 2009, 356.
\end{itemize}
space and time cannot belong to what is a posteriori in itself at all. The spatiotemporal dimensions of appearance must then result from a prior imposition by mind; only then could these dimensions be necessary and universal. And since these forms must lie in the mind – for otherwise they wouldn’t be knowable a priori – their application and subsequent field of efficacy is limited to whatever relates to mind, i.e. to what appears.

There is textual-support for such a view. In the aesthetic, Kant explores what kind of intuitive cognition is necessary for the possibility of geo-mathematical propositions, which are synthetic a priori:

   You thus give yourself an intuition; but what kind is this, is it a pure a priori or an empirical one? If it were the latter, then no universally valid, let alone apodictic proposition could ever come of it: for experience can never provide anything of this sort. You must, therefore, give your object a priori in intuition, and ground your synthetic propositions on this.\(^{119}\)

At first glance, this passage seems to support only the a priori nature of space and time, and not the non-spatiality of real things in themselves. Though the intuition of space and time must be a priori in order to ground synthetic a priori knowledge, this does not, in itself, preclude the possibility that things really are spatiotemporal. However, when Kant writes that, “experience can never provide anything of this sort”, he is not only affirming the a priority of space-time, he is denying its application to things in themselves. If he were not, he would not follow up this passage with the claim that “it is…indubitably certain that space and time…. are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition (Es ist also ungezweifelt gewiß, und nicht bloß möglich…daß Raum und Zeit…bloß subjecktive Bedeigungen aller unserer Anschauung sind…).\(^{120}\)

Here, the ‘bloß’ restricts the significance of spatiotemporal structures to the subject; they are, Kant writes, subjective, and not objective determinations of things. Kant begins this same section in the

\(^{119}\) KrV A48/B66.

\(^{120}\) KrV A48/B66.
aesthetic, with the supposition that “space and time are in themselves object and conditions of the possibility of things in themselves”. The first problem such a supposition faces, however, is that “there is a large number of a priori apodictic and synthetic propositions about both”. After showing that empirical concepts/intuitions can “never contain necessity and absolute universality of the sort that is…characteristic of all propositions of geometry”, Kant then establishes the ground of synthetic a priori propositions in the pure, a priori intuition of space and time. Space and time cannot, therefore, be objective determinations, for then they would not yield universal and necessary propositions. Or, what is the same, the objectification of space and time would cancel the kind of knowledge we have of them. On these grounds, Kant is able to reject the objectivity of space and time, and describe them as “merely subjective conditions”.

In the Inaugural Dissertation, Kant makes this point even more clearly. There he not only rejects the Newtonian and Leibnizian notions of space, he deduces the non-spatiality of things in themselves from mathematics. For Kant, the notion of absolute space (Newton’s position) is an “empty fabrication of reason”, presumably for reasons that he will later recite in the Anticipations of Perception. Briefly, this amounts to the problem of how an absolute, empty space could be knowable at all; and, indeed, Kant thinks that it is not: “if all reality has a degree…and if… every sense must have a determinate degree…no experience is possible… that would prove an entire absence of the real”. For this reason, a “proof of empty space or of empty time can never be drawn from experience”. And neither can Newtonian space be known a priori (given that it is a physical entity, known empirically). Turning to Leibniz, Kant not only makes arguments

121 KrV A47/B64.
122 KrV A47/B64
123 KrV A48/B66.
125 KrV A172/B214.
126 KrV A172/B214.
he will reiterate in the aesthetic, especially concerning the nature of space in relational accounts,\textsuperscript{127} he also claims that,

\[\ldots\text{If all the properties of space are merely borrowed from experience from outer relations, then there would only be comparative universality to be found in the axioms of geometry, a universality such as is obtained by induction, that is to say, such as extends no further than observation. Nor would the axioms of geometry possesses any necessity apart from that which was in accordance with the established laws of nature, nor any prevision apart from that which was arbitrarily constructed. And we might hope, as happens in empirical matters, one day to discover a space endowed with different fundamental properties}\ldots\textsuperscript{128}\]

Unlike the notion of absolute space, relational conceptions do not fall into the problem of proof; for a relationist such as Leibniz, space can be experienced because it results from real relations. For a relationist then, the problem is not so much how space is experienced (since it is experienced), but, rather, how the experience of it a posteriori problematizes the kind of knowledge we have about it. As argued here, Kant thinks that if space and time were objective determinations, then arithmetical propositions would have accidental, and not necessary and universal epistemic significance. For if space and time were objective determinations belonging to things themselves, the generated propositions grounded by them would never be universal or necessary and they, as well as everything conditioned by them, would be accidental, or (according to Kant) illusory.\textsuperscript{129} If space and time were objective, belonging to things in themselves, then they could not be known with certainty. Our synthetic a priori propositions – i.e. our “criterion for truth” – would not count as synthetic a priori knowledge, i.e. as applying to objects of intuition universally and necessarily.\textsuperscript{130} If this kind of knowledge is to be possible then, space and time cannot be objective determinations of things in themselves. This kind of knowledge, however, is possible; therefore,

\textsuperscript{127} KrVA23/B38.
\textsuperscript{128} Kant 2002, 398. 2:404.
\textsuperscript{129} Proleg: 375.
\textsuperscript{130} Synthetic a priori propositions make up the foundation of all sciences. They, thus, supply the “criterion for truth”. See KrV B14-19.
space and time cannot belong to things in themselves. If geometry is to have a ground, this ground must be necessary to the objects of geometry, i.e. spatiotemporal objects. \(^{131}\) Space and time are, therefore, necessary predicates of any geometric object. If space and time are necessary, they must be known a priori and cannot, therefore, belong to things in themselves – which are unknowable.\(^{132}\)

Guyer points out a problem with this argument, however. Instead of taking the universal necessity of geometry as proof that things in themselves are not spatial, we could simply take the spatiality of these same things as proof that geometry is not universally necessary:

When faced with a modus tollens of the form ‘p implies q, not-q, therefore not-p’—‘the transcendental realism of spatio-temporality implies the contingency of our knowledge of it, but our knowledge is not contingent, therefore transcendental realism is false’—we always have two choices: we can accept not-p or simply deny not-q, that is, just accept that our knowledge of spatio-temporality is not necessarily true throughout its possible domain.\(^{133}\)

It seems that the neglected alternative cannot be easily ruled out. In what follows I will give a brief argument against this alternative.

The ‘way’ in which an object is known to be is determined by the nature of the object. Being known to be spatiotemporal does not make objects spatiotemporal. The same thing can be said about intuition. The way an object is intuited is determined, not by its being intuited, but in virtue of the given object. Of course, one can say that X is spatial in virtue of being intuited, but this tells us something about the nature of the object as an appearance. Even if an object is spatiotemporal because it is informed by intuition, being intuited as being spatiotemporal does not make objects spatiotemporal. We intuit objects spatiotemporally in virtue of something true about them; namely, that they are appearances, i.e. transcendentally ideal. It follows then, that the extra-mental nature of things in themselves, establishes that they are intuitable only a posteriori: “I can only know what

\(^{131}\) Guyer 2013, 64.  
\(^{132}\) Ibid, 65.  
\(^{133}\) Guyer 2016, 271.
may be contained in the object in itself if the object is present and given to me”. Similarly, if I intuit the spatial form of objects a priori, then this is in virtue of the nature of space, i.e. that it is ideal.

We cannot intuit the properties of things in themselves a priori because they are extra-mental. Space, on the other hand, can be intuited a priori, a fact that must be established by the nature of space itself. It intuitable a priori because it is a form of intuition. The difference in nature between spatial determinations and determinations of things in themselves must, therefore, be sufficient for establishing a dissimilarity in the ways in which they are intuitable. How an object is intuitable to us must be determined by the nature of that object. If object (a) is intuitable in a way that object (b) is not, then the nature of (a) and of (b) must differ. We represent the spatial form of objects a priori; the determinations of things in themselves cannot be intuited a priori. Spatial representations cannot, therefore, represent any property of things in themselves. Still, the possibility of the neglected alternative remains. Represented space may be different than the space determining things in themselves, even though both are space.

The neglected alternative assumes that there is no property of space by virtue of which its ability to be known a priori is grounded. This thesis posits a region of spatial objects whose determinations are intuitable a priori. This is called the space of appearances. Behind this region, it suggests that another region of spatial objects, grounding and even causing the former, is possible in itself. Though objects would be spatial in both regions, one region would be intuitable a priori and, the other, a posteriori (in principle). This difference in the kind of intuition cannot, therefore, be grounded in the nature of spatial objects. How is this difference grounded?

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134 Proleg; 282.
135 In this paragraph I mean ‘object’ in the most general sense as ‘entity’, not in the strict Kantian sense.
The easy answer is found in the difference between appearances and things in themselves. One could argue that where the spatial objects of the first region are appearances, i.e. objects informed by spatial laws of sensibility, the spatial objects of the second are in themselves. We could argue further, that spatial objects of the first kind have determinations intuitable a priori because they reflect mental structures, i.e. because they are appearances. Spatial objects of the second kind, on the other hand, are intuitable a posteriori because, as things in themselves, they are by definition extra mental. On this account, the world in itself reflects mental structures, not by conforming to mind, but through some established harmony between terms. Kant himself entertains this possibility. He writes that, if a representation of an object in itself were possible, “the intuition still would not take place a priori, i.e. before the object were present to me, for without that no basis for the relation of my representation to the object can be conceived; so it would have to be based on inspiration”. Kant continues under the assumption that such an inspiration would be absurd.

When the world in itself has the same spatial form as the world of appearance, the two regions become structurally identical. Now, of course spatial appearance X2 could be extended in a way altogether different than is spatial ground X1. However, since both objects are organized spatially, our a priori intuition would be an intuition of the form, not just to the first, but also the second region of objects. Our a priori intuition, after all, is an intuition of form, not of content. Even if we were unable to know that things in themselves were in fact spatial, our a priori intuition of the spatial form would be an intuition of both spaces (otherwise, they would not both be spatial). In the case of the neglected alternative, the determination of things in themselves is knowable a priori. If the neglected alternative is possible, so too is an a priori intuition of determinations in

136 Proleg; 282. My emphasis.
themselves. This would contradict the nature of things in themselves, which would be knowable (if at all) only a posteriori. If things in themselves were spatially determined, then they would have the spatial feature of being determined by a form that is simultaneously intuitable a priori. This contradicts the nature of extra-mental determinations, which are in principle intuitable a posteriori.

If space belonged to things in themselves and was also a form of sensibility, then the form of things in themselves would be intuitable a priori and this would amount to the absurd claim of knowing something extra-mental prior to it being given. If this were true, it would no longer be possible to differentiate appearances from things in themselves, since these latter entities would now satisfy the precondition of appearing, i.e. of having their form represented a priori. This is a problem for the neglected alternative, which is an objection leveled, not against the difference between appearances and things in themselves, but against the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. In fact, the difference between appearances and things in themselves is a premise of the objection itself; without it, positing two spatial realms – one intuitable a priori, the other a posteriori – would be impossible. If the neglected alternative is true, the difference between appearances and things in themselves cannot be sustained, which runs contrary to its own hypothesis, i.e. that things in themselves could also be spatial in kind.

Allais might respond to this argument, claiming that I have misrepresented the real argument. She has pointed out that Kant’s claim is not that space and time do not in fact apply to things in themselves, but that they represent no property of things in themselves. According to Allais, this entails that the mind-independence of space and time does not to matter Kant one way or the other. The claim is that the represented space does not belong to things in themselves, even if some other space might. She writes:
Here again the idea that intuitions are immediately present to their object makes sense of Kant’s conclusion: it enables us to say that even if there were something like space and time in mind-independent reality, this something would not be that of which our representation of space is a representation, since it would not be that which is present to us in a priori intuition. The space that we represent – the space that structures the experience of objects, the space that is present to us, is not a feature of mind independent reality, and it does not present us with a feature of things as they are in themselves.\textsuperscript{137}

If Allais is right, then two independent spaces can be posited, and the a priori intuition of one does not entail the a priori intuition of the other (as I have argued). There are two major problems with this. First, Kant is clear that, because it cannot be enumerated – i.e. because there cannot be many separate instances of it – space is not a concept: “it is essentially single; the manifold in it, thus also the general concept of spaces in general, rests on limitations”.\textsuperscript{138} While the concept of a bird can be instantiated in any number of separate objects, the concept of space refers to a single, infinite magnitude. It cannot, for this reason, be divided into separate parts, since these parts would themselves be separated by space. If Kant is right, and this is metaphysically true of the concept of space, the possibility of many separate spaces contradicts the concept of space itself.\textsuperscript{139} According to Allais’s argument then, which stipulates the possibility of two ontologically distinct spaces, the very possibility of space becomes questionable, i.e. it would both be, and not be, singular. This leads to the second objection. For even if we could somehow salvage the possibility of the concept and posit two distinct spaces, it is unclear why the knowledge we have of represented space would not also be true of space in itself. If represented and real space are both spaces, then wouldn’t the science of the former apply to the latter? I have argued that it would in fact apply and would thereby collapse the appearance/thing in itself distinction, on which the neglected alternative depends.

\textsuperscript{137} Allais 2015, 198.
\textsuperscript{138} KrV A25/B39.
\textsuperscript{139} KrV A23/B37.
My argument is that the neglected alternative is not a viable option because it threatens to collapse the appearance/thing in itself distinction, which it has to assume. The a priori intuition we have of space is grounded in the nature of space: it can be intuited a priori because it is a form of intuition. It cannot, however, determine things in themselves. If it did, we would intuit a form of the mind independent world a priori, i.e. we would intuit something mind independent prior to it being given. This, in turn, contradicts the nature of mind independent objects.

Section 1.3
Problems with Things in Themselves

For Kant, an object can be cognized if it satisfies two conditions. An object can be cognized if it can be (a) thought in accordance with a concept and (b) given in accordance with sensibility. An intuition without a possible concept is “blind” and a concept without a possible intuition is “empty”: “it is thus just as necessary to make the mind’s concept sensible (i.e. to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e. to bring them under concepts). For Kant, these conditions of objects of cognition – i.e. their obedience to conceptual and sensible form – is a condition of the possibility of our “cognition” of them. Their knowability, in other words, is a condition of the possibility of ‘experience’ in the weighty, intentional sense.

For human beings, our concepts are empty unless a corresponding intuition can be given in intuition (this is merely a reiteration of the claim that our faculty of intuition is sensible, i.e. receptive). Our concepts are, therefore, applicable only to objects that obey both our categorical and sensible appurtenances. Without (at least) a possible intuition corresponding to our concepts, our thoughts lack objectivity: “for if an intuition corresponding to a concept could not be given at all,

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140 KrV A 51/B75.
141 KrV A 51/B75.
then it would be a thought as far as its form is concerned, but without any object, and by its means no cognition of anything at all would be possible”.\textsuperscript{142} As ‘objects’ that are neither spatial nor temporal – i.e. as entities free from the conditions of sensibility – things in themselves are, in principle, unknowable. Though they are indeed thinkable (insofar as the categories are not limited by sensibility),\textsuperscript{143} they are necessarily supersensible. They cannot be given.\textsuperscript{144}

Since the concepts of the understanding are that to which appearances are referred, and are thereby limited in their objective use, to the organization of this sensible stuff, the application of these forms beyond this use results in the unlawful play of the understanding, moving within its own freedom:

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.\textsuperscript{145}

The real possibility of a concept is established by its ability to unite with, or be given, corresponding intuition. The merely logical possibility of a concept, on the other hand, is grounded on the principle of non-contradiction and applies to objects in general, sensible or non-sensible.\textsuperscript{146}

Thus, while the concept of a centaur marks a real possibility (given that if centaurs existed, they would be sensible), the concept of an unextended monad has merely logical possibility. Where the former concept is both formally and materially possible (since it is both non-contradictory and sensory), the latter is only formally conceivable (since it refers to a logically but not sensibly

\textsuperscript{142} KrV B146.
\textsuperscript{143} KrV B148.
\textsuperscript{144} KrV B149.
\textsuperscript{145} KrV 379-380.
\textsuperscript{146} Adams 1997, 809.
possible object). Indeed, an intelligible monadic object—i.e. an object of intellectual, or non-sensible intuition— is logically possible for so long “as no predicate pertains to [the] thing that contracts it”. Constrained solely by the principle of non-contradiction, then, concepts of the understanding can extend, however emptily, beyond the bounds of possible experience. This does not mean that they are really possible, however. Without the hope of a sensible intuition, “not even a single category” can be applied to “an object of a non-sensible intuition”. In such a case, the categories would be without any object; they would be theoretically indeterminate.

Because things in themselves are non-sensible, our concepts of them must remain empty. Of course, we can know some truths about them insofar as they are logically possible, but this does not get us further than knowing them in the most general and empty of ways. And given that non-sensible entities are entities devoid of sensible properties, it is also possible to know negative truths about them. Regarding a non-sensible object, “one can certainly represent all of the predicates that already lie in the presupposition that nothing that belongs to sensible intuition pertains to it”. If we abstract the sensible properties away from an object (as we do when thinking of things in themselves), we can make negative claims about the surviving object by virtue of that process itself. If I abstract A from B, I can say of B that it is not A. As an object enduring the process of abstraction then, we can know that a non-sensible object “is not extended, or in space, [and] that its duration is not in time, that no alternation…. is to be encountered in it”.

This framework helps us resolve one of the traditional objections often leveled against Kant. At first glance, it looks as though Kant flat out contradicts himself by maintaining both (a)

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147 Adams 1997, 818.  
148 KrV A150/B189.  
149 KrV B149.  
150 KrV B 149.  
151 KrV B 149.
that we cannot know things in themselves and (b) that they exist as non-spatiotemporal entities.\textsuperscript{152} Without further analysis, this seems to be an incoherent position. How can we know the properties of objects that are supposedly unknowable? Van Cleve has pointed out that these conflicting sentences do not entail a contradiction and that when Kant claims that non-sensible objects are unknowable “he is indulging in hyperbole”.\textsuperscript{153} According to Van Cleve, Kant’s expression can be represented in the form “p, but I do not know that p”.\textsuperscript{154} Though this is not a contradiction (i.e. it is not the claim that both P and not P), it is indisputably “self-enfeebling” since ‘p’ is denied the possibility for soundness. The sentence P – e.g. that non-sensible objects cause appearances – cannot be known to be true or false even though it can be asserted; from a theoretical point of view, it is a blind assumption.\textsuperscript{155} For if I state P, even though I cannot know P, then the statement P cannot be derived from a knowledge claim. This might work for Kant in an interesting way. As we will see in chapter 3 of this first part, positive claims about non-sensible objects are possible for practical but not for theoretical reason. Thus, P could for instance be a practical postulation grounding the possibility of freedom.\textsuperscript{156}

Hogan has approached these difficulties by differentiating between two kinds of unknowability.\textsuperscript{157} According to the first meaning, things in themselves are unknowable because they exceed our cognitive capacities.\textsuperscript{158} On this account, it is difficult to see how we can know anything about things in themselves without exceeding our capacity and falling into error. What is worse, by accepting this sense of unknowability we must conclude that Kant contradicts (or at least enfeebles) himself on numerous occasions. After all, it is clear that Kant claims to know a great

\textsuperscript{152} See Dicker 2004, 44.
\textsuperscript{153} Van Cleve 1999, 136.
\textsuperscript{154} Van Cleve 1999, 135.
\textsuperscript{155} Van Cleve 1999, 135.
\textsuperscript{156} Van Cleve 1999, 136.
\textsuperscript{157} Hogan 2009.
\textsuperscript{158} Hogan 2009, 55.
deal about things in themselves in both theoretical and practical realms (e.g. that they are nonsensible, that they are the ground of appearance, that they are free from the mechanisms of nature etc…). To address these problems, Hogan argues that this ‘unknowability’ should be understood as arising, not from the limitation of our cognition, but from the very nature of noumena: “‘f’ lacks a determining ground through which it could be non-empirically cognized”.¹⁵⁹ According to this view, the unknowability of noumenal objects paradoxically arises from what knowledge we do in fact have about them. Hogan has pointed out additionally that “the doctrine that there is nothing through which some features of things in themselves could be non-empirically cognized also represents an unmistakably metaphysical root of Kant’s opposition to Leibniz’s thoroughgoing rationalism.”¹⁶⁰

In general, I agree here with Hogan that things in themselves are unknowable because of their nature. By contrast, however, I would argue that the bit of knowledge responsible for the unknowability of things in themselves is easy to isolate. On my view, things in themselves are unknowable because they are not spatiotemporal. We are, in other words, unable to know them because their nature is unfit for our mode of intuition, through which alone our concepts become determinate. Kant is therefore not weakening his argument by claiming that things in themselves are both (a) supersensible and (b) unknowable since the latter truth is grounded in the former. Because they are not spatiotemporal, things in themselves cannot appear in any intuition, pure or empirical, and cannot for this reason, ‘fill’ any concepts with content, which for human beings is always sensible (we will recall, also, that “thoughts without content are empty”).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Hogan 2009, 57.
¹⁶⁰ Hogan 2009, 60.
¹⁶¹ KrV A51/B75.
There is textual evidence for this view. Most significantly, it supports Kant’s claim that “in order for a noumenon to signify a true object…. I must…have ground to assume another kind of intuition, than this sensible one, under which such an object could be given”. That is, in order for us to even imagine a supersensible object, our concept of it is not sufficient to produce an objective cognition – “in the absence of a determinate concept…[noumena] cannot be asserted as objects for our understanding”.

The implicit premise of this claim is that, in order for an object to be given, it must be given through intuition; otherwise, concepts are indeterminate and have no objective validity. If (a) things in themselves are not spatiotemporal and (b) space and time are the forms of sensibility, then nothing can be given in itself. Without determinate concepts – i.e. concepts with a possible object – nothing can be known of things in themselves, or noumena in the positive sense, i.e. as objects of intellectual intuition. In the Amphiboly section, Kant even goes so far to claim that “without the data of sensibility, [the categories] would be merely subjective forms of unity of the understanding, but without any object”. Here the claim is that the pure use of the categories is capable of building complex metaphysical systems if, and only if, logical possibility and real possibility are conflated. The real possibility of a noumenal object cannot be decided, however, since it cannot be given to our intuition. This is why a noumenal object “signifies precisely the problematic concept of an object for an entirely different understanding than our own, which is thus a problem itself”. As noumena, things in themselves are problematic when considered positively and a metaphysics grounded in making claims about them is illusory.

The problem of noumenal causality is the second difficulty and poses a greater threat to Kant’s critical system. This problem arises as soon as we attempt to explain the relationship

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162 KrV A 252.
163 KrV A288/B343.
164 KrV A2867B343
165 KrV A287/343.
between appearances and their transcendent ground. The receptive nature of sensibility does not just require a cause external to the mind, without which no object would be presented; given that all appearances are informed by sensibility as a condition of their possibility, the receptivity of sensibility requires a cause transcendentally external to the mind, without which the conditions of this receptivity would not be satisfied. For even if it were granted that appearances were capable of affecting sensibility – as in theories of ‘double affection’ for instance\(^\text{166}\) – the ideality of those appearances requires that they be grounded in more fundamental event of affectivity. The “true correlate” or appearances must be independent of sensibility altogether; it must be a thing in itself.\(^\text{167}\) In other sections, Kant calls this true correlate of sensibility “the non-sensible cause of…representations”\(^\text{168}\) and the “unknown ground of…appearances”.\(^\text{169}\) How are we to understand this relationship?

For Kant, this relation of affectivity or grounding is a result of (a) the receptivity of sensibility and (b) the ideality of appearance: “for the existence of appearances, not grounded in the least within itself but always conditioned, demands that we look around us for something different from all appearances, hence for an intelligible object, with which this contingency would stop”.\(^\text{170}\) What Kant is pointing out here is that, because they exist only insofar as they are perceived, i.e. only in relations to the mind, appearances are unoriginal. When my desk lamp appears to me, the lamp-appearance and the lamp-object are distinct for me. I experience the lamp in such a way that, while the appearance exists only in relation to my sensibility, and is thus annulled by the solitude of being in itself, the object can withstand the pressures of this loneliness.

\(^{166}\) Adickes, 1924. 
\(^{167}\) KrV A30/B45. 
\(^{168}\) KrV A494/B522. 
\(^{169}\) KrV A380. 
\(^{170}\) KrV A566/B594.
An appearance is by definition a representation of something *original*. For Kant, this is complicated by the fact the original objects underlying the appearances are not spatiotemporal and cannot, therefore, be known by us. But “even if we cannot cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we must at least be able to think them as things in themselves...otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears”.\(^{171}\) The concept of an appearance includes, in its very sense, reference to something non-appearing. As Adickes has pointed out, “der Begriff der Erscheinung würde geradezu sinnlos werden, wenn ihr nicht ein Ding an sich entspräche”.\(^{172}\)

A problem arises here. Kant does not simply claim that appearances refer, in their very sense, to things in themselves. He also makes the stronger claim that things as they are in themselves do not appear in the appearance at all. It is for this reason that they are incongruous with our concept, which requires objects that can be given: “the representation of a body in intuition…contains nothing at all that could pertain to an object in itself, but merely the appearance of something and the way in which we are affected by it”.\(^{173}\) Adickes has pointed out that, if we assume that Kant infers things in themselves and their causality from appearances as effects, this stronger conclusion does not follow.\(^{174}\) The inference of a cause from an effect does not, in itself, prohibit the appearance or the knowledge of said cause. Strawson argues that in order for an opposition between reality and appearance to occur, it is not enough to claim that the former is the cause of the latter; indeed, we “may say sometimes that things are as they appear”.\(^{175}\) Instead, there

\(^{171}\) KrV Bxxvi.  
\(^{172}\) Adickes 1924, 5.  
\(^{173}\) A44, B61.  
\(^{174}\) Adickes 1924, 33.  
\(^{175}\) Strawson 1966, 250.
must be a subjective structure in virtue of which the appearance and the reality differ. Adickes is
correct, therefore, when he writes that, when it comes to the unknowability of things in themselves,
die Schuld liegt beim Ich an sich, das sie [things in themselves] affizieren und das
daraufhin sie und ihre rein innerlichen Verhältnisse in den Formen räumlich-
zeitlicher Ordnung sich als bewegte Kraft-komplexe gegenüberstellt. Nicht also von
gegebenen Wirkungen tastet Kant sich zu den Dingen an sich als erschlossenen
Ursachen zurück; er beginnt vielmehr bei den letzteren als unzweifelhaft Gegebenen
und leitet von ihnen die Erscheinungen ab.... 176

This sequence from things in themselves to appearances (instead of from appearances to things in
themselves) opens a space for the conversion of a transcendent ground into the spatiotemporal
structure of sensibility. If the argument began with spatiotemporal appearances and then inferred
their transcendent cause, it would be impossible to determine whether or not things in themselves
were also spatiotemporal. If space and time are only the pure forms of sensibility, and sensibility
is receptive, then we must (at least) think on an original relation between the subject in itself on
the one hand, and the true correlate of its sensible faculty on the other. Appearance and reality can
differ if, and only if, the affected subject – i.e. the subject prior to both its self-appearance and the
intuition of objects external – transforms (or rather informs the structure of) the cause.

For Strawson, the transcendent nature of things in themselves contradicts the conditions by
which a sensible contrast between reality and appearance can occur. According to Strawson, it is
impossible to posit a meaningful dissimilarity between these modes of being without being able to
assume the positions of two, contrasting standpoints: when it is said that a thing appears to be thus-
and-so, but really is not, it seems to be implied that there are two different standpoints from which
it would be natural to make different and incompatible judgments about the same thing”. 177 Since
we cannot, on Kant’s account, assume the ‘corrected position’ of an intellectual intuition, we

176 Adickes 1924, 35.
177 Strawson 1966, 250.
cannot meaningfully set reality and appearance in opposition to one another: “the specification of the standpoint of the corrected view is given in terms which, it is admitted, we cannot really understand…and the task of making it intelligible how identity or reference is secured is, a fortiori, impossible”.\textsuperscript{178} One major problem with Strawson’s criticism is that he does not take the non-spatiality of things in themselves seriously enough. It is my contention that, regardless of the other problems that may arise, the non-spatial and non-temporal nature of things in themselves constitutes a difference between sensible and non-sensible objects that is sufficient for the opposition of reality and appearance.

There is a more striking problem concerning noumenal affectivity. How can Kant maintain that things in themselves ground appearances when the category of causation (like all categories) is only applicable to phenomena? How are we to understand this relationship between the wahres Korrelatum and sensibility when \textit{relation} itself is a category whose objective use is limited to the realm of sensibility? And even if we could coherently claim that noumena affected us, their causality would be utterly distinct in kind – it would be non-spatial and non-temporal. Some commentators (but especially Strawson and Jacobi) claim that noumenal causality is an incoherent concept. Others (like Van Cleve and Ameriks), claim that this problem is exaggerated. By resorting to the general applicability of unschematized categories, these commentators argue that noumenal affectivity is not only coherent, but also philosophically defensible from a practical point of view.

This problem of noumenal causality has motivated the creation of new kinds of interpretation. Many commentators (but especially Allison) have pointed out that this problem of noumenal causality exists if, and only if, we assume that appearances and things in themselves are different kinds of entities (i.e. two-world theories).\textsuperscript{179} Allison denies that they are different and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[178] Strawson 1966, 250.
\item[179] Allison 1983.
\end{footnotes}
urges readers to understand the difference between phenomena and things in themselves methodologically, not ontologically (i.e. one-world or two-aspect theories). There are, of course, two-world interpreters who disagree that noumenal affection is problematic. There are also one-world interprets who argue that, while phenomena and things in themselves are the same, they are also ontologically distinct. In the next chapter, I will be working under the assumption that noumenal causality is incoherent. On this traditional two-world view, the only interpretive solutions available are Phenomenalistic or Two-Aspect. I will argue that two-world and two-aspect interpretations oscillate between one another and that no consensus is possible. I will also argue that a purely phenomenalistic reading runs the risk of contradicting a central principle of transcendental idealism. In the hope of reaching a consensus, I will question the assumed incoherence of noumenal causality in chapter 3. Recent commentators (but especially Ameriks and Van Cleve), deny that noumenal causality is theoretically problematic. I will argue against this view. Lastly, I will argue against a recent ontological one world interpretation.
Chapter Two
Grappling with Things in Themselves

In this chapter, I will argue the notion of things in themselves a *dialectically charged* notion that forces the two competing interpretations of it to waver. These two opposing interpretations are called the *two-world* and *two-aspect* interpretations. My general claim in this chapter will be that neither form of interpretation can resolve the problems that result from positing things in themselves. My specific claim will be that the problems inherent in the two-world conception are resolved by its competitor, the two-aspect interpretation. But the two-aspect theory is itself host to internal tensions addressed and relieved only by two-world interpretations. These two views, therefore, oscillate between each other dialectically and cannot be expected to achieve peace.

In section 2.1, I will introduce these two interpretations. In section 2.2, I will argue that two-world interpretations are unable to grapple with the problem of things in themselves. In section 2.3, I will argue that two-aspect interpretations are right just where two-world theories go wrong. However, two-aspect theories go wrong just where two-world theories are rights. Since these are mutually incompatible interpretations, neither offers a resolution to the problem of things in themselves.

Section 2.1
*Introduction to the Debate: Two World’s or Two Aspects?*

The debate between traditional two-world and two-aspect notions of the thing in itself has become stagnant. While each side offers excellent arguments, quotations, and analysis, this has proven insufficient for the establishment of any consensus. And since these interpretations are mutually exclusive – i.e. since they cannot both be true – such a consensus is not only desirable, but perhaps necessary for the continued relevance of Kant’s theoretical work. In this chapter, I will argue that such a consensus cannot be achieved, not because both interpretations are wrong, but because both are equally defensible. Of course, in order for two mutually exclusive, conceptions to be correct, there must be some contradiction in the matter itself – and this is precisely what I claim. The thing in itself, on my view, is an essentially problematic ‘thing’ that develops according to its own internal logic. I will argue that it is a dialectically charged concept that wavers between its two opposing interpretations. Though the problems inherent in the traditional-two-world (TTW)

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180 I mean dialectically charged in the following sense: it is a concept that has an internal tension, or contradiction. Resolving this contradiction will amount to a form of interpretation.
conception are resolved by its competitor,\textsuperscript{181} the two-aspect theory\textsuperscript{182} (called TA from here on) is, itself, host to internal tensions addressed and relieved only by TTW propositions. These two views, therefore, oscillate between each other dialectically and cannot be expected to achieve peace.

If these two methods of considering the thing in itself are implied in, and oscillate between, each other, then contributing to the continuation of their struggle is pointless. We must, therefore, reconsider how the thing in itself, as a problem, should be understood and scrutinized. Considering that the vast majority of the literature on the thing in itself has been situated within this debate, this call for a modification in analysis is, simultaneously, a call for a change in the direction of research. In recent years especially, these traditional interpretations have been discarded in favour of new two-world theories (NTW). Unlike TTW, NTW theories claim that, while noumenal affection is perhaps problematic, it is not incoherent. NTW, therefore, defend Kant’s use of the categories beyond the bounds of sense. To the extent that both TTW and NTW posit two kinds of worlds, they can both be called two-world theories (simply TW). The difference between TTW and NTW is that, while the former rejects noumenal causality as being incoherent, the latter accedes to it willingly. I do not find any of these accounts entirely convincing, for reasons that I will propose in the last half of this Chapter. My claim is that things in themselves are (perhaps even on Kant’s view) theoretically problematic.

Whether an interpretation is two-aspect or two-world depends on the how the difference, and relation, between appearances and things in themselves is understood. For Kant, we will recall, appearances are ideal inasmuch as they are informed, in their possibility, by the pure forms of

\textsuperscript{181} See, for instance, Strawson 1966. Guyer 1987; 2006. Even McDowell, for his part, is a two-world interpreter of Kant; for this, see the footnote on page 43 of McDowell 1994. For a good overview of these two different sides of the argument, see Walker 2010.

subjective sensibility; thus, he writes that “space and time are of course representations a priori, which dwell in us as forms of our sensible intuition”.183 This ‘subjectification’ of time and space is, of course, a result of his attempt to ground the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition184 and results in the idealization of appearance.185 Given that sensibility is essentially receptive, however, Kant must simultaneously posit something that is given to, or provides the grounding for, sensibility: “what we call outer objects are nothing other than the mere representation of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose true correlate (wahres Korrelatum), i.e. the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized” through them.186 The thing in itself is, in other words, a thing that, while uninformed by sensibility, is also the transcendent (or supersensible) ground of it. And if spatiotemporal properties are reducible to sensibility, then the thing in itself is supersensible. Mind cannot, in other words, impart structures to entities that exceed it.

The thing in itself is therefore a noumenon in the negative sense, which is “not an object of our sensible intuition”.187 In contrast to a noumenon taken positively – i.e. as an object of an intellectual intuition188 – a noumenon in the negative sense, as the abstraction of an object from our intuition of it, is connected essentially with “with the limit of our sensibility”.189 Since the thing in itself is not an object of our sensible intuition, and despite being called the wahres Korrelatum, the “nichtsinnliche Ursache”,190 or “Grund”,191 of sensibility, any attempt to apply categories, and make judgements about it, is theoretically forbidden: “for one must accede that the

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183 KrV A374.
184 KrV Bxvii.
185 KrV A379.
186 KrV A30: „was wir äußere Gegenstände nennen, nichts anderes als bloße Vorstellungen unserer Sinnlichkeit sind, deren Form der Raum ist, deren wahres Korrelatum aber, d.i. das Ding an sich selbst, dadurch gar nicht erkannt wird, noch erkannt werden kann…“
187 KrV B307.
188 KrV B307.
189 KrV A255/B311.
190 KrV A494/B522.
191 A380.
categories alone are not sufficient for the cognition of things in themselves, and without data of sensibility they would be merely subjective forms”. 192 Our lack of an intellectual intuition – or what Heidegger calls productive, rather than a receptive intuition in his book on Kant 193 – prevents us from being able to know through thinking alone. The objectivity of thinking is, therefore, restricted to the realm of possible experience, where our concepts are relieved of their emptiness. 194 Categories are, therefore, inapplicable to things in themselves inasmuch these latter entities exceed the aesthetic forms of experience. 195 It is, in fact, this very misapplication of categories that leads to the dialectical problems discussed in the antinomies. 196

TTW theorists, broadly speaking, interpret the thing in itself as a real, ontologically distinct entity that affects sensibility. For the most part, this has been the most traditional way to interpret Kant and is still widely accepted. But where TTW theorists like Strawson and Jacobi take the thing in itself to be an ontologically distinct entity that truly affects the mind, TA theorists like Bird and Allison do not; instead (and for reasons that will soon be made clear) they interpret the thing in itself as a heuristic device used to ground the possibility of transcendental reflection. 197 According to TA theorists things are considered transcendentally when the formal properties that allow us to know and experience them are attributed, not to these objects considered outside of their relation to human sensibility, but to the human subject. 198 Inasmuch as it grants us the ability to think a supersensible object, the notion of a thing in itself allows us to attribute, or trace back, certain essential predicates of this object to mind; for without being able to consider objects independently of mind, we could not consider certain predicates as contributions of mind (which

192 KrV A286/B343.
193 Heidegger 1962, 17. Heidegger will come up later in the discussion on Two-Aspect theory.
194 KrV A51/B75.
195 KrV B164; see also A155/B195; A237/B296; A277/B333. Van Cleve 1999, 137.
196 KrV A491/B519 (A567/B595).
198 Allison 1983, 241f.
is precisely what Kant says he is doing). In this way, the thing in itself, as an object independent of sensibility, serves a necessary function in this kind of reflection.\textsuperscript{199}

Where TTW theorists emphasize Kant’s idealism, while underemphasizing his empirical realism, TA theorists do just the opposite; they underemphasize his idealism and emphasize his empirical realism. For TTW theorists, the acceptance of a distinctly transcendent ground of appearance, which is neither spatial nor temporal, necessitates attributing a considerable amount to the efficacy of mind in the composition, and regularity of the empirical world. But if this inaccessible reality were a mere positing of thought – i.e. the result of a certain kind of consideration – then no such attribution, or idealization, is required; instead, it is enough to merely isolate conditions of possible experience without, at the same time, having to reduce their existence to mind. Walker has recently pointed out that these tendencies often (wrongfully) lead TTW theorists towards phenomenalism, and TA theorists towards realism. Walker writes, and I agree, that where “the one-world [two-aspect] view tends to represent transcendental idealism as harmless… the two-worlds view makes it a radical…incoherent precursor of nineteenth century philosophy”.\textsuperscript{200} If we interpret the thing in itself as a mere device used to locate conditions for the possibility of experience (as Strawson’s “austere” version of Kant’s idealism would suggest),\textsuperscript{201} then calling it an idealism at all might sound excessive; if things in themselves and appearances are the same object considered from different aspects, then there is no realm outside and beyond appearance – the world is the way the mind needs it to be for experience. If, on the other hand, there is such a transcendent realm underlying our own, then not only is our world structured by mind, it is also not the wahres Korrelatum of sensibility, but only its mere representation.

\textsuperscript{199} Allison 1983, 241.  
\textsuperscript{200} Walker 2010, 822.  
\textsuperscript{201} Strawson 1966, 68.
Section 2.2
On Traditional Two-World Theories

Lucy Allais writes that, for TW interpreters, “things as they are in themselves and appearances [are] distinct kinds of entities”.\textsuperscript{202} The text that would support this claim is in the Aesthetic, Kant writes, “the things that we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be, nor are their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us”.\textsuperscript{203} This passage not only confirms the existence of things in themselves but also their fundamentality. Except perhaps for his continual use of the phrase ‘mere appearance’, this is the closest Kant gets in the first Critique to limiting the empirical region from a reality to a mere appearance, or representation, of it. Indeed, Kant encourages this interpretation when, soon after, he claims that sensibility is a world apart or away from the object in itself.\textsuperscript{204} Again, in the A edition section of the ground of the distinction, Kant writes that “it follows naturally from the concept of an appearance in general that something must correspond to it which is not in itself appearance…the word ‘appearance’ must already indicate a relation…to an object independent of sensibility”.\textsuperscript{205} One of the most significant passages for two-world interpreters in the Critique, however, appears in section six of the antinomies. At A494, Kant makes the claim that, “the non-sensible cause (\textit{Ursache}) is entirely unknown to us, and therefore we cannot intuit it as an object”.\textsuperscript{206} What is unique about this passage, and what distinguishes it from those that attribute causality to a supersensible ground of appearance, is that is not by the necessity of thinking, or merely positing such a causal thing. In another key passage found in the Amphiboly, for instance, Kant attributes causality to a supersensible ground by virtue

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{202} Allais 2007, 460.
\item \textsuperscript{203} KrV A42/B58.
\item \textsuperscript{204} KrV A44/B61.
\item \textsuperscript{205} KrV A251.
\item \textsuperscript{206} KrV A494/B522.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of the necessity of understanding’s need to posit such a ground. Unlike the passage from the Antinomies, then, the actual existence of a causal ground is not explicitly postulated.

The difficulty this view faces is making sense of the causal relation that must exist between the thing in itself and sensibility. The problem with this noumenal causality – i.e. with noumenon qua “die nichtsinnliche Ursache dieser Vorstellungen” or the true correlate of appearance – is that it indicates the application of a concept that, according to Kant, is limited to the realm of appearances. Given that the categories of the understanding are that to which appearances are referred and thereby limited in their objective use to the organization of sensible stuff, the application of these forms beyond this use results in the unlawful play of the understanding, moving within its own freedom.

According to TTW theorists, the difficulty this interpretation faces is making sense of this causation or relation between the thing in itself and sensibility. The problem with this noumenal causality – i.e. with noumena qua “the non-sensible cause of...representations” or the “the true correlate of appearance” – is that it indicates the application of a concept that’s use, according to Kant, is limited to the realm of appearances. Given that the categories of the understanding are that to which appearances are referred, i.e. to an object, and are thereby limited in their objective use, to the organization of sensible stuff, the application of these forms beyond this use results in the unlawful play of the understanding, moving within its own freedom:

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.

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207 KrV A288/B344.
208 KrV A494/B522.
209 KrV A30/B45.
210 KrV A494/B522.
211 KrV A30/B45.
are given to us, and, if we abstract from the latter, then the former have no relation at all to any sort of object.\textsuperscript{212}

How can Kant claim this while, at the same time, asserting that the thing in itself affects, or even relates to, sensibility? In positing the real existence of a thing in itself as the \textit{wahres Korrelatum}, Kant knowingly places it outside the region of possible intuition and conceptualization.\textsuperscript{213} What is more, the very nature of our sensibility, in its receptive capacity, forces us, when faced with the ideality of space and time, not only to broaden the concept of ‘causality’ to a region alien to its sense, but also to undermine its sense altogether. If the forms of intuition determine appearance, something must appear.\textsuperscript{214} And even if we allow such a noumenal causality or affectivity, this does not, in any way, help us. For then we are required to think of ‘cause’ and ‘affection’ in ways altogether distinct from how we understand them a priori, as they relate to appearance. How are we to understand cause when it is mourns the loss of the very structures that render it intelligible and possible?\textsuperscript{215} The problem of noumenal causality is, therefore, twofold and can be described as the problem, first, of the application of categories onto supersensible objects and, second, the nature of a non-spatiotemporal causality itself.

Ideal forms of sensibility, as determinations of appearance, cannot determine the thing in itself. These forms determine appearances. At the same time, however, in order for there to be appearances – i.e. in order for the receptive nature of sensibility to be respected – there must be something given to sensibility for it to translate into its own idiomatic structure. Something must be given to sensibility that is not thereby changed by it but, rather, grounds that which does appear. These demands at once remind us that the model of secondary quality is capable of satisfying them.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{212} KrV A30/B45.
\item \textsuperscript{213} See Van Cleve 1999, 137.
\item \textsuperscript{214} KrV Bxviii.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Strawson 1966, 41.
\end{itemize}
Though sensibility interprets a real ground, this does not indicate the slightest alteration in the thing in itself, nor does it necessitate the appearance of said thing as it is in itself (though it is often interpreted as doing so). This analogy falls apart, however, as soon as we try to make sense of the thing in itself as ‘ground’ or ‘cause’ of appearance. Things in themselves, after all, “are not in themselves as they appear to us, nor are their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us”.\(^{216}\)

Indeed, we are forced to re-imagine causation and affectivity in an entirely new and even alien way. Even for Aristotle, who operated under the rule of more causes than most, the idea of noumenal causality would be entirely problematic. The thing in itself cannot be a formal cause, because something’s form is that which makes an object what it is to be that thing, i.e. its species. If the thing in itself were a formal cause it would, indeed, be outside of space and time, at least as the kind of cause that it is. It would, however, not only be knowable, it would also be the very source of what makes a thing knowable. This is, on Kant’s account, precisely what the thing in itself is not. It is not the source of general structures – we are. Neither could the thing in itself be the final cause of sensibility, given that what makes a telos efficacious is its absence. If sensibility were somehow constituted by the desire for the thing in itself, this would entail the absence, and not the presence, of a real relation – I do not strive after what I already have. Without the real presence of the thing in itself, it is difficult to see how it could be affect sensibility. For the same reason, the thing in itself could not be a material cause in the Aristotelian sense as potency. If the thing in itself were potency, it would not be actual and would, therefore, be unable to affect sensibility. As for efficient causality, this is precisely where we left off. How could there be efficient causality outside of spatiotemporal determinations?

\(^{216}\)KrV A42/B59.
Jacobi was one of the first commentators to bring this issue to light with any clarity in an article from 1787. There, he points out that, “the word ‘sensibility’ is already entirely meaningless if we do not understand it to be a distinct real medium between what is real and what is real,” not between what appears and what is in itself. Given this understanding of sensibility, the “absolute universality and necessity” of “externality and connection…causality and dependence” is prerequisite for its possibility. Jacobi interprets Kant’s idealism of space-time, and the restricted application of understanding to said medium, as contradicting the notion of sensibility insofar as it precludes, or at least greatly complicates, the possibility of a relation between sensibility and something ‘outside’ it. Of course, appearances affect our senses, whose correlative sense organs are spatiotemporal, but this cannot be the entire story. Given that appearances, when they appear, are already conditioned by ideality, something non-ideal, and respectively unconditioned, must transcend and ground them; that is, “in order that there be something that corresponds to sensibility as receptivity,” reason must, in its demand for an unconditioned correlate of each conditional entity, assume or posit a thing in itself underlying all appearance. At the same time, any extra-mental cause, in Kant’s sense, cannot, properly speaking, be a cause or relata in any meaningful sense. Without the presupposition of an extra-mental cause, sensibility is a problematic, and arguably contradictory faculty. With this presupposition, however, it is equally problematic. Limiting the application of the concepts and structures that arise from aesthetic and logical form to appearance, undercuts the possibility of sensibility. If sensibility is to be salvaged, the application of these forms to things in themselves

218 Sassen 2000, 173.
219 Sassen 2000, 173.
220 Sassen 2000, 173.
221 KrV Bxx.
should be presupposed, as they are in models of primary and secondary quality. Kant’s refusal to do so leads Jacobi to exclaim, “without this presupposition [of the categorical/aesthetic application on things in themselves], I could not find my way into the system, whereas with it, I could not stay there”. 222

Like the thing in itself, the two-fold problem of noumenal causality is a result of (a) the receptivity of sensibility and (b) the ideality of appearance. If appearances were not ideal but were things in themselves, then there would be no problem of noumenal causality. Sensibility would be affected by spatiotemporal entities and that would be that. If sensibility were not receptive, on the other hand, then there would be no reason to posit the real and effective existence of a thing in itself. In addition to this, the problem of noumenal causality is also, in part, established by the restriction of the understanding to appearance. This restriction, however, is a result of the ideality of appearance; for if appearances were things in themselves, the understanding would know no bounds. 223 The ideality of appearance, coupled with the receptivity of sensibility, gives rise to the thing in itself and the problem of noumenal causality. For if the wahres Korrelatum is not an appearance but a thing in itself, then what affects sensibility must be altogether, though not entirely, transcendent. As Allison has rightly pointed out (and which I will quote again later for different purposes),

[The] something that affects the mind (thereby functioning as the ground of its representations) cannot be taken under its empirical description (as a spatiotemporal entity). To do so would involve assigning to that object, considered apart from its relation to human sensibility, precisely those features which, according to the theory, only possesses in virtue of this relation.224

222 Sassen 2000, 173.
223 KrV Bxix; also this is the very point of the antinomies, especially at A505/B533; A517/B545; A538/B566.
224 Allison 1983, 250.
The ideal nature of an appearance implies its derivation from a more fundamental relation between sense and the supersensible. For if a condition for the possibility of an appearance is its obedience to mental structures, then the very appearance of an appearance necessarily presupposes the mind’s prior affection. If space and time are forms of sensibility, these must be receptive to non-sensible, and therefore non-spatiotemporal, things in themselves. But if the thing in itself is an ontological entity whose mind mediated correlate is appearance, then such a thing is problematic, for then the thing in itself must really affect sensibility and this, in any of its forms, designates the unlicensed application of (at least) relational categories. If we attempt to fix this problem, and isolate the thing in itself from any and all relation, then the very receptivity of sensibility is contradicted.

TTW theorists think that the problem of noumenal affection is reason enough to reject Kant’s transcendental idealism, at least in its presented form. For NTW theorists, Kant’s use of categories – at least in their un-schematized form – is entirely consistent, even though such a use yields no theoretical knowledge. This view will be examined in Part 3 of this chapter.

Having given an account of TTW interpretations, I will now show how this conception of the thing in itself is transformed by the tensions implicit to its logic. I will call this movement ‘dialectical’ to indicate the development of the concept from an internal contradiction. Here the catalyst is the problem of noumenal causality. This problem implicitly contains, and moves towards, its resolution in thought.

The posited relationship between appearances and things in themselves has proven entirely problematic for TTW theorists. Inasmuch as it posits a relationship, two-world theory assents to the existence of two kinds of objects; in this case, one set that is spatiotemporal and one that is not. At this point, however, these two sets of objects are not sitting aside one another arbitrarily; instead, the difference between them is a result of a relationship of affection between the thing in
itself and the subject. The difference between the thing in itself and the appearance is, therefore, a result of the subjectification of the latter, i.e. its being informed by subjective conditions. The problem is that such a relationship is impossible. Given that the categories have validity only to the extent that they apply to appearances, the application that is required of them here contradicts the critical project itself. If categories really are applicable to things in themselves – i.e. if we can attribute affectivity to them – then they must be knowable to an extent that would transform Kant into a rationalist of the very tradition whose claims he seeks to repudiate. Given what Kant demands of us (namely to restrict our concepts to a realm already ordered by mind), our thinking cannot simultaneously sustain any kind of relation, causal or otherwise, between things in themselves and sensibility. We must therefore cancel this relation.

One interesting and helpful way to imagine this move is to frame it in terms of externality. In the fourth Paralogism, Kant distinguishes between two ways in which an object might be called external. On the one hand, an object might be called external – or outside us – if it is spatial; but since space itself is “in me”, which itself entails the ideality of spatial appearance, this externality is of the immanent kind and should, in all cases, be distinguished from its transcendent sense.225 In this way, while spatial appearances are outside of me empirically, immanent to the realm of possible experience, things in themselves transcend sensibility altogether: “it is also impossible that in this space anything outside us (in the transcendental sense) should be given, since space itself is nothing apart from our sensibility”.226 On a two-world interpretation, these two kinds of externality are not unrelated. Spatial appearances, which are empirically external, are grounded by a transcendentally external cause. This double externality, inasmuch as its narrative is one from the transcendentally transcendent to immanently transcendent, is the foundation for the theory of

225 KrV 375. Reading from “Freilich ist der Raum selbst…nur in mir”.
226 KrV A375. My emphasis.
double affection, according to which we are first affected by things in themselves and subsequently by appearances.\textsuperscript{227} However, since this original relation is entirely problematic, we are compelled to reject it.

This dynamic also occurs in readings that take Kant’s analogy to secondary qualities seriously. Allais has offered a ‘one-world’ account in terms of secondary qualities, where “some of the ways in which things appear to us in perception are public (unlike mental states), and are revealed in perception, but are mind-dependent and do not reveal the mind-independent nature of the things of which they are appearances”.\textsuperscript{228} Like a secondary quality, the sensible and categorical structures of appearances are neither entirely objective nor entirely mental. Instead, they are the result of mediation between thing in itself, as the causal ground, and the subjective forms, which interpret the former according to its own rule. Moreover, according to Allais, this

\begin{quote}
    cannot be thought of as misrepresenting a property of the object in itself, because in these cases the mode of presentation does not give a distorted presentation of a property the object has in itself, but rather presents a property, which the object does not have apart from its perceptually appearing to us.\textsuperscript{229}
\end{quote}

The mind, therefore, does not misrepresent objects in themselves but, rather, renders them intelligible, translating them into its own idiom and, in so doing, both the non-appearance and the relational dimension of noumena are respected. Although “all the properties which constitute the intuition of a body belong merely to its appearance, the existence of the thing that appears is thereby not destroyed”.\textsuperscript{230} In fact, it is the very existence of this object that affects sensibility, filling its form with contents thereafter organized accordingly.\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{227}Walker 2010, 829f.
\textsuperscript{228} Allais 2007, 459.
\textsuperscript{229} Allais 2007, 474.
\textsuperscript{230} Proleg; 289.
\textsuperscript{231} Proleg; 315.
Though it appears that Allais’s view hovers somewhere between a two-world and a two-aspect reading, it is, in my opinion, a two-world interpretation that merely posits an identity between an appearance and its noumenal correlate, which are nevertheless distinct from one another. Allais herself claims, on the one hand, that two-world interpretations of Kant all too often “fail to give a strong enough sense in which appearances are mind-dependent” and, as a result, all too easily succumb to phenomenalist interpretations. On the other hand, she finds that the methodological (or two-aspect) interpretations trivialize the unknowability of the thing in itself. Though her article does an excellent job of making compromises – i.e. of eluding phenomenalism while, at the same time, permitting the ideal status of appearances– it fails to recognize the transformation the secondary-quality model undergoes when it is adapted to Kant’s formulation. For starters, most of the significant textual evidence for such a reading is presented primarily in the *Prolegomena*, a work that Kant himself described as a tool for teachers. Given this fact, the reference to secondary qualities as presented in this work is perhaps a mere means of rendering Kant’s revolution intelligible to newcomers. After all, the model of primary and secondary qualities was both widely accepted and understood. More significantly, the broadening of secondary qualities to include all sensible and logical predicates transforms, and complicates, this very model of predication. On a typical model of primary and secondary qualities, the thing in itself is in a spatiotemporal/causal relationship to the organ of sense. If, however, the structures permitting such a relationship (i.e. spatiality, temporality, causality) are themselves secondary qualities, it is hard to see how such a model might persist. In transforming this model in order to

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232 Allais 2007, 463.
233 Ibid. 462.
234 Proleg;
fit Kant’s demands, Allais’s interpretation is plagued by the same as any two-world commentator, i.e. the problem of noumenal causality. How can the thing in itself act as a cause – how can it affect sensibility – when the application of the concept of causality is limited to appearances? How can things in themselves exhibit these formal structures when they are, in essence, independent from them? If Kant believes that things in themselves affect sensibility, and are, thus, unaesthetic and non-logical, then he is either converting them into appearances or else using the term ‘affect’ and ‘cause’ in an entirely different, and problematic, way. If we take the traditional objection seriously, we are compelled to reject this relationship since it cannot be sustained.

Since two things can exist and be unrelated – e.g. one in space and one transcendent – the negation of this relationship does not yet entail the rejection of the existence of these two worlds, but only of their relationship. Where before things in themselves were external to appearances as their cause, or ground, now they are external and entirely unrelated – the two worlds have become two dimensions. We are not, in any way, related to things in themselves. This, in turn, gives rise to interpretations of Kant that are phenomenalistic. These interpretations take objects to be products of the mind’s creation, which are unrelated to any transcendent or extra-mental ground. Though there have been many excellent arguments against these kinds of interpretations, they are not relevant for our purposes here. The most pressing issue is that, since phenomenalists interpret objects as constructions of simpler impressions, nothing can be given to sensibility that is not already spatiotemporal. If sensibility receives nothing but what is spatiotemporal, then these aesthetic forms are received through experience a posteriori, which (for Kant) is impossible. For

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236 Like Allais, Marshall 2013 thinks that there must be a single ‘thing’ that is both an appearance and a thing in itself. To make this point, Marshall argues that Kant’s insistence on the identity between noumenal and empirical aspects of the self is indicative, and arguably supportive of, ‘one-world’ or two aspect interpretations (433).

237 See Walker 2010, 831f; Allison 1983, 30f; Guyer 1987, 262f.
if we create objects out of impressions that are already spatiotemporal, then the mind cannot make those objects spatiotemporal in the first place.

According to non-phenomenalistic two-world theories, things in themselves are the ground of appearance and can, in this respect, stand in as a ‘given’ that is not already spatiotemporal; the object can, therefore, come to conform to the mind without already reflecting it. However, once this relationship between worlds is cancelled, there is no longer any supersensible ‘material’ for the mind to take up. Appearances, on this view, cannot be made spatiotemporal unless these impressions are created ex nihilo, which is precisely the kind of subjective idealism that Kant rejects when he writes that his “idealism concerns not the existence of things…but it concerns the sensuous representations of things”.238 If the sensuous representation of things is already ideal, then they must have been either (a) previously subjectified or (b) created outright. Since they cannot, according to Kant, be created outright, then (a) must be true. But if there is no relationship between an appearance and its supersensible ground, then they cannot be organized ‘prior’ to being spatiotemporal. Here, the transcendental ideality of appearance is undermined, or at least problematized.

Section 2.3
On Two-Aspect Theories

Though Phenomenalistic accounts might be able to avoid the problem of noumenal causality, they are unable to maintain the efficacy of appearance, at least not without contradicting the receptivity of sensibility or the mere ideality of space and time. Phenomenalistic accounts elude the issue of noumenal causality by denying either the existence of the thing in itself or, instead, by denying its significant relation to appearance. TA interpreters avoid the problem in the same way – i.e. by denying the separate and relational existence of the thing in itself – while at the same time avoiding

238Proleg: 293.
the inherent problems of Phenomenalistic interpretations. TA interpreters such as Henry Allison repudiate the claim that appearances and things in themselves are two separate kinds of entity and, instead of interpreting the distinction ontologically, they explain it as a merely methodological result of transcendental reflection. On this interpretation, objects are considered transcendentally when the formal properties that allow us to know and experience them are attributed, not to these objects considered outside of their relation to human sensibility, but to the human subject. This does not mean, however, that a transcendental object affects the mind per se or that such attribution requires the processes of noumenal causation. In fact, since TA interpreters deny the real existence of the thing in itself, the formal properties of an appearance – i.e. the conditions for the possibility of their appearance and knowability – are not ‘put in the world’ by the mind; such a model, after all, would presuppose noumenal afflection. Instead the ideality of aesthetic form is to be understood methodologically, as “theory about the nature and the scope of the conditions under which objects can be experienced or known by the human mind”.

Since the difference between the thing in itself and its appearance results from two ways of considering one and the same thing, the problem of noumenal causality does not even arise; there is no such real or causal relation between an object as considered one way and that same object, as considered differently.

From a two-aspect standpoint, the non-spatiality of the thing in itself is a result, not of its inability to take on spatiotemporal properties, but of the transcendental method itself. For if to consider an object transcendentally means to consider it in its relation and agreement with cognitive conditions, then the consideration of this same object as it is outside of this relation is

239 Proleg: 248. See also Bird 1962, 29.
240 Allison 1983, 27.
both methodologically essential and implicit. And given that the very hypothesis locates these conditions in the subject, the consideration of these objects outside of their relation to human cognition is, “ex hypothesi, considering them apart from the condition under which [spatiotemporal and logical] predicates are applicable to them.” The unaesthetic and non-logical nature of the thing in itself is, therefore, not a description of a kind of being, as it is in TTW interpretations. It is, instead, the reverse side of transcendental reflection itself, where the consideration of objects in their conformity with cognition implies the consideration of these same objects outside of any such agreement. For these reasons, the two-aspect interpretation of the thing in itself stresses its purely transcendental function. TA interpreters, like two-world interpreters, agree that the correlate of sensibility, i.e. what it is receptive to, cannot be an object under an empirical description. As stated previously, if appearances are in agreement with sensibility in virtue of ideal structures, they cannot be that which sensibility receives. Unlike TTW interpretations, however, the TA view affirms the methodological necessity of positing a supersensible ground without entailing its real existence. For if things are thought to conform to the mind, we must be able to think about things in themselves: “we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves...for otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears.” The thing in itself is, therefore, a limiting concept, used to demarcate the limit between the sensible and the supersensible. The fact that the thing in itself can be understood as grounding the limits of transcendental reflection lends support to TA interpretations. If objects as they are in themselves must be considered in order to demarcate the limits and conditions of cognition, then they need not have any significance beyond such a use.

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242 Allison 2983, 241.
243 Allison 2012, 76.
244 Allison 1983, 250.
245 KrV Bxxvii.
There is plenty of textual support for two-aspect interpretations. One of the most significant occurs in the Amphiboly, when Kant, while describing the noumenon (in the negative sense) as a concept that bounds sensibility, writes:

The understanding accordingly bounds sensibility without thereby expanding its own field, and in warning sensibility not to presume to reach for things in themselves but solely for appearances, it thinks of an object in itself, but only as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance).  

This excerpt, the latter half of which I have quoted before, not only exemplifies the methodological function of the thing in itself, it also wards off interpretations that posit the real and necessary existence of things in themselves (e.g. two-world interpretations). Kant is claiming that such things might not exist at all – the thing in itself may be a transcendental condition, a positing of reason that makes the experience of an appearing object possible. Kant says much of the same in other sections of text. In the preface to the ‘b’ edition, he writes that “we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves ”, suggesting its methodological significance over any ontological claim about the ground of appearances. A paragraph later, Kant strengthens this point, adding that objects should be “taken in a twofold meaning, namely as appearance or as thing in itself”.  

The fourth Paralogism has often been taken to lend significant support to TA interpreters. In this famous section, Kant rejects the idea that the existence of all outer objects, qua empirical, spatiotemporal entities, is doubtful. This skepticism, argues Kant, results from rightly assuming (a) that “that whose existence can be inferred only as a cause of a given perception has only a doubtful existence”, and wrongly assuming (b) that “all outer appearances are of this kind: their

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246 KrV A288/B344-345
247 KrV Bxxvii.
existence cannot be immediately perceived, but can be inferred”. Transcendental realists, who “regard space and time as something given in themselves”, fall into this skeptical trap, first by confusing the empirical with transcendental ‘externality’, then by regarding external objects generally as mediatly perceived. The transcendental realist, by regarding space and time as belonging to things in themselves, interprets the ‘externality’ of empirical objects as signifying independence from sensibility. Given the degree of this alterity, the appearance of empirical objects must be caused and the existence of the latter inferred; “The transcendental realist, therefore, represents outer appearances…as things in themselves…he finds that from this point of view all our representations of sense are insufficient to make their reality certain”. For a transcendental idealist, on the other hand, who regards spatiotemporal determinations as pertaining to appearances only and who, thus, interprets empirical ‘externality’ as signifying, not the independence of the object from sense, but instead, its very participation in it, this skeptical dilemma does not occur. For if appearances are “nothing other than a species of my representation” – i.e. if their externality does not imply extra-mentality – then the “immediate perception” of them is “sufficient proof of their reality”. If we regard space and time as existing only “in us”, then objects that are spatially external to us empirically, are in fact, transcendently immanent to the subject: “for one cannot have sensation outside of oneself…and the whole of self-consciousness therefore provides nothing other than merely our own determinations”. In this way, the existence of spatiotemporal objects is not doubtful because they are nothing but “determinations” of our sensible forms. If, instead, we take space and time to belong to things in themselves, then the 

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248 KrV A367.  
249 KrV A369.  
250 KrV A369.  
251 KrV A371.  
252 KrV A 378.
existence of what appears must be inferred and is, therefore, entirely doubtful. For the transcendental realists spatiotemporal objects have only doubtful existence; for the transcendental idealist, their existence is certain. The real existence of spatiotemporal objects, for Kant, is not inferred but immediately given.

Some TA interpreters have suggested that Kant’s refutation of transcendental realism is, simultaneously, a rejection of any ‘causal story’ between the thing in itself and the appearance.\textsuperscript{253} For Bird, for example, the fourth Paralogism supports the TA rejection of noumenal causality. According to Bird, positing a causal relation between spatiotemporal objects and things in themselves would entail the non-immediacy and dubiousness of the former: “Kant clearly identifies and rejects the claim that objects said to affect us are noumena, and implies instead that if these objects are external in the spatial sense…then they must be phenomenal objects or appearances”\textsuperscript{254} Because any causal attribution to things in themselves would, according to Bird, contradict the immediacy and certainty of spatiotemporal objects, Kant’s rejection of transcendental realism (on the basis that it leads to empirical idealism), is simultaneously, his rejection of noumenal causality.\textsuperscript{255} Though Bird’s argument is, prima facie, a good one, it is inherently flawed.

Kant’s aim in the fourth Paralogism is to show how, in contrast to transcendental realism, transcendental idealism is able to secure the empirical reality of spatiotemporal objects. For transcendental realists, spatiotemporal objects are always dubious because, by attributing space and time to things in themselves, as objects existing independently of sensibility, the existence of these things can only ever be inferred.\textsuperscript{256} Transcendental realists take the externality of empirical

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{253} Bird 1962, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{254} Bird 1962, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{255} Ibid, 43-45.
\item \textsuperscript{256} KrV A369.
\end{itemize}
objects in a transcendental sense, that is as implying absolute independence from mind. Because these objects are taken to be transcendentally external, their existence can only be inferred by our representations of them. If spatiotemporal things (i.e. empirical objects) cause spatiotemporal representations, then the existence of the former can only ever be inferred; both the empirical world and its spatiotemporal form remain uncertain inferences.\textsuperscript{257} If space and time are mere forms of sensibility, on the other hand, then the externality of empirical objects – i.e. their existence in space – is not transcendental but, rather, merely empirical. Spatiotemporal objects are not dubious because they are determinations of the mind itself and, thus, are secured qua spatiotemporal, both by the a priority of their form and by the cogito itself.\textsuperscript{258} If the objects outside of us are outside of us absolutely – i.e. if they transcend the mind altogether – then their existence can only ever be inferred. But if they are outside of us empirically and within us transcendentally, then their outer existence, as determinations of the mind itself, is certain and immediate. This does not, however, entail the non-existence of noumenal causality, as Bird thinks it does. Kant’s point in the Paralogism is to assure us of the certainty of spatiotemporal objects, not deny the existence of a supersensible world. After all, we can assume that spatiotemporal objects are immediate representations in us while, at the same time, positing their origin in the supersensible world. If this were true, then the existence of spatiotemporal objects would not be dubious; as representations, or mental determinations, they would be certain and immediate. If things in themselves, as causally efficacious, non-spatial entities, were inferred from empirical appearances, then these, and not the empirical objects themselves, would be known mediately and without certainty. Indeed, this seems to be Kant’s point when he writes that, “the transcendental object that

\textsuperscript{257} KrV A369. “The transcendental realist therefore represents outer appearances…. as things in themselves, which would exist independently of us and our sensibility and thus would also be outside us according to pure concepts of the understanding.”.

\textsuperscript{258} KrV A378.
grounds both outer appearance and inner intuition is neither matter nor a thinking being in itself, but rather an unknown ground of those appearances”.

Noumenal causality, contrary to what Bird may think, can occur without empirical objects becoming uncertain. It is, after all, the cause and not the effect that is known mediately and without certainty.

The TA interpretation, in its denial of the separate existence of the thing in itself, must emphasize these methodological functions over its supposed causality, which is, itself, reduced to a heuristic move. Because of this methodological diminution, the limitation of human knowledge to mere representations is not a barring from the way the world is really like. The real object of human knowledge is not the thing in itself – such an object does not, properly speaking, exist. The thing in itself, as a way of considering an empirical object independent of ideal conditions, is not a real something standing behind appearance and cannot, therefore, be the true object of knowledge. Here, the objects of knowledge are what appear in their appearance. This shift, says Allison, is the paradigmatic turn from a theocentric to an anthropocentric epistemological model. The object of knowledge is no longer the object, as God would know it, but the object as represented by human beings. If human beings supply conditions that make objects, objects of knowledge, then the epistemological aim is no longer to know them as they are in themselves, but as they are represented: “an object is now to be understood as whatever conforms to our knowledge and this…. means whatever conforms to the mind’s conditions”.

In its finitude, mind is limited to whatever answers to the conditions for the possibility of its knowing, and its experience. Unlike the TTW interpretation, this method does not claim to isolate knowledge from the world as it truly is. Instead, to say that we cannot know the thing in itself signifies nothing more than the finitude of human knowledge itself. For a finite knower, whose understanding does not produce intuitions

\[259\] KrV A380.

and who, therefore, is acquainted solely with mind-compliant representations, the thing in itself is the object, not of its own epistemological aim, but of a different kind of knower altogether.

What makes Kant paradigmatic is that, for him, different kinds of knowing – e.g. divine vs. human knowing – produce different kinds of epistemological objects. Prior to Kant, a god’s eye view was the goal of knowledge, precisely because human knowing and divine knowing were considered to be different; yet, this difference did not mean a difference in epistemological objects. For an intellectual intuition, the object of knowledge is the object considered in itself. It is, at it were, not given to intuition, but produced by it. Given that this understanding first produces the nature of what is thereafter intuited, both by God and by His creations, the object appears as it is thought to be:

The difference between infinite and finite intuition consists in the fact that the former, in its immediate representation of the individual, i.e., of the unique, singular being as a whole, first brings this being into its Being, helps it to its coming-into-being…divine knowing is representing which, in intuiting, first creates the intuitable being as such.261

The thought that brings things into being does not change the being it thinks – it constitutes it as it is in itself. As Heidegger writes in his book on Kant, this marks the breakdown of thinking itself.262 For Kant, thinking, in contrast to intuition, does not entail the existence of the object thought: “to cognize an object, it is required that I be able to prove its possibility…but I can think whatever I like”.263 For a divine understanding, for which thinking and intuiting are the same, the very notion of thought and of intuition is transformed entirely. Infinite understanding immediately dissolves into actual being; intuition and thinking are, thereby, the same, i.e. infinite. God is the truth insofar as there is no possible difference between what he thinks, and what is.264 For human

261 Heidegger 1962, 17.
262 Heidegger 1962, 17..
263 KrV BBxxvi.
264 Heidegger 1962, 17.
beings, on the other hand, the mere thinking of a being does not entail its objectivity: “being finite, we are forced to have recourse to analysis in order to grasp the identities which the divine intellect sees immediately”. 265 Intuitions are given to, and not produced by, the sensible form of intuition (in this case, to a faculty called sensibility). For this reason, what is thought does not entail existence or intuition. Human beings can err in their thinking about reality because thinking does not entail the reality of its object. Human beings must, therefore, come to think what God thinks, to know what he knows originally, i.e. reality.

For Kant, however, the difference between divine and human knowing also entails a difference in the object of knowledge. This is because, for Kant, the way of knowing the world entails the compliance of that world to uniquely ideal forms. We cannot, therefore, know the world as God does because our way of knowing entails, in its very possibility, the adaptation of said world in accordance with aesthetic and logical forms. If we take things in space and time as things in themselves, then the adequate correspondence of thought to reality in itself is both possible and desirable. If space-time is a form of human sensibility, however, then the manner of empirical existence is not identical with the manner of that same existence, when considered in-itself. If experience and knowledge of the world are possible only in their compliance with forms of human sensibility, then human reality is different from God’s. If the manner of knowing, changes the object known, the rift between human and divine knowledge is not merely epistemological, but ontological as well. And given that human beings cannot know the world as God does, divine reality, as both the inaccessible and unknowable correlate of divine knowing, cannot realistically be the aim, or object of human knowledge. Human reality is not an illusion, or a deformation of divine reality. It is a reality unto itself, except now the model of knowledge is not that of a

265 Allison 1983, 23.
correspondence between thought and divine reality, but that of a coherence of thought with objects of human sensibility. In this way, one and the same object can be thought as corresponding to two different kinds of knowing, divine and human. Since this knowing entails an alteration in the manner of object, however, to consider an object transcendentally is to consider it in compliance with aesthetic conditions. To consider it as an object of a divine mind is to consider it as independent of these same conditions.

This is, according to Heidegger’s two-aspect interpretation, the ground for the difference between appearances and things in themselves. He writes:

> Appearances are not mere illusion, but are the being itself. And again this being is not something different from the thing in itself, but rather this thing in itself is precisely a being...The double characterization of the being as ‘thing in itself’ and as ‘appearance’ corresponds to the twofold manner according to which it (the being) can stand in a relationship to infinite and finite knowing: the being in the standing forth (Entstand) and the same being as object (Gegenstand).266

What Heidegger does not add is that the difference between an Entstand and a Gegenstand – i.e. between a divine and a sensible object of intuition respectively – cannot amount to a *mere* difference in the manners of ‘standing’. For Kant, the orientation of an object in its stance towards human sensibility does not entail a completely subjective difference. Explicitly, for Kant, the object is not spatiotemporal except insofar as it stands as Gegenstand. It is entirely possible, outside of Kant’s methodology, to imagine a spatiotemporal object as the correlate of both divine and human intuition. Here, the difference would amount to nothing more than a difference between X in relation to its inception, and X in its relation to some other kind of knower. Unless the ideality of these forms were presupposed, the relation of X to the divine would not, by itself, entail the non-extension of X in space and time; nor does the relation of X to human sensibility entail the unknowability of its transcendent referent, i.e. its manner of being outside of said relation. Being

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266 Allison 1983, 23.
in relation to two different kinds of beings (an infinite and a finite one) does not, without further qualification, entail a difference in what will be said of that being. In fact, Kant’s unique contribution is precisely that this difference in relation also produces a difference in what can and cannot be said of these objects.

Many problems with the two-aspect interpretation have been pointed out. Guyer, for instance, claims that, despite what its espousers believe, the interpretation faces the difficulty of the neglected alternative. The fact that “our knowledge is subject to certain epistemic conditions” does not entail the non-existence of these conditions in objects, as they are in themselves, unless (argues Guyer) these conditions are applied ideally or subjectively onto a supersensible ground. Guyer, unlike most other interpreters, reads the non-spatiality of things in themselves as resulting, not from the ideal nature of aesthetic form, but from the kind of a priori knowledge we have of that form. Since we have a priori cognition of space and time, these cannot be known a posteriori in themselves. For this reason, it is even more apparent why the subjective nature of epistemic conditions does not for Guyer entail, ‘by definition,’ the absence of these conditions from things in themselves. For if the non-spatiality of things in themselves gives rise to the ideality of aesthetic form, then to deduce the former from the latter is to exchange the conclusion with a premise and, in so doing, disturb the grounds of the argument’s inference. For if things in themselves cannot be spatiotemporal, given the kind of knowledge we have of them, the appearance of their structures in empirical objects is explainable if, and according to Guyer’s Kant only if, these forms are ideal. But if we attempt to deduce the non-spatiality of things in themselves from the ideality of aesthetic form, then non-spatiality does not clearly follow – after

267 Guyer 1987, 338.
268 Guyer 1987, 342.
269 Guyer 1987, 338.
270 Guyer 1987, 338
all, space-time can be ideal without being absolutely so (i.e. space and time might also belong to things in themselves).\textsuperscript{271} So, for Guyer, the two-aspect account, by beginning with the assumption of space-time’s ideality, destabilizes the grounding principles of Kant’s critical system and, in so doing, undermines the necessity of spatiotemporal structures in appearance.\textsuperscript{272}

My own issue with two-aspect interpretations follows much the same line. Unlike these other interpretations, however, mine locates TTW presuppositions at the heart of two-aspect theory itself. As we saw, the TTW interpretation of the thing in itself results in the problem of noumenal causality, of applying categories in ways that exceed their capacities. If we assume the existence of the thing in itself as the ground or cause of appearance, then this problem will inevitably result. To solve these problems, the real existence of the thing in itself – and with it, its causal relation – had to be denied without dissolving the distinction altogether. This gives rise to a methodological interpretation that denies the separate existence of the thing in itself without, at the same time, deleting its function altogether. Here the thing in itself is the consequence of a transcendental reflection that in the consideration of objects in their conformity to epistemic conditions must also posit them independently of these conditions. Thus, this distinction between the thing in itself and its appearance is a heuristic device, used for the consideration of a single object in two distinct ways. In what follows, I will show (a) that this methodological interpretation is unable to sustain itself without presupposing the validity of two-world consequences. Having done so, I will then argue (b) that both of these interpretations follow from Kant’s hypothesis and are, for this reason, equally valid, but equally problematic.

\textsuperscript{271} Guyer 1987, 366.

\textsuperscript{272} See Nitzan, 2010. He argues that Allison – or any two-aspect interpretation for that matter – must, in the consideration of an object in-itself, think of an object totally devoid of intuitable content. This, according to Nitzan, contradicts the very possibility of thinking an object, which is always answerable to intuitable content (178).
For TA interpretations, the two ways of considering an object must amount to a difference in that selfsame object. If no difference resulted, considering an object in itself would not amount to it being non-spatial and non-temporal; neither would there be a difference between human and divine objects of knowledge. For if the manner of intuiting did not, in some way, alter what is predicated of the object, the finitude of human knowledge would not entail its limitation, but would only explain our capacity for error. In other words, epistemic conditions of space and time cannot merely dictate the conditions necessary for the appearance of an object; the mere compliance with such conditions is not, in itself, an adequate ground for two drastically different ways of ‘considering things’ – i.e. even if an object satisfies epistemic conditions, this is not yet sufficient for denying the object these properties when it is considered in itself. After all, it is not just that spatiotemporal objects are the only kinds of objects permitted appearance, but only as appearances do objects have predicates of extension and duration. Two aspects of considering an object can amount to a difference in those objects if a particular form of considering it changes what is said of it. Without such a presupposition, considering something in two ways does not necessarily yield a difference in what appears as a thing.

If two ways of considering an object must amount to a difference in those objects, then there must be something to account for this difference. In the case of transcendental idealism, at least as interpreted through a two-aspect lens, this difference comes about, first, through the consideration of an object in relation to the mind, and then, through the consideration of that same object as it is in itself. One has to assume, therefore, that the properties exhibited by X in relation to a subject Y do not pertain to that same object, outside of that relation – otherwise, there would be no reason for assuming a difference between X in relation and X outside of its relation, i.e. between an appearance and its transcendent ground. Yet, in order for there to be a difference, we
have to assume that certain properties of X are reducible to a contribution made by subjectivity. If subjectivity contributes certain structures to X, we have to consider X in, and outside, of its relation to subjectivity. For if the subject is to contribute properties to X, in order to constitute X^y, then the envisioning of X without Y is a requirement. To do this, however, we also have to posit a relation between X, as it is in itself, and the subjective conditions Y – otherwise, Y would not be attached to X, nor would X receive Y. Of course these assumptions might be methodological, but it would at least entail the thought of a real relation between an appearance and its transcendental object. If different considerations are to entail correlated differences in aspect, we must at least posit ideal contributions to what is, outside of this relation, in itself. In other words, in order for the TA theory to work – i.e. in order for two methods of reflection to entail a difference in object – the interpreter must at least posit the validity of relations usually associated with two-world views. But why would a methodology hope to progress scientifically if the basis of its hypothetical distinction results in a thought that, according to our own methodology, cannot be true, i.e. the idea of noumenal causality. If we need to hypothesize an impossible scenario in order to ground synthetic a priori knowledge, then does not the impossibility of the hypothesis entail the impossibility of the conclusion?

An example might be useful. Let’s imagine that a TA interpretation is applied to the model of primary and secondary qualities. Though there are obvious differences between these two views, it is an excellent model for the illustration of an analogous method of reflection. When considering an object in its relation to human sensibility, we can reduce the chromatic appearance of X to the receptivity of sense to light. The tree is not, in itself, green – green is what we call a certain interpretation of light made by sense. For this reason, we can say that a tree is not itself green, though it may be the cause of greenness. Or rather we can say that greenness as it appears and
greenness as it is in itself, i.e. as a particular oscillation of light, are not the same. Considered from relation to human sensibility, green is a chromatic quality; considered in itself, it is a photonic wavelength. Now, these two ways of considering an object, both in and outside of sensibility, entail a difference only if, in its relation to sensibility, it is the ground for new predicates ‘added’ by consciousness. This does not mean that the object must itself change when it relates to sensibility; Kant would reject such an alteration altogether. We could as easily well imagine (as in the case of primary and secondary qualities) the contribution of certain structures to the object by sensibility without this, at the same time, signifying the alteration of the object itself – light, after all, does not, properly speaking, become color; it causally grounds the appearance of it. In either case, if in its relation to sensibility, the object takes on different predicates, then, and only then, do we have reason to imagine a difference between an appearance and its transcendent object. Without certain physical presuppositions about optics and light, for instance, the consideration of objects as they are themselves does not entail the lack of chromatic quality. And so too with Kant, without the presupposition of sensibilities receptivity to noumenal causality, the consideration of objects as appearances does not prohibit the ascription of spatiotemporal predicates to their transcendent correlate. If objects are considered to have unique predicates in their relation to subjectivity, there must be a ‘charged’ relation between mind and its correlate.

A TA interpretation must methodologically postulate a real relation between things in themselves and the mind. Otherwise, the consideration of the same object in two different ways would not amount to a difference in aspect. But why would a method of interpretation imagine, as its very possibility, a model that it has rejected? Without hypothesizing a two-world model – i.e. a model that asserts a real, though problematic, relation between things in themselves and cognition – the consideration of objects in, and outside of their relation to ideal forms does not necessarily
yield a difference in that object. The real validity of a two-aspect interpretation rests on the validity of a two-world account. Yet, a two-world account is, in its essential propensity to apply categories illegitimately, entirely problematic. These problems were to be resolved by a two-aspect interpretation; yet, without the positing of a two-world model as its possibility, the consideration of an object in two ways cannot entail a difference in these objects.

Where TA theorists claim that the non-spatiality of the thing in itself results from the consideration of it outside of any relation to sensibility, I claim that this consideration is insufficient to produce such a difference. The thing in itself, as the transcendent object – i.e. the extra-mental entity – is not, by definition, non-spatial. We can, after all, well imagine spatiotemporal objects existing independently of mind even after locating these forms in the mind. Space and time, in other words, can (at least without further qualification) be both ideal and real. This is why, I argue, the translation of an extra-mental something by mind must be posited if such a difference is to be maintained. Unique predicates can be attached to objects in relation to the subject only if the mind is posited as contributing the structures underlying these predicates. If the mind contributes something, the object in relation to subjectivity and that same object, outside of such a relationship, are different. This can occur only if something ‘extra-mental’ comes into relation with mind. This can happen, in Kant’s case, only if something like noumenal causality is allowed to occur. If the consideration of an object outside of its relation to mind is to entail a difference in what is predicated of it, then the contribution of structure by mind and, thus, the real relation between it and the extra-mental object, is unavoidably necessary. Two-aspect and two-world interpretations oscillate. Where the problems in two-world interpretations are resolved by two-aspects interpretations, TA interpretations require, as their ground, TTW presuppositions.  

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273 See Oberst, 2015. In this paper Oberst attempts to reconcile the two world and two aspect interpretations of Kant. To do this, he argues that these two kinds of interpreters have been speaking past each other. According to Oberst,
If I am right and these different forms of interpretation are dialectically impelled towards each other, then we should not pit them against each other; the tensions in each will develop into the other. Instead, I urge a reconsideration of the reasons behind the postulation of such a thing as the thing in itself. It is important to remember that the problem we have found ourselves in is not reducible simply to the difficult nature of the thing in itself. After all Kant saw this unknowable thing not as a mere posit, but as a necessary result of his own Copernican revolution,\textsuperscript{274} which was itself nothing but an honest attempt to ground the possibility, and solve the problem, of synthetic a priori propositions – propositions that make up the foundation of all science (i.e. geometry and math, and the assumption of causality).\textsuperscript{275} Since “we can cognize things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them”, we must assume that “the thing in itself as something actual but uncognized by us”.\textsuperscript{276} As the true correlate of sensibility, the thing in itself is ‘actual’; as its averter, it is free from sensibility, and ‘unknowable’. And yet, to conceive of this entity in this way, the problem of noumenal affection results. The thing in itself is the result of an experimental solution to the problem of synthetic a priori cognition; Kant asks us to see “whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that objects must conform to cognition”.\textsuperscript{277} If objects conform to the form of our sensibility, and sensibility is receptive, then what appears will be ideal. And if what appears is ideal, representations cannot originally affect sensibility. However, given that the thing in itself is, itself, problematic – given that it requires us to

\textsuperscript{274} KrV Bxix-xx.
\textsuperscript{275} KrV A10/B14.
\textsuperscript{276} KrV Bxix-xx. Reading: “Die Sache an sich selbst dagegen zwar als für sich wirklich, aber von uns unerkannt…”
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid. Bxvi. My emphasis.
simultaneously draw and overreach the limits of cognition – does this not undermine the legitimacy of the experiment? And if so, is not the problem motivating the hypothesis still unsolved?
Chapter Three
New Two-World Interpreters and Practical Reason

In this chapter, I will confront a more a recent version of the two-world interpretation. For technical reasons given in section 3.1, I will argue that this two-world interpretation also fails. I will then turn, in section 3.2, to Lucy Allais’ recent one-world interpretation. Allais’ interpretation has many virtues, but it is, I will argue, inconsistent with Kant’s views in the Amphiboly. Lastly, in section 3.3, I will offer an argument against the attempt to construe things in themselves in terms of Kant’s practical philosophy. I will conclude, on the basis of the last three chapters, that things in themselves are fundamentally problematic. This will prepare the reader for chapter 4, where I trace things in themselves to their root cause.

Section 3.1
Unschematized Categories and Noumena

The problem of noumenal causality can be broken down into two parts. The first issue is that the notion of a supersensible cause, or a true correlate of sensibility underlying appearances, seems to involve the illegitimate use of a category, which (as Kant continuously reminds us) can yield no cognition. From this perspective, it seems that Kant’s two claims are incompatible and that his theory is incoherent. Even if it were granted that such an application was possible, however – i.e. even if a pure category could be put to use for the sake of theoretical cognition – the difficulty of making sense of this causality, which is beholden neither to space nor time, remains. This is the second problem.

The ‘new two-world’ approach to these problems is informed by two significant concepts, both of which play a central role in Kant’s philosophy. The first is the idea of an unschematized category, through which an object in general can be thought. NTW theorists argue that the ability of the understanding to think independently of sensible conditions answers the first problem of noumenal causality; for if an unschematized category can be used to think about non-sensible objects, the idea of a non-sensible cause is at least coherent, though not theoretically significant. The second idea is taken from Kant’s practical philosophy and is, at least in principle, capable of answering both of the difficulties associated with supersensible causation. In the Critique of
Practical Reason noumenal causality, which remained a problematical concept in the first Critique, obtains reality through the notion of Freedom, albeit only in regard to reasons practical, and not its theoretical use. Here noumenal causality is a necessary condition for a will determinable, not just by empirical incentives, but also by universal law. As a non-sensible cause, freedom not only confirms the coherence of noumenal causality; it also gives it an object. Is this defense of noumenal causality successful?

Though the categories of the understanding have only immanent validity, their ontological independence from sensibility grants us the ability to think objects in general through them: “if I leave out all intuition, then there remains the form of thinking, i.e., the way of determining an object for the manifold of possible intuition”. These pure categories of thinking are, in effect, heterogeneous with appearances – there is nothing by virtue of which they may correspond to appearances and nothing, therefore, through which these appearances can be subsumed. In order for appearances to be subsumed under these categories – i.e. in order for experience to be possible – they must be synchronized with these formal rules. According to Kant, the union between pure sensibility and pure understanding occurs through schemata, which are determinations of time in accordance with categorical rules. The meaning of an ‘unschematized category’ is, therefore, a category isolated through abstraction from sensibility. It is this independence that allows the thinking of non-sensible objects. Thus, the NTW argument is that non-schematized categories allow the understanding to think, but not to cognize, things in themselves.

278 KpR:56.
279 KrV A254/B309.
280 KrV B162: “Categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances….”
281 KrV A138/B177.
282 Kant does not use this language of ‘unschematized’ categories.
This does not explain why pure, non-schematized categories are empty; it only describes their freedom from sensibility. Why then, are they not objectively valid in their pure form? According to Kant, there is a very important difference between thinking (denken) and cognizing (erkennen) an object.\textsuperscript{283} When an object is thought without being given in intuition it is not cognized. In order to be cognized, the object must be thought through a concept and given in intuition. This is a reiteration of the principle, “thoughts without intuitions are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind”.\textsuperscript{284} For cognition of it to occur, the object must not only be subsumable under a concept, it must also be intuitable. Unlike intellectual forms of intuition however, which do not receive objects, human intuition is entirely sensible: “all intuition that is possible for us is sensible… thus for us thinking an object in general through a pure concept of the understanding can become cognition only insofar as this concept is related to objects of the senses”.\textsuperscript{285} From this, it follows that the objects of an unschematized category – i.e. objects of a non-sensible nature – cannot in principle be cognized; they can only be thought.

The pure concept of causality is defined (by Kant) as “something that allows an inference to the existence of something else”.\textsuperscript{286} In the absence of any temporal structure, this might be rephrased simply as ‘p is the ground of q’, or things in themselves are the ground of appearance. And despite being unable to apply this pure concept to anything supersensible, it allows us to think, and to thereby to at least posit a noumenal cause, without which the receptive nature of our sensibility would be compromised. Because we can coherently (or logically) posit the possibility of such an entity commentators have claimed that Kant is adequately equipped to respond to the seeming incoherence of a supersensible cause. Van Cleve, for instance, argues that, “though the

\textsuperscript{283} KrV B146.
\textsuperscript{284} KrV A51/B75.
\textsuperscript{285} KrV B146.
\textsuperscript{286} KrV A243/B301.
schematized categories obviously cannot apply to any items that lie outside of space and time…perhaps Kant can allow that the pure categories have application to noumena”.

Ameriks echoes this argument when he writes that Kant can “consistently hold that talk about things in themselves is not absurd or mere empty words…because…we can think of them intelligibly, even if not very informatively, in terms of all the unschematized categories”.

Perhaps most decisively, Adams writes:

I think it is plausible, from a Kantian point of view and for theoretical purposes, to regard the concept of noumenal causality as a problematic concept. It is the concept of a real (not a merely logical) relation that corresponds to the inferential form (and force) of the hypothetical judgment, and that is not understood in terms of succession of events in time, nor in any other terms that depend on our forms of intuition. If there is any problem about the possibility of such a relation, it is not a problem of formal inconsistency… if we doubt that there is any such relation in the space of real possibilities, that is presumably for lack of something like intuitive content to fill out the formal framework of the idea…Uncertain as it may be of the real possibility of noumenal causality, theoretical reason seems justified in affirming the logical possibility of the concept.

For each of these commentators, the thinkability of noumenal causes is enough to resolve the first problem of affectivity. Even though it might be mysterious and (perhaps) unimaginable, noumenal causality is not an incoherent concept as some have supposedly claimed. It is important to note that, while all of these commentators agree that noumenal causation is thinkable, none of them think that it can be validated through any sensible cognition. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant describes, “pure theoretical reason” as having to do “with cognition of such objects as could be given to the understanding”.

There is, therefore, no possible theoretical cognition of such a cause, even though there is the thought of its possibility.

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287 Van Cleve 1999, 137.
288 Ameriks 2003, 32.
289 Adams 1999, 821.
290 KpR; 89.
As I see it, this defense of ‘noumenal causation’ results from a very complicated misrepresentation of the original objection. The objection is not that ‘noumenal causation’ is incoherent, or that thinking of it is impossible. If this were the case, it would have to include a contradiction, which it does not: there is, after all, nothing in the concept of a transcendent object that prevents us from attributing causality to it through a judgment. The objection is that the concept of noumenal causality contradicts the limits of reason as defined, and articulated by Kant; noumenal causality is not, and perhaps cannot be, a mere thought for Kant. The receptive nature of sensibility requires that we posit something really existing behind appearances, “for the existence of appearances, not grounded in the least within itself but always conditioned, demands that we look around us for something different from all appearances”.291 This positing is demanded by reason, which must always posit the idea of an unconditioned condition that grounds, and arranges a series of conditioned entities.292 Such an object however, to the extent that it is supersensible, cannot be given and cannot, therefore, be theoretically known.

Commenters who defend Kant often overstate what can be known of things in themselves according to Kant. They claim that Kant often overstates the ‘emptiness’ or ‘meaninglessness’ of unschematized categories. As we saw above, Van Cleve speculates that pure categories may apply to things in themselves. Ameriks too points out in regard to unschematized categories that “Kant has a tendency to abbreviate his position…and will often simply call some terms ‘meaningless’ when it is very clear on reflection that he must mean no more what we would express by saying they do not yield a warranted theoretical claim”.293 What these commentators ignore is that their claims threaten to legitimatize methodological rationalism. For if Kant really does exaggerate the

291 KrV A566/B594.
292 KrV A409/B436 – A420-B448.
293 Ameriks 2003, 28.
emptiness of pure categories, then he must also be exaggerating the limitations of their applicability. However, even if his language is loose when it comes to the vacuity of pure categories, it is absolutely clear when it comes to these limitations. Though there are many, I will list 4 significant quotes:

1) “Without the data of sensibility [categories] would be merely subjective forms of the unity of the understanding”. 294
2) “The categories consequently have no other use for the cognition of things except insofar as they are taken as objects of possible experience”. 295
3) “Where this temporal unity cannot be encountered, thus in the case of noumenon, there the entire use, indeed even all significance of the categories completely ceases; for then we could not have insight even into the possibility of the things that would correspond to the categories…” 296
4) “…As long as intuition is lacking, one does not know whether one thinks an object through the categories, and whether there can ever be an object that even fits them; and so it is confirmed that the categories are not by themselves cognitions, but mere forms of thought for making cognitions out of given intuitions”. 297

It is my view that the categories of the understanding in their pure use are merely subjective forms of synthesis, at least as far as theoretical reason is concerned. The freedom that understanding enjoys from sensibility is not a result of its universal validity to objects in general; it is a result, rather, of its inability to cognize objects intellectually. Because an object can be thought without being given in appearance, the faculty of the understanding is a distinct power, separate in kind from sensibility. Without a possible (i.e. sensible) object however, it is home to lonely, uninstantiated forms. If our intellect could intuit, on the other hand, the logically possible and the really possible would be identical. In this case, our intuition would not be situated in a distinct, non-intellectual power; it would not only be free from, but also unanswerable to, any species of sensibility. For human beings, this is not the case – the logical and real possibilities are not the

294 KrV A287/B343;
295 KrV B148.
296 KrV B308.
297 KrV B288.
same. This is why the very possibility of a supersensible object cannot be determined (as stated in the third quote above). The understanding can therefore think an object in abstraction from all content; it has a pure use. It is in this respect free from the conditions and contents of sensibility. This freedom does not entail the theoretical validity of the categories in regard to the non-sensible, however. If it did, the synthetic propositions of pure reason would hold true weight. So too, would Wolfian and Leibnizian philosophy.

For Kant, it would be only natural for many of his readers to derive more from pure categories than is really permitted: “there is something so seductive in the possession of an apparent art for giving all of our cognitions the form of understanding”. Logic abstracted from all content – i.e. a general organon applying to every possible object – can be exploited to cancel the limits of our finitude by transcending them. For if metaphysical conclusions were derivable from this general logic, the inferences resulting therefrom would concern, not this or that region of being, but all objects everywhere. This is a delusion of grandeur, however. For when “this general logic, which is merely a canon for judging, has been used as if it were an organon for the production of at least the semblance of objective assertions” dialectical illusion arises. As strange as it may sound then, general logic is entirely subjective – the freedom it enjoys by virtue of its formal nature tricks it into the belief that its claims are objective (as claimed in quote 1 above). This general logic is transformed from subjectivity to objectivity only when it applies to “the data of sensibility” as justified in the deduction. Categories are the “mere form of thought for making cognitions out of given intuition”; they are mental cookie cutters, devised for the determining of sensible dough.

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298 KrV A60/B85.
299 KrV A61/B86.
300 KrV A287/B343.
301 KrV A 288/B189. With the help of the transcendental imagination of course.
Markus Kohl has recently pointed out that the categories have an essential telos or function: “unless they can be applied to some actual (for us: spatiotemporal) manifold, they cannot fulfill their conceptual telos”. His point is that, for Kant at least, the categories of the understanding do something to something else. This is, of course, exemplified by their capacity to “unify representations” and to determine appearances in preparation for their reference to an object. In abstraction from this activity, the categories are nothing but the form of this procedure itself. Additionally, Kohl has made the argument that, if pure categories were in fact applicable to noumena, then an intellectual intuition would have to represent them as having categorical properties. And since an intellectual intuition would not represent objects discursively through categories, pure categories are inapplicable to things in themselves. It will be useful for our purposes here to go deeper into this argument.

Where the material of an object is sensible, and not intellectual, unification with a concept is a pre-condition for cognition. Where the material is merely intellectual, on the other hand, no such unification, or synchronization is required – these objects are already an appropriate fit for judgment. For an intellectual intuition, categorical functions would be obsolete. According to Kohl, “an intuitive intellect would not represent this synthetic unity because it would not synthesize given representations”.

At times, it may seem that even Kohl, whose construal of categorical limitations is quite conservative, wanders beyond the boundaries set by Kant. It may be objected that the limits of reason cannot be sketched by means of inferences derived from a conception of intuition that,

302 Kohl 2015, 96.
303 KrV A69/B93.
304 KrV B143. See also Guyer 1992, 130.
305 Kohl 2015, 91.
306 Ibid, 91.
according to Kant himself, is entirely *problematic*; its very possibility is unknowable.\textsuperscript{308} Kohl does not, however, commit such an error – his conception of an intellectual intuition is entirely negative and results from the subtraction of everything sensible that belongs to cognition. A non-sensible intuition is (and even must be conceived as) intellectual, not because Kant is somehow elevating the understanding to great heights, but simply because there is no other faculty known to us through which objects could possibly be given. Once sensibility has been canceled through abstraction, the understanding is the only remaining faculty; without sensibility, which has been annulled through generalization, it must now do the work of intuiting objects. The objects of such an intuition would be neither spatial nor temporal (since they would be non-sensible); they would not, for this reason, require synthesis and would not, therefore, exhibit the categorical properties imparted through synthesis. This would instead be an understanding “through whose representation the objects of this representation would at the same time exist”.\textsuperscript{309}

Section 3.2

*Allais’ Intrinsic-Nature Account*

The real possibility of an intuitive intellect and a noumenal object cannot, therefore, be decided: “where...temporal unity cannot be encountered, thus in the case of the noumenon...all significance of the categories completely ceases”.\textsuperscript{310} What does this tell us? First, it tells us that pure categories have no objective use in abstraction from sensibility. Second, it tells us that, whatever the true correlate or ground of sensibility is, it cannot be a noumenon, i.e. the object of an intellectual intuition. According to Kant, the ground of sensibility is not only really possible (a modal predicate inapplicable to noumena) – it actually *exists*. What is more, it exists in unity with, and not merely beside, the categorical law of causality – otherwise, it would not do the job of a “non-sensible

\textsuperscript{308} KrV B308.
\textsuperscript{309} KrV B138.
\textsuperscript{310} KrV B308.
cause” of representations.\textsuperscript{311} Though these claims prevent the \textit{wahres Korrelatum} from ascending to noumenal altitudes, they are simultaneously (and perhaps irreparably) complicated by the fact such an object must be non-sensible. The ultimate correlate of sensibility’s receptivity cannot be sensible, at least not without assuming receptivity beforehand (in which case the correlate is not ultimate). If it is not sensible, how can we say that it exists, or that it is a cause?

It seems that we are caught between the existence/causality of the true correlate, on the one hand, and its non-sensible nature on the other. We must either (a) deny its non-sensible nature and implicate it the world of appearance, or (b) affirm its non-sensible nature, and deny its existence and causality. If we choose (a), then there is no true correlate of sensibility, which is now groundless – phenomenalism results. If we choose (b), on the other hand, then the thing in itself is a merely \textit{problematic} entity; not even its possibility can known – it is a mere thought entity.

Lucy Allais’s ‘one world’ interpretation provides an interesting middle way. In her recent book, she offers what I will call, an ‘intrinsic-nature’ account of things in themselves. For her, appearances are reducible to, and grounded by, non-relational things in themselves, which are unknowable.\textsuperscript{312} This interpretation has many benefits. By anchoring empirical reality to a region of more metaphysically fundamental entities, Allais is able to evade phenomenalism by stabilizing appearances. She is also in a better position to defend her thesis that the ‘primary quality analogy’ has real substance (for if things in themselves are intrinsic entities grounding appearance, they may easily take the role of the categorical source of mind mediated objects, i.e. objects in space and time). More importantly for our purposes here, by distinguishing between ‘ground’ and ‘cause’, Allais also offers a potential solution to the problem of noumenal causality. In this respect, she offers a valuable interpretation of both things in themselves and the grounding of appearances.

\textsuperscript{311} KrV A494/B523.  
\textsuperscript{312} Allais 2015, 258.
Her argument can, therefore, be broken down into two sections, the first in support of ‘reducibility’ and the second in support of ‘grounding’. Where the first concerns the inference from relational nexuses to non-relational intrinsics, the second concerns the grounding of the former in the latter. To reiterate, for Allais, things in themselves are the intrinsic, unknowable versions of absolutely relational appearances. They are, therefore, not only the same entity; the relational nature of the latter is grounded (or caused by) the intrinsic nature of the latter. Does this resolve the problems at hand? For all its virtues, I will argue that neither argument offers a fully convincing reading of Kant.

Allais’s begins her argument by pointing out a structural ambiguity that runs the length of the Amphiboly section in the first Critique. In this section, Kant continuously makes inferences regarding Verstandesobjekte, i.e. objects of pure understanding. At A263, for instance, he writes: “if an object is presented to us several times, but always with the same inner determinations…then it is always exactly the same if it counts as an object of pure understanding”. He commits several similar statements at A265, 267, 272, A274 etc… In general, these statements take the form of a hypothetical conjunction, if \( p \) (where \( p \) is an object of pure understanding) then \( q \) (where \( q \) is a predicate derived from pure concepts, i.e. concepts without reference to sensible intuition). The statement that appears at A272, for example, takes on this structure explicitly: “if I know a drop of water as a thing in itself…I cannot let any, one drop count as different from the other”. Again, at A274, it is repeated: “substances in general must have something inner, which is therefore free of all outer relations”. An ambiguity arises as soon as one attempts to determine whether Kant

\[ \text{KrV A263/B319.} \]
\[ \text{KrV A272/B328. This is because, for Kant, there is nothing that would individuate two, conceptually indiscernible things in themselves, given that they are neither spatially nor temporally extended.} \]
\[ \text{KrV A274/B331.} \]
endorses these claims about things in themselves, or whether they are merely examples of ‘transcendental amphiboly’.

The definition of Amphiboly is “a confusion of the pure object of the understanding with the appearance (ist einer Verwechslung des reinen Verstandesobjekts mit der Erscheinung)”\(^{316}\) If Kant endorses these claims, then according to the conceptual relations utilized by Leibniz the following must be true of things in themselves: (1) they must follow the law of non-discernibility;\(^{317}\) (2) they must not oppose or cancel one another;\(^{318}\) (3) they must be composed on non-relational entities;\(^{319}\) and (4) they must make up the determinable in general (i.e. matter).\(^{320}\) If, on the other hand, these claims are examples of amphiboly, then they are not to be taken seriously.

Allais is concerned mostly with claim 3 and is well aware of the ambiguity involved in Kant’s statements. She writes that:

That it is not entirely clear whether Kant himself is committed to saying that substances must have something inner or whether he thinks that this is something one would say only after making the mistake that the Amphiboly is concerned with—failing to think about concepts in relation to the sensible form of our intuition.\(^{321}\)

Even though she is aware of the ambiguity, Allais is going to argue that the former assertion is true, namely that Kant himself is committed to saying “that substances have something inner”.\(^{322}\) While she admits that it is wrong to move from a logical to a metaphysical possibility, and thus that objects of pure understanding are unknowable, she maintains that the existence of an intrinsic, non-relational nature is necessary.\(^{323}\) To make this point, Allais asserts that (a) irreducible relations

\(^{316}\) KrV A270/B326.
\(^{317}\) KrV A263/B319.
\(^{318}\) KrV A 264/B320.
\(^{319}\) A265/B321.
\(^{320}\) A267/B323.
\(^{321}\) Allais 2015, 238.
\(^{322}\) Ibid.
\(^{323}\) Ibid, 240.
are logically impossible and (b) that “something’s being logically impossible is enough to show
that it is really impossible”\textsuperscript{324}. Furthermore, since spatiotemporal appearances are composed of
nothing but relations, and irreducible relations are impossible, it follows that “Kant thinks that
things have intrinsic natures but that these natures are no part of what we have empirical cognition
of, or of what science describes”.\textsuperscript{325}

For Allais, analytic truths – e.g. “substances in general must have something inner, which
is free of all outer relations”\textsuperscript{326} – are true of objects in general. The first major problem this
interpretation runs up against is that, for Kant, appearances “consist entirely of relations”.\textsuperscript{327} If
relations exhaust the nature of an appearance – i.e. if it is irreducible – then Allais’s claim that
“that things [must] have intrinsic natures” seems to be contradicted.\textsuperscript{328} Her response is that, while
analytic truths apply to objects existing in themselves, they need not apply to mere appearances:

The fact that an analytic claim appears not to hold of the objects of our knowledge
would be a problem if the spatial objects of our experience were metaphysically
fundamental and ontologically self-subsistent— if they were things as they are in
themselves.\textsuperscript{329}

Allais resorts to Kant’s idealism in order to make (a) the irreducibility of spatiotemporal relations
and (b) the universality of analyticity compatible. Appearances can be composed of irreducible
relations insofar as they are ideal and are not genuine existents: “the claim that spatio-temporal
objects contain nothing non-relational is compatible with the claim that relations require something
non-relational if spatio-temporal objects are not all that exists”.\textsuperscript{330} Allais goes so far to compare
this argument with the indirect argument for transcendental idealism in the antinomies:

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid, 242.
\textsuperscript{326} KrV A274/B330
\textsuperscript{327} KrV A285/B341.
\textsuperscript{328} Allais 2015, 242.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid, 241.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
Kant thinks that we are able to explain something that appears not to make sense by seeing that the objects of our knowledge are mind-dependent appearances and therefore not ontologically complete or fundamental. With respect to the Antinomies, Kant thinks that this enables us to make sense of the claim that the world in space and time does not have a determinate extent. In the Amphiboly, he thinks that it enables us to make sense of the claim that the spatio-temporal world contains relations only.  

Though this seems to be a defensible argument and analogy, I think it is highly problematic. First, although appearances are not fundamental, the irreducibility of their relational existence cannot be justified in the same way that the indeterminate extent of the world can be in the Antinomies. For Kant, the world as a “given whole of all appearances” or an entity in the “completeness of the division of a given whole” is not an object of possible experience. These totalities of appearance and composition, in other words, are intuitions that are either too big or too small for “our empirical concepts”. These are not possible objects of experience and cannot, for this reason, be known to obey the conceptual rules of an object in general. The world does not have a determinate extent because an infinite intuition is too big and finite intuition is too small for our concept. In order for the analogy to work then, appearances, which are supposedly not beholden to analyticity, and which are allegedly indeterminate, could not be objects of possible experience. For if appearances do not obey the laws of analyticity – conceptual laws of objects in general – then either (a) objects cannot appear or (b) appearing objects are absurd.

According to Kant, the “principle of contradiction” is the “universal and sufficient principle of all analytic cognition”. The principle that an object cannot be both A and not A applies analytically to all “cognitions in general, without regard for their content”.

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332 KrV A416/B443.
333 KrV A487/B515.
334 KrV A487/B5154.
335 KrV A151/B191.
336 KrV A151/B190.
constitutes the realm of the *logically possible* and its pure use can even “combine concepts in a way not entailed by the object, or even without any ground being given to us either *a priori* or *a posteriori*”. 337 Without obedience to the understanding and to the analytical rules of objects in general, cognition would be unable to refer representations to an object; without these rules, that is, “appearances could never amount to cognition of an object corresponding to them”. 338 If the analytic laws of objects in general – e.g. the principle of non-contradiction or the reducibility of relations – do not apply to appearances, then appearances cannot be referred to objects. If appearances cannot be referred to objects, then the kind cognition that Kant attempts to ground in the *Deduction* and in the *Analogies* is impossible: “if a cognition is to have objective reality, i.e., to be related to an object, and is to have significance and sense in that object, the object must be given in some way”. 339 If Allais is right and appearances do not obey analytical laws – i.e. if they can be composed of irreducible relations – then they cannot be referred to objects. If our categories allow us to think an object in general, then they are related to objects generally. If appearances are not objects, then categories do apply to them. This is something Kant plainly denies: “categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances….” 340

Allais might respond to this objection, arguing that, although appearances do not obey analytic laws, the objects to which they are referred do. The problem with this claim is that it seems to contradict Kant’s main goal in the deduction, which is to prove that

The objective reality of our empirical cognition rests on the transcendental law that all appearances, insofar as objects are to be given to us through them, must stand under a priori rules of their synthetic unity, in accordance with which their relation in empirical intuition is alone possible. 341

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337 KrV A150/B190
338 KrV A198/B159
339 KrV A155/B195.
340 KrV B162.
341 KrV A 110.
The categories of the understanding, which allow us to think objects in general, are also synthetic laws unifying the sensible manifold of appearances. They are, in Kant’s words, “concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances”. For these reasons, I would argue that objects of experience, despite being composed of mere relations, do in fact obey analytical laws. If this were not the case – i.e. if appearances were not constrained by analyticity – then they could never be referred to an object; there would, in fact, be no objects of possible experience. It is not a contradiction, therefore, to maintain the possibility of a world composed of irreducible relations. It is strange indeed, but not contradictory. These objections are overly detailed, however, and dodge the main issue. Can things in themselves really be non-relational entities underlying a purely relational world of appearances or is Allais confusing objects of the understanding with appearances?

It is clear that Allais is inferring supersensible simples from the merely relational nature of appearance. Since the inference is from something sensible to something non-sensible, the understanding must be utilized independently of sensibility (in order to make a judgment about something non-sensible, after all, the understanding must resort to its pure use). More importantly, the object of the understanding in this case is not originally non-sensible – the inference is from appearances to the underlying simples, not vice versa. The pure understanding is, therefore, being used to conclude something from the nature of appearances. The understanding is consequently handling appearances as objects appropriate for pure thought. This, however, is the very definition of amphiboly, i.e. “a confusion of the pure object of the understanding with the appearance”. This is why Kant ultimately claims that, “the absolutely internal in matter, according to pure understanding, is a mere fancy (bloße Grille), for it is nowhere an object for the pure

\[342\text{ KrV B163.}\]
\[343\text{ A270/B326.}\]
It is unfortunate that Allais did not include this quote in her chapter, as it seems to extinguish the legitimacy of any attempt to infer simples or intrinsics from relations.

If she did incorporate this passage, perhaps she would have included (in her defense) the sentence subsequent to the previous. Directly following his claim that “the absolutely internal” is a mere fancy, Kant states that, “the transcendental object…which might be the ground of this appearance that we call matter, is a mere something, about which we could not understand what it is even if someone could tell us”. Allais may take this as proof that the transcendental object is the intrinsic correlate of relational appearances. It is clear, however, that the “absolutely internal in matter” and the “transcendental object” are here being juxtaposed. Where the former is “mere fancy”, the latter “might be the ground of…appearance”; where the absolutely internal is simple, the transcendental object is a “mere something”. The transcendental object – i.e. the true correlate of our sensibility – is not the absolutely intrinsic. This is directly opposed to Allais’s hypothesis.

In an infrequently quoted text, Kant reiterates his point. In On a Discovery whereby any New Critique of Pure Reason is to be Made Superfluous by an Older One (simply On a Discovery hereafter), Kant points out that, if we abstract everything sensible from our notion of a simple entity, it no longer has any significance: “it is uncertain whether, when one takes away from the simple all the properties whereby it can be a part of matter, there is anything remaining which could be called a possible thing”. If things in themselves are non-relational entities, then the very possibility of things in themselves cannot be decided. Allais may respond to this quote by urging us away from the word ‘simple’; instead, she uses the words ‘intrinsic’ and ‘non-relational’ to refer to things in themselves. The problem with this is that, if something is not composed of any

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344 KrV A277/B333.
345 KrV A277/N333.
346 Proleg; 214.
relations, is it not *simple* ex hypothesi? Simple and complex entities are contradictory, not contrary objects. Kant himself thinks as much:

> The Leibnizian Monadology has no ground at all other than the fact that this philosopher represented the distinction of the inner and the outer merely in relation to the understanding. Substance in general must have something inner, which is therefore, free of all outer relations, consequently of composition. The simple is therefore the foundation of inner things in themselves.\(^{347}\)

To be clear, Kant is criticizing Leibniz here, not agreeing with him. This quote illustrates that for Kant, being free of composition – i.e. being non-relational – necessitates being simple. This is in line, not only with Leibniz, but also with Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics*. It is commonly acknowledged that this latter work played a significant role in the development of Kant’s metaphysical education. For Baumgarten too, “a non-composite being is simple”.\(^{348}\) The properties being simple and being composite are contradictory; if \(p\) is composite, it is non-simple, and if it is simple, it is non-composite.

For a moment, let us accede to Allais. Let us assume that things in themselves are non-relational entities grounding appearances. This does not signify that appearances are ‘confused’ representations of things in themselves however; Allais admits that this would contradict Kant. She urges us to understand appearances, not as a misrepresentation of things in themselves, but instead as unoriginal, purely relational entities: “we are saying of things that their entirely relational spatio-temporal appearances exhaust their empirical reality but are also grounded in non-relational natures they have independently of us”.\(^{349}\) Without getting into other difficulties, it is easy now to see how this construal of things in themselves threatens Allais’s own ‘one world view’.

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\(^{347}\) *KrV* A330/B274.

\(^{348}\) Baumgarten 2014, 142: §224. My emphasis.

\(^{349}\) Allais 2015, 242.
While Allais admits that “there is no contradiction in saying that things have properties in certain relations which they do not have independently of them”, it is still not clear that the non-spatiality of things in themselves is compatible with a one-world view.\textsuperscript{350} Indeed, if \( p \) is \( F \) (blue) in certain relations and Not-\( F \) (not colored) in others, then no contradiction arises. But if \textit{all} the spatiotemporal properties of an appearance, including those dependent upon them (e.g. color, shape, size, mechanism etc.), are accidental to it, and can therefore be annulled in certain contexts, it is difficult (if not impossible) to see how the \( p \) that is \( F \) (spatiotemporal) and the \( p \) that is not-\( F \) are the same, since they have no common properties. Of course, according to traditional models of primary and secondary qualities this is not a problem. Given that (at least) some of the primary qualities of \( p \) belong to \( p \) regardless of its relations, it is possible to maintain that there is an essential commonality between \( p \) as it appears and \( p \) as it is, in itself. For example, even though the 2-metered crocodile is green only insofar as it appears, it is 2 metered regardless. But even in a case where no primary qualities appeared, the analogy would still be misleading. On any Lockean account, the secondary qualities of an appearance supervene on their primary counterparts, such that a representation is a construal of things in themselves. Thus, we can say that the crocodile is, in fact green, where ‘greenness’ is understood as a particular construal of a wavelength by our sensible faculties. For Kant, neither of these structures apply to things in themselves. There is, in other words, no common property between appearances and things in themselves; and neither is there a supervening relation between appearances and their true correlate. Indeed, even Allais admits that Kant rejects the “idea that appearances represent things as they are in themselves”.\textsuperscript{351} How then, are we to understand the identity between appearances and things in themselves when they have no common properties?

\textsuperscript{350} Allais 2015, 73.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid, 75.
Allais claims to avoid this problem by distinguishing between (a) representing something in itself (which Kant agrees to allow) and (b) representing something as it is in itself (which he does not permit). While this may be the best way to interpret Kant, I think that it in fact causes problems for the one-world interpreter. If we do not represent something as it is in itself at all, then appearances and things in themselves share nothing in virtue of which they can be identified as ‘the same’. To this extent, I am in agreement with Van Cleve, who claims that “an object can depend on us for its Sosein (its being the way it is) only if it also depends on us for its Sein (its being period)”. If an object’s formal structures are ultimately grounded in subjective functions, then it is its own kind of entity. It cannot be the same as something it has nothing in common with. This is very problematic for any intrinsic nature interpreter of Kant. In any metaphysical context regarding composites and simples, the relational nature of the former is grounded in the non-relational nature of the latter. For Kant, as we have just seen, there is no way possible way to identify an appearance with its intrinsic complement, at least not without transforming the relation between appearances and things in themselves into a supervening one (which he clearly forbids). This is synonymous with the claim that there is no shared identity between a thing and its intrinsic nature, which is absurd.

Section 3.3
Theoretical vs. Practical Reason

We have been confronted by a serious problem. It would be best to repeat that problem here: It seems that we are caught between the existence/causality of the true correlate, on the one hand, and its non-sensible nature on the other. We must either (a) deny its non-sensible nature and implicate it in the world of appearance, or (b) affirm its non-sensible nature, and deny its existence.

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352 Ibid.
353 Van Cleve 1999, 5.
and causality. If we choose (a), then there is no true correlate of sensibility, which is now groundless – phenomenalism results. If we choose (b), on the other hand, then the thing in itself is a merely problematic entity; not even its possibility is knowable – it is a mere thought entity. On my interpretation, the *wahres Korrelatum* must be posited as a cause, despite being unknowable. We must in other words posit, without being able to know the nature or existence of, a non-sensible cause. It is a mere thought. For this reason, the true correlate is not a non-sensible cause, but merely the thought of one.

At the end of the Antinomies, Kant claims that a transcendent idea, which has a merely “intelligible object”, is a “mere thought entity”.\(^{354}\) In the sentences following this statement, he goes on to argue that the true correlate of sensibility is *itself* a transcendent idea: “for the existence of appearances, not grounded in the least within itself but always conditioned, demands we look around for something different from all appearances, hence for an intelligible object, with which this contingency would stop”.\(^{355}\) This amounts to calling the true correlate of sensibility a ‘transcendent idea’, whose object is a “mere thought entity”.\(^{356}\) This argument may be summarized in this way (I will deal with each premise and conclusion separately afterwards).

1) The receptive nature of sensibility requires affectivity by non-sensible objects.
2) The non-sensible cause of appearances is a *mere* idea.
3) Therefore, sensibility is affected by a *mere* idea.
4) Conclusion: the true correlate’s existence and causality is posited, but cannot be known.

**1. Sensibility receives non-sensible things, and informs them according to spatiotemporal rules.**

Appearances, in turn, are sensible intuitions. An appearance is, therefore, a relational concept; it signifies an object insofar as it is informed by the formal structures of sensibility: “appearance can

\(^{354}\) KrV A566/B594.
\(^{355}\) Ibid.
\(^{356}\) Ibid.
be nothing for itself and outside our kind of representation”. Appearances are, for this reason, ideal – they conform to the formal structures of sense. And if objects are appearances to the extent that they are informed by sensibility, then appearances cannot themselves affect sensibility, at least not originally. Now unless we posit an endless series of appearances (in which case the receptive nature of sensibility becomes dubious), there must be something given to sense that is not itself an appearance: “it follows naturally from the concept of an appearance in general that something must correspond that is not in itself appearance”. The concept of an appearance includes, in its very sense, the idea of something that does not appear, i.e. something supersensible.

Is this ‘something’ that which Kant calls the transcendental object, i.e. the object to which all our appearances are ultimately referred? It is unclear. The ‘transcendental object’ (transcendent object hereafter) is defined by Kant as a “pure concept” of the “merely intelligible cause of appearances in general”. This transcendent object is posited, “so that we may have something corresponding to sensibility as receptivity”. In the deduction it serves the very important function of being the ultimate conceptual unity – i.e. the concept of an object in general – to which the synthetic unity of apperception must correspond; it is “the unity which must be encountered in a manifold of cognition insofar as it stands in relation to an object”. The transcendent object performs the double function of (a) grounding and (b) organizing the sensible manifold. How are these two functions related? Why do they come up in one and the same section?

The concept of an appearance includes, in its very sense, the idea of something non-appearing. This can also be rephrased in terms of sensibility. We can say, for instance, that the

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357 KrV A252.
358 I leave open the question of double affection.
359 KrV A251.
360 KrVA109.
361 KrV A494/B523
362 KrV A494/B523.
363 KrV A108.
receptive nature of sensibility requires, as its ground, a relation to something non-sensible. In either case, Kant’s concept of sensibility involves the reference to a non-appearing, non-sensible ground. For human beings, there are only two fundamental faculties to which such an object can conceivably be given; these are sensibility and the understanding. Given that this referent of appearance is (in its very sense) free from sensibility, it is automatically and naturally associated with the only other faculty, i.e. the understanding. In fact, it is only through the freedom of this intellectual faculty from sensibility that such a referent is thinkable in the first place. Without its ability to think an object in general, the understanding could not even conceive of a non-sensible object. The understanding that *thinks* this referent is therefore pure.

As we have seen in section 3.1 of this chapter, the pure understanding is the mere form of an object in general; it is the empty, and merely subjective rule of synthesis. If the transcendental object is the entity of a merely negative concept (as Kant often claims), then it is an object insofar as it is non-sensible; without further speculation as to the contents of its nature – which Kant prohibits – it is a mere something. A ‘mere something’, however, is the object of the concept of an object in general. The transcendent object is, therefore, not just *an* object – it is *the* object of the pure understanding. For this reason, it is nothing more than the posited object of the pure understanding. It is, if you will, the objectification of the most general (and most subjective) synthetic rule. Where the synthetic rule is the mere concept of an object in general, the transcendental object is the object posited in itself. Thus, while the synthetic task is performed by its pure concept, the object of that concept performs the task of grounding sensibility.

Each of these two functions works to make experience possible. Objects of experience face the difficult task of appearing without, at the same time, becoming merely subjective. In order to appear, an object must be represented, and it must also be distinct from this representation –
otherwise, there would be nothing for cognition to cognize. Through rule-governed synthesis – i.e. through their reference to an object in general – appearances are made referable to an object distinct from the representation of them. If a representation is referred to an appearance (e.g. if of a yellow blob is referred to the object ‘banana’), then the latter must itself be correlated to an object (banana, without quotations); “all representations have their object, and can themselves be objects of other representations”.364 This cannot go on forever, however. In order for the receptivity of sensibility to be respected, an ultimate correlate must be posited:

appearances are not things in themselves, but themselves only representation, which in turn have their object, which therefore cannot be further intuited by us, and that may therefore be called the non-empirical, i.e., transcendental object = X.365

In order to intuit an object as an appearance, and not a thing in itself, the object as an appearance must be referred to a non-sensible correlate. It is something the understanding must posit behind appearance in order to maintain the externality of its object – otherwise, appearances would be indistinct from the acts apprehending them. Appearances would be mental contents plain and simple. Nothing would be cognized, but merely felt. To refer appearances ultimately to the transcendental object establishes the appearance as a ‘not self’, i.e. a thing that exists in and outside of its relation to the act of cognition. As a rule of synthesis, the concept of the transcendental object prepares the manifold for possible judgement; as the posited object of that concept, it protects the realm of appearance from the subjective flow of representation, which threatens to incorporate it completely.

The pure concept of a transcendental object is simply the rule through which appearances become related to an object.366 Though it is posited in order “that we may have something

364 KrV A109.
365 KrV A109.
366 KrV B522.
corresponding to sensibility as receptivity”, it is still an entirely problematic entity, the very possibility of which we cannot even decide.\textsuperscript{367} For given that it cannot in principle appear to intuition, it cannot in principle be cognized.\textsuperscript{368} It is a mere idea, derived from the pure concept of an object, and serves to complete the concept of appearance by acting as its ground. It is, in this respect, tied completely and utterly to sensibility: “it remains completely unknown whether such an object is to be encountered within or without us, whether it would be canceled out along with sensibility or whether it would remain…”\textsuperscript{369} This is a fairly drastic statement. It signifies that the ultimate correlate of an appearance is not an intelligible entity, but the necessary and problematic thought of one. If the transcendental object is the true correlate of sensibility, then reality in itself is not secured. Though the thing in itself must be posited to exist (so that something affects sensibility), it cannot be known to exist; not even its real possibility can be decided: “it is therefore no object of cognition itself, but only the representations of appearances under the concept of an object in general”.\textsuperscript{370}

If the transcendental object were the true correlate of sensibility, Kant’s idealism would be highly unsatisfying. After all, the transcendent object is not a transcendent reality; it is “something that can serve only as a correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition”.\textsuperscript{371} To the extent that it organizes appearances transcendentally a priori, it can be named their cause. To the extent that it is the object of a pure concept, it can even be called a non-sensible; “If we want to call this object a noumenon because the representation of it is nothing sensible, we are free to do so”.\textsuperscript{372} Neither of these determinations, however, secure this entity in

\textsuperscript{367} KrV B522.
\textsuperscript{368} KrV A288/B344.
\textsuperscript{369} KrV A288/B344.
\textsuperscript{370} KrV A250.
\textsuperscript{371} KrV A250.
\textsuperscript{372} KrV A288/B344
any way that would resolve, or even lighten the problem of noumenal causality. This entity is not even known to be really possible. It is the indeterminate something posited behind, and concretized or determined by, the realm of appearance.\textsuperscript{373} Neither the transcendental, nor the noumenal object can be the true correlate of appearance. Both of these objects cannot be said to firmly exist; they are possible in a merely logical way.

Though the differences between the transcendental and the noumenal object are difficult to pin-point, it is an important distinction. The transcendental object is an object in general; it is a subjective form whose pure correlate is, by abstraction, non-sensible. The object of this concept is, therefore, a suitable candidate for the task of grounding sensibility, even though its real possibility cannot be decided. The noumenal object in the negative sense is something insofar as it is not sensible. The noumenal object in the positive sense, on the other hand, is the object of an intellectual intuition. Importantly, the difference between these two kinds of noumena is not ontological; there are not negative noumenal objects here, and positive ones over there. These polarity predicates signify a difference in consideration, not in being. In order to consider noumenon negatively, I need only abstract everything sensible from the object. In this respect, since the transcendental object refers to something that is merely not sensible, it can be called a noumenon in the negative sense. To consider noumenon positively, on the other hand, I must not only abstract the object from its sensible form, I must also conceive of it in relation to an intellectual intuition, which is impossible.

Kant calls the Noumenon problematic. He designates a concept problematic that “contains no contradiction but that is also, as a boundary for given concepts, connected with other cognitions, the objective reality of which can in no way be cognized”.\textsuperscript{374} Since the real possibility of noumenal

\textsuperscript{373} Kant states this second function clearly A250.
\textsuperscript{374} KrV A254/B310.
objects cannot be decided, neither can the validity of their concept – it is, on this account, *problematical*. Of course, the logical possibility of these objects allows us to think them, even though they cannot be given as objects of possible experience. The function of the concept is not, and cannot be, a theoretical one. It is, instead, a methodological notion. In its reference to non-sensible objects (when taken in the negative sense), the concept of a noumenon articulates where sensibility ends and things in themselves begin: “this concept is necessary in order not to extend sensible intuition to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible cognition”.375 If sensibility had unlimited reach – i.e. if it could receive all objects – then *appearances* would be things in themselves. Without an ‘outside’, or transcendent ground, appearances lose the metaphysical incompleteness that differentiates them from objects of the pure understanding.

When sensibility is given a boundary, so too is the way in which an object is given to the understanding. By positing noumena then, the understanding not only limits sensibility, it also limits its objective applicability to the materials established therein.376 If sensibility were unlimited, on the other hand, the authority of the categories would not be isolated to a particular region; it would extend to objects as they are in themselves. With the concept of a non-sensible object establishing the limit between what can and cannot be ‘given’, the breadth of the understanding’s objective validity is simultaneously narrowed. Thus, although it must think a non-sensible object in order to discipline itself, it can only ever *think* it; where the categories have no validity, the understanding can only think “an unknown something (*ein unbekanntes Etwas*)”.377

375 *KrV* A 254/B309.
376 *KrV* A256/B312.
377 *KrV* A256/B312.
2. At least two things are required of the thing in itself. First, the thing in itself must be posited in order for sensibility to have a correlate. The metaphysical incompleteness of appearances demands the existence of a non-sensible ground. Second, the theoretical function of the thing in itself is to limit sensibility and the understanding. In the first case, the thing in itself must exist. In the second, we must posit the existence of an entity whose real possibility we cannot assume. But doesn’t Kant say that the thing in itself exists? How can he say it really exists, if we cannot decide if it is really possible?

Sometimes, Kant is very clear about the existence of things in themselves. In the preface to the ‘B’ edition, Kant claims that “cognition reaches appearances only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual (wirklich) for itself but uncognized by us”.

Again, in the antinomies, Kant writes that a spatiotemporal entity is “only an appearance of this to us unknown being, which was given to sensibility…”.

In the prolegomena, Kant is even clearer: “I by all means avow that there are bodies outside us, i.e. things which, though completely unknown to us what they might be in themselves…”.

In other sections, whether mind independent objects can be known to exist is less clear. In most of the places where this occurs, Kant is drawing limits for the use of categories. Where an object is a thing in itself, it cannot be thought “of either as magnitude or as reality or as substance etc…”.

More to the point, if categories are applicable only to objects of possible experience, then they cannot be determined, though they can be merely thought, through modal concepts. And if predicking objects in themselves with modal concepts is impossible, whether these objects are really possible, exist, or are necessary cannot be known. This is confirmed in a very important passage at the end of the section On the Impossibility of the

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378 KrV Bxx. My emphasis.
379 KrV A492/B520.
380 Proleg: 289.
381 KrV B344/A288
Ontological Proof, where Kant writes, “for objects of pure thinking there is no means whatever for cognizing their existence...and though an existence outside the field [of experience] cannot be declared absolutely impossible, it is a presupposition (Voraussetzung) that we cannot justify through anything”. 382 If Kant thinks that the thing in itself cannot be known to exists, but does exist, then he is making a presuppositions we can never in principle justify.

What it means for Kant to say that something ‘exists’ is complicated. In a recent article, Toni Kannisto has pointed out that Kant’s account of existence is understood best in the opposition to Baumgarten’s. 383 For Baumgarten ‘existence’ is a predicate belonging to a thoroughly determined concept: “singular beings are internally entirely determined and hence are actual”. 384 A thoroughly determined concept is a concept in which every possible predicate (i.e. every possible determination) is either affirmed or denied. Kant defines this principle in the opening section of The Transcendental Ideal: “everything...as to its possibility, further stands under the principle of thoroughgoing determination; according to which among all possible predicates of things, insofar as they are compared with their opposites, one must apply to it”. 385 Why does Baumgarten think that a thoroughly determinate concept – which in every case is either determined by affirming A or not A of X – is the concept of something that exists?

For Baumgarten, inner determinations either belong to the essence (e.g. a woman being rational) or are “consequences of the essence” (e.g. a woman being musical). 386 Where the former determinations make up the internal possibility of the object, the affections realize that essence:

382 KrV A601/B629.
383 Kannisto 2016.
384 Baumgarten 2014, § 152.
385 KrV A572/B600
386 Baumgarten 2014, § 41.
“existence is the collection of affections”\(^{387}\). A possible human being is merely a universal,\(^{388}\) i.e. a ‘rational animal’, but a human being that is also 5 feet tall, imaginative, and born in Canada exists if, not just these, but all possible affections are either affirmed or denied. Where essence establishes the possibility of something, its conditional accidents individuate, or actualize, it’s essence.\(^{389}\) In a word, something’s existence adds to the possibility of the object, since it results from the total procurement of affections, which indeed amplifies the concept. For Kant, this is problematic because a thoroughly determined concept is still only possible: We can imagine, for instance, the idea of a dog as represented by a divine being. Given the holy nature of this intellect, this concept could be represented as being thoroughly determined – it would be formed by the affirmation or denial of every possible predicate belonging to this dog (e.g. it is a Border Collie, living 154 kilometers west of Toronto, weighing 15 pounds 4 ounces etc…). This would not, however, entail the existence of this dog. For “although Kant agrees that every existing being is necessarily thoroughly determined, he does not grant that conversely every thoroughly determined being exists”.\(^{390}\) A thoroughly determined concept does not mean that it exists. To say that something exists cannot, therefore, determine the concept any further. Existence, says Kant, is not a real predicate.

Existence cannot be a real predicate for when it is said of a subject it attaches to the totality, or the thoroughgoing determination, of its possibility. Existence is not a real predicate, in other words, because it can be subtracted from a thoroughly determined concept without diminishing its determinacy. For this reason, it can be concluded that the actuality of an object does not include

\(^{387}\) Baumgarten 2014, § 55.
\(^{388}\) Kanniso 2016, 297.
\(^{389}\) Ibid.
\(^{390}\) Ibid.
anything more than its possibility (or ‘concept’). If it did, the possibility of the object would not adequately characterize its instantiation, nor would a concept adequately represent its object. If actuality contained something more than possibility, then something would be actual that was not possible, which is absurd. Instead of adding to the object, existence is a predicate that posits the object without adjusting it, e.g. Q is vs. Q is P.

A real predicate adds something to the concept. What does this mean? The difference between synthetic and analytic judgments can helpful here. In both synthetic and analytic propositions, predicates add something to the concept, albeit in a different way. In the first case, the predicate adds something by attaching to the total concept; in the second instance, the predicate adds by completing, or fulfilling the concept. Where the added predicate can be subtracted in the first case, it cannot in the second. In both cases, however, the predicate can add something to a concept only if it is not identical, or does not assume, that total concept. In an analytic judgement, p is q (e.g. bodies are extended) but q is not p (extensions are not all bodies, e.g. ‘space’). In a synthetic proposition ‘p’ is not ‘q’ (e.g. trees are not green) and ‘q’ is not ‘p’ (green is not a tree). In the former case, the predicate cannot be subtracted from the concept without contradicting it; it adds to the concept by completing it. In the latter case, the subtraction of the predicate diminishes the determinacy of the total object; it adds to the concept by enhancing its determinacy.

An existing object on the other hand is identical to the concept, or possibility, it instantiates and can, therefore, be subtracted without causing contradiction or diminishment. Existence is, therefore, a synthetic predicate inasmuch as it modifies the total concept, even in cases where the concept cannot be determined any further. It does not, however, modify the referent of the concept, but the concept itself; it adds nothing to the concept synthetically, it only refers to the instantiation

391 KrV A599/B627.
of its object in a possible perception. To say that a ‘Larch Tree’ exists does not add anything to the object, it only posits the object external to its possibility. What is more, even if this concept were represented by a divine intelligence in which all its possible predicates were determined – e.g. a tree of 14 feet, changing color on the 4th day of the 10th month of the 16th year of the 21st century in an area north of Toronto etc. – it would still be a merely possible object. If this tree were to exist, the concept would not change; it would be externalized, instantiated, and posited to be.

The principle of existence can be stated as follows: something exists, if it instantiates, without determining the concept. What does it mean to say that something exists then? If it adds no determination to the possibility of its object, what does instantiation mean? What is the truth maker of questions like “is there a bear in the backyard?” or “have you been to the Saturday market?”. The truth maker cannot be the concepts involved, since concepts, regardless of how determinate they may be, only ever refer to possible objects. For Kant then, something can exist only if it becomes grounded in something ultimately non-conceptual, i.e. in something sensible. This non-conceptual material allows something to be added to the concept without altering its content. The object itself is added. Kant writes,

If the issue were an object of sense, then I could not confuse the existence of the thing with the mere concept of the thing. For through its concept, the object would be thought only as in agreement with the universal conditions of a possible empirical cognition in general, but through its existence it would be thought as contained in the context of the entirety of experience; thus, through connection with the content of the entire experience the concept of the object is not in the least increased, but our thinking receives more through it, namely, a possible perception.392

There are two main points and each play an important role in Kant’s modal framework.393 An object of cognition is possible only if it obeys the general conditions of experience, which are the forms of sensibility and the categories of the understanding. An object that is neither spatial nor

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392 KrV A600/B628.
393 Here I am following Uygar Abaci 2008, 590.
temporal is not, therefore, a possible object; nor is an object unregulated by the synthetic rules of the understanding. In this respect, a possible object is an object that is both notionally sensible and really conceivable. An actual object of cognition, on the other hand, is one that is posited as contained within the dynamical process of nature, which is made up of a community of spatiotemporal objects obeying causal laws.\textsuperscript{394} Implicated within the spatiotemporal framework and the causal nexus, an actual object is perceptible in principle.

Of course, this does not mean that something is actual only insofar as it is perceived – after all, there are lonely moonrocks that obey this framework and these laws. Instead, an actual object is an object that is the object of a possible perception “in accordance with the analogies of experience, which exhibit all connection in an experience in general”.\textsuperscript{395} A moonrock shaped like the Coliseum, i.e. a merely possible object, is not a possible perception because it cannot be encountered in the context of any experience. More simply, a merely possible object, i.e. an object that is not actually sensible, cannot be encountered within the framework of experience, since it could not be given. An actual moonrock, on the other hand, can be encountered within the synthetic context of sensations, whose relations are determined a priori by the analogies of experience. It can be given to sensibility and integrated into the unity of the synthetic and causal series (even from photographs alone). For these reasons it should now be clear that (for Kant at least) the modal categories signify its relation of object to the “faculty of cognition”.\textsuperscript{396} On the one hand, an object’s possibility is determined by its obedience to “the formal conditions of experience (in accordance

\textsuperscript{394} Following Kant’s description of Nature at KrV A125.
\textsuperscript{395} KrV A271/B224.
\textsuperscript{396} KrV A 219/B266.
An actual object, on the other hand, “is connected with the material conditions of experience (of sensation)”.

An object coming to be connected with the “material conditions of experience” does not result in the modification, but only in the instantiation of its concept. Although it must be organized by categorical rules and synthetic principles, this matter of experience originates in a sensible, and not in an intellectual, faculty. The fact that it is a sensible and non-conceptual substratum allows matter to add something to a concept (namely, a corresponding object) without adjusting the determination or sense of that concept. Something is said to instantiate a concept and exist when it is, or can be, sensed. For this reason, we can ultimately know what exists only empirically, a posteriori. Kant does say that we can know of something’s existence “comparatively a priori”, which signifies an inference from something perceived (e.g. “attracted iron fillings”) to something not perceived, but that still yet exists (e.g. “Magnetic matter penetrating all bodies”). Still, this a priori knowledge is only ever ‘comparative’ as it is ultimately grounded in what is immediately given. We cannot ever, therefore, infer the existence of an object from its concept alone: “in the mere concept of a thing no characteristic of its existence can be encountered at all”.

According to Kant, an entity can be known to exist only if it (a) satisfies the formal conditions of cognition and (b) is associated within the sensible context of experience. If it satisfies the first condition, but not the second, it is possible. If it satisfies both, it is actual. A non-sensible object can achieve neither task. First, though a non-sensible object can, and is indeed, thinkable according to categories, it escapes the reach of intuition altogether. For this reason, the real possibility of things in themselves cannot be established theoretically – our thoughts concerning

397 KrV A218/B265.
398 KrV A218/B266.
399 KrV A 225/B272.
400 KrV A 225/B272.
them are empty. If their very possibility cannot be decided, then neither can they be known exist. This leads me to the second point. Given that existence is a predicate reserved for sensible entities, the existence of non-sensible entities cannot be known. Of course, it cannot be established that transcendent things do not exist; after all, the very possibility of an intellectual intuition includes, in its very sense, the parallel possibility of existents that are not sensible, but that instantiate their concepts intelligibly.

Kant cannot, therefore, offer us an argument for believing in the existence of things in themselves. If he did, he would have to show (a) that they are really possible and (b) that they can appear, neither of which is possible. If things in themselves do exist, their actuality is not merely an assumption, since assumptions usually concern what is both obvious and really possible. And not only is the idea of a transcendent, non-dimensional cause unobvious; its real possibility cannot be established, at least not without transgressing the boundaries, and indulging the problematic desires, of reason. The assumption that sensibility is receptive carries with it the added assumption that, if something appears, sensibility is affected by something that is not, itself, an appearance. We must, therefore, assume an existent without being able to know if it does, or even can exist.

Ameriks has claimed that the notion of things in themselves is an assumption, which arises in the consideration of human finitude and the receptivity of senses.\textsuperscript{401} He writes that, “Kant’s starting point is that non-personal things really affect us”.\textsuperscript{402} Allais agrees and claims that Kant “starts by assuming that there are things… he then argues that our cognition of these things is limited to mind-dependent appearances of them….and that we cannot know them as they are apart from their mind dependent appearances…”.\textsuperscript{403} In both cases, it is clear that, while mind

\textsuperscript{401} Ameriks 2003, 26.
\textsuperscript{402} Ameriks 2003, 30.
\textsuperscript{403} Allais 2015, 35.
independent things are assumed from the outset, they are transformed into ‘things in themselves’ (as we have come to know them) only after spatiotemporal properties have been designated as being merely ideal. The natural assumption of a mind independent object, whose existence is indifferent to relations, and whose internal nature affects sensibility, is not only confirmed by Kant’s Copernican Hypothesis, which assumes that cognition and its object are external to one another, it also constantly validates the use of the term ‘appearance’, which refers in its very concept to the non-appearing ground of its origin. What is important is that in these preliminary stages of the assumption, the mind dependence of an appearance does not, by itself, entail any difference between it and its independent counterpart. Besides having the merely relational property of being cognized, which (like all relational properties) cannot sufficiently explain or justify an alteration in the attributes of its intrinsic version, an appearance and the thing in itself are in principle identical. The difference between them is established, not merely through the relation that engenders the former, but through the mind’s contribution of form, which receives the original and transforms it into a palatable variety. Of course, for Kant these mind dependent properties happen to be those by means of which an object becomes knowable.

Over the course of the first Critique we come to learn a lot about what is merely assumed from the outset. I would go so far to wager that what we learn – i.e. that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal, that they elude the categories, that they are causes etc. – actually undermines the legitimacy of the assumption. It is reasonable that, if the arguments that follow from an assumption, make that assumption incomprehensible or unobvious, then we should either reconsider the assumption or the arguments subsequent to the conjecture. If we assume that objects exist in a way independent from our cognition of them, that is one thing. If after having subtracted every mind dependent property from an appearance, we are left with nothing but the mere thought
of an indeterminate something, the real possibility of which we cannot decide, then this is another thing altogether. In Kant, we begin by assuming an entity and discover later that the metaphysical possibility of its existence cannot even be decided. In the long run, we are assuming something that might be impossible. Sure, this entity does an excellent job at grounding, and limiting the reach of, our receptive faculty. In doing so, however, it is forced to act in a way that is not permitted by its kind, i.e. as a cause. Not only does the assumption become unobvious and problematic, it comes into a fundamental conflict with the very argument it is an assumption of!

To reiterate, my point here is not that the things in themselves are unthinkable; of course they are. My claim is that, if Kant really assumes that nonsensible objects underlie appearances as their cause, then it is an assumption that transgresses the limits of reason. Through the critique of pure reason, which results in the disciplining of the categories, i.e. in the restriction of their valid use to what is sensible, this innocent assumption (if, indeed it is one) is transformed into a problematic one. We are not just assuming something that is unknowable; we are assuming something dogmatically, without first taking the limits of reason into account. Someone could respond to this point and claim that the unknowability of things in themselves, while central to the critical project as a whole, also plays a justificatory role in the supposition of the existence of these objects. They might argue that these supersensible causes must be assumed because they are simultaneously unknowable and necessary for sensibility. The problem with this argument is that it opens a floodgate. If we can assume that certain nonsensible objects exist because they follow analytically from certain concepts (e.g. from ‘appearance’, ‘sensibility’, cause’, ‘etc…), then the understanding would have a pure object, i.e. a noumenon taken positively. In this scenario, the only metaphysical difference between a Kantian universe and a Leibnizian one would be epistemological; where the former reality could never be known, but only assumed, the latter
would be deduced absolutely. Both realities, however, would be consistent with inferences made from pure categories through reason.

For some commentators, noumenal causality is a concept that is justified only in the context of second Critique, since it is here that the notion of a non-sensible cause is substantiated through the condition of freedom. Because this substantiation pertains only to free noumenal agents, and not to the true correlate of bodily appearances, others (like Ameriks) resist such a view. I am of the opinion that, although the notion of noumenal causality can be substantiated practically, this substantiation is not universally applicable to all objects. While the noumenal causality of rational agents can be authentically postulated, at least insofar as they are capable of enacting a universal law, this validation cannot be extended to the true correlate of a sensible appearance. How such a causal correlate is possible remains a mystery and a problem.

In the preface to the B edition of the first Critique, Kant suggests that the objective validity of a concept is attained when something “more” is added to what is merely thought. In the case of theoretical cognition, this ‘more’ is always a possible intuition. To this point, he adds the claim that “this “more…need not be sought in theoretical sources of cognition; it may also lie in practical ones”. Certain concepts, whose objects cannot be intuited, are validated by practical reason. In the Critique of Practical Reason, this validation occurs in respect to three objects: god, freedom, and immortality. Since freedom is a noumenal cause – i.e. a cause that can determine an action from a supersensible realm – it will be our focus here.

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404 See, for instance, Hogan 2009.
406 KrV Bxxvi.
407 KrV Bxxvi.
408 KpR; 132-133.
Between the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*, Kant struggled to decide whether to derive the moral law from the concept of freedom or vice versa. When he derives the moral law from freedom, as is done in the former work, then he is unable to appeal to the concept of duty in the order to justify noumenal causality (i.e. freedom). Because of this, Kant is forced to make theoretical claims about freedom that contradict the boundaries established in the first *Critique*. His solution to this difficulty (which consists in deriving freedom from the moral law) is presented in the second *Critique*. But Kant faces a difficulty of equal consequence here. If he must derive freedom from the moral law, then the possibility of enacting the latter must be merely assumed. If the moral law reveals our freedom to us, then we have to assume, without further argumentation, that our obedience to universal maxims is not founded by a cause external to that duty. That is, we must simply accept as a fact that our incentive to obey the moral law does not necessarily arise from an external, albeit subliminal, cause. Ameriks has pointed out that Kant, in his justification of freedom from morality, moves from the psychological absence of “causal content in ones intentions…to the metaphysical absence of any natural cause as the efficient ground of that act…” This possibility threatens to undermine Kant’s Copernican revolution of value, which culminates in the idea that “only human reason is in a position to confer value on the objects”. This problem can be summarized as follows: if we justify the moral law through freedom, then freedom is theoretically problematic. But if we justify freedom through the moral law, then moral law must be a fact, i.e. reality without further qualification. If we are unable to rule out that

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409 Guyer 2006, 222.
410 Ameriks, 219.
411 Korsgaard 1986, 499.
possibility that our moral acts are determined by some insidious cause, and that they therefore only appear to be freely enacted, we cannot be certain of our autonomy.\footnote{Guyer 2006, 222: “we cannot give any theoretical proof of the freedom of our will at all, we can only take our awareness of our obligation under the moral law as a given and infer the freedom of our will from that.”}

Since we are concerned here with the substantiation of a noumenal cause, and not with the moral law, I will focus on the notion of freedom as it appears in the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason}. Here, the condition of the possibility of enacting a pure practical law requires that, regardless of natural determinations involved, the law is able to determine my will. Thus, even though the consequences of duty may be dire, and my natural tendency towards happiness encourages me to cheat, my act is moral if I can and do enact a universal law, which (as universal) is indifferent to contextual determinations and causes. This, in turn, is possible only if my will is determinable by a cause that is, itself, free from the natural, mechanical nexus. A moral act is, therefore, the act of a free will, i.e. a will that is determined by a universal law of reason. Insofar as it determines an action, the will is a cause. Insofar as the moral maxim determining the will to action – i.e. the object of the good will – is universal and necessary, the will is free from the contextual, causally determined nexus of nature; it is free.

The argument may be summarized as follows: since (a) freedom is a condition of the possibility of enacting the moral law, and since (b) the “consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason”,\footnote{KpR: 31.} freedom must necessarily exist in beings that can enact moral laws. In order to be free, furthermore, the will must stand above the sensible world of nature, where every event proceeds necessarily from what preceded it, i.e. mechanically.\footnote{See KrV A189/B233.} If it was not raised into a noumenal realm, the will could not be determined by a universal maxim unconditionally, but would be effected by mechanical impulses that are conditional, and that vary from context to context.
context.\textsuperscript{415} Beings that can enact the moral law, must therefore exist as noumenal causes. In rational beings, the reality of this law within them is a fact. Therefore, rational beings exist as noumenal causes to the extent that they are practical, i.e. can be determined by the moral law. The conclusion of all this is that, for the first time, Kant is able to substantiate the concept of a supersensible object, albeit practically. For although a noumenal cause cannot be sensed, and cannot therefore be an object of theoretical reason, it can be validated to the extent that a rational will is determinable by the moral law. Kant writes,

\ldots something different and quite paradoxical takes the place of this vainly sought deduction of the moral principle, namely that the moral principle, conversely itself serves as the principle of the deduction of an inscrutable faculty which no experience could prove but which speculative reason had to assume as at least possible.\ldots namely, the faculty of freedom, of which the moral law is, in fact, a law of causality through freedom and hence a law of the possibility of a supersensible nature, just as the metaphysical law of events in the sensible world was a law of the causality of the sensible nature; and the moral law thus determines that which speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined, namely the law for the causality the concept of which was only negative in the latter, and thus for the first time provides objective reality to its concept.\textsuperscript{416}

We cannot validate the concept of a noumenal cause theoretically, but only practically. I cannot, therefore, know anything about this cause except what is required of it in grounding the possibility of moral law: “I consider myself authorized to make no other use of it [i.e. freedom] than with regard to the moral law which determines its reality, that is, only a practical use”.\textsuperscript{417}

Noumenal causality has gained objective validity only in regard to rational/practical beings, and not in regard to non-personal bodies (i.e. the vast majority of the cosmos). Of course, while this world of thought and reason must appear to internal sense if freedom is to be deduced, freedom itself cannot be sensed at all – it can only be indirectly concluded from the presence of

\textsuperscript{415} KpR:48: “the determination of the causality of beings in the sensible world can never be unconditioned…”
\textsuperscript{416} KpR:47.
\textsuperscript{417} KpR: 56.
the moral law in reason.\textsuperscript{418} Freedom is, therefore, a valid concept only in regards to beings that are rational in a practical way. Unless we conclude that all objects have the moral law within them, which is absurd, it is unclear how the practical validation of the noumenal concept of freedom can grant reality to the true correlate of non-rational bodies. My intuition tells me that it cannot and Kant agrees: “this objective reality of the pure concepts in the field of the supersensible…these categories have reference only to beings as intelligences, and in them, only in relation to reason and will…”. This limitation follows from Kant’s argument overall and is a result of consistency. For if the concept of supersensible cause is legitimate only to the extent that it is a precondition for the moral law, then it is substantiated only in regard to beings capable of receiving and enacting this law.

For Kant, practical reason is filling in a void left by the hypothesis of theoretical reason. This hypothesis – that there is a noumenal realm underlying our own – must remain theoretically empty, since no intuition can correspond to the concepts of freedom, God, and immortality. Practically, however, each of these concepts are given objects through postulation, through “presuppositions having a necessarily practical reference” to the universal moral law.\textsuperscript{419} In the case of freedom, the concept of a nonsensible causality, which was assumed in the first Critique, is finally substantiated, but only in the case of intelligences. It does not, therefore, sufficiently resolve the problem of noumenal causality in impersonal objects and irrational animals.

Kant, in attempting to ground the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition is working under the assumption that either (a) cognition most conform to the object or (b) the object must conform to cognition. For Kant, having recognized that the prior understanding of Nature’s form is pre-

\textsuperscript{418} To this extent, the moral law ‘within others’ can only ever be inferred from behaviors that are deemed to be inconsistent with the laws of nature (e.g. resisting temptation, disregarding consequences of enacting a principle etc…).
\textsuperscript{419} KpR:132.
requisite for the experience and knowledge of it, the first epistemological model is entirely problematic. Cognition cannot learn what is universally and necessarily true of Nature from nature itself, i.e. empirically; knowledge can only move towards such certainty, driven on by the ideal of reason to uncover natural laws; laws, moreover, whose very discovery presupposes the anticipation, knowledge and existence of a more fundamental unity, a formal unity. To explain the a priori knowledge of this, Kant hypothesizes a reversal of (a). To Kant, the ‘promise of nature’ to behave according to laws that guarantee to us its intelligibility can be trusted if, and only if, the knower herself is the ground of this intelligibility; for then her very experience is sufficient for the anticipation of universal and necessary laws. The harmony and regularity that constitutes nature results from our mind’s ideal structures and would be unknowable if the mind had not structured it accordingly, or simply ‘put it there’ (hineingelegen).\textsuperscript{420} Whatever is known of nature a priori must, therefore, be assigned an ideal location and be limited, in its applicability, to experience.

But if this revolution of his inevitably leads to the problem of the thing in itself, should we not reconsider the very framework from which Kant begins? Perhaps beginning with a difference between mind and world is the problem.

\textsuperscript{420} KrV A125. See Laywine 1993, 10. puts this point well.
Chapter Four  
On the Reconciliation of Mind and World

The first part of this chapter is devoted to tracing the origins of Kant’s notion of things in themselves back to his Copernican Hypothesis. In section 4.1, I will argue that models which reduce the mind to the world cannot explain how our judgements might agree with that world. Idealism on the other hand, which results from reducing the world to mind, are destined to produce a realm of unknowable things. In section 4.2, I will go on to show how Kant’s own idealism generates the notion of things in themselves. In 4.3 I will offer the beginnings of a non-reconciliatory model. When mind and object are taken to be the same, formally speaking, the dynamic changes altogether. Mind recognizes itself in natural objects because it is nature’s form; in this way, nature is self-conscious through cognition. At the transcendental level, cognition is the self-consciousness of nature. Where we do, in fact, cognize the world in itself, this world is limited to what is ‘natural’ (i.e. what obeys space/time and the categories).

Section 4.1  
On the Oscillation of Frameworks: Empiricism and Rationalism

Reconciliatory frameworks are usually traced back to Descartes’s famous dualistic distinction between res cogitans and res extensa. On the mental side, self-conscious sensing, willing, and conceptualizing are included.421 On the other side – and separated by an abyss – matter and motion intermingle mechanically, i.e. thoughtlessly.422 Though the origin of this model does not concern us, it is important to recognize that it did, in fact, originate. It is not, in other words, the only model of mind and world that history has given us. In the Aristotelian tradition, for instance, conceptual thinking was informed, not by mere sense impressions or a priori ideas, but by the formal cause of the object. To say that the concept (or what Aquinas calls the ‘intelligible species’) and the object have the same form – one in sensuous matter, the other in intelligible matter – is to say that the matter is identically informed. In sensuous matter, the natural predicates are separated from the

421 Kenny 1989, 1.  
422 Kenny 1989, 8.
accidentals, determining the nature and unity of the substance; in intelligible matter, the form determines a concept, the rules of thinking about said substance.\textsuperscript{423}

The Aristotelian argument for this view is complex but it hinges on the principle of homogeneity between knower and known. In Thomas’s words, “that which is received is in the recipient according to the mode of the recipient”.\textsuperscript{424} This principle leads Aristotelian to conclude that, since the intellect grasps the nature of things immaterially – e.g. when I think about a horse, there is no individual horse weighing my head down – the mind must be “capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, it must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object”.\textsuperscript{425} The case is similar with Aquinas, who writes that “in the intellect…the species of bodies, which are material and changeable, are received immaterially and unchangeably according to its own mode”.\textsuperscript{426} On these accounts, substances are composed of matter and form hylomorphically. Where the former cause makes the substance perceptible, the latter cause makes it intelligible or thinkable. And given that a form is ‘one-in-many’, the form in the intellect is potentially identical to the form in the substance itself. Thus, in a world in which form is operative, there is no reason to make the ‘world thinkable’ by reducing one term to the other, at least not to the extent that the form informing our thinking about a substance also informs that substance itself.

This is different from reconciliatory models, which of course denounce the efficacy of formal causation in nature and, thereby, eliminate the ‘common ground’ between concepts and their worldly objects. The elimination of this common ground has significant epistemological impact; how our concepts correspond to the world becomes enigmatic. While the increasing

\textsuperscript{423} There has been a growing interest in this kind of Metaphysical Epistemology. See, for instance, Mitscherling 2009, Haldane 1999, Owens 1991, Oderberg 2007, 2016, Feser 2014 and others.
\textsuperscript{424} Sum. II, Q84, Art.1co.
\textsuperscript{425} De Anima 429a4
\textsuperscript{426} ST I-II.Q84, co.
tendency to reduce the mind to world produces thinkers like Locke and Hobbes, the opposite
tendency of reducing the world to mind generates thinkers of the rationalist tradition like Kant and
Fichte. Taken in their extreme, both traditions culminate in philosophical positions incapable of
knowing the natural world in its own right. On the one hand, Hume’s skepticism reduces our
empirical knowledge to a system of coherence incapable of correspondence; our “knowledge”，
when taken in this light, is no longer insightful,\textsuperscript{427} it is merely useful. On the other hand, Kant’s
idealism renders the natural order a mere appearance; the earthly cosmos is the mere appearance
of the world in itself. In the first case, our ideas are constructed from heterogeneous materials (i.e.
sense impressions), which undercuts the possibility of their correspondence from the outset. In the
second case, things are transformed into mere representations.

Reconciliatory accounts are philosophical systems that assume a difference between mind
and world. This is not just any difference, however – it is fundamental. Indeed, what is defining
about the ‘reconciliatory difference’ is that it not only licenses, but also prompts or activates a
philosophical reduction of one term to the other. Since it contests the possibility of correspondence
– i.e. of truth – it motivates reconciliatory systems that, in their very nature, seek to overcome, or
at least lighten, the mind’s estrangement from the world. The result of all of this is that, whatever
is attributed to the concept of mind is excluded from the concept of the world and vice versa. The
world, according to a reconciliatory account, is devoid of conceptual content – objects are bare
presences, not specifications of higher forms, ideas, or kinds. In order for truth to be possible,
philosophers have to justify the use of concepts. However, because these thinkers begin with the
assumed difference between realms, no reasonable solution to the problem of knowledge can
cancel this difference. Thus, the reconciliation cannot resolve the difference – it can only connect

\textsuperscript{427} Hume 1994, 49.
the sides. While I think trying to decide which philosophers belong in the reconciliatory camp is an important task, it is not an easy one (especially in the case, for instance, of Spinoza). It also is not necessary here. My task, instead, is to show that any philosophy that happens to be reconciliatory will be problematic. Since my focus in this thesis is Kant, my overall aim is to establish (a) how his account is reconciliatory and (b) problematic thereby.

If concepts are derived from non-conceptual entities – e.g. by associations of impressions – then concepts cannot agree with the world, they can merely translate said world into an idiom alien to its nature. The result is that, though concepts can cohere amongst themselves to varying degrees of harmony, they cannot correspond to worldly objects, at least not in the robust Aristotelian sense. If natural entities of the world are composed of material stuff, and contain nothing consistent with the intellect’s own mode (e.g. generality, universality, essentiality), then the world is external to the realm of intelligibility. Edifices of knowledge are, therefore, constructions or tools for describing the world, not for knowing it, at least not in the sense of ‘knowledge’ as outlined above. McDowell’s philosophy prospers from this problem, at least as it shows its head in the ‘myth of the given’. For if we understand our conceptual capacities as bumping up against a non-conceptual realm of purely empirical stuff, what Sellars calls ‘the Given’, then one must resort to theories that “express precisely the unnerving idea that the spontaneity of our conceptual thinking is not subject to rational constraint from outside”.\textsuperscript{428} This, of course, entails a “coherence theory of knowledge”, which refutes the possibility of knowing the given world and instead affirms the consistency of propositions with one another.\textsuperscript{429} To the extent that he agrees with Davidson, McDowell inherits a resistance to non-conceptual constraints on reason, but goes on to also resist

\textsuperscript{428} McDowell 1994, 15.
\textsuperscript{429} McDowell 1994, 15.
a coherence theory of truth, which merely accepts a disconnection between thought and reality. Though I find McDowell’s own solution problematic, this is beside the point. If we sever all conceptual rules, formal ideas, and logical categories from a world unconstrained by concepts or forms, any attempt to defend a correspondence theory – i.e. an affirmation of the agreement between cognition and object – is bound to fail. Instead we are left with a coherence view that tells us more about how we think than it does about the nature of our reality.

If the contents of the world were not possible objects of thought in essence – i.e. if they were not instantiations of thoroughly specified concepts in principle – then their intelligibility would be accidental. In this case, no concepts could apply universally with necessity and no validation of our a priori concepts would be possible. Instead, these innate concepts would be turned into habits constitutive of thought which may, or may not, happen to find themselves specified in concrete, particular objects. To put it in analytical terms, the propositional structure of the world would be external to the possibility of that world. Or, in the words of Sellers, the world would be different in kind from the space of reasons and would, for that reason, be unable to act as the ultimate, non-inferential tribunal for empirical propositions. If the principles of intelligibility are external to the possibility of the world, then their nature is in principle unknowable, and such is the progression from bare empiricism to skepticism.

If the world is adequate to thought in principle, its contents must be understood as being concrete instantiations of thoroughly specified concepts. They are concepts, or specific forms, enumerated by extension. The specification of general concepts permits the functions of determination and unification to occur simultaneously. In the specification of the concept substance (into say ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’), the formal in kind is concretized through the

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430 McDowell 1994,14.
431 See Haldane 1999, 54.
division through their determinable (i.e. the genus) into kinds that necessarily bear a general resemblance to one another. Spatiotemporal determination intervenes and marks the distinction between the infima species and its particular instantiation. Spatiotemporal dimensions are not, therefore, a specific difference or determination, but the expression of a rule. This is why spatiotemporal determinations are accidental to whatever object exhibits them. Undergoing change in place and time never entails undergoing a change in kind; at least not metaphysically speaking (of course, there may be nomolgoical constraints).

There is also the more fundamental problem, pointed out most succinctly by Sellars. Empiricists are, perhaps by nature, nominalists; for them, particulars are the only existents of experience. That empirical objects can correspond to propositions is, on this basis, entirely problematic given that states of affairs, e.g. that a is F (i.e. Fa), are not themselves (nor do they only involve) particulars. According to sense-data empiricists, the particulars of sensation are not, by nature, organized in a way that is suitable for the kinds of judgements we make about the world. Experience without propositional content is, therefore, incapable of offering up reasons for endorsing certain assertions. The mere association of particular impressions is not, in other words, a suitable tribunal for the empirical assertions we make. Nor is it a suitable ground for the generation of concepts themselves. Given the independence with which each particular stands to the next – i.e. given that no two particulars are instantiations of a universal – the resemblance between particular impressions cannot be analyzable. It cannot be a basic relation given that each impression is altogether distinct from the other. An explanation is required in this case, because what is basic for a nominalist is the irreducibility between particular impressions.

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432 Sellars 1956, 129.
433 McDowell 1994, xii.
434 For an overview of arguments against nominalism see Armstrong 1978 Vol.1, 11-56.
An empiricist might respond by arguing that our concepts arise through a process of ‘abstraction’, which begins with the comparison of particular entities and ends with what is common to many of them. Since our abstraction in this case would be ultimately rooted in the world, we are justified in claiming that our concepts correspond to that world. The problem with this view arises when we consider that, according to the empiricist view, particular entities are not instantiations of general entities to begin with and are, for this very reason, separated from one another as singular individuals. It is hard to see, therefore, how perception – which denotes the discernment of those singular individuals – can perceive a likeness between objects without appealing to concepts in the first place. How can two objects, e.g. ‘X’ and ‘Y’, ‘look’ the same if all of their properties are concretely singular and external to one another? In order for abstraction to begin its work, perception must pick out commonalities, i.e. properties that belong to objects external to one another. This is impossible if these properties are, themselves, concretely singular and external to one another. In a world of merely concrete singulars, every object and every property is altogether different from every other object.

Kant’s own issue with this model is well known. If mind conforms to world, then all knowledge about the world is empirical and none of it a priori. If all knowledge derives from induction or abstraction, then none of our a priori sciences (i.e. logic, math, geometry) have universal or necessary validity in the world.\textsuperscript{435} The very principles upon which our empirical sciences rest – e.g. that “in all alterations of the corporeal world the quantity of matter remains unaltered”\textsuperscript{436} – are without foundation. As Hume himself has shown, if we assume an absolutely empiricist basis, then we cannot derive the regularity of nature from any a priori principle of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[435] KrV Bxvii.
\item[436] KrV B18.
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causality. Instead, we come to know causal regularities through induction.\textsuperscript{437} The problem is that induction – i.e. the generalization from discrete events to a causal rule – assumes the regularity of nature as a premise. Induction would be impossible if nature were not regular; we cannot, therefore, derive said regularity from induction.\textsuperscript{438} If this is the case, our empirical sciences are groundless – though they might describe regularity, or construct theories about it, they cannot in principle justify or explain the regularity or the ‘necessary connection’ itself.

In Kant, this is also relevant to the agreement between a conceptual cognition and its object. If our concepts, by which we determine intuitions, must conform to objects, then we can cognize nothing about objects a priori:

Because I cannot stop with…intuitions, if they are to become cognitions, but must refer them as representations to something as their object and determine this object through them, I can assume…that the concepts through which I bring this determination also conform to objects, and then I am once again in the same difficulty about how I could know anything about them a priori…\textsuperscript{439}

In principle, purely sensible objects of the world do not necessarily have to obey, resemble, or correspond to any of our most general concepts by means of which anything can be thought about an object. Without objective legitimacy, the categories of the understanding, which underlie each and every kind of judgement, have merely subjective validity. They are, in other words, nothing but the subject habits of thinking – habits we might use to interpret, but not to know the nature of a reality external to reason.\textsuperscript{440}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[437] Hume 1977, 17.
\item[438] Hume 1977. 23.
\item[439] KrV Bxvii.
\item[440] Interestingly, it appears that Kant follows a trajectory of thought similar to McDowell’s. At the end of the B-Deduction, Kant makes the point that, if the categories are merely habits of thinking, if they have merely subjective validity, then “all our supposed insight through the supposed objective validity of our judgements is nothing but sheer illusion…” (KrV B168). Just as Davidson’s coherence view suffers from a disconnection between our knowledge and reality, so does any view that locates our fundamental concepts in “subjective predispositions”. In both cases, the connection between thought and reality is broken, i.e. “the supposed objective validity of our judgments is nothing but sheer illusion”.
\end{footnotes}
Furthermore, since Kant is clear that “intuitions without concepts are blind”, his worries are consistent with my own. For if non-conceptual intuitions, which are indeterminate, are that from which concepts are derived, it is hard to imagine any sense in which they are not mere constructions or how they might come to agree with a cognition. By contrast, Kant argues that our a priori concepts – e.g. the categories – inform objects as their possibility. Because of this, our judgements and conceptual cognitions can agree with specifications of those categories, i.e. objects. If categories do not apply to objects a priori, however, then all of our relevant concepts about the world are empirical. Since these empirical objects are, in themselves, non-conceptual, and are not derived from categories a priori, the concepts derived from them do not correspond to them – they merely interpret them.

Any attempt to escape these problems results in an effort to put thought, i.e. intelligible stuff, back into the world. From within metaphysical frameworks that assume a difference between mind and world to begin with, the only real option to is reduce the latter to the former. This is called idealism if the ‘mind’ to which that world is reduced is the mind of a rational, but finite being. If, instead, the mind to which the world is reduced is infinite, then the resulting system will be one in the rationalist tradition. There are two kinds of minds that the world has been reduced to. In the rationalist’s tradition, the procurement of God’s existence (usually through an ontological argument) promises, if it does not entail, the consistency of the world with a priori principles of understanding and reason. In the transcendental tradition, of which Kant is a founding member, the world conforms to a finite, and not to an infinite, mind.

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441 Ibid. A51/B75.
442 Descartes 1967, 231. (From ‘Principles of Philosophy’): “Whence it follows that the light of nature, or the faculty of knowledge which God has given us, can never disclose to us any object which is not true, inasmuch as it comprehends it, that is inasmuch as it apprehends it clearly and distinctly. Because we should have had reason to think God a deceiver if HE had given us this faculty perverted…” By ‘clear and distinct’ idea Descartes means logical, mathematical, geometric and metaphysical principles that are a priori (see principle XLIII). In this resect, we can make deductions about the world using these principles because their validity is secured by the divine mind. In Spinoza, this
In the first case, our deductive powers are allowed to exercise themselves without any constraint. To say that the world is reduced to the mind of God is to say that it is an intelligible world. That it is, as it were, a world a pure intelligence. From this vantage point, it becomes possible to reason a priori about the nature of the world in itself. To that extent, the world of sense, as a particularly human form of representation, is only an impediment and should be reduced to the pure understanding. By considering appearances as representations of intelligible things, pure inferences can be made about reality in itself a priori. Pure reason is valid, therefore, only if we consider the world to be a correlate of a pure intelligence, i.e. God. Without this, there is no reason to believe that our pure use of the understanding is more than a subjective faculty, lacking objectivity. The rationalist requires the existence of a pure intelligence in order to produce the world as its correlate. A rationalist cannot prove the existence of God empirically, however. Since whatever is known a posteriori is confused, befuddled by sense, she must resort to a priori arguments. The a priori proof of God (e.g. the ontological argument) is a proof concerning the existence of something beyond any possible experience. The a priori proof of God is, therefore, the proof of an intelligible existence. For this reason, the a priori proof of the existence of God begs the question, it assumes what it is supposed to explain; namely, the correspondence of the world to the pure use of our understanding.

The problem with this is that, for the Rationalists, the validity of our a priori reasoning – i.e. its objectivity – is grounded on ontological arguments for the existence of God that assume
that validity to begin with. For the proof to work, the rationalist must assume that ‘existence’ is in fact a real predicate that can do the work of proving the existence of God from a mere concept.\textsuperscript{443} As Kant has pointed out, however, since ‘existence’ adds nothing to a concept – i.e. since “A hundred actual dollars do not contain the least bit more than a hundred possible ones”\textsuperscript{444} – it cannot properly be considered a real predicate. And if ‘existence’ is not a real predicate, its separation from the concept cannot entail a contradiction in said concept.\textsuperscript{445} In order to make an ontological argument, the rationalist must, therefore, assume the legitimacy of its reasoning principles outside the mind already. Inasmuch as the ontological argument presupposes the legitimacy of mind beyond mind, the rationalist cannot reasonably justify the objective use of a priori principles by appealing to God. Such an appeal presupposes the objective validity of a priori reasoning and cannot, therefore, be expected to explain it.

Importantly, this appeal to God is that which brings mind and world back into conversation, at least in the Rationalist tradition– only then is truth about said world possible. In Descartes, the goodness of God puts to rests any of our outstanding suspicions concerning clear and distinct ideas, i.e. those of reason, mathematics, and geometry (not to mention the existence of material things).\textsuperscript{446} In Spinoza’s \textit{Ethics} Part One, axiom VII asserts that “if a thing can be conceived as non-existing, its essence does not involve existence”.\textsuperscript{447} And though this principle is, by itself, sufficient for the

\textsuperscript{443} For a discussion of the possibility of the ontological argument See Spinoza 1955, 49: “…the only truth substances can have, external to the intellect, must consist in their existence…. therefore, for a person to say that he as a clear and distinct – that is true – idea of a substance, but that he is not sure whether such a substance exists, would be the same as if he said that he had a true idea, but was not sure whether or not it was false”.
\textsuperscript{444} KrV A599/B627.
\textsuperscript{445} KrV A600/B628.
\textsuperscript{446} Descartes 1967, 184. (from Meditation V): “…after I have recognized that there is a God – because at the same time I have also recognized that all things depend upon Him, and that He is not a deceiver, and from that have \textit{inferred} that what I perceive clearly and distinctly cannot fail to be true” and in meditation VI, p 191: “For since He has given me no faculty to recognize that this is the case, but…a very great inclination to believe…that they are conveyed to me by corporeal objects, I do not see how He could be defended from the accusation of deceit if these ideas were produced by causes other than corporeal objects. Hence we must allow that corporeal things exist…”
\textsuperscript{447} Spinoza 1955, 46.
ontological proof of God, it is God itself that grounds conceivability later in Part I. Proposition XV reads: “whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived”. This same dynamic plays out in Leibniz, where God is both derived from reason and the source of the validity of pure reason, i.e. the “necessary substance in which the diversity of changes is only eminent”. In each case, the assumed objectivity of reason authorizes an ontological argument that proves the existence of God. It is, however, through the existence of God that the unconstrained use of reason is permitted in the first place. In all versions, God’s existence justifies what brought Him into being: our clear and distinct ideas have validity after God is proved to exist; the principle of sufficient reason is objective after God’s perfection is deduced; things are conceivable after God exists etc…. In each case, our rational capacities are grounded in the existence of God, even though that existence was proved through the use of reason alone.

Kant’s own criticism of Rationalism is complex and fully developed in the second, dialectical half of the first Critique, in which he shows how the application of categories to things in themselves inevitably leads to insurmountable problems. By restricting the applicability of the categories to appearances, Kant limits the legitimate employment of reason to the realm of possible experience. Given then it can be readily accepted that, for Kant, “concepts without intuitions are empty” and that no amount of thinking is sufficient for the production of its object, Kant is confounded by the rationalist impulse. In his words, “that which is merely in us, [i.e. a priori categories], cannot determine the constitution of an object distinct from our representations”. If instead our a priori concepts apply to objects necessarily as their possibility, if the world conforms

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448 Spinoza 1955, 55.
449 Leibniz 1991, 73.
450 KrV B75/A51.
451 KrV A129.
to our finite mind, then our judgements may agree with specifications of those categories, i.e. objects.

Kant himself fits into this reconciliatory framework, however. Where rationalists reduced the world to a divine mind in order to ground the use of reason, Kant reduces the world to a human mind in order to limit it. It is, in fact, this reconciliatory framework that leads to the problem of things in themselves.

The problem we have found ourselves in is not simply about the difficult nature of the thing in itself. After all Kant saw this unknowable thing, not as a mere stipulation, but as a necessary result of his own ‘Copernican’ revolution,\(^{452}\) which was itself nothing but an honest attempt to locate the ground of the possibility, and solve the problem, of synthetic a priori cognitions – cognitions, no less, whose propositions make up the foundations of science.\(^{453}\) Since “we can cognize things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them”, we must assume that our a priori cognition leaves “the thing in itself as something actual but uncognized by us”.\(^{454}\) As the true correlate of sensibility, it is ‘actual’; as its affecter, it is free from it, and ‘unknowable’. And yet, to conceive of it as such is entirely problematic, at least given the problem of noumenal causality. The thing in itself is the result of an experimental solution to the problem of synthetic a priori knowledge; Kant asks that we “try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that objects must conform to cognition”.\(^{455}\) If objects conform to the form of our sensibility, and sensibility is receptive, then what appears will be ideal. And if what appears is ideal, appearance cannot originally affect sensibility. However, given that the thing in itself is, itself, problematic – given that it requires us to simultaneously draw and overreach the limits of

\(^{452}\) KrV Bxix-xx.  
^{453}\) KrV A10/B14.  
^{454}\) KrV Bxix-xx.  
^{455}\) KrV Bxvi.
knowledge – does this not undermine the legitimacy of the experiment? And if so, is not the problem motivating the hypothesis still unsolved?

Section 4.2

*Kant’s Copernican Turn*

Kant, in attempting to ground the possibility of synthetic a priori cognitions, is working under the reconciliatory assumption that either (a) cognition most conform to the object or (b) that the object must conform to cognition. For Kant, the first epistemological model is entirely problematic. Cognition cannot learn what is both universally and necessarily true of Nature from nature itself; knowledge can only approach such certainty a posteriori, driven on by the ideal of reason to uncover natural laws. To explain a priori cognitions, Kant hypothesizes the reversal of (a). To Kant, the ‘promise of nature’ to behave according to universal and necessary laws can be trusted to the extent that the knower herself enforces these laws; for then her very experience, which as the product of this legislation, guarantees that this ‘promise of nature’ is an honest one. The universal and necessary regularity that constitutes nature results from the imposition of our ideal structures onto the contents of sensibility and would be unknowable “if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there.”\(^{456}\) Whatever is cognized of nature a priori must, therefore, be assigned an ideal location and be limited, in its applicability, to experience.

The effect of this reversal is two-fold. First, the idealization of space-time simultaneously limits objective thought to what appears. For, as we have seen in the third chapter of this thesis, thoughts without contents are empty, i.e. are merely subjective. Second, the ideality of appearance, along with the limitation of thought to what appears, entails the unknowability of things in themselves. If nature’s harmony is constituted by ideal conditions that ground the possible experience of it, then knowledge is limited to what obeys those conditions, including the empirical

\(^{456}\) KrV A125.
world. For if the world of experience both constitutes the realm of evidence and is (formally speaking) constructed from ideal forms, then nothing can be known of the world except that which falls within experience itself. What is more, because appearances are transcendentally ideal, it is left to the receptivity of sensibility to differentiate this idealism from subjective idealism, which altogether denies a ground to appearance.

The problem, as we have seen, is that the receptive nature of sensibility is incompatible with the ideality of appearance; given that the ‘true correlate of sensibility’ cannot be spatiotemporal, and so cannot be subsumed under concepts, the very receptivity in question is undermined. The result is, perhaps, that phenomenalism is inevitable; perhaps when Kant writes that spatial objects “are external to one another, but space itself is in us” we should not hesitate to degrade this externality to an illusory signification. The mind, we might say, tricks us into thinking that there is in fact an outside. In its positing of a transcendental object, we might again say, it allows us to think that a mental content is distinct from its representation, when in fact it is not. However, given that this phenomenalism would be transcendental – i.e. its appearances would answer to conditions of the possibility of their appearance – it would be a kind of absolute idealism, i.e. idealism from which everything, including the transcendental object, is derived from subjectivity. In Fichte for example, the not-self (or ‘objective’ world) is derived from the freedom of Absolute subjectivity as a condition of the possibility of finite subjectivity: “in the critical system a thing is what is posited in the self…critical philosophy is thus immanent, since it posits everything in the self.”457 Indeed, there are moments in the first Critique, especially in the fourth

457 Fichte 2003, 117. See also p. 33: “Though the self may exist only for itself, there necessarily arises for it at once an existence external to it; the ground of the latter lies in the former, and is conditioned thereby: self-consciousness and consciousness of something that is to be – not ourselves – are necessarily connected; but for the first is to be regarded as the conditioning factor, and the second as the conditioned.” P. 37; “Let him but assume provisionally, with transcendental idealism, that all consciousness rests on, and is conditioned by, self-consciousness”. See also, p. 221. “…The not-self to be presented would be immediately determined by the absolute self, while the presenting self
paralogism, where the notion of immanent transcendence is developed along these lines; most generally, in order for something to be outside of us, there must be an inside and vice-versa. Does the world exist only as it appears? Is the independence of Nature’s objects reducible to the posting, by reason, of a transcendental signified?

If we assume that our intuition conforms to objects, then space and time are objective determinations of things. If they are objective determinations then, as we have seen, our arithmetical sciences, which contain synthetic a priori propositions, are suspended over an abyss: “if intuition has to conform to objects then I do not see how we can know anything of them a priori”.\footnote{KrV Bxvi.} If we do not have a priori knowledge, then the propositions that ground physical sciences are contingent; the propositions that ‘everything that happens has a cause’ and that ‘the straightest distance between two points is a line’ would be of equal epistemological value as ‘the sun rises in the morning’ or ‘rain is required for the growth of forests’. In Kant’s words, “one would therefore be able to say that as far as has been observed to date, no space has been found that has more than three dimensions”.\footnote{KrV A23.} All synthetic a priori principles would be contingent. In regards to causality, the world would be pure contingency, a kind of disorder. In regard to our arithmetical sciences, the possible application of synthetic geometrical proportions—e.g. the shortest distance between two points in Euclidian space is a straight line—would be groundless. Just why these a priori sciences might be insightful about the nature of the spatiotemporal world is left unexplained and unexplainable. On the other hand, however, if we ‘assume’ that objects conform to our intuition, then we are faced with the thing in itself, which is the unknowable ground of what appears. And though our sciences of appearance would be grounded, this would come at the cost not only of

\footnote{would be determined mediately, by means of that determination; the self would be dependent solely on itself, that is, it would be self-determined throughout it.}
separating knowledge from what is ‘in itself’ forever, but of positing what cannot be conceived: a 
cause that cannot be a cause in relation to what it cannot relate to. If objects conform to the forms 
of cognition, there is the thing in itself. If cognition conforms to objects, science is groundless. We 
are caught between unknowable chaos and skepticism.

Kant’s dichotomist assumption that objects must conform to mind or vice versa is at the heart 
of this story. Could not the world and mind be in agreement without one having to conform to the 
other? What if, for instance, the mind and the world were the same at the level of form? Our a 
priori knowledge of the world’s form is problematic if such a difference is maintained, for it is 
precisely when this difference is overcome – i.e. when one conforms to the other – that the problem 
is resolved. However, if this difference was never assumed, or if a profound identity between 
cognition and its natural object was defended, then the problem of how such a priori knowledge is 
possible would be the problem itself. If a profound unity has been separated, if what is one has 
become two in thought, then the problems that inevitably arise will not only motivate their reunion, 
but will mistake this reunion for a relation between aspects, not a return to self. The strength of 
Kant’s account is that it brings back together what should not be apart; however, because this 
reunion takes the form of a reduction – i.e. of one conforming to the other – it begins with their 
separation and results in the unknowable wahres Korrelatum, i.e. the thing in itself.

At the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel makes a similar point. There, he 
criticizes the prior analysis of cognition in the grounding of knowledge. If we try to reconcile 
cognition with its object (i.e. the ‘absolute’) we become mired in difficulties. If we imagine 
cognition as “an instrument for getting hold of absolute being, it is obvious that the use of an 
instrument does not let it be what it is for itself”.[460] If, on the other hand, we understand cognition

“not as an instrument….but a more or less passive medium through which the light of truth reaches us, then again we do not receive truth as it is in itself”.\textsuperscript{461} Hegel then makes the claim that above all, these formulations presuppose the “\textit{difference between ourselves and this cognition}”.\textsuperscript{462} The fear of falling into error, and the subsequent analysis of cognitions faculties

Presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition of the other, independent and separated from it, and yet as something real; or in other words, it presupposes that cognition which, since it excludes the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true, an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth.\textsuperscript{463}

One of Hegel’s points in this passage is that the assumed difference between cognition and its object stimulates philosophical attempts of reconciliation. If knowledge is possible – i.e. if, in Hegel’s words, “Notion corresponds to object and object to Notion” – then cognition must be adequate to its object.\textsuperscript{464} Yet, if we assume that cognition and object are essentially heterogeneous, or are different things standing apart, then the difficulty of reconciling them, and of grounding knowledge, is a necessary pre-requisite project. However, given that this pre-requisite project of reconciliation requires, as its possibility, the possibility of knowledge itself (at least about cognition qua object), is presupposed. This leads to a second, similar criticism made by Hegel in the \textit{Encyclopedia Logic}. There he famously writes,

One of the main points of view in the Critical Philosophy is the following: before we embark upon the cognition of God, or of the essence of things, we should first investigate our faculty of cognition itself, to see whether it is capable of achieving this…for, otherwise, if the instrument is inadequate, then all further effort would have been expended in vain… But the investigation of cognition cannot take place in any other way than cognitively; in the case of this so-called tool, the investigation of it means nothing but the cognition of it. But to want to have cognition before we have any is as absurd as the wise resolve of Scholastics to learn to swim before he ventured into the water.\textsuperscript{465}

\textsuperscript{461} Hegel 1977, 46. PG 73.  
\textsuperscript{462} Hegel 1977, 46. PG 73.  
\textsuperscript{463} Hegel 1977, 46. PG 74.  
\textsuperscript{464} Hegel 1977, 46. PG 74  
\textsuperscript{465} Hegel 1991, 34.
For Hegel, the very act of reconciling cognition with its object presupposes the success of said reconciliation. To ground the possibility of knowledge by analyzing cognition, knowledge must already be possible, or else such analysis is impossible. What is relevant about these passages for our purposes is to show, not that the prior analysis of cognition is contradictory, but that the dichotomy assumed by Kant results in reconciliatory projects that are problematic. If objects conform to cognition, the thing in itself emerges. If cognition conforms to objects, synthetic a priori cognition is impossible and skepticism results. The designation of the former model as transcendental idealism is, indeed, a reason for Hegel’s rejection of the method altogether. But since our purpose here is not to reject but to sharpen the transcendental method, I will not be resorting to the dialectical option, which itself is deserving of a separate, independent analysis.

Kant begins by assuming a difference between cognition and its object. It is based on such an assumption, after all, that the disjunctive formulation underlying his revolution is even possible. Were it not for the construction that, either cognition must conform to objects or objects must conform to cognition, then Kant’s reconciliatory project of establishing the possibility of knowledge, of a community between these terms, may never need arise. However, since he is working within this disjunctive framework, he goes on to assert that synthetic a priori knowledge is possible only if objects conform to cognition. For how else can such knowledge be possible, since it cannot be through empirical means? He tells us, therefore, that we can know about the world a priori because, in order to be what it is, it must conform to structures that are in the mind. Thus, while the mind is objectified and expelled into the world as its invariant structure, the world is subjectified and reduced to a realm of possible experience. And because the object is

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466 Hegel 1977, PG. 76.
467 KrV Bxvii.
468 KrV Bxvi.
subjectified, the thing in itself “as something actual for itself but unrecognized by us” is the necessary result, and ultimate problem of this organization.\(^{469}\)

This difference between cognition and its object is even more pronounced when Kant asserts (as he often does) that a priori knowledge is impossible if “the objects which our cognition has to do with [are] things in themselves”.\(^{470}\) This impossibility results from the great schism drawn between mind and object, at least as these terms stand prior to the constitution of the world by mind. To see this clearly, it is important to quote this significant paragraph fully:

If the objects with which our cognition has to do with were things in themselves, then we would not be able to have any a priori concepts of them at all. For whence should we obtain them? If we take them from the object (without even investigating here how the latter become known to us) then our concepts would be merely empirical and not a priori concepts. If we take them from ourselves, then that which is merely in us cannot determine the constitution of an object distinct from our representations, i.e. be a ground why there should be a thing that corresponds to something we have in our thoughts, and why all this representation should not instead be empty.\(^{471}\)

There are two premises in this argument, whose conclusion is that a priori concepts cannot be applied to, or representative of, things in themselves. The first premise is that, if we were to get a priori concepts from objects, then our concepts would not be a priori, but empirical. The second premise is that, if we have a priori concepts in virtue of the nature of the mind itself – i.e. if their location is merely ideal – then their applicability to objects in themselves is mysterious and, in the words of Kant, grounded in some kind of “inspiration”.\(^{472}\) Since we cannot get a priori concepts from objects without contradicting the universality and necessity of their claim, these concepts must exist already in the mind. But if they exist already in the mind, then their applicability to objects in themselves, which exist outside the mind, is entirely problematic; and here too, they lose

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\(^{469}\) KrV, Bxix

\(^{470}\) KrV, A129. See also A181.

\(^{471}\) KrV A129.

\(^{472}\) Proleg; 282.
their universal and necessary validity to objects. Therefore, says Kant, our a priori concepts (and intuitions) cannot apply, or represent, things in themselves. If a priori knowledge is possible, the object must conform to mind – it must be arrested from itself and brought into the immanence of subjectivity; it must be made an appearance. Only then are a priori concepts, intuitions, and principles possible. Not surprisingly Kant goes on to say just this:

But if on the contrary we have to do everywhere only with appearances, then it is not only possible but also necessary that certain a priori concepts precede the empirical cognition of objects. For as appearances they constitute an object that is merely in us, since a mere modification of our sensibility is not encountered outside us at all.

There are many important points to take from this section. First, it is clear that Kant is taking aim at both empirical and rationalistic epistemologies. For empiricists, who (broadly speaking) take the mind as a ‘blank slate’, a priori knowledge of objects is impossible, since all concepts are to be obtained a posteriori. For rationalists, on the other hand, the applicability of a priori principles to things in themselves leads to dialectical problems. It is perhaps not surprising that empiricists, in their limitation of knowledge to experience, make the gap between mental concepts (e.g. relations of ideas) and objects of the world absolute.473 For empiricists, a priori knowledge (i.e. relations of ideas) – though perhaps useful in their application to the world – can tell us nothing of matters of fact. It is this rejection of unbounded ideation that may, ultimately, be responsible for waking Kant from his dogmatic slumber. Rationalism takes for granted the notion that our a priori ideas “express…the universe”; 474 but why, asks Kant, should “there should be a thing that corresponds to something we have in our thoughts”.475

At the same time, Kant is unwilling to accept that these a priori concepts somehow arise from sensations or, as Hume puts it, “that all this creative power of the mind amounts to nothing

475 KrV A129.
more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses.*476 When it comes to the possibility of a priori knowledge, Kant agrees with the rationalists: these concepts and ideas cannot arise a posteriori, otherwise they would not be universal and necessary. While Kant is here showing the inadequacy of both rationalism and empiricism explicitly, he is also implicitly showing us their respective strengths. Though rationalism bridges the gap between mind and the world in a divine way, it takes seriously the universal and necessary nature of a priori cognitions, thereby allowing it to prohibit the reduction of these cognitions to abstraction of experience. And though empiricism traces these cognitions back to sense experience, and therefore contradicts the universality and necessity of necessary and universal cognitions, it rightfully problematizes, if not outright rejects, the correlation between these ideas and objects in themselves. Kant sees himself, of course, as borrowing the best attributes of each while, at the same time, excluding what is problematical and contradictory. While he is unwilling to derive a priori concepts from experience, he is equally unwilling to presuppose an isomorphic relation between thought and its object. The solution is his Copernican revolution in philosophy, which at the expense of our ability to know objects in themselves, locates a priori forms in the mind and grounds their objective validity by hypothesizing the compliance of what appears, as a condition for its very possibility, to the mind.

More significantly (for our purposes here) is the fact that, when Kant makes statements like “if the objects with which our cognition has to do with were things in themselves, then we would not…have any a priori concepts of them”*477 and “if the objects to which these [a priori principles] were to be related were things in themselves, then it would be…impossible to cognize anything

*476 Hume 1999, 11.
*477 KrV, A181.
about them synthetically a priori”, a profound difference between the mind and objects (as considered in themselves) is presupposed. For if this difference did not exist, at least not at a basic level, then the very formulation of this problematic – a problematic that results in transcendental idealism – would be impossible in the first place. Kant’s construction that our a priori concepts must originate either ‘in the object’ or ‘in the mind’, but not in both presupposes a difference between these terms that cannot be overcome without the reduction of one to the other; i.e., without the world conforming to the mind or the mind conforming to the world. For Kant, our inability to know objects in themselves a priori results from, and does not simply complement, the (as of yet unanalyzed) assumption of this original, alienating difference between mind and world. We cannot know about objects in themselves a priori because of this difference.

There are many possible reasons for assuming this difference, the most convincing of which is the fact that the human understanding is not intuitive, but lacks essentially what sensible intuition (which is receptive) offers, i.e. content. Without intuitive material offered up by a sensible intuition, without the presence of a “manifold …given prior to the synthesis of the understanding”, our understanding (in its pure form) is composed “only [of] rules”, in themselves abstract and empty. Thus, if human understanding is unable to intuit by itself, and requires a receptive faculty, the wahres Korrelatum of said faculty, the correlate of what is sensed, must be outside or different from, the mind. The divine intellect, on the other hand, which contains “an understanding [that] cognizes its object not discursively through categories but intuitively in a non-sensible intuition”, remains within itself and is not forced, like human beings are, to take things in stride. The receptive nature of sensibility indicates that objects, in their intuitable state, exist ‘outside’ of

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478 KrV, A181.
479 KrV B145.
480 Heidegger 1962, 18.
the mind receiving them. Thought is, therefore, unable (in its thinking) to know these objects prior to the intuition of them, but must grapple with them, reflect on them, and (finally perhaps) understand them. For Kant, therefore, the mind and the object are different because our intuition is receptive, i.e. sensible and not intellectual. It is a faculty that, in its receptivity of worldly beings, yields to what is outside, and what must therefore be other than, the mind.

But is this sufficient for supposing this difference? Is the receptive nature of sensibility, coupled with the emptiness of pure thought, enough to warrant a differentiation so robust that one must conform to the other in order to ground then possibility of universal knowledge? I don’t think it is. I would go so far to argue, moreover, that the reasons for rejecting, or in the least questioning, this difference is neither pulled out of thin air, nor external to the critical system itself; the reason exists in the very essence of Kant’s theoretical work. Kant’s idealism supports the claim that though objects of intuition may be external to, they are also in formal agreement with, the mind; thus, though the mind and the object of a sensible intuition differ in content, they have to agree in form, at least if experience is to be possible. In other words, Kant’s solution to the problematic difference between the mind and the object (his Copernican revolution) presupposes that the mind and the object of a sensible intuition, which is received externally in the empirical sense, can (and indeed must) be in formal agreement. Appearances for Kant are, empirically speaking, simultaneously external to, and in compliance with, the forms of sensibility and the understanding, i.e. with the mind: “space and time are…representation a priori, which dwell in us as forms…..” and yet, “all appearances…necessarily agree [this] formal condition of sensibility”. Furthermore, these same appearances, if they are to be objects of possible

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481 See Walker 2006, 239.
482 KrV, A369.
483 Ibid, A373.
484 Ibid, A93/B125.
experience, and not merely undetermined objects of empirical intuition, must conform to rules of synthesis (e.g. categories), and these too, properly speaking, “dwell in us”: “thus we bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call nature”. Objects that are external to us, i.e. appearances, have mind dependent predicates and, therefore, agree with the mind in terms of form. The invariant structure of the empirical world, which is the object of external sense, is engendered by its conformity to mind. Insofar as this is possible, the receptivity of our intuition, i.e. the finitude of our understanding, cannot be sufficient for supposing the kind of robust difference underlying Kant’s reconciliatory, often termed ‘Copernican’, project. If it did, the very possibility of his own project would be refuted.

Section 4.3
Towards a Non-Reconciliatory Model
This reconciliatory difference, however problematic, is the ‘host’ of a more fundamental difference between form and its instantiation in matter. For if the material world of bodies – which is contingent and subject to change – is organized by invariant, ideal structures or forms, then the difference between the mind and its object answers to the more essential difference between unchanging forms and their instantiation in the world of contingency. Thus, one might say that formal causality is explained by the formal efficacy of mind. It should be noted, however, that I do not intend this comparison between Kant’s idealistic mechanisms and the traditional role of formal causality to simply map onto the relation between the mind and the thing in itself. Indeed, since we are dealing with a difference that, logically speaking, precedes Kant’s Copernican hypothesis itself, the simple delegation of form to mind and matter to Ding an sich is not only crass, but also textually and philosophically problematic. Textually, the thing in itself cannot be

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485 Ibid.
486 See Pippin 1982, 9.
487 See Pippin 1982, 188.
matter, since matter “is merely an outer appearance, whose substratum is not cognized through any specifiable predicates”. Philosophically, the unknowability of the thing-in-itself disallows us from stripping it of determination; the thing-in-itself may very well have form, even though we cannot know it. My point is, therefore, not that the terms of ‘formal causation’ can be mapped onto subject and object, but that when the mind is made responsible for the invariant structures of a contingent world, the mind is differentiated from its object just as a form is from its instantiation. Thus, the fundamental difference that Kant presupposes between the subject and object is later used to host the difference between form and its imposition onto sensible material.

It is, however, this very subjectification – this constitution of objects by the subject – that results in the unknowability of the thing in itself. In other words, the reconciliatory nature of Kant’s formulation is at fault for the problem of the thing in itself. If we begin by assuming that subject and object are heterogeneous, then indeed, knowledge is possible if and only if one term conforms to the other. If objects conform to subject, then the object as it is in itself is not only a premise in the argument; it is also the unknowable, transcendent foundation of the world. If objects are knowable only insofar as they are products of transcendental labors, then the true, or ultimate “material” upon which this labor is enacted is unknowable. When objects are subjectified, how they are in themselves becomes unknowable. This, we have discovered, is very problematic. Is there any way to solve this problem without resorting to the dialectical methods of Hegel or the absolute, subjective idealism of Fichte? My hypothesis is that such a formulation is possible. We can keep many, if not all, of Kant’s conclusions without having to posit the thing in itself; we can

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488 KrV A359.
489 Especially as the definition of ‘matter’ is presented in the discussion in the Amphiboly: KrV A266/B322: “the former [i.e. matter] signifies the determinable in general, the latter [i.e. form] its determination.”
have a transcendentalism that does not amount to a subjectification of the object. This, I will argue, is possible from within a non-reconciliatory epistemic model.

To develop this model, it is necessary to define some of the terms that I will be using. More importantly, it will be necessary to develop these terms within the Kantian framework, for if this non-reconciliatory model is meant to transform an existent system, the metamorphoses must begin within the confines of said system. For this reason, ‘defining terms’ will be equivalent to locating the mechanisms within Kant that will undergo transformation. Though these mechanisms are not present in the Critical system explicitly, they are essential functions that underlie its possibility. First, there is the mechanism in Kant of being able to know the invariant structures of the experiential world a priori. Insofar as they yield universal and necessary knowledge – i.e. knowledge that is true in any possible world of experience – these structures (i.e. space, time, and categories) cannot be known empirically;\footnote{KrV A156/B195.} insofar as they condition the possibility of experience, they have universal and necessary validity in any world of possible experience.\footnote{KrV A93/B125-A94/B127.} I will call the cognition of the world’s necessary structures a priori ‘mind’. I will call these structures themselves, as conditions for the possibility of the empirical world, ‘nature’. Thus, ‘nature’ is not meant here in the sense of a ‘thing’, e.g. a cosmos or an environment – it is meant, instead, in the sense of an essence, e.g. the ‘nature of love’. Nature, in this sense, is the essence, or the invariant structure of, the world.

The use of the term ‘nature’ (\textit{Natur}) may lead to some confusion. In Kant’s \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, ‘nature’ has a definite meaning, signifying the “order and regularity” resulting from the efficacy of the dynamical categories in the world of experience.\footnote{KrV A125.} In the antinomies, Kant
clarifies this by contrasting ‘world’ (Welt) and ‘nature’; where the first “signifies the mathematical whole of all appearances”, the second is considered the “dynamic whole” of the “unity in the existence of appearances”\textsuperscript{493}. This distinction between mathematical and dynamical is introduced in the section entitled “Systematic Representations of all Synthetic Principles” and is made in order to differentiate principles that are “necessary throughout” possible experience from those are “merely contingent”\textsuperscript{494}. Where the former kind are subsequently divided into the Axioms of Intuition and Anticipations of Perception – and which are said not only to ground the objective use of mathematics, but also to pertain merely to the intuition of something\textsuperscript{495} – the latter are divided into the Analogies of Experience and Postulates of Empirical Thinking, which pertain to the “existence of an appearance”, not “merely to the intuition”, and are said to ground the possibility of physical/metaphysical science\textsuperscript{496}. Though I will not get into the details here, this should be enough to see that ‘Natur’, as a dynamical whole, signifies the causal order of appearance, not merely its intensive (i.e. qualitative) or extensive (quantitative) magnitude. Thus where the “mathematical whole of all appearances” is the world, the order and regularity of this world – i.e. the “unity in the existence of appearances” – is called nature. By contrast, I will be using this term ‘nature’ more broadly to signify the invariant, or formal structures of possible worlds (i.e. space, time, and categories). I will use the term ‘world’ to signify, not the mathematical totality of appearance, but the ‘realm of obedience’. For if nature is the form, the invariant conditions for the possibility of a world, then the world is that which is conditioned; it is that which obeys these forms. In order to avoid confusion then, whenever I am talking about ‘nature’ or ‘world’ in Kant’s sense, I will use the German equivalent, Natur and Welt.

\textsuperscript{493} KrV A418/B446. 
\textsuperscript{494} KrV A160/199. 
\textsuperscript{495} KrV A160/199. 
\textsuperscript{496} KrV A160/199.
I will also here use ‘mind’ in a technical sense to signify what Kant calls a ‘priori cognition’. Taken in this sense, ‘mind’ means both the pure intuition of the sensible forms, on the one hand, and the cognition of pure concepts, on the other. Taken together, these pure cognitions are what we cognize a priori about objects. At A11 of the first Critique Kant defines ‘transcendental cognition’ as cognition “that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori”.\textsuperscript{497} Again, in the introduction to the second part of The Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, Kant contrasts general logic, which “abstracts…from all content of cognition”, with transcendental logic, which “has to do merely with laws of understanding and reason, but solely insofar as they are related to objects a priori”.\textsuperscript{498} There, he also specifies that “not every a priori cognition must be called transcendental, but only that by means of which we cognize that and how certain representations are applied entirely a priori”.\textsuperscript{499} By the mind, I mean the cognition of these a priori forms. For Kant, these are space, time, and the categories.

For Kant, synthetic a priori cognition is possible because the world conforms to forms that reside within the mind; he not only states that, “we can cognize things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them”,\textsuperscript{500} he explicitly assigns the pure forms of intuition and the pure concepts of the understanding the task of engendering invariance in appearance.\textsuperscript{501} For if the universality and necessity of synthetic a priori judgments is not to be contradicted, then the forms from which they are derived, and to which they are reduced, must also be universal and necessary; if space, for instance, were a contingent structure of appearance, then geometrical propositions

\textsuperscript{497} KrV A11/B24.  
\textsuperscript{498} KrV A57/B81.  
\textsuperscript{499} KrV 196.A56/B81.  
\textsuperscript{500} KrV 111. KrV Bxviii.  
\textsuperscript{501} KrV 110. KrV Bxvii.
would have contingent validity. Thus by explaining their efficacy in the world, the great deductions of these forms – i.e. how they can “relate to objects a priori”\(^\text{502}\) – must be understood as not only grounding validity of this knowledge, but also as substantiating the ubiquity of these general structures that I am calling nature, and the cognition of which I am calling mind. For since these forms are cognized a priori, they must (by definition) reside ‘in the mind’; if these forms were external to the mind, and instead of residing within it, were to befall it through some kind of relation, intentional or otherwise, then they would be appropriated a posteriori – they would, in other words, be unable to ground universal and necessary judgments. Thus where nature denotes the mental structures underlying and grounding a priori knowledge – structures that must, therefore, be necessary conditions for worlds of possible experience – ‘mind’ signifies the cognition of these structures a priori. Thus, mind designates our cognition of the world a priori, i.e. nature.

For this reason, I will be using ‘mind’ in a technical sense to signify what Kant calls a ‘priori cognition’. Taken in this sense, ‘mind’ means both the pure intuition of the sensible forms, on the one hand, and the thinking of pure concepts, on the other. Taken together, these pure cognitions yield what we cognize a priori about objects. In the first case, this cognition yields arithmetical knowledge. In the latter case, the cognition yields ontological claims about objects. At A11 of the first Critique Kant defines ‘transcendental cognition’ as cognition “that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori”.\(^\text{503}\) Again, in the introduction to the second part of The Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, Kant contrasts general logic, which “abstracts…from all content of cognition”, with transcendental logic, which “has to do merely with laws of understanding and reason, but solely

\(^{502}\text{KrV A85/B117.}\\(^{503}\text{KrV A11/B24.}
insofar as they are related to objects a priori”. 504 There, he also specifies that “not every a priori cognition must be called transcendental, but only that by means of which we cognize that and how certain representations are applied entirely a priori”. 505 By mind, I mean the cognition of these a priori forms. For Kant, these are space, time, and the categories.

Let’s assume that cognition and its object are, at least at the formal level, the same. This breakdown of the dichotomy must not result in a model that is, in fact, reconciliatory. We are not, after all, bringing two things together – we are describing one and the same thing, namely a form. On the one hand, this would entail that the world reflects the form of the mind, not because the mind informs it, but because it is the same as mind itself (at the formal level). If we are to avoid the dichotomy, however, this statement must not signify the reduction of the world to mind, i.e. to absolute idealism or phenomenalism – this would be merely reconciliatory. We must, on the other hand, make the far less common claim that the mind reflects the world, not by conforming to it, but by being it (at the formal level). Again, if we are to avoid the dichotomy, this statement cannot signify the reduction of mind to object, i.e. to empiricism – this too would be reconciliatory. But how can mind and its object be the same when one is defined by its directionality toward, i.e. its cognition of, the other? If mind is directed towards the world, how can objects and mind be formally the same except through reconciliation? If they are different insofar as one (mind) acts on the other (object), then the agreement of the latter with the former might only be possible through reconciliation, or the reduction of one to the other.

Is there any way to keep this directionality of mind towards its object, while, at the same time, positing the identity between them? If so, then our concept of ‘mind’ must both be, and be acting on, its object; it must, in other words, be the ‘consciousness’ in an act of self-consciousness.

504 KrV A57/B81.
505 KrV A56/B81.
For if the mind is the act of acting on itself, then it can be simultaneously differentiated and identified with its object; it can be the act of its own objectification. Therefore, the ‘mind’ is still differentiated by its object by acting on it; however, since it is the object it is acting on, it is simultaneously identical. If the mind is differentiated by its object only insofar as the mind cognizes it, then the mind is the self-consciousness of its object. If we take mind as the subject pole, and the world as the object pole, then this means that ‘mind’ is, at the formal level, the self-consciousness of the world. On this model, cognition and its object correspond, at the most general level, as a self-consciousness, where the ‘self’ is both cognition and object; cognition looks into the world and sees itself in the form therein. And when it sees itself therein, it recognizes itself, not as implanting its own structure onto an alien, unknowable ground, but as returned to, or as folding onto, or as conscious of, itself. And given that it recognizes itself, not in the content, but in the form of the world (i.e. in its nature), this folding-onto-itself is equally the folding, or the self-consciousness, of nature. If, in order for synthetic a priori knowledge to be possible, the mind must ‘recognize’ itself in the forms of the world, then the subject and the object are somehow in agreement. If they are in agreement because one conforms to the other, then each is problematically independent of the other. If, on the other hand they are identical, then any subject-object relation between mind and nature must indicate not the confrontation, between mind and an independent thing in itself, but between the mind and itself. In mind, the nature of the world is self-conscious.

This requires an important qualification. I do not mean that the mind and world are the same in terms of content; I mean that they are the same only in terms of form. Since I have called necessary structures of the world – i.e. the forms of space, time, and the categories – nature, it is more appropriate to say that mind and nature are the same or that, through mind, nature is self-
To explain the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition, Kant claims that the ‘world’ (the object) conforms to mind (the subject). For Kant, the form of the world, i.e. what I have called nature, is supplied by the mind. My argument is that, though these forms belong to the possibility of the world, they are not supplied by the mind. I am suggesting instead that mind and ‘nature’ are the same – the form that organizes the world is the same form that directs cognition a priori. Indeed, for Kant too, the mind and the world ‘are formally speaking, the same. But this identity is a result, not of a profound unity, but of the world’s obedience to mind. The formal cognition of the ‘world’ – i.e. what Kant calls ‘transcendental cognition’—is the self-consciousness of mind because ‘world’ is an ideal organization. In the world’s form, mind is for-itself because it has implanted itself therein. And because mind constructs ‘world’, it is prior to ‘world’. That is, if “we bring into the appearances that order and regularity we call ‘Natur’ – and indeed, if we also supply the realm in which anything appears at all – then mind is prior to what we call ‘world’ and ‘nature’.

For Kant, mind is conscious of itself in ‘nature’—i.e. in the form of the world – because it has, on all accounts, supplied these conditions for its possibility. On my account, mind is also conscious of itself in the formal architecture of the world; in the form of the world (i.e. nature), mind is for-itself. Unlike Kant, however, I do not think that the mind supplies the conditions for the possibility of ‘nature’ and ‘world’; instead, I think that the mind and ‘world’, when understood at the formal level formally, are originally the same. As Kant argues, mind recognizes itself in the world because it is the nature, or form of, that world. Unlike what Kant maintains however, this recognition is possible however, not insofar as the mind constructs ‘the world’, but insofar as the mind is its ‘nature’ itself.

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506 That is, the form of the world thinks itself.
507 KrV A11/B24. “I call cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our a priori concepts of objects in general”.
508 KrV A125.
This is a difficult hypothesis and it needs to be broken down. I am attempting to start from a non-reconciliatory framework, where cognition and its object are assumed to be formally identical. This form, which offers rules for the possibility of a world, is called nature; nature, in this respect, signifies the nature of the world. If we assume that cognition and its object are formally the same, then the mind is nature and nature is the mind. This does not, however, entail any kind of phenomenalism. The mind does not, as it were, create the world; it merely is the act, or consciousness, of the form of this world. The mind is, therefore, in agreement with the world, not by forcing it to answer to its form, but by being its form. The world and mind need not be reconciled because they are, formally, one and the same thing. When the mind cognizes the world, it cognizes nature in its specificity. Since this form is itself, mind may – in its attempt to respond to such an agreement – be tempted to claim either (a) that it put its form in the world or (b) that it came to reflect it empirically; both of these, however, are reconciliatory. In a non-reconciliatory framework, the recognition of itself in the form of the form of the world is indicative, not of some prior compromise, but of an original agreement; the nature of the world, through mind, is self-conscious. The difference between mind and nature therefore is that, while the latter signifies the mere form of the world, the former signifies the self-cognition of the latter.

When cognition is taken to be the self-consciousness of nature, ‘transcendental cognition’ means the exact same thing, though with some important metaphysical differences. Like Kant, we agree that our a priori cognition of objects is possible because of an established harmony between mind and world. Instead of giving ‘world its shape and regularity, however, the mind, as nature’s formal self-consciousness, is ‘nature’s’ reflection. Though ‘transcendental’ still means what we cognize a priori about objects at all, and what therefore entails unity between mind and world, it is now indicative of the identity, and not the reconciliation, of these terms, whose difference must,
therefore, be established subsequent to such harmony, i.e. a posteriori. We know about the form of ‘world’ prior to our experience of it because mind is its nature. For simplicity’s sake, I will call this feature of cognition – i.e. to know the form of nature priori to experience – ‘transcendental mind’ or simply ‘mind’. On the new model, the transcendental mind is taken to be the formal self-consciousness of nature.

Of course, when I say that ‘mind’ is the self-consciousness of nature, I do not mean that trees and rocks and rivers are self-conscious via mind. I mean, instead, that the formal structures shared by all natural beings – in other words, the ontological conditions for the possibility of any natural object – is not only the object, but also the subject of transcendental mind. For as I have said above, if the mind is differentiated by its object only insofar as cognizes it, then mind is the self-consciousness of, what has been taken to be, its object. If we take mind as the subject pole, and nature as the object pole, then this means that ‘mind’ is, at the transcendental level, the self-consciousness of nature.

In any self-consciousness there is a subjective and an objective term. Where the objective term is the correlate of the consciousness, the subjective term is the consciousness itself; but in their ‘truth’, i.e. their self-consciousness, they are one and the same. Because reconciliatory models of cognition see ‘mind’ and ‘nature’ as independent kinds of beings – and indeed, kinds in need of unification – the objective and subjective terms of the self-consciousness delineated above, i.e. nature and mind respectively, are usually marked by a difference in name. On this alternative account, little has changed; ‘nature’ is still the objective term and ‘mind’ is still the subjective term of a cognitive relation. The difference now, however, is that this relation is a relation of self-consciousness. The subjective term ‘mind’ is, in its consciousness of ‘nature’, conscious of itself; ‘Nature’, as the objective term of self-consciousness, is also that which is conscious. In this way,
when we say that mind and nature are the ‘same’, we take ‘same’ to mean an identity between the subjective and objective terms of self-consciousness. The transcendental cognition of nature’s form by a mind that ‘contains’ them, amounts to the self-consciousness of nature. Where Kant explained the efficacy of these a priori forms in the world by reducing world to mind, this model explains it by equating mind and nature through their identity. The forms in the mind are in the world because mind, at least when taken in its transcendental sense, is the folding of nature, i.e. the cognition of these forms by that which ‘contains’ them. Importantly, this model should also be distinguished from any kind of isomorphic model, which would signify the likeness in form between mind and nature. The problem with isomorphic models, at least as it concerns us here, is that posits an identity of form between two kinds of beings, in this case ‘mind’ and ‘nature’. Given that it begins with a separation between these terms, it is left the problem of explaining this isomorphic relation, which is always reconciliatory. The isomorphism of this alternative model is already explained by the identity between ‘mind’ and ‘nature’, where both make up the subjective and objective term of a self-conscious relation.

Up to this point, a working concept of ‘form’ has been taken for granted. It is time to unpack what I mean by form. A form is a universal and a rule. To the extent that it is has instances, which it remains undivided by, a form is a universal. Like all universals, e.g. obtuseness, there can be any number of instantiations of a form. In the case at hand, we might say that the category of substance is instantiated by any object that can be correctly assigned properties by means of a categorical judgment. Or similarly, we might say that there can be any number of instances of a right-angled triangle, regardless of the size they take or the color they exhibit. To the extent that they concretize indivisible universals, each instance of a form will resemble every other instance having the same form.
Apart from allowing independent objects to resemble one another, universals also play the role of specifying the identity conditions of their instances. A universal determines which features and relations an object must exhibit in order to be classified as a member. Thus, where "x" is an object, 'F' is the universal kind it instantiates, and 'G' is a set of essential features, we can say that 'Fx ↔ Gx'; or, rather 'that' is an instance of a dog if an only if it exhibits the features of being canine, of being a mammalian animal, of being warm blooded etc.... Or, to give a property example, we can say that x is 'light blue' to the extent that its extension is of a visual quality lighter than purple, but darker than yellow. The reverse of this, of course, is that a universal also determines what is not possible for its members, e.g. a dog cannot be made of marble, a painting cannot occur naturally etc.

These general forms of nature are not merely universals, however. They do not merely explain the resemblances between objects. More importantly, these forms contain rules that must be obeyed by their instances if these instances are to be objects at all. In order to be extended in space and time, for instance, an object must follow certain rules dictated by the pure forms of space and time, e.g. each point on a body must be external to every other point. Or, similarly, in order for an object to be attributed properties, and thus in order for the form of judgement ‘x is g’ to correspond to it, there must be something to which to ascribe those properties, namely a substance. Obedience to these forms is a condition of the possibility of being an object. Further, because human beings are acquainted with these forms a priori, any concrete specification or instantiation of them, e.g. a Grizzly Bear or a community of stars or a causal sequence, will necessarily be comprehensible or intelligible. The world is the suitable truth maker of our judgements to the extent that it is made possible by obeying, and thereby instantiating, the categories underlying the
structure of those judgements. Similarly, our arithmetical sciences are capable of anticipating the 
extended form of concrete objects given their obedience to spatiotemporal rules.

According to Kant, a priori forms comprise the structure of all possible worlds that can be 
experienced by beings like us. As we saw in the first part of this thesis, whether the forms of space 
and time are actually a priori is highly contentious, but it is luckily not the focus here. If there is a 
priori cognition of the world’s form, then any non-reconciliatory approach must acknowledge that 
these forms are not just epistemological conditions upon which worlds of possible experience are 
grounded: they are also ontological conditions grounding the metaphysical possibility of real 
worlds. In this case, a priori conditions would have an ontological parallel. The a priori conditions 
that make the world of experience possible are identical to the ontological conditions that make 
real worlds possible.

If we follow Kant’s lead as to which forms are necessary for worlds of experience, then what 
is metaphysically possible is constrained by both (a) the forms of space and time (but by time 
especially) and (b) the categories of the understanding. The forms at work here are very general; 
so general in fact, that all objects must be understood as concrete instances of their specification. 
This is why they are transcendental. Forms are instantiated by concrete particulars, which can 
then be organized into accidental and essential properties. A form determines what conditions an 
object must satisfy if it is to be an instantiation of that form. These conditions, once satisfied, make 
up the essential properties of the instance. The specificity, and inevitable dimensionality, of said 
instance authorizes a degree of ‘freedom’ in the concretization of the form. These properties an 
object can exchange, and which are thereby free from the essence, are accidental to it. Given that 
specification involves differentiating one kind from another by means of a property accidental to 
the genus (i.e. the differentia), the most general of forms are also the least specific. The a priori
cognition of a priori forms is, therefore, yields the most general, basic, and empty kind of knowledge.

In the third critique Kant defines the power of judgement as “the faculty for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal”. According to this characterization, judgements take the form Fx, where the variable is bound to a particular which bears a predicate. For a judgment of this form to be true, it must be the case that x is F. It must be assumed of all that can be known that there is some possible judgement that can reflect it. If there was a state of affairs that eluded the form of judgement, it could not correspond to any assertion and could not, therefore, be known to be true. We could not even speculate about such a thing, at least to the extent that speculations are themselves systems of judgement.

Inherent within the form of judgement, but as of yet unspecified by any assertion, all possible judgments are contained. And given that the world of the true must be in compliance with the forms of judgment, the various kinds of forms are themselves a clue to the discovery of the kinds of states and relations that the world itself must be organized by and into. Simply put, the world must be a suitable object for judgement if any of our assertions are to be true. For this to be possible, the functions that unify the terms in a judgment must also unify objects, their properties, and relations. As Kant puts it, “the same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition”.

To give an example, imagine the category of ‘substance’. In order for categorical judgements to be true of objects, objects must somehow bear their properties, not as though they were parts, but as modes or ways of being. A categorical judgement is true of an object only if the unification of a subject term with a predicate term is somehow reflected in the objects themselves.

509 KU:179.
510 KrV A79/B105.
Otherwise, the judgement ‘Socrates is wise’ would be unsupported by any possible state of affairs. It is not a mere subject, but a substance that grounds predication; nor is it a mere predicate, but also property that modifies the substance.

For Kant, the world of possible experience is organized according to these categories. Though I will say much more about these rules later, it is important to recognize that their discovery is directed from the outset by the uncovering of the forms of possible judgment.\textsuperscript{511} Kant is primarily concerned with how the world must be in order for it fill our judgments concerning it with truth. The instantiation of these general categories in the empirical world requires their specification, whereby ever more precise laws are understood as empirical (i.e contingent) occasions of those general laws.\textsuperscript{512} To this extent, this specification of categories is a determination a movement that is both a multiplication and a simplification. Where these general laws are instantiated empirically, there is multiplication, diversity, and complexity. Given that this diversity is understood as resulting from the determination of more universal forms, under which they are subsumable, the empirical laws can be reduced or simplified all the way up to the transcendental category of their origin.

‘Natur’ is understood by Kant as a system of empirical laws, which however contingent, must ultimately be grasped as resulting from the determination, or concretization, of laws that are transcendental:

The understanding is of course in possession a priori of universal laws of nature, without which nature could not be an object of experience at all; but still, it requires in addition a certain order of nature in its particular rules, which can only be known to it empirically and which from its point of view are contingent.\textsuperscript{513}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{511} KrV A67/B92.
\item \textsuperscript{512} KU; 182.
\item \textsuperscript{513} KU; 184.
\end{itemize}
This view can be understood in terms of the modality of possible worlds. Where transcendental laws are those laws that any world (of experience) must obey, their realization need not occur in any one, particular way. Where any world must be organized according to causal laws, the particular causal laws (e.g. gravity, chemical attraction) are contingent upon the state of the actual world in which they occur. Thus, where the understanding is in possession of the laws that govern any world of possible experience, it must discover which version of these laws operate in the actual world empirically. Given that (a) these empirical laws are themselves specifications of transcendental laws, and that (b) these transcendental laws organize the world so that it is adequate to the forms of judgement, the understanding is licensed, in any world of possible experience, to apprehend nature in thought; to discover laws in the diversity and wealth of actuality and to subsume these laws under increasingly general laws. So, for example, we might ultimately trace the attraction between electrons back to more general, electromagnetic laws, which might themselves be understood as specifications of Kant’s transcendental law that “everything that happens…presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule”\(^{514}\). It might be possible for the electromagnetic laws to be different, or for them to be absent from a world altogether, but it will not be possible for there to be a complete lack of lawful determination.

To put all this more precisely, the world is an object of possible reflection, not merely accidentally, but essentially. ‘Reflection’, of course, is a technical term denoting the ability to find a universal in the particular. It is an ascending procedure that begins with particular intuitions and, through the process of associating given representations, arrives at universals of ever increasing generality.\(^{515}\) This kind of judgement is best understood in contrast with the \textit{determining} procedure of this same power, which is characteristically descending. For rather than generating a concept

\(^{514}\)KrV B232.

\(^{515}\)KU: 180.
through procedures of comparison, the procedure of determination begins with a universal concept or law and proceeds to subsume a particular under it: “if the universal…is given, then the power of judgement, which subsumes the particular under it…is determining”.

To the extent that it anticipates the discovery of universals in both particular representations and the empirical laws exposed therein, the reflecting power of judgement presupposes, in its very activity, that the world is an instantiation of universal laws of the understanding. It presupposes, therefore, that the natural world specifies itself in accordance with, or for the purpose of being considered by, the understanding.

Now, an object that is made possible by means of its relation to a particular end is *purposive*. As the object of reflection, the natural world must be understood as originating in accordance with our understanding and, thus, as instantiating transcendental laws. To this extent, nature is purposive in principle. It is this principle that not only justifies our powers of reflection, it also confirms what Kant has argued all along; namely, that the natural world is possible to the extent that it obeys transcendental laws of the understanding: “one has good reason to assume, in accordance with transcendental principles, a subjective purposiveness in nature in its particular laws, for comprehensibility of the connection of the particular experiences in one system of nature”. In principle, the natural world of experience promises to behave in a systematic, conceptually informed way.

On this view, the natural world is understood as a rational system organized from the outset by universal concepts for the sake of our powers of judgement. Though the empirical laws are contingent, and must be discovered through reflection, these are determinations of determinable

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516 KU; 179.
517 Ibid.
518 KU; 359.
laws which are ultimately transcendental. This distinction between contingent and transcendental laws marks the more fundamental distinction between what is cognized a posteriori and what is cognized a priori. Where the contingency of particular laws/concepts entails a constraint on our thinking from the outside, the circumstance that of their origin, i.e. that they are determinations of determinable transcendentals, involves the compliance of their contents to concepts and structures adequate for the purposes of reflection.

According to the view I am proposing, the forms by means of which a priori cognition is possible are also the forms by means of which actual worlds are possible. The distinction between the mental and real operation of these forms is properly understood, not through the reduction of one to the other, but through the concept of ‘modes’ or ways of being. Mentally, these forms are operative in transcendental cognition, i.e. in the a priori cognition of objects, their principles, and sciences. Ontologically, they are the invariant structures underlying the possibility of real objects, their relations, and structures. Not only does this view ground the applicability of pure sciences on impure (empirical) objects without resorting to idealism, it offers a foundation for the correspondence between concepts and objects. For if worldly objects are understood as ultimately resulting from the specification of categories that are not merely conceptual, it will follow ex hypothesi that they are informed, in essence, by those very structures that would grant them entrance into the logical space of judgment.

Transcendental forms are so general, and so empty of content, that the rules of their specification – i.e. the ways in which they can be concretely realized – are all but entirely lenient. It is this leniency and freedom of realization that allows cognition to be faced with a world of contingency. For although the mind can cognize the logical or spatiotemporal structures of objects a priori, it can cognize them in their specificity only empirically, with relative universality. Where
the transcendental form may be called ‘metaphysically’ necessary, their instantiation as empirical laws may be called ‘nomologically’ necessary. Where transcendental structures cut across all metaphysically possible worlds, empirical laws do not; for though the laws of nature are true of this world, they need not be of in every world. Distinguishing which principles are metaphysically and nomologically necessary is a transcendental task, and it does not concern us here.

The strength of this model is that it is capable of grounding the possibility of a priori knowledge without resulting in mentalis-tic idealism, and an unknowable thing in itself. Up to now, this alternative model has been presented in a very general way. Because of this, it is difficult to see just what this amounts to, or how it plays out. It is time now to put some meat on this skeleton.

Scholars generally agree that Kant uses the term ‘experience’ (Erfahrung) in an equivocal way. On the one hand, he defines it in a way that includes in its very definition, the reference to an object. At the beginning of the Transition to the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, for instance, Kant writes: “all experience contains in addition to the intuition of the senses, through which something is given, a concept of an object that is given in intuition”.\(^{519}\) Again in the Analogies, Kant tells us that experience, as a kind of empirical knowledge, is not merely the flux of inner states: “experience is an empirical cognition, i.e., a cognition that determines objects through perceptions”.\(^{520}\) On the other hand, Kant is known to use the term experience to signify, not the referral of an intuition to an object, but the mere flow of appearances, which we will recall, are not objects, but merely “the undetermined object[s] (Object) of an empirical intuition[s]”\(^{521}\). At B219, Kant writes that, “in experience…perceptions come together only contingently, so no

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\(^{519}\) Krv A93/B126.
\(^{520}\) KrV 295. A176/B218.
\(^{521}\) KrV A19/B33.
necessity of their connection is or can become evident in the perceptions themselves”. Here experience includes mental states that are not intentional, i.e. that do not have a reference to an object distinct from representation.

As Guyer has pointed out, this ambiguity in the definition of experience leads to an ambiguity in the deduction itself. For since Kant is here attempting to argue that the categories are conditions for the possibility of experience, any equivocation in the meaning of this term will transform the way in which these conditions are said to ground, or constitute it. Guyer argues that, if we take Kant to be using concept experience in the first way, i.e. as including a reference to an object, then the deduction “assumes that that we have knowledge of objects and merely determines the necessary conditions thereof”. This, we might recall, is akin, if not entirely identical, to Ameriks regressive interpretation of the deduction. On this reading, Kant assumes objectivity in the nature of experience itself and attempts to prove how this, in turn, presupposes the reality of the categories. This benefits readers of Kant who take the deduction as “an unequivocal argument against an empiricist” who attempts to abstract what must, in fact, be presupposed in any possible experience. If, on the other hand, we take experience to mean the mere flow of appearances, then the deduction must be read as showing that “knowledge of objects…is itself a necessary condition” for experience. This line of interpretation, insofar as it does not presuppose empirical knowledge of objects from the outset, is fit to respond to skepticism – it does not, in other words, presuppose what skeptics are skeptical of (i.e. validity of categories). Interpreters like Dicker and Strawson (and unlike Ameriks) support this second way inasmuch as it is capable of

522 KrV A176/B219.
523 Guyer 1987, 81.
524 Guyer 1987, 80.
525 Guyer 1987, 81.
526 Guyer 1987, 82.
responding to Hume’s challenge. If we take experience to mean the mere play of appearances, i.e. of consciousness in a weak sense, “then that principle is a powerful one, for it asserts that if consciousness or awareness is possible, then all experience must be structured in accordance with laws and principles prescribed by the categories”.527 Interpreters of this kind see the first, regressive way, as begging the skeptical question: if we assume empirical knowledge from the outset, no skeptic will be satisfied.528

Since I question the very need for a deduction (insofar as it results from the reconciliatory framework), my take on this debate is irrelevant. A description of this debate is significant, however, as it allows us to locate what is relatively uncontroversial about the deduction – its conclusion and significance. For both kinds of interpreters, the categories of the understanding are conditions for the possibility of experience. Without appearances obeying some law-like synthesis of the transcendental unity of apperception (of an “I” that unifies), the experience of them – and their reference to an object – would be impossible: “all appearances, insofar as objects are to be given through them, must stand under a priori rules of their synthetic unity, in accordance with which their relation in empirical intuition is alone impossible”.529 And, if this is the case – i.e. if the rule and regularity of appearance (which makes objectivity possible) originates in the unity of the subject – then that “order and regularity that we call Natur.”530 is a subjective achievement; “and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of the mind, had not originally put it there”.531 We could not, in other words, abstract these categories from experience since experience is possible if, and only if, the appearances therein are ‘always already’532,

527 Dicker, 89.
528 Guyer 2006, . 83. Also, Dicker, 89.
529 KrV A110. My emphasis.
530 KrV A125.
531 KrV B165: “For laws exists just as little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere…”
532 No intentional reference to Heidegger here.
appropriately attuned. Without this proper, pre-established attunement of the sensible manifold, without its subjection to orderly, a priori synthesis, it would be given in “unruly heaps”,\textsuperscript{533} or as a “swarm of appearances”\textsuperscript{534} from which no (a) experience, and (b) no object, could arise. Indeed, without the attunement of appearances to synthetic unity, each moment and part of the manifold would be disjunctive; it could not appear to a single self, nor host the reference to an object.

Experience is possible only if what appears is orderly, and appearances are orderly only insofar as they answer to the laws of synthesis, i.e. to categories. It is on the basis of this that Kant can later develop, in his Critique of Judgement, the transcendental claim that, however unruly the empirical world might be, the pre-requisite obedience to categorical law by appearance generates the “subjectively necessary transcendental presupposition that such a disturbingly unbound diversity of empirical law…does not pertain to Natur…”\textsuperscript{535} – instead, since obedience to law is a necessary condition for the possibility of appearance, it is necessary to presuppose an orderly, systematic arrangement underlying Natur itself.\textsuperscript{536} The intuition that god doesn’t play dice arises, not from some theological claim, but from the transcendental rule that within the very possibility of appearance itself, such rules must be at work. The appearance of a world, in other words, is sufficient for the legitimacy of these categories – since appearance presupposes obedience to law, we are confronted, in any experience, with a world of promises. Since the possibility of appearance resides in its homogeneity with, or obedience to, categories of the understanding, the specific law and order of this concrete world must exhibit, or display, these transcendental laws – they must, in other words, be specifications of these more general laws: “the regulative principle demands that systematic unity be presupposed absolutely as a unity in Natur that is recognized not only

\textsuperscript{533} KrV A121.
\textsuperscript{534} KrV A111.
\textsuperscript{535} KU 20:209.
\textsuperscript{536} KU 20:209.
empirically but also a priori”. The specific, empirical laws of nature are, therefore, transcendently presumed to be specifications of these general, a priori laws – otherwise, this specific world of appearance would be heterogeneous with its possibility, i.e. categories (which is impossible). It is this world of promises that science, in its very possibility, must assume, without which the search for specific laws of Natur or, more generally, the systematic arrangement of these would not arise. Thus, Kant writes that “since universal laws of Natur have their ground in our understanding…the particular empirical laws, in regard to which is left undetermined by the former, must be considered in terms of the sort of unity they would if an understanding had likewise given them for the sake of our faculty of cognition”.

Experience always includes, as its possibility, a transcendentally ordered set of appearances, without which the ‘I’ would could not “possibly think the identity of itself”. The unity of experience is possible if, and only if, the “I” confronts the “unity of its action, which subjects all of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity…. In order for experience to be possible, it must be unified; in order to be unified, the manifold inherent in the “I” – i.e. the represented world – must not contradict or disobey this unity; otherwise, it would not appear. Sensibility, whose role is limited to providing the material, but not the determination of a cognition, is not up to the task of this unification: “for appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the condition of its unity….in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish the role of synthesis”. Without such a rule of synthesis, the mere flux of appearance could hardly be called

537 KrV A693/B721.
538 KU; 180.
539 KrV A108.
540 KrV A108.
541 KrV A51/B75.
542 Krv A90/B123
an experience. Here, the “I” would confront, not the unity, but the disjunction of its action and no experience could occur.\textsuperscript{543} The understanding, and not sensibility, must serve to unify appearances a priori.

The understanding, as we have seen, unifies by means of \textit{concepts}. Charged with the responsibility of unifying appearance a priori, it is forced to resort to structures native to its constitution. The pure a priori concepts of the understanding – i.e. the categories – must be not only be employed, they must be that to which all appearances are referred, otherwise no unity among them would occur. The categories, when taken as a whole, make up the concept, not of this or that object – (indeed, all objects \textit{presuppose} them) – but of an object in general, and this is the \textit{object} to which all appearances are referred. As conditions for the possibility of objectivity itself, and not just this or that object, the operation of categories \textit{must} be unspecific and general. Properly speaking, this transcendental object is no object at all, but only the form of an object in general: “this pure concept of this transcendental object X...is that which in all of our empirical concepts is general can provide relation to an object, i.e. objective reality”.\textsuperscript{544} By referring appearances to this object in general appearances are ordered and synthesized by categorical law, “in accordance with which their relation in empirical intuition is alone possible”.\textsuperscript{545}

In the end, experience is the cognition \textit{of} a world, whose appearance promises in its very possibility obedience to transcendental, a priori law. This is possible for Kant if, and only if, the world is a \textit{representation}, which by means of sensibility, is already immanent to mind. In one of the most significant paragraphs of the critique, Kant tells us as much:

(a) That nature should direct itself according to our subjective ground of apperception, indeed in regard to its lawfulness even depend on this, may seem quite contradictory and strange. (b) But if one considers that this nature is nothing

\textsuperscript{543} Much more will be said about this in the next chapter, especially as it pretrains to the conceptualism debate.
\textsuperscript{544} KrV A108.
\textsuperscript{545} KrV A110.
in itself but a sum of appearances, hence not a thing in itself but merely a multitude of representations of the mind, then one will not be astonished to see that unity on account of which alone it can be called an object of all possible experience, i.e. Natur, solely in the radical faculty of all our cognition, namely transcendental apperception; and for that very reason (c) we can cognize this unity a priori, hence also as necessary, which we would certainly have to abandon if it were given in itself independently of the primary sources of our thinking.\(^{546}\)

There are three points I would like to focus on here as it will be significant in what follows. In point (a), Kant reiterates the alienating presupposition of his reconciliatory framework. Kant assumes that it should seem “strange” and “contradictory” that the Natur should reflect, in the structure of its conditions of possibility, the rules of our understanding and the transcendental, a priori geography of our subjectivity. This assumption, we have seen, would not make sense to the Ancients; for Aristotle at least, thought can become all things because the form of nature and the form of thought are the same; for Aquinas too, the passive intellect is like prime matter – it is potentially all things because it follows the same rules as things. This fact will seem “strange” and “contradictory” if, and only if, we assume a reconciliatory dichotomy. Only then, does this unity between the understanding and the world (i.e. Natur) present itself as extraordinary. It is, in fact, this assumed difference between thought and world that makes synthetic a priori knowledge mysterious and problematic; for only if we first assume a separation between these terms does the prior knowing of one by the other entail a problem or mystery, i.e. a fact that overwhelms thinking. And since it is this problem of a priori knowledge that, at once constitutes and incites the critical project, we are at liberty to assume that the origins of this project arise from a profound sense of alienation. We are outside the world in itself and cannot, therefore, know anything of it a priori with necessity and universality. But we do know things about it a priori; in fact, without that

\(^{546}\) KrV A114.
knowledge being true of the world, no experience of it would be possible. We are, therefore, simultaneously at home in, and utterly alienated from, the world—this is a contradiction.

This “astonishment” of being at home, of knowing a priori, disappears as soon as the world is taken to be, not a reality independent of mind, but “merely a multitude of representations”. The solution to this contradiction depends, therefore, on making the Other answerable to the formal rules of subjectivity. The world is no longer the Other per se; instead, it is the mere representation of an Other—it is, in other words, the product of an assimilation. Indeed, it should not astonish us if the world, as an assimilated entity, obeys our transcendental unity, our “I”—in fact, we should expect it to; then, and only then, is our a priori knowledge secure and safe from skepticism (point C in the quote above). The world in itself, on the other hand, as utterly distinct from us, humbles and alienates us. And it is this very fact that, in and of itself, differentiates the alternative model from both Kant and from his more idealistic descendants, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling. In his lectures on Kant, Adorno makes a valuable point that, unlike these absolute idealists listed above, Kant does not, as it were, reduce everything to the subject; he does not, in Adorno’s words, conclude that, “a thing is fully reducible to its concept, that object and subject are…to be collapsed into each other”.

Adorno claims that Kant is historically distinguished from his philosophical descendants in that even though he

Does situate the unity of existing reality and also the concept of Being in the realm of consciousness, he simultaneously refuses to generate everything that exists from that realm of consciousness…so much so that we would rather accept inconsistency, that he would rather allow all sorts of unexplained phenomena to enter philosophy whenever he encounters something given, than, as sometimes appears to be the case, to reduce everything to the unity of reason.

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547 KrV A114.
549 Adorno 1995, 18.
Though more will have to be said on the topic, it is enough to see that, where Kant leaves room for the noumenal – i.e. for something ‘standing against’ mind – his romantic disciples do not; for philosophers of the latter category, the object’s confrontation with the subject is entirely overcome, either through dialectical or deductive methods. This is why Kant’s idealism is, in his own words, a formal idealism.

And this is, I think, the strength of Kantian idealism. On this account, mind and world are simultaneously in (a) formal agreement (inasmuch as a priori forms organize, regulate, and synthesize actual contents) and (b) in a concrete asymmetry (inasmuch as independent contents provides matter for said synthesis and organization). Though the world is organized according to a priori categories and rules of relation, this does not (and cannot) determine what actually occurs or exists – otherwise the mind would know the contents of world a priori, instead of from posterior experience. Where pure a-priority is indicative of symmetry between mind and world, ‘posteriority’ denotes difference, alienation, and confrontation. It is, however, only on the bases of the prior establishment of symmetry, that this confrontation and alienation can occur; the actual object can appear only after already having been organized according to these a priori conditions (i.e. spacetime and categories). As conditions for the possibility of experience, a priori forms determine objects of posteriori knowledge ahead of time.

But, again, why is a transcendental deduction of the categories possible? Why can it be argued that the categories make experience possible, even though it might not be necessary? This non-reconciliatory model gives us the tools to answer this question. Doing so, will not only explain why it is possible but also why it transcendental argumentation is still reasonable and fruitful.

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I have defined nature as the necessary form, or structure of, the world. I have suggested that this form is made up of space, time, and the categories; through space and time, objects are individuated, through categories, they are unified and determined according to general rules. Without space and time, there would be bare empty unity. Without unity, there would be no limitation or determination of things – there would be no individuals. A priori knowledge is possible insofar as mind – i.e. pure a priori cognition – is the act of this form unto itself. It is time that I address the ontological question of mind. I have said what it is – i.e. the self-consciousness of the invariant form of the world – but I have not mentioned any of its further attributes.

Since mind is the act of nature onto itself, and since nature is the invariant form, or nature of, the world, the mind is itself a form. It is, therefore, immaterial and transcendental. It is (a) immaterial insofar as it is the formal condition for the possibility of worldly objects. Nature, as the form of the world cannot itself be a being, or a worldly entity; for then it would presuppose itself as its own possibility. In other words, if obeying the rules of nature makes any X possible, then nature cannot itself be an X; and if it were an object, an X, then Nature, qua object, would presuppose itself as its possibility. Conditions for the possibility of X cannot itself be an X for then the very possibility of X would be contradicted. In order for an owl to be it must obey the general rules of its concept, i.e. its form. This form, however, cannot be an owl since then it would require some further form to constitute it, and so on. I will call this the ‘principle of immateriality’: A condition for entities cannot itself be an entity for then it would no longer be the antecedent condition, but the consequent product. It would not, in other words, be able to explain – or constitute – entities. Mind, as the act of this form unto itself, cannot therefore be a worldly thing – it is immaterial.
But as I have said in the previous Chapter, supersensible objects have only nominal possibility. Since actuality is limited to what can be realizable spatiotemporally, any supersensible possibility is a possibility in ‘name only’. Does this mean that nature and mind or only nominal entities, i.e. non-entities? No. Of course, since nature is a form it must follow the principle of immateriality, which states that, a condition for the possibility of X cannot itself be an X without contradicting its role as a condition. At the same time, since nature is a form – i.e. a transcendental architectonic for the possibility of worlds – it is automatically implicated in worlds. Though it is supersensible it is related to the sensible necessarily as its possibility. Without a world, the conditions for the possibility of a world would not really be conditions at all. Laws are laws only insofar as they are obeyed. A law is a law for so long as there is a region of obedience. Without something obeying it – i.e. without a world – nature would therefore be an empty universal; it would not, in other words, be a form: a general condition for the possibility of an ontological region of entities. I will call this the principle of transcendence: A form is real to the extent that spatiotemporal regions and objects can obey it.

Here, it is important to differentiate the form of the world, i.e. nature, from the form of a particular object, e.g. a bear. For with this principle of transcendence a question immediately appears: would this principle of transcendence entail the formal emptiness of merely potential entities? Is the form of a centaur a form ‘in name only’ – is it not, in other words, a real condition and not, therefore, a real form? Indeed, since there are no actual centaurs (let’s assume that there are not), the form of this animal, on the one hand, might somehow be ‘at rest’. On the other hand, however, the universe is full of material conditions that might allow the generation, or evolution of such a creature – a centaur, indeed, is spatiotemporal and unifiable conceptually. It is therefore a real possibility, a potentiality. In the case of particular entities, potential existence must be
sufficient for the reality of their form. For if the form of unreal entities was empty, then the conditions for the possibility of unreal entities, i.e. their form, would be impotent. If the conditions for the possibility of a centaur were impotent, or unreal, then a centaur would not have potential. And, indeed, if the forms of inactual but possible entities were empty, then inactual but possible entities would have no possibility, i.e. potency. In other words, what is potential would be impossible, which is contradictory. In cases of the forms of particular entities potential existence must sufficiently satisfy the condition of obedience. The forms of particular entities are real to the extent that their object has potential or actual existence. Objects can be said to obey to their form either explicitly or implicitly – explicitly if they are actually individuated; implicitly if they are potentially individuated. The form of a centaur is, therefore, real since objects in the world obey certain principles that give centaurs potential existence. The world does not, on the other hand, obey rules that make a square-triangle possible; this is an empty, or nominal form.

This is altogether different with Nature. Nature relies, for its reality, on the obedience of some actual world. Without a world, this form would be an empty universal – it would be a condition without a conditioned, a legislative body without citizens. For unlike the form of a centaur, which has reality to the extent that its object has (at least) implicit existence in the actual world, the form of the world, i.e. nature, has no reality without an actual world. Without an actual world, there is no potential at all. The world, as the totality of what is actual cannot arise from pure potential – only nothing can come from nothing. Thus, there can be no potential world without it being implicit within some actual one; ‘world simpliciter’ cannot, therefore, have merely potential existence. The potency of world-simpliciter cannot, therefore, satisfy the condition of obedience, since ‘world per se’ is not a real possibility, a potentiality. Whereas the form of an unreal entity is real to the extent that the possibility of its object is potent or implicit, nature – qua
the form of the world – requires the actuality of its object because the potentiality of its object is impossible. Thus, though nature is immaterial to the extent that, as a condition for worlds, it cannot be a world, it is irrevocably tied to the actuality of its object as its formal possibility and structure. Similarly, where there a forms for particular entities, these are real to the extent that their object is explicitly or implicitly actual. Therefore, although forms are immaterial, they are not entities free or separate from the world. They are irrevocably tied to actuality.

Forms are, therefore, like rules or laws, which condition the possibility of participation, or citizenship, in a certain community. Similarly, with ontological forms; but where laws grant people access to some constituency, forms grant things access to some ontological region. Obedience to, for example, the rule of animal form, permits admittance into the community of the living organism, (perhaps) of the mammalian or reptilian kind. Obedience to these laws grants the object residency in a certain ontological region. Like laws, however, the legitimacy of these forms is granted, and secured only if a region that participates, or enacts them – otherwise, these are not Laws at all as they do not inform the organization of entities and their acts. The most general laws – i.e. the categories – are, therefore, conditions for the possibility of being an object at all. And in order to be an individual X, the laws of space and time must be obeyed by X. Where obedience to the categories relates extension to an object – i.e. a ‘this’ that is a ‘what’ – obedience to space and time makes ‘what’ something is a ‘this’. A ‘this’ that is not a ‘what’ – i.e. that is not unified by a concept— is unlimited and undetermined; how else could we say that an individual begins and ends without already knowing what it is? Similarly, a ‘what’ that is not a ‘this’ is either (a) potentially a this or (b) an empty idea, a concept that cannot be individuated. If it is (a) then it is implicit in some ‘this’ already. If it is (b) it is a mere idea.
Though mind, as Nature, cannot be worldly, neither is it noumenal; for if nature is the form of possible worlds, and mind is the act of this form unto itself, then mind is the self-consciousness, the underlying architecture of worlds. And since worlds can be implicit only within other worlds – i.e. since the world qua world cannot arise from nothing – the efficacy of this form is assumed. Since any potentiality that is not implicit in actuality has merely nominal existence, nature, as the form of actuality, must always be explicitly, and never potentially instantiated. Nature is, therefore, a form that is always explicitly instantiated. At the same time, and in equal fundamentality, nature is never itself in the world. As the condition for the world it cannot be among its conditioned entities, at least not without presupposing itself. When nature becomes an entity qua nature, and not merely as some specific configuration (e.g. a bear or an atom), it must therefore be subject to its own necessary structures. In other words, in order to be in the world, the condition for worlds (a.k.a. nature), must find itself in some actual entity. As a being, however, it must not become mired in particularity, i.e. it must not contradict the principle of its immateriality – otherwise it would not be the condition of worlds, but merely a conditioned thing. When nature is subject to itself – or when nature qua nature is instantiated – it must be simultaneously in the world (as a being) and outside the world (as the condition, or form, of worlds). It must be immaterially material. It cannot be utterly immaterial – then it would be form only, nature per se. Nor can it be utterly material – then it would not be nature at all, only one of its citizens. It must be embodied. If the Being of beings is in a being it must embody that being without becoming it. For then it would be a being, and not Being, an object and not nature. This embodied nature is what we called this embodied nature mind.

If mind is nature-embodied, and world is embodied-nature, then no deduction of the categories is necessary. When mind is nature, and nature is the form of the world, then whatever
resides in the mind a priori belongs to this form necessarily. And since whatever belongs to this form essentially, i.e. whatever is a priori, establishes the conditions for the possibility of worlds, the categories (as a priori cognitions) must be operative in all actual and possible worlds. The categories are real, not because the mind requires their reality for experience, but because objects, or entities, require them for their being objects at all. The categories, in as much as they are known purely a priori, reside in nature itself. Nature, in turn, as the form of the world is ontologically priori to said world – the categories, therefore, are conditions for the possibility of objects. There is, therefore, no need to make a transcendental argument as there is in Kant, though I would argue that such a transcendental argument is possible.

Kant knows that, if pure a priori knowledge is possible, then these forms must be conditions for the possibility of experience – otherwise, these structures would not be guaranteed in, or promised by, worldly entities. This must be the case if we assume that the mind and world are in need of reconciliation. Without such a need, does the same hold? Must conformity to nature – i.e. the necessary structures of the world – be conditions for the possibility of experience? Are these conditions for worldly entities also conditions of experience? Insofar as experience is experience of a world, we could easily answer the question. Of course, if nature is the formal condition for the possibility of a world, and ‘world’ is the empirical object of experience, then conformity to nature is also conformity to the conditions for the possibility of experience. This is, however, too easy. What, on the non-reconciliatory model, is experience of the world in the first place?

Whatever its limits end up being, since nature is free – i.e. since it includes all possible variations – it implicitly contains the schema for all possible worlds. The form of the world is, therefore, free from any particular world. The impossibility of a world in which nature is inoperative prohibits limiting this form to any particular world. Nature is, therefore, not tied to any
particular worldly, or material condition, since it is operative in all. And if mind, itself, is this form (as we have hypothesized), then mind is a form. And if the forms of nature designate invariant structures that make up the world’s possibility, then knowledge of these forms amounts, not to knowledge of this or that world, but of all possible (natural) worlds.

Now, if cognition is, transcendentally speaking, nature-unti-itself, then it is the self-consciousness, or transcendental cognition, of these forms; mind is the cognition, or knowledge, of what is possible. The world, in this respect, is a ‘permutation’ of Nature and signifies the latter’s particularization in accordance with its form. And if we think of nature as form, and world as an instantiation of that form, then what marks the distinction is not merely the difference between generality and its specification, but more importantly, the difference between essence and accident. For our purposes here, it will suffice to say that, where the form of nature is the essence (or soul) of any world, the specification, or individuation, of each world is made through its contingencies, e.g. specific kinds of entities, laws, motions etc… The invariant structures of worlds that differ accidentally make up what, we here call, “Nature”. And as nature-unti-itself, formal cognition is the knowledge of all possible worlds, the essence of each; it is, as it were, a knowing of the most general, empty, and invariant truths. For at this highest level of cognition, nature, in knowing itself, knows nothing of the world, of the specification of nature, but only of ‘worlds’ generally. What it knows before it experiences a world – what it knows a priori – amounts to nothing more than what is true of all natural worlds. But as the truth of Nature, that is, of the structures that constitute the possibility of all worlds, this truth only entails the possible knowledge of worlds. When we refer to possible worlds, we mean worlds that obey the a priori forms of mind, i.e. to nature.
On this model, ‘experience’ signifies something quite different than it does for Kant. For Kant, since the objects of this experience, a.k.a. ‘appearances’, are ideal (at least insofar they conform to the mind), their obedience to the forms of transcendental cognition does not, simultaneously, signify a form of self-consciousness. When I experience the world, for Kant, I am experiencing something that conforms to me, and only thereby reflects me; it is ‘made’ by me. If transcendental mind is the self-consciousness of nature, however, then the experience of a world by that mind entails the confrontation between nature and, what I have called, its permutation or instantiation, i.e. a ‘world’. The experience of the world by mind then, signifies the folding of the form onto its instantiation; through ‘mind’, nature, qua form, is living in (one of) its world(s).

It is helpful to think of this in terms of soul and body. I have hypothesized that mind is the self-consciousness of nature, which is the soul of the world; by soul, I simply mean form of the world, i.e. its immaterial, transcendental conditions of possibility. If experience is the cognition of the world by a mind, then this signifies that experience of the world by its soul. Since this soul is, in fact, the condition for the possibility of a world, this experience signifies the cognition, by the soul, of its body. Where formal mind is the folding of the form unto itself, its ‘experience’ of a world, entails the folding of the form onto its instance. The ‘mind’ is both reflected in, and alienated by, the world. It is reflected because the object of its experience, a.k.a. ‘world’, obeys nature as a condition for its possibility; if, for example, the form of an owl could experience its living instantiation, it would, prior to experience, know the invariant, or universal and necessary, dimensions of this animal’s possibility – it could therefore, recognize itself in the creature, as its possibility. However, because the world is an instantiation of form, the variant and accidental content specifying it, simultaneously differentiates it from said form. The content of its instantiation in world is unknown to the form prior to experience; the form of the owl would not,
as it were, know the idiosyncrasies of this instantiation prior to experience. ‘Mind’, as nature unto itself, is ‘at home’ in the form of the world, though it is estranged by its contents found therein. To designate the notion of being at home in the form of the world, I will use the word ‘solace’; to refer to the alienation between a form and its content, I will use the word ‘estrangement’.

The difference between solace and estrangement amounts to the fundamental epistemological difference between what is knowable transcendentally (i.e. a priori) and what is knowable empirically (i.e. a posteriori). We are at home in the world because, in terms of its logical/arithmetic form, the logical world and the mind are the same. Transcendental a priori cognition, or knowledge of this form by an empirical subject, amounts therefore to the prior understanding of the world’s form by a subject hurled into it. And because this knowledge is known independent of experience, it may seem – and indeed, it often does – as though we have returned; in this a priori familiarity, we find solace and religious material – for how else could we ‘know’ prior to experience except by some capacity to recollect, or by some divine intention, or by some system of reincarnation? At the same time, however, the world is unknown to us in terms of its content. We do not know of owls, or genes, or stars prior to our experience of them, though each are, formally speaking, in compliance with nature’s form. It is, in fact, this very obedience that makes our knowledge of these instantiations possible. Science, when taken in its empirical sense then – i.e. as a body of knowledge about the world – amounts to the theoretical articulation of Nature’s instantiation by mind. Of all the possible permutations of its form, nature resolves to know in which particular variation of itself it lives within.

On this alternative account, both of these dynamics are simultaneously true. On the one hand, the subject and the object are not entirely collapsed; the subject is estranged essentially from the world inasmuch as it can never predict, or be certain of, the content instantiating it. It is estranged
from the world in the way precisely in the way that a concept would be, were it conscious of its instance, i.e. an object differentiated by content and non-essential accidents. On the other hand, since transcendental mind is taken to be the self-consciousness of nature – i.e. the form of the world – the object and the subject are collapsible, albeit in a qualified way. As we have seen, this collapse is not to be understood as a kind of reconciliation or a reduction of the object to mind. If it were, then the estrangement of transcendental mind might be overcome. For if the object were reduced, or reconciled, with mind, then estrangement might be a vanishing attribute of transcendental mind in experience. However, if the subject is taken to be formal folding of the object, as this model suggests, then estrangement is not something that can be overcome. If mind is the formal folding of nature, then it will always be differentiated from the world both as its general possibility, and its ontological difference. In this respect, mind might be understood as being both infinite and finite. Inasmuch as the world and nature are, formally speaking, identical, mind is infinite; inasmuch as form is distinguished from instantiation, nature is limited by world, and mind is finite. Though mind is infinite, it cannot merely deduce everything about the world’s content; though it is finite, it understands the nature of the world prior to any experience of it. What this amounts to is that that the soul of the world experiences its body as both a familiar, and alien entity. The world, in way – or, at least insofar as it is the object of nature’s act– confronts itself through with and without a priori familiarity.

This account offers an explanation for why Kant’s transcendental argument is possible, which he himself is unable to do. Kant’s formulation of transcendental conditions as conditions for the possibility of experience is a clever, hypothetical way to ground the validity of a priori forms in the world. If the mind is the soul of the world onto itself, however, then this offers an explanation as to why these conditions are conditions for experience, not just that they must be so
if a priori knowledge is to be possible. A priori forms are conditions for the possibility of experience of a world because experience is the cognition of the world by its soul; that is, by its formal possibility. Since experience denotes the form’s confrontation with its instantiation, obedience by the latter to the former is already assumed. Nature is the condition for the possibility of the world, its ontological priority. And since mind is nature onto itself, whatever forms are in the mind a priori are also in nature and so too, the world.

But there is a problem here. What if, for instance, the categorical and aesthetic forms could be separated? If they could be separated – i.e. if there could be an unschematized spatiotemporal world – then our concepts would not play an essential role in natural worlds. An unintelligible world of extension would be possible. Recent debates regarding the conceptualism in Kant’s philosophy see the two a priori faculties as working, not in tandem, but quite independently. In the final chapter, I will attempt to explore and answer some problems regarding conceptualism in Kant’s philosophy. This will help us get clearer handle on how the two faculties stand in relation to one another. What I will suggest, as a result of these considerations, is that although a world of pure extension is in principle a natural possibility, it would be an indeterminate world of mere potentiality. Spatiotemporal content requires determination by rules of thinking.
In the concluding chapter, I will attempt to answer the problem of Kant’s conceptualism. How this problem is resolved will affect to understand the non-reconciliatory model as described in chapter four. Though much has been written on the categories in Kant’s philosophy, recent scholarship is divided in regard to the degree and nature of their agreement with appearances. It has become a matter of controversy whether the sensible particulars of perception can occur without any conceptual mediation. In section 5.1, I will attempt to articulate the two principles in Kant’s philosophy that give rise to the problem of conceptual content in the first place. These principles are the principles of ‘homogeneity’ and ‘heterogeneity’. In section 5.2, I will contend that, by favoring one principle over the other, certain difficulties arise. In section 5.3, I will offer my own conclusion: *though a non-conceptual intuition is possible in principle, the consciousness of it is not.*

**Section 5.1**  
*Conceptualism and its Alternative*

In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant describes the goal of the deduction as explaining “the surprising agreement of appearances with the laws of the understanding, despite their having entirely different sources from the former”.\(^{551}\) Though much has been written on the categories in Kant’s philosophy, recent scholarship is divided in regard to the degree and nature of their agreement with appearances. Due in part to recent developments in the philosophy of mind, most especially McDowell’s revitalization of Kant’s dictum that “intuitions without concepts are blind”, it has become a matter of controversy whether the sensible particulars of perception can occur without any conceptual mediation, i.e. whether non-conceptual mental content is possible.\(^{552}\)

The conclusion of this chapter will be a simple one: for the transcendental unity of consciousness to be possible – i.e. in order for the identity of this consciousness to be preserved – its immanent contents must be unified according to necessary rules, which are (or happen to be) the a priori categories of the understanding. This position may be called a version of ‘weak

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\(^{551}\) 4:476  
\(^{552}\) KrV A5.
For though intuitions are not produced by a priori concepts (as they would be according to a stronger version of conceptualism), they are brought to consciousness by means of them. What is novel about this approach is that it attempts to solve the problem of Kant’s conceptualism by means of ‘transcendental apperception’. Though much has been written on the role of concepts in Kant’s philosophy, especially on the breadth of their extent, this central feature of the deduction (i.e. Transcendental Apperception) often plays a minor role in the exchange. This chapter is an attempt to begin to rectify that marginalization.

In the first section, I will outline a conflict between the two principles that underlie and motivate the transcendental deduction. In this second section, I will show how problems arise if one principle is preferred over, or reduced to, the other. I will then set the stage for our analysis of apperception, by briefly describing its role in the deduction. After deriving the conclusion cited above from 3 premises, I will respond to some potential objections and concerns.

In Kant’s philosophy, there are two principles that seem to conflict with one another. These are what I call the principles of agreement (PA) and of opposition (PO). On my reading, the conflict generated by these principles motivates the transcendental deduction, which is Kant’s attempt to validate the applicability of a priori concepts regarding “everything that may ever come before our senses” (B159).

1) PO: To the extent that they arise from heterogeneous faculties, intuitions and concepts are heterogeneous elements of cognition.\(^553\)

2) PA: In the subsumption of an object under a concept, the object must be homogeneous (or in agreement) with that concept.\(^554\)

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\(^553\) See Land 2015, 26. Land refers to this principle as the ‘thesis of Heterogeneity’.
\(^554\) Of course, the explicit justification of this principle appears at the beginning of the Schematism chapter, though it appears implicitly in many prior instances, at A58, for instance, Kant writes that “the nominal definition of truth…is the agreement of cognition with its object is here granted and presupposed”. In the deduction itself, Kant often refers to the agreement (what he calls homogeneity in the schematism) between appearances and a priori concepts. KrV A90/B123; see esp. B144.
The conflict between these principles arises in the context of the transcendental deduction, which is Kant’s attempt to validate the applicability of our a priori categories onto appearances. For the deduction to be successful, it is not enough for appearances to accidentally agree with these concepts; if the categories are to have a priori validity, appearances must agree with these concepts a priori, i.e. not merely empirically. Famously, the argument justifying this a priori agreement between appearances and concepts involves somehow substantiating the counterfactual claim, ‘were sensible appearances unreceptive to categorical concepts – i.e. if they were contingently or essentially non-conceptual— then objects of cognition (i.e. experience) would not arise’.

According to the ‘principle of agreement’, the a priori applicability of pure concepts (which is their validation) depends, from the outset, on the establishment of an essential agreement between pure concepts and appearances. But how is this agreement possible when, according to the principle of opposition, appearances arise from a faculty that is altogether different from the understanding? If the deduction is to be successful, Kant must show that appearances agree with our understanding despite arising from a heterogeneous source.

I believe that conceptualists and non-conceptualists attempt to resolve this conflict by favoring one of these principles over the other. Where conceptualists have a special sympathy towards the principle of agreement, so much so that they often mitigate the opposition dividing the faculties, non-conceptualists do just the opposite: to the detriment of the agreement requisite for concept application, they exaggerate the opposition between our faculties. It is my contention that any acceptable interpretation of the role of non-conceptual content must grant equal weight to both. If we deny PO, then we challenge one of Kant’s clearest statements in the whole Critique. If we deny PA, we leave the agreement of appearances with a priori concepts up to chance and thereby undercut the possibility of their a priori validity.
Participants in the debate can be divided into conceptualist and non-conceptualist camps. Each of these camps can be specified further into a weak and a strong type. For a strong conceptualist (e.g. Sellars, McDowell 1994), sensible intuitions depend on concepts for their individuation and existence. On this view, the categories are necessary conditions for the possibility of appearances and the forms of sensibility do not make any separate, sui generis contribution to cognition. The worry here is that the principle of opposition is contradicted. To resolve this, tenets of the restrained version of conceptualism affirm that concepts are necessary conditions of perceptual intuitions, but somehow make room sensibility and its unique contents. The difficulty here is resolving the tensions between the faculties of cognition.

Running parallel to strong and weak forms of conceptualism, there are weak and strong forms of non-conceptualism. A strong non-conceptualist (e.g. Hannah) affirms the possibility of cognizing essentially non-conceptual content. Simply, proponents of this view assert the reality of what others have taken to be a myth – the given. This is opposed to weak non-conceptualism (e.g. Allais), which locates non-conceptual content within the space of reasons itself. On this interpretation, intuitions are non-conceptual but they can, in principle, be conceptualized.555

In order to elucidate this conflict, each principle requires explication. The PO arises from Kant’s discussion beginning at A50/B74, where he distinguishes between the two “fundamental sources in the mind”. The first is the capacity to receive intuitions, which can be either pure or empirical. Whether an intuition is pure or empirical depends on whether ‘sensations’ (“which presuppose the actual presence of the object”) are contained in them.556 If sensations are contained, then the intuition is empirical and never a priori; if not, then they are pure and always a priori. The second is the spontaneous capacity for unifying manifold representations under concepts of the

555 For more on these views see Grüne 2011, 470-71.
556 KrV A50/B74.
understanding. Though cognition proper occurs only when intuitions are thought through concepts (or when concepts are instantiated by intuitions) Kant is clear that neither faculty can “exchange their functions”. Our understanding cannot intuit the object, nor can our senses think it. Furthermore, without the amalgamation of these capacities, the empirical cognition of objects (i.e. experience) would not be possible, which is summarized by the famous phrase that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind”.

Importantly, the opposition between faculties is reflected in the contents of their respective kinds of act. In contrast to an empirical intuition, which “is immediately related to the object and is singular”, a concept is always “mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things”. Where something is ‘singular’ to the extent that it is the only instance of what it is—i.e. to the extent that it “has no domain” – it cannot be common to many things. Take the Galilean moons of Jupiter, for example: Europa, Callisto, Io, and Ganymede are not contained in my singular intuition of the moon as it breaks through the trees outside my window. A concept, by contrast, is capable of being common to an indefinite number of intuitions, despite their particularity: Callisto, Europa, Io, and Ganymede are all represented as being consistent with the concept ‘moon’.

The question now arises: if cognition occurs only when these faculties ‘work together’, how are we to understand the harmonization of divergent sources and their contents? When concepts and intuitions characterise two unique species of representation, how is the subsumption of an appearance under a concept possible? These questions are especially pressing given what is

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557 KrV A68/B93.
558 KrV A51/B75.
559 KrV A51/B75.
560 KrV A320/B377.
561 KrV A71/B96.
required in order for this relation to be successful. For a concept to relate to an object successfully, the concept and the object must be homogenous. The PA states: “in the subsumption of an object under a concept the representation of the former must be homogeneous with the latter, i.e. the concept must contain that which is represented in the object that is subsumed under it”.\(^{562}\) In the case of the application of categories to intuitions, the representation of the intuitions must be in uniform agreement with the applied concept. In order to make a categorical judgement, for example X is green, ‘X’ must exhibit the structural organization of a substance, i.e. a subject with properties.

To my mind, the principle of agreement is a very sensible condition. If in order to apply a concept to an intuition, that intuition must correspond to the concept’s intension, then the inclusion of the particular under the concept’s extension is justified; in the absence of such an agreement, inclusion in the extension of a meaning is mysterious, even arbitrary. In the case of universal and necessary concepts, this agreement between appearances and thoughts cannot be achieved through empirical reflection, i.e. through abstracting the universal from the particular. Neither can it be achieved through the application of these concepts, at least not without simply presupposing agreement, by means of which the extension of a concept is grounded. There must therefore be a function by means of which intuitions are in priori agreement with categories without contradicting the PO.\(^{563}\)

One way to construe the agreement between intuitions and concepts is simply to contend that the latter are abstractions of the former. In this case, concepts are homogeneous with appearances insofar as they conform to them. What is more, this view seems accurate ‘out of the

\(^{562}\) KrV A137/B176.

\(^{563}\) There must be a mediator. Of course, the means by which intuitions become homogeneous with pure concepts is through transcendental ‘time determinations’, i.e. schemata.
‘armchair’, at least since “experience constantly offers examples of a regularity of appearance that give sufficient occasion for abstracting the concept of [e.g.] cause from them”.\textsuperscript{564} If this is accurate, and the uniformity between categories and intuitions is established by means of the compliance of our concepts to what appears, then all of our concepts can only ever be empirically true; homogeneity would arise a posteriori and none of our concepts would apply to objects with universal and necessary validity.\textsuperscript{565}

This explanation of homogeneity is not, therefore, capable of validating our a priori concepts. We might have a priori concepts but they would not be applicable with universal and necessary force. If our a priori concepts are to have universal and necessary validity, then the homogeneity between intuitions and concepts cannot arise a posteriori. Reversing this, we can say that a priori concepts are valid only if their agreement with appearances can be established a priori. This, in turn, is possible only if intuitions conform to concepts in a way that secures their reference to an object.\textsuperscript{566}

The justification for the validity of our a priori concepts burdens Kant with an exceptionally challenging task. For if we take these two principles together and subject them to the demands of the deduction, the result is an intimidating one: Kant must prove that, despite arising from a heterogeneous source, the contents of sensibility are homogeneous with our a priori categories. The difficulty here is making sense of the a priori homogeneity without simultaneously conflating the functions of our faculties. To be homogenous, intuitions must correspond to our categories a priori; they must “furnish” these intellectual rules with content.\textsuperscript{567} However, given that sensibility is sui generis, “it is not clear a priori why appearances should contain anything of this sort…and it

\textsuperscript{564} KrV A91/B123.
\textsuperscript{565} KrV Bxvii.
\textsuperscript{566} KrV A93/B126.
\textsuperscript{567} KrV A90/B123.
is therefore a priori doubtful whether such a concept is not perhaps entirely empty”. Relating to concepts a priori is not, in other words, a condition of an object being given in intuition. It is therefore possible that, “appearances could…be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity”.

The validity of our a priori categories rests on their universal and necessary agreement with appearances. Since appearances arise from a non-intellectual faculty, however, there is no a priori reason for admitting their agreement with these universal concepts. There are two ways to approach this problem, one ‘conceptualist’ and the other ‘non-conceptualist’. According to conceptualists, Kant sets out to prove that categories are necessary conditions of appearances generally. On this account, particular intuitions are homogeneous with the categories to the extent that they are more or less carved out by them and the forms of sensibility equally. Non-conceptualists will reply by pointing out that, according to such a view, the sovereignty of sensibility is endangered or even abolished – in other words, the PO is contradicted. A non-conceptualist will argue, by contrast, that categories are external to the possibility of intuitions, though they play an essential role in referring representations to objects. On this reading, intuitions are homogeneous with categories inasmuch as they are organized by them for the purpose of having relation to an object. Conceptualists will retort by pointing out that, if categories are external to the possibility of particular intuitions then the only means by which they can agree is through the application of these concepts onto sensible particulars. But if this is the case, then the homogeneity requisite for the application is left unexplained and unjustified; successfully

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568 KrV A90/B123.
569 KrV A90/B123.
570 See Land 2015, 44: “sensible representations exhibit their own distinctive structure, which is different from the discursive structure of judgements, while also being dependent on the categories”.

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subsuming intuitions under concepts assumes, and therefore cannot explain, their agreement with these concepts – in other words, the PA is contradicted.  

To summarize: if categories are internal to the possibility of intuitions – i.e. if they are essentially conceptual – then sources of cognition are conflated and their heterogeneity denied. If, on the other hand, categories are external to the possibility of intuitions – i.e. if they are essentially non-conceptual – then they are (at most) accidentally homogeneous with intuitions, which is precisely the conclusion that the deduction is designed to overcome; only by establishing the a priori validity of the categories “in regard to all objects of our senses” will the “aim of the deduction…first be fully attained” (B144). In the first case, the PO is contradicted; if the concepts are necessary conditions for the givenness of objects, then the functions of sensibility and the understanding are exchanged and conflated. By rectifying this problem, however, and reinstating a division between the faculties, another problem arises: the PA is refuted. When we admit that concepts are external to the possibility of appearances, their agreement with concepts is coincidental at best.  

5.2 Examples of the Competing Views: An Examination

Where conceptualists favour the PA, non-conceptualists favour the PO. Both kinds of interpretations arise from the difficulty of explaining how a priori concepts can agree with contents that arise from a heterogeneous source. Favoring one principle over the other makes this job easier, but it comes at a cost. To reveal this price, it will prove useful to give an example of each kind of

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571 For more on these distinctions see Hannah 2011, 328; also Grüne 2011, 471. For good definitions and discussion on the distinction between weak and strong content conceptualism see Schulting 2015, 565. For another version of these distinctions see Allais 2015, 149.  
572 For more on this see Schulting 2015, 565: “Ihr Unterschied liegt hauptsächlich darin, dass der „starke“ Konzeptualismus die von Kant mehrmals betonte strenge Trennung zwischen Verstand und Sinnlichkeit dermaßen aufgeweicht hat, dass eine fast völlige Verschmelzung beider droht, welche der „schwache“ Konzeptualismus gerade vermeiden möchte.“ My emphasis.  
573 see Ginsborg 2007, 70.
imbalance. As a representative of the conceptualist camp I have selected John MacDowell. As a representative of the non-conceptualist camp, I have chosen Lucy Allais.

A brief side note is in order here. I am not certain that McDowell’s view is so strongly conceptual as it is often made out to be. In fact, there are sections in Mind and World that lend evidence to the contrary.\textsuperscript{574} For this reason, the ‘McDowell’ that I refer to in the following section might not be representative of ‘McDowell’ himself. McDowell’s work has been interpreted (correctly or incorrectly) by non-conceptualists like Hannah as being representative of a strong version of conceptualism. It is that McDowell to which I refer in the following.

(1) By rejecting both (i) a region of non-conceptual givens, which constrains our thinking from the outside, but which thereby exceeds the ‘space of reasons’, and (ii) a coherentism purporting to avoid such pitfalls but falling into its own (i.e. a conceptual system unrestrained by the empirical world), McDowell arrives at the conclusion that “we must not suppose that receptivity makes an even notionally separable contribution to its co-operation with spontaneity”.\textsuperscript{575} Consequently, McDowell defends a view he calls ‘Kantian’, according to which concepts are inexorably implicated in the contents of sensibility: “we must insist that the understanding is already inextricably implicated in the deliverances of sensibility themselves”.\textsuperscript{576}

That McDowell’s view really is Kantian is highly debatable.\textsuperscript{577} I would argue that his interpretation of Kant is in the spirit, though perhaps not the letter, of conceptualist readings. This is enough to make him a suitable representative of Kantian conceptualism. The problem with conceptualist readings is that it they problematize the PO. For if sensible contents are conceptual in the very fabric of their being, then the contributions of sensibility are not altogether different

\textsuperscript{574} McDowell 1996, 55.  
\textsuperscript{575} McDowell 1996, 41.  
\textsuperscript{576} McDowell 1996, 46.  
\textsuperscript{577} See for instance Hannah 2005, 250-251.
from those of the understanding. By focusing attention on Kant’s phrase that “intuitions without concepts are blind”, strong conceptualists overlook the reverse phrase of the famous dictum at A51/B67, namely that “thoughts without content are empty”. This omission makes many Kantian claims difficult to understand. Most notably, perhaps, are those comments made starting at A89/B122 and which run as follows: “objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding”; “appearances can certainly be given in intuition without functions of the understanding”; and lastly, even in absence of intellectual functions, “appearances would nonetheless offer objects to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking”.

The interpretation of the section of the First Critique from which these passages are lifted is highly contentious. There are those who claim that Kant here speaks merely didactically, and those who think his statements are categorical.\(^{578}\) In either case, Kant unquestionably makes the claim that non-conceptual intuitions are at least in principle possible, even if this cannot be the case in the end. They are possible in principle, not in order to satisfy our craving for some friction between thought and the world, but in order to respect the dissimilarity both between concepts and intuitions and their respective sources. On McDowell’s account it is difficult to see how this would be possible even in principle, seeing as “experience has content by virtue of the drawing into operation, in sensibility, of what are genuinely elements in a faculty of spontaneity”.\(^{579}\) Had Kant allowed concepts to be so essentially involved in the possibility of intuitions as McDowell requires, the Transcendental Deduction of the categories, i.e. the justification of their validity “in regard to all objects of our senses”, would not have involved the welding function of the imagination, which

\(^{578}\) For those who read this as counterfactual see for instance Brady 2011; Grüne 2011; Land 2015; in contrast, see Hannah 2005, 2011; Allais 2009, 2015; Schulting 2015.

\(^{579}\) McDowell 1996, 46.
connects sensibility and the understanding (see esp. A124; B151; A140/B179). More generally, the conflation of our faculties threatens to remove the difficulty of necessitating the transcendental deduction in the first place, namely “how the subjective conditions of thinking should have objective validity”.\(^{580}\) For if the categories are internal to the possibility of appearances generally, then they seem to be equivalent to our other sensible conditions, i.e. space and time, in which case no special deduction of them is required.\(^ {581}\)

(2) Allais offers an ‘epistemological reading’ of the deduction, which interprets its central aim, not as an attempt to ground the possibility of perceptual particulars in categories, but as an effort to secure the validity of referential thought.\(^ {582}\) To that end, Kant’s claim that we are entitled to use a priori concepts because they are conditions of the possibility of \textit{Erfahrung} does not amount to an ontological claim about appearances as intuitions generally. For Allais, synthesis is something that is done to intuitions, not something that produces them.\(^ {583}\) On this view, the categories are a priori rules of synthesis that allow thinking to have ‘reference to an object’; they are not, therefore, conditions that make intuitions possible, but conditions that make it possible for them to receive concepts.\(^ {584}\)

In defending this non-conceptualist thesis, Allais makes a contrast between ‘combining sensations’ and ‘synthesizing intuitions’, noting that synthesis is something done to spatiotemporal intuitions, and not to the raw materials of our sensible receptivity.\(^ {585}\) According to her, synthesis is a spontaneous act, which combines the non-conceptual particulars of a perceptual field in a way that makes them receptive to empirical concepts. To avoid the possibility of the arbitrary

\(^{580}\) Kant V A90/B122
\(^{581}\) Kant V A89/B121-A91/B123
\(^{582}\) Allais 2015, 259.
\(^{583}\) Allais 2015, 169.
\(^{584}\) Allais 2015, 263. Thus, Allais writes that, “Kant’s aim is to show that the application of a priori concepts, as a priori rules of synthesis, is a condition of thoughts having relation to an object”.
\(^{585}\) Allais 2015, 170.
combination of intuitions, Allais reads Kant as implanting categorical rules that govern synthesis, which makes objective reference possible. On this interpretation, the categories are ‘external’ to the possibility of the appearances they organize through synthesis.

For Allais, it appears that synthesis must be understood as a species of judgement or concept application. Through the synthetic application of a priori concepts, intuitions are unified in a manner appropriate for referring them to an object. Put differently, a priori concepts are understood as subsuming intuitions under universal rules, with which they are then homogenous. The problem with this ‘application view’ is that, since categories are external to the possibility of appearances, these appearances are not homogeneous with our a priori categories to begin with. Why we are justified in using these concepts to subsume appearances is left unexplained. The option remaining to us would be to presuppose a pre-established harmony between the order of appearances and the categories, which Kant vehemently rejects in section 27 of the B-Deduction. In this passage at B168, he points out that a pre-established harmony would entail demoting the categories from objective concepts to “subjective pre-dispositions for thinking”. According to such a view, the categories would lack their characteristic necessity since all I could say is that “I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected”. In short, the ‘application view’ is unable to justify the necessary agreement that must exist between appearances and categories, at least if these latter concepts are to be universally valid.

Allais’s interpretation therefore contradicts the principle of agreement. She argues that the manifold of intuition, which is to be combined through the application of categories, can be

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586 Allais 2015, 276.
587 KrV B167. Thomas Land has levelled a similar point against non-conceptualism generally. See Land 2015, 35-37.
588 KrV B168.
589 Allais 2015, 275.
synthesized in “indefinitely many ways” and so is, in principle, heterogeneous with the categories of the understanding.\footnote{Allais 2015, 283.} Additionally, she writes:

as I read Kant, he thinks that we organize the sensory input into perceptual units using our forms of intuition….To understand the deduction we need to know why he thinks empirical concepts could not be successfully applied unless we bring these individuals under our a priori concepts.\footnote{Allais 2015, 275.}

What is left out of this account, and what is key to the deduction as a whole, is the justification for being able to bring objects of intuition under our a priori concepts. If intuitions can be combined in any number of ways – i.e. if they [were] so “constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord the conditions of its unity” (A90/B123) – then they are essentially heterogeneous with, and therefore unreceptive to, the laws of the understanding and their envisioned necessity. If synthesis is something that is done to intuitions, and not something helping to produce them as appearances, then categorical laws are not internal to appearances generally. And if categorical laws are not internal to the possibility of appearances generally, then they are not universally true of the world of particulars. How can the vindication of our a priori categories be successful if they are not substantiated by that to which they are ultimately applied? Though the PO is respected, the PA is left out of the picture.

Interpretations that acknowledge both principles equally are difficult to imagine. Are any of the species of interpretation outlined above adequate to the task? I have attempted to summarize which positions respect which principles. Strong conceptualism is obviously not capable of defending a balanced account. If concepts are necessary conditions for appearances, then the faculties are conflated. To remedy this difficulty, interpreters may be driven to disentangle a priori concepts from the possibility of appearances. Naturally, this would have the intended effect of
driving a suitable wedge between the faculties, albeit to the determent of the possibility of an agreement between appearances and a priori concepts. For if these concepts are external to the possibility of appearances (c) essentially, or even (d) accidentally, then our a priori concepts cannot apply to appearances universally.

It appears that our only option is a weak version of conceptualism. On my view, non-conceptual intuitions are possible in principle, though our consciousness of them is not. Thus, we might contend that, in order for contents to be immanent to consciousness, they must necessarily obey, and therefore be homogeneous with, the a priori categories of the understanding. The difficulty facing these kinds of interpretations will lie in explaining how appearances become homogeneous with the categories prior to their application.\(^{592}\) For unlike strong conceptualism, which denies essentially non-conceptual content, weak conceptualism must confront the sub-categorical head on. It is my contention that the answer to this difficulty rests on the function of the transcendental unity of apperception.

Remarkably, this central feature of the transcendental deduction has played a very small role in the conceptualism debate generally. This is no exception in Allais work as she admits to saying little “about a (the?) central feature of the argument in the deduction: the role of self-consciousness (what Kant calls the transcendental unity of apperception)”.\(^{593}\) And although Allais has an entire section on the role of synthesis, which she argues is performed on pre-existing, non-conceptual intuitions, she admits to ignoring “the connection between this [synthesis] and self-consciousness”.\(^{594}\) Is Allais, or any conceptualist/non-conceptualist justified in making such an omission? I don’t think so, at least not since the overriding concern of these interpreters is with

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\(^{592}\) Luckily, Kant has an entire section devoted to just this difficulty. It is the chapter on the schematism which follows both the A and the B deduction.

\(^{593}\) Allais 2015, 260.

\(^{594}\) Allais 2015, 272.
the extent to which intuitions involve concepts and this involves the central feature of ‘relation to an object’. This is omission is especially serious, since what Kant means by ‘relation to an object’ is connected fundamentally to the TUA (Transcendental Unity of Apperception). In the A-Deduction, for instance, Kant argues that if “the necessary unity of consciousness” was not “encountered in the manifold of perceptions”, then experience would be “without object” (A112). In the immediately preceding section, he contends that the relation to an object, which is made possible by a particular unity of the manifold, is “nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness” (A108). In both quotations, the TUA is construed as being both a necessary condition for relation to an object, and the primary function in virtue of which there are lawful regularities among appearances. And if appearances are lawfully organized as a consequence of belonging to consciousness, then the agreement between these appearances and the rules of the understanding can be interpreted as resulting from the transcendental unity of apperception.

Section 5.3
_A Purposed Solution to the Problem of Conceptualism_

In spite of the independence that sensibility enjoys in its (in principle) ability to receive non-conceptual givens (i.e. PO), the agreement between appearances and concepts (i.e. the PA) seems to require the dissolution, though perhaps not the annihilation, of this freedom from intellectual rules. This demand generates a conflict, however. For if we affirm that intuitions are non-conceptual and can be contents of mental states, then they do not satisfy the PA, which underlies the possibility of applying concepts generally. In this case, not only is the aim of the deduction made ambiguous, its execution entails applying concepts to what cannot receive them. But if we accede to the PA, and overrule the possibility of non-conceptual givens, then we run the risk of incapacitating sensibility by depriving it of its defining and essential power to give intuitions. By taking either side, an important tenet of Kant’s theory is contradicted. In the first case, the principle
of homogeneity, which seems to drive the deduction as a whole, is contradicted; in the second, the independence and contribution of sensibility is annulled.

In their present form, then, both interpretations cannot be correct and so, regardless of which side you agree with, at least one central feature of Kant’s philosophy will be rejected. It is my view that this conflict can be resolved, not by choosing one side over the other, but by appealing to the primary functions of Transcendental Unity of Apperception (TUA). I argue that, while non-conceptual intuitions can be given independently of the understanding, they can be taken up into thought only through a synthesis in accordance with categorical laws. It is therefore true both that (a) intuitions are given independently and (b) in necessary agreement with the understanding. Where non-conceptual manifolds are given, they are representations if and only if they can be attributed to the experience of a single, rule governed consciousness.

My argument will be comprised of 3 premises and a conclusion. It can be summarized as follows:

P1) Belonging the TUA is a necessary condition for being a representation.

P2) Reflecting the identity of the TUA is a necessary condition for belonging TUA.

P3) Obeying categories is identical to reflecting the identity of the TUA.

Therefore: Obeying categories is a necessary condition for being a representation.

I will call the first condition ‘the immanence condition’ and it will signify the requirement of belonging to the TUA that appearances must satisfy in order to be representations. I will call the second condition ‘the mirroring condition’ and it will signify the requirement of reflecting the identity of the TUA that appearances must satisfy in order to belong to that apperception. The third condition requires no special nomenclature as it is simply what Kant means by the phrase ‘reference to an object’.
A

The Immanence Condition:

Belonging to the TUA is a necessary condition for being an experiential appearance.

What Kant means by transcendental apperception is difficult to grasp and a complete analysis would take up more time than is here available. In the simplest terms possible, the TUA is the principle through which all the mental contents of which I can become conscious are unified synthetically. ‘Synthesis’ here signifies the act of putting different representations together and unifying them in one cognition and is responsible for the connection, combination, and unity among all representations. The TUA makes this synthesis possible in two respects. First, by enduring through multiple representations, it is able to combine and connect different contents and states. Second, by being identical and unchanging, it can resist dispersion among these representations, and unite them in itself.

The power to unite and synthesize representations is not, however, accidental to these representations themselves; in fact, belonging to the TUA is a necessary condition for being a representation:

We are conscious a priori of the thoroughgoing identity of ourselves with regard to all representations that can ever belong to our cognition, as a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations (since the latter represent something in me only insofar as they belong with all the others to one consciousness, hence they must be capable of being connected in it).

But why is connection, combination, and unity of representations necessary for the possibility representations generally? Besides the merely analytical claim that ‘representations must be immanent to consciousness in order to belong to it’, Kant’s answer is that, in the absence of the unity of the TUA, the succession of representations in time, including the manifold contained in

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595 KrV A77/B103; A99; B130.
596 KrV A108; A113.
597 KrV A117.
time itself, could not be represented (A100). For if in every new moment, the previous moment was forgotten, consciousness would be composed of discrete fragments, each being comprised of an “absolute unity” (A99). The reproduction of these moments, i.e. their combination or synthesis, is therefore a necessary condition of the possibility of representing the manifold in an intuition, including those contained in the pure intuitions of space and time (A102). And since all representations belong ultimately to inner sense, whose form is time, the TUA is also a necessary condition for representations generally, which is Kant’s indispensable conclusions: “we are conscious a priori of the thoroughgoing identity of ourselves….as a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations” (A114). Even if I am not conscious of it, my enduring identity is the means by which representations can be together at all. It is, therefore, also the means by which ‘I’ can have more than a single, unitary representation. Through such an identity, representations external to one another can stand together, e.g. in succession in time.

This argument is highly condensed but its conclusion is an important one, namely, that the TUA is a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations generally, both intuitions and thoughts. As undetermined objects “of empirical intuition”, appearances are a species of intuition, which are themselves a species of representation (A19/B33). To that end, the ‘condition of immanence’ states that contents can belong to mental states if, and only if, they are contained within the single, transcendental identity, i.e. the bearer of those states. All possible appearances are, in other words, immanent to consciousness. Put differently, the immanence of representations to consciousness is an essential property of representations generally. In the language of the B-Deduction, Kant claims that the “I think must be able to accompany all my representations”, which would be impossible were these representations not themselves “in accord

\footnote{See Kitcher 2011, 98.}
with the condition under which alone they can stand together in a universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not…belong to me” (B132). The “I think’ can accompany representations to the extent that these representations are immanent, or contained within, the unity of consciousness. Even when we are not “conscious of them as such”, representations must belong to me (however faintly) if the “I think” is to be ascribable to them: “all my representations in any given intuition must stand under the condition under which alone I can ascribe them to the identical self as my representations” (B138). How does consciousness belong to each representation?

B

The Mirroring Condition:

*Reflecting the identity of the TUA is a necessary condition for belonging to that TUA*

Kant argues that the identity of transcendental consciousness would not be possible, or apprehensible, if the ‘I think’ were attached to each representation separately; in this case, “I would have as multicolored, diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious” (B134). Empirical consciousness, which is as dispersed and varied as its representations, is therefore incapable of supplying an identity sufficient for the establishment of a single, unified experience. In absence of such unity, the ‘I think’ accompanying one representation would be distinct from the ‘I think’ accompanying the next; there would, in other words, be no identity through which representations, which are immanent to the mind, could come together, which is precisely what Kant means when he writes, “the thought that these representations given in intuition belong to me means, accordingly, the same as that I unite them in a self-consciousness, or at least can unite them therein…” (B133).

What is made clearer in the second edition right off the bat is the claim that *all synthesis* is accomplished by a spontaneous act of the understanding (B130). When considered solely as that

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599 See B143.
which is given through sensibility, the manifold of intuition lacks all unity and combination (B129). Only through a spontaneous act, can the understanding synthetically combine and what is given through sensibility (B130). Combination is not self-sufficient, however, and requires a unity in which its synthesis can occur. This is a minor point, but an important one, as it highlights the function of unity over that of synthesis, which the former makes possible. In order to combine 100 marbles, for instance, I would need to take them together as members of a set, and not as sets in themselves. Unity is therefore a precondition for combination, just as combination is a precondition for the analysis of parts (B130). This unity underlying all synthesis and making it possible is original apperception (i.e. the TUA), which “produces the representations I think, which must be able to accompany all others” (B132). All combination and unity among intuitions is therefore a result of belonging to consciousness, i.e. of satisfying the condition of immanence.

The identity of self-consciousness, which must be capable of accompanying all representations, is constituted therefore, not by attaching to each representation separately, but through the combination (or synthesis) of them into a (or its) unity. The ‘I think’ cannot belong to perception 1,2, and 3 by being added to them. In such a case, ‘I’ would be divided into 3 mental acts, 1*,2*, and 3*. Here the divided “self” would be incapable of bringing representations together in the first place, since it would be dispersed among them; what is worse, the very principle intended for the purpose of grounding the combination of contents would now require a combination itself. To avoid such pitfalls, Kant purposes to ground the possibility of any combination (either 1,2,3 or 1*,2*,3*) on their synthesis in a single, transcendental consciousness. Representations can only be mine if they belong, not to the empirical self, which is as diverse and fluctuating as inner sense itself, but to the enduring, transcendental consciousness.⁶⁰⁰

⁶⁰⁰ See A352.
In a certain respect, there is a double set of requirements. On the one hand, representations are made possible both by submitting both intuitions to a synthesis, and that synthesis to a transcendental unity. On the other hand, the identity of this transcendental unity (which makes synthesis possible to begin with) requires that it unify, without being divided by, its manifold of representations.\textsuperscript{601} Taken in this sense, the condition of immanence necessitates that the \emph{necessary} unity of consciousness includes a necessary unity or ‘connection’ of the representations found therein. In other words, since representations are constitutively immanent to an identity, they must reflect (or ‘mirror’) the unity of that identity in their synthesis. Out of necessity then, consciousness must be able to witness its identity in the manifold of intuition, which would be impossible were these contents disjointed and fractured. Coming at it from a different angle, we can say with equal validity and weight, that the manifold of intuition must exhibit the identity of the consciousness to which it necessarily belongs; “for the mind could not possibly think of the identity of itself in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this a priori, if it did not have \emph{before its eyes the identity of its action…”} (A108).\textsuperscript{602} Given that a disarray of appearances would entail disorder in the unity of consciousness itself – indeed, even a disintegration of the identity underlying “the possibility of all representations” – the identity of consciousness must be reflected in the unity of immanent appearances (A116). To that end, Kant writes that “the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances” (A108).\textsuperscript{603} Mirroring the identity of consciousness in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{601} Kitcher 2011, 148.
\item \textsuperscript{602} My emphasis.
\item \textsuperscript{603} See also A118: „Diese synthetische Einheit setzt aber eine Synthesis voraus, oder schließt sie ein, und soll jene a priori notwendig sein, so muß letztere auch eine Synthesis a priori sein. “ In the B deduction, Kant makes the same point, albeit with less force (i.e. he excludes the notion of ‘necessity’): „Nun erfordert aber alle Vereinigung der Vorstellungen Einheit des Bewußtseins in der Synthesis derselben.“
\end{itemize}
The unity of their synthesis is a necessary condition that appearances must satisfy if they are to be attributable to an ‘I think’.

The unity of the synthesis to which appearances are subjected and brought to consciousness reflects, and is structured in accordance with, transcendental identity. This identity of oneself is possible therefore if, and only if, the contents of its consciousness are unified in accordance with the necessary unity of its self. Transcendental apperception (i.e. consciousness) is possible, therefore, only on the condition that the unity of its act is mirrored in the manifold of immanent representations: “synthetic unity in the manifold of intuitions, as given a priori, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself” (B134). Given that the term ‘unity’ here refers to two dimensions of the same self, the unity of transcendental identity and the unity of its respective contents are not properly speaking ‘isomorphic’. It is better to call these unities ‘monomorphic’, i.e. as being of one and the same formal unity. In a word, the necessary unity of consciousness and the necessary unity of the synthesis of appearances are one and the same unity. Or, what is the same, mirroring the identity of the TUA is a necessary condition of belonging to that TUA.

C
Reference to an Object:
The necessary unity produced in appearances by the consciousness in which they are immanent is identical to unity produced in appearances in their relation to an object in general.

The capacity to be the subject of multiple representations, either immanent to my own consciousness or to someone else’s, is a constitutive property of objectivity. Thus, although my representation of that pumpkin changes with each perspectival variation, including those temporal vicissitudes constitutive of inner sense, the referral of these representations to an object neutralizes the disarray of subjective viewpoints by determining them in accordance with rules, i.e. by
unifying them together in an object. Put simply, these objects transcend our representational states and therefore endure the transition of states.

According to Kant, however, we have nothing at our disposal that is distinct from our representations (i.e. thoughts and intuitions). An object cannot therefore be cognized \textit{per se} since it is effectually “nothing for us” (A105). This means that if the cognition of an object is not possible by means of transcending our representations, it can only be possible through them. What is more, the object to which these represented appearances must ultimately be referred is not (nor can it be) specifiable, as it exceeds the bounds of what is immanent to consciousness. From this, “it is easy to see that this object must be thought of only as something in general = X” (A104). How then, do we cognize something distinct from our representations through those representations? In order to represent an object (e.g. the moon), it must be represented as being indifferent to \textit{how} it is represented. Thus, we say that although the moon appears to be very small, it is \textit{actually} quite large, having an actual radius, not equal to that of my thumb, but of 1737 km. The adjective ‘actual’ is used here to mark the impartiality of the object to the representation of it; appearing to be small and being small are distinguishable on condition that the appearance is referred to something with which it cannot be equated, i.e. something that is ‘public’ in principle. According to Kant, this referral to something non-appearing must impart a unity to those appearance themselves; our cognitions “must have that unity that constitutes the concept of an object” (A104). An object is cognized therefore not insofar as it \textit{itself} appears, but only insofar as it determines the synthesis of the manifold, such that the combination of appearances is not capricious: “hence we say that we cognize an object if we have effected synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition” (A105). The object makes a unity of representations necessary.
That the manifold contained in an intuition cannot be arbitrarily unified, at least if it is to have relation to an object, is easily seen. Kant is even clear on this point. In a central passage in the first edition, he shows how the transcendental object, as that to which appearances as representations are ultimately referred, “concerns nothing but that unity which must be encountered in a manifold of cognition insofar as it stands in relation to an object” (A108). If in representing ‘the rose being red’ it was undetermined whether the ‘rose’ were the subject or the predicate – as in the case of the representation ‘something red being a rose’ – the object would be determined by, and therefore partial to how it was represented, i.e. it would not be distinct from the representation of it. An object must, therefore, be indifferent to how it is represented (A104). At the same time, it is important to recognize that, in order to represent an object as being distinct from its representation, the lawful unity of the former must be mirrored by the latter; otherwise, the rule governed nature of an object could not be brought to consciousness. In other words, if the synthesis through which an object was brought to consciousness were arbitrarily structured and combined, the impartiality of the object would not appear to consciousness. This is what Kant means when he writes that, “insofar as they are in relation to an object our cognitions must also necessarily agree with each other in relation to it, i.e. they must have that unity that constitutes the concept of an object” (A104). The impartiality of the object must, therefore, determine the synthetic unity of the manifold.

According to Kant, this synthetic unity of the manifold, through which reference to an object in general is possible, is nothing other than monomorphic unity described above, i.e. that unity belonging to both consciousness and its representations:

Now this concept [of the transcendental object] cannot contain any determinate intuition at all, and therefore concerns nothing but that unity which must be encountered in a manifold of cognition insofar as it stands in relation to an object.
This relation, however, is nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness, thus also of the synthesis of the manifold… (A109).  

Transcendental apperception imparts synthetic unity to the manifold and this synthetic unity is identical to that “unity that must be encountered in a manifold…insofar as it stands in relation to an object” (A109). As a transcendental (and not merely empirical) condition, apperception bestows representations with a necessary (and not merely contingent) unity (A111). For since the synthetic unity of representations and the transcendental unity of identity are the same, Kant is able to derive the necessity of the former unity from that of the latter. Appearances must obey universal and necessary rules, at least insofar if they are to mirror both the necessity and unity of transcendental apperception. That the appearances of which we are conscious must obey certain universal and necessary rules can therefore be established a priori: “since this [transcendental] identity must necessarily enter into the synthesis of all the manifold of appearances…the appearances are thus subject to a priori conditions with which their synthesis…must be in thoroughgoing accord” (A113). In other words, the TUA must unify the manifold in accordance with necessary rules such that its own identity can be preserved. According to Kant, these necessary rules are none other than the categories of the understanding. All appearances that can be represented by consciousness are, therefore, homogenous with the a priori categories of the understanding, though not through the application of those concepts, but through a synthesis in accordance with them.

Our analysis of the TUA has yielded the following result: *though a non-conceptual intuition is possible in principle, the consciousness of it is not.* All representations are immanent to consciousness and, as representations, “they must…necessarily be accord with the condition

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604 This is a key passage for my argument. Here is the german: „Dieser Begriff kann nun gar keine bestimmte Anschauung enthalten, und wird also nichts anderes, als diejenige Einheit betreffen, die in einem Mannigfaltigen der Erkenntnis angetroffen werden muß, sofern es in Beziehung auf einen Gegenstand steht. Diese Beziehung aber ist nichts anderes, als die notwendige Einheit des Bewußteins ...“

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under which alone…they can stand together in a universal self-consciousness in” (B132). This cited ‘condition’ for standing within the TUA is the pre-requisite obedience to categorical rules by means of which the necessary unity, or identity of consciousness is respected and reflected; this is why “the [TUA] is that unity through which all of the manifold given in an intuition is united in the concept of the object” (B139). All representations immanent to consciousness are, therefore, universally and necessarily in agreement with the categories (PA). Though nothing prevents non-conceptual intuitions from being given in principle (PO), the transcendental conditions of the unity of apperception preclude the possibility of them entering conscious awareness.

605 Concepts are therefore necessary conditions of conscious representations. Put differently, everything we are conscious of can be understood as spatiotemporally extended (i.e. an instantiated) thoughts. The world that we are open to as rational, self-aware animals is one that is one that is conceptually informed throughout.

D: Some Minor Difficulties

Given that the TUA imparts a necessary unity to the representations that can be contained therein – i.e. a synthetic unity in accordance with a priori rules – we can apply categories to all appearances of which we are (or can be) conscious. Thus, even though intuitions can be given to us independently of the understanding in principle, we cannot be conscious of them, not even phenomenally, unless they are subject to the unity through which the identity of consciousness is preserved and discernable. The synthetic unity to which these representations are subjected, at least if they are to be immanent to consciousness, must be a necessary one, i.e. a synthesis in accordance with necessary rules. In other words, “all appearances whatever must come into the mind or be apprehended in such a way that they are in agreement with the unity of apperception,

605 I am, therefore, in agreement with Guyer’s analysis (see, Guyer 1992, 144).
which would be impossible without synthetic unity in their connection, which is thus also objectively necessary” (A122). A necessary connection of representations, i.e. a synthesis in accordance with categories, makes the consciousness of them possible. Though intuitions may give us spatiotemporal particulars, we can be conscious of them if, and only if, they are subjected to categorical laws (including the intuition of space and time themselves). This is because the necessary unity of immanent contents is a precondition for the unity of the TUA itself, i.e. the identity grounding the possibility of all representations a priori.

The necessary unity of self and the necessary unity of its contents are one and the same. Thus, if we imagine a disunity in one term, we instigate the disintegration of the unity in the other. If the identity of the self was broken, I would be reborn in each and every moment. In this multicolored state, no representation of time (and so no representations at all) would be possible (A102). On the other hand, if the representations immanent to consciousness were essentially non-conceptual, then they would not be unified according to universal and necessary rules. According to Kant, their unity (if they had any) would be a merely empirical one. Given that our empirical states are “forever variable”, however, and cannot support “that which should necessarily be represented as numerically identical”, this ungrounded or ‘less-than-necessary’ unity of contents instigates a disintegration of the self, i.e. the ground of representations generally: “for this empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject” (B133). Where the identity of consciousness is divided, either through the fragmentation of its states or its contents, nothing can be represented. All intuitions can be represented only if they are subject to necessary rules through which their immanence to consciousness is secured. On my reading, intuitions are not produced by concepts, they are brought to consciousness by them.
To preserve the heterogeneity between sensibility and understanding, we must acknowledge the fact that objects can in principle be given independently of our intellectual functions. Though they would be given however, we would not be conscious of them as such – we would be blind to them. In such a state, there would be no “I” to which these intuitions belonged, and no narrative to which they could be ascribed – they would not mine. Put differently, non-conceptual intuitions cannot be immanent to a consciousness, at least not without breaking its identity down into discrete units in such a way that time (or at least its representation) would altogether cease. In the fog of this episode the “necessary unity of consciousness would not be encountered in the manifold of perceptions” and it would be “less than a dream” (A112). Even in dreams, there is some “I” to whom the dream event is happening. The TUA is the faculty by means of which non-conceptual intuitions, which are possible in principle, become actually impossible.

As a species of representation, intuitions must be immanent to consciousness (A50/B74; A116; B132). In order to be immanent, however, they must mirror the identity of consciousness in their synthetic unity, which is identical to the claim that they must obey categories.

Here it is important to mention that, on my view, unconscious intuitions are possible. An unconscious intuition would be a content that is given to sensibility, but not received by consciousness. Any non-conceptual content would fall into this category. As Kant Claims:

> The I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would be either impossible or else at least would be nothing for me.⁶⁶⁶

Kant’s ambivalence about such representations (call them ‘pseudo-representations’) is acceptable given our blindness to them. There simply is nothing in, or relevant to, the world of conscious life

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⁶⁶⁶ KrV B132. My emphasis.
that does not obey categorical laws. In fact, if there were something that could not, in principle, be brought to consciousness, then it would be irrelevant to experience. This is why Kant follows up this previous comment, with the claim that “the representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called intuition”, which must stand in a “necessary relation to the I think” if it is to be brought into view at all.\footnote{KrV B132.} Though intuition is prior to thinking, it must come to obey the predicative structures suitable for consciousness if it is to play a role in perception (‘perception’, we will recall, is intuition + consciousness). When Kant claims that all representations must be immanent to consciousness, he cannot mean all representations per se. What he must really have in mind is all relevant representations, i.e. representations that can be ‘something for me’. Without such a qualification, interpreting the above quote would be incredibly difficult. Kant does not, after all, outright deny the possibility of problematic representations, but only their relevance: they “would be nothing for me

A non-conceptualist might respond by denying that all ‘mental states’ are conscious, counselling us to equate non-conceptual ‘experiences’ with a kind of animal awareness. From this standpoint, intuitions might be given to a subject that is ‘aware’ but is not yet conscious of that awareness. The problem with this view is that, until intuitions are unified in accordance with categorical rules, there simply is no subject to whom that awareness might belong. In absence of categorical synthesis, the subject is divided and multiplied throughout the manifold of intuition, each external to the next, and even “the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself disperse and without relation to the identity of the subject” (B133). Unless they are subjected to the unified synthesis of the TUA, there simply is ‘no one’ to receive these given intuitions and take them into consciousness. While I agree with non-conceptualists
like Allais that intuitions can be given prior to the intellectual functions, these impressions would be “nothing for me”, since there would be no ‘me’ at all.\(^{608}\) Intuitions without concepts are ‘blind’, not because they do not exist, but because they do not exist for me.\(^{609}\) According to non-conceptualists like Allais, who argue that “outer intuition presents us with a manifold of separate, distinct, spatially located, bounded things, which are not yet grouped or classified”,\(^ {610}\) the extent of this blindness is underappreciated. Kant’s theory of consciousness has shown us why this kind of spatiotemporal experience cannot be possible: pre-categorized outer intuitions do not present ‘us’ with anything at all. Instead they fracture our identity such that not even the apprehension of time, in which all representations must themselves be represented, is possible (A102).\(^{611}\)

It might also be objected that though the ‘I think’ must be able to accompany all my representations, it does not actually have to in every case. There could, for example, be instances where I could not bring intuitions to consciousness, though they would still be given to me (e.g. think of having a dangerously high fever and watching *Lola Rennt*). The problem with this objection is that it contradicts one of Kant’s central stipulations, according to which *representations* must be determined in a rule-governed way if the ‘I think’ is to even be ascribable to their occurrence. This is why he writes that, “as my representations…they must…be in accord with the condition under which alone they can stand together in a universal self-consciousness”

\(^{608}\) From this perspective, Kant’s theory of consciousness can be read as a critical answer to Hume’s, for whom the self was “nothing but a bundle of perceptions which…are in perpetual flux and movement” (Hume 1989, 300). On Kant’s account, by contrast, the self cannot even be a bundle of perceptions (what he calls ‘empirical’ consciousness or apperception) unless that bundle is synthetically unified according to rules: “the objective unity of all (empirical) conscious in one consciousness (of original apperception) is…a necessary condition even of all perception” (A123). For more on this topic see Kitcher 1982, 58.

\(^{609}\) For a similar understanding of ‘blindness’ see Tolley 2013, 127. I also agree with Tolley that we are right to “emphasize that Kant thinks that an intuition without synthesis cannot give us a certain kind of consciousness (perception, experience)”, 128.

\(^{610}\) Allais 2015, 274.

\(^{611}\) See section 18 of \(B\) deduction. At B140, Kant writes “the pure form of intuition in time…merely as an intuition in general, which contains a given manifold, stands under the original unity of consciousness, solely by means of the necessary relation of the manifold of intuition to the one I think, thus through the pure synthesis of the understanding….”
(B131). In other words, the ‘I think’ can accompany all representations only if they are already determined in accordance with the unity of consciousness; I could not even comprehend the manifold in my consciousness if it were not already in accord with the unity of that identity. A non-conceptual intuition would not be distinct from the relevant representation of it and it would be without relation to an object, i.e. its existence would be merely subjective. For this reason, the identity of consciousness, which imparts a necessary unity to whatever it can contain, would not be encountered in the content of this phenomenal state (A112). A non-conceptual intuition cannot exhibit any abiding self, and cannot therefore be accompanied with the ‘I think’ – it cannot, in other words, be my representation.

Another difficulty involves the non-conceptual content of objects. How should we characterize the ‘givenness’ and/or the contribution of non-conceptual content in the intuition of objects? For starters, it should be clear that though we cannot be conscious of non-conceptual contents by themselves, they can exist as intuitions in sensibility independently of the understanding. These intuitions cannot appear to consciousness until they are brought under the unifying functions of the TUA. As I have said previously, intuitions are not produced by concepts, they are merely brought to consciousness by them. To give an analogy, one can say that although molecules are ‘given’ to us when we perceive an apple in that they part of what appears to sensibility, something further is required (e.g. a microscope) if they are to appear to consciousness. Similarly, intuitions are given to us non-conceptually in accordance with the forms of sensibility but something further is required if they are to be brought to consciousness. Of course, they are brought to consciousness insofar as they obey categorical law, and not insofar as they are produced by it.
The biggest problem facing this solution is that it might be construed as merely pushing the problem further down the line. To see this, a review of the general argument of this chapter is needed. We have seen that appearances cannot agree with our a priori concepts accidentally. Nor can they agree in virtue of being subsumed under these concepts; indeed, such a subsumption – if it is not violent in nature – assumes an agreement. Therefore, appearances cannot agree with our a priori concepts accidentally or in virtue of an act of judgement. We need to explain why our intuitions are potentially subsumable entities in the first place. The only way forward is to argue that being informed by categories is a necessary condition of the possibility of intuitions. The worry here is that the opposition of the faculties falls apart.

To solve this, I have suggested that there are two kinds of human intuition, conscious and unconscious. Those intuitions of which we can be conscious are those that are informed, from the outset, by rules of the understanding. There are also intuitions which we are blind to, which are given but not received. When an intuition is brought into consciousness, categories are internal to the possibility of that intuition, but not its unconsciousness counterpart. Now the question arises: in what sense, if any, does a conceptual intuition agree with its non-conceptual counterpart. If no good answer can be given, haven’t we just pushed the problem of agreement between appearances and concepts further down the line? If blind-intuitions are brought to consciousness through a conceptually organize synthesis, must they not agree with those concepts in the first place?

As I said above, appearances cannot agree with our a priori concepts in virtue of being subsumed under them, given that any such application assumes, and so cannot explain, an agreement. Our blind intuitions cannot, therefore, be brought to consciousness by means of applying concepts to them. As a result, the initiation of intuitions into consciousness cannot be a
result of judgement, but of some other process instead. What would such a synthetic process look like?

To answer this question, we must first answer the supplementary question of what such a process needs to achieve, and the answer to this is simple enough. The only kind of process that can initiate an intuition into consciousness is one is able to establish an agreement between that intuition and our a priori concepts. As a further requirement, this process can be neither (a) a judgemental one, nor (b) a strictly formative one. If it were (a), agreement would be assumed. If were (b), intuitions would be constructions, and not impressions. What is clear, however, is that any process must be somehow determinative.

Alexandra Newton offers a few different possible models, each of which capture the hylomorphic nature of this determination. On the artefactual model, synthesis informs intuitions in the way that a craftsman informs the materials of his labour.\textsuperscript{612} The problem with this model, argues Newton, is that it makes the categories accidental to the intuitions of sensibility, just as the form of an artifact (e.g. a bed) is accidental to its materials.\textsuperscript{613} According to the second version, synthesis is a process of digestions whereby intuitions are consumed by synthesis and integrated into the organic process of consciousness.\textsuperscript{614} Though she does not mention it, an objection to that raised against the first model might also be raised here. After all, doesn’t such a model presume that the nutritive powers of sensible contents are, in fact, nourishing? If so, then it seems that intuitions are accidentally agreeable to synthesis. The third and last model seeks to remedy these difficulties by construing the categories as informing intuitions in the way that a life form informs its organic parts.\textsuperscript{615} Thus just as a hand that is removed from the body is no longer a hand, so an

\textsuperscript{612} Newton 2016, 276.
\textsuperscript{613} Newton 2016, 276.
\textsuperscript{614} Newton 2016, 276.
\textsuperscript{615} Newton 2016, 277.
intuition removed from synthesis is no longer an intuition. This is Newton’s preferred model, though it is undeveloped there.

Unlike the artefactual model, the organic model captures the fact that the form is not merely accidental to the materials. The parts of an organic body are not separable from the form in the way that wood is from ‘bed-ness’; instead, the parts of an organic whole are, in a fundamental way, constituted by that whole, which is in an important respect over and above its parts. The problem with this view is that it construes the whole as being prior to the parts, which might be correct when it comes to biology, but it is problematic when it comes to the process of synthesis. This is because synthesis is something done to intuitions, not something producing them. Of course, these models are attempts to interpret what it means for a form to do something to its materials in the first place, but I think this last construal is a stretch. On the organic model, the priority of the whole over its parts entails that the obedience of materials to a form produces these parts, which for this very reason, disqualifies them from being the matter of the process. For since these parts result from the process of being informed, they cannot be what is informed. In short, Newton confuses the notions of ‘matter’ and ‘parts’. Where the materials of an organism are its “blood, flesh and bone”, its parts are its organs and limbs. When it comes to the role intuitions play in representing an object, the objective referent might (and probably must) be prior to the intuitions in this respect. Surely, we are conscious of sensible contents in virtue of their reference to objects.

What I like about these hylomorphic models is that they attempt to understand the synthetic process as one that is both informative and non-accidental. Where they go wrong is in not taking the analogy far enough. On my view, the form/matter relationship is more profound than the simple informer/informed dynamic outlined above. As Kant himself points out, the process is primarily
one in which something determinable, i.e. the matter, suffers a determination (A266/B322). Taken in this way, matter must be understood as being ‘undetermined’ in respect to a specific kind determination. Matter is, therefore, defined as a kind of determinate ‘privation’ that is receptive to some formal determination. Traditionally speaking, we might say that matter has a certain potentiality that the determination actualizes.

The way that a concept subsumes an object is not analogous to the way that a form informs matter. This can be seen if we examine the distinct ways in which the receptive relates to the agent it receives. In terms of concept application, for an object to agree with a concept, that object must be homogenous with that concept. The same cannot be said of matter, however. For matter to be receptive to a form it need not, and indeed cannot be, in prior agreement with that form. It must instead be determinable in a way that makes it potentially an object of that determination or form. If the categories inform intuition as form informs matter, then intuitions need not be in agreement with the categories; they must only be potentially in agreement with the categories, which does not (of course) prohibit being in possible agreement with other, non-conceptual forms of synthesis (e.g. in animals). If the categories inform intuitions as form informs matter, then the role of the understanding should be construed as determining something undetermined in intuitions.

As determinable materials, sensible intuitions may be receptive to other, non-conceptual forms of determination. Does this mean that the agreement between concepts and intuitions is accidental? Not at all. By determining intuitions, i.e. by actualizing their potential to be receptive to concepts, the categories bring intuitions to the consciousness of rational animals. This determination is, therefore, essential to any perceptive intuition that a human being can have.

McDowell argues that, like animals, human beings are perceptually sensitive to features of the environment. Unlike animals however, our species of perceptual intuition is permeated by
conceptual structures, which are not merely additions to what is bestial in us, but are instead internal to the very possibility of our contents of perception. Simply, intuitions are determined by a different form in humans than they are in animals. To say that intuitions are informed non-conceptually in the case of animals is not only needlessly anthropocentric, it also disparages the fact that their experience is, in some sense, organized in a positive, and not merely negative way. To capture this fact, I can say that where human intuitions are conceptually informed, animal intuitions are appetitively informed, i.e. determined by systems of inclination and evasion. Considered generically, i.e. as mere intuitions, intuitions are therefore neither conceptual nor non-conceptual, but simply undetermined in respect to their actual mode of being, which is the mode they take in the species-specific system of organization. For some, this system is a system of nature. For others, it a mere environment of pressures and imperatives.

That Kant believed in animalistic kinds of synthesis is readily seen. Though a full defense is impossible here, I will point the reader to a passage taken from the first introduction to the third critique, where Kant writes:

“Reflecting (which goes on even in animals, although only instinctively, namely not in relation to a concept which is thereby to be attained but rather in relation to some inclination which is thereby to be determined) in our sense requires a principle as much as determining, in which the underlying concept of the object prescribes the rule to the power of judgement…”616

Reflection is a means by which a rule of synthesis (e.g. a concept) is extracted from an object, and so is not determinative in the relevant sense. What is pertinent here, however, is simply the fact that Kant seemed to posit certain bestial capacities, which are functionally analogous to our conceptual ones. What is more, reflective judgement – like all judgement – is a synthetic power in some respect: “to reflect…is to compare and to hold together given representations either with

616 KU 20:211.
others or with one’s faculty of cognition”. If animals have the power to compare representations with others by means of certain imperatives and impulses, then they might be construed as implicating their inclinations in the very structure of their environment in much the same way that we implicate our faculty of spontaneity in the world we perceive and live within.

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617 KU 20:211.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have attempted to trace Kant’s most distressing problem – i.e. the thing in itself – back to the reconciliatory assumptions with which he begins his analysis. This picture of the world, which turns the mind against it, is a characteristically modern problem. I have shown that, by rejecting this reconciliatory assumption, Kant might have been able to avoid ‘idealism’ without having to sacrifice the necessary a priori structures in the mind. I have shown that the world can agree with our a priori categories, for instance, not because appearances are organized in accordance with them, but because the world and the mind share a common logical form, which when further determined by empirical contents, give rise to objects that are at once intelligible and real. I suspect the further development of a non-reconciliatory framework – though perhaps not in line with Kant’s critical philosophy – will yield a metaphysical view that undercuts the problems that gave rise to idealism and empiricism in the first place.

For Kant, our cognition “arises from two fundamental sources, the first of which is the reception of representations...the second the faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations”.\textsuperscript{618} These are the faculties of \textit{intuition} and of \textit{thought} respectively, and both play an equally essential role in the ‘cognition’ of objects, i.e. in the intentional relation between the subject and the objects of experience. Where intuition “gives” objects insofar as it is receptive to them, thought brings them under spontaneous, conceptual determination.\textsuperscript{619} In Kant’s words, thought refers these intuitions to objects by means of concepts, which bring various representations under a common rule.\textsuperscript{620} Thus, while paddling on the river, I am given sensations immediately through my intuition; I am then able to ‘refer’ this intuitive representation to my thought, which

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{618} KrV A50/B74
  \item \textsuperscript{619} KrV A50/B74
  \item \textsuperscript{620} KrV A68/B93.
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then applies the concept ‘body’, ‘animal’, and perhaps finally ‘bear’ to the sensuous material. Through intuition, the individual, frightening bear, is given; in thought, the sensuous material is determined under a concept; that is, a judgment is made about an appearance. The most important thing about this distinction, however, is that, while both of these faculties are necessary conditions, neither of them are, in and of themselves, sufficient for the cognition of objects. Where the non-discursive object of an empirical intuition” is an undetermined appearance, a concept without any intuitive matter is hollow, or empty. In Kant’s words, “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind”. Let’s break this statement down into two sub-sections.

Thoughts without content are empty. For human beings, the mere thinking of something is not enough to cognize that something; we do not, as Kant says, have a faculty of intellectual intuition, “of cognizing object[s] not discursively through categories but intuitively in a non-sensible intuition, the possibility of which we cannot in the least represent”. This insufficiency of thought plays a very essential role in the development of Kant’s transcendental logic. For him, ‘general logic’ “abstracts from all contents of cognition….and has to do with nothing but the mere form of thinking”. Thus, general logic is pure thought, free “from any relation” to an object. Kant sees this ‘purity’ of general logic as a significant opportunity for the development of transcendental cognition, of the capacity to cognize objects a priori. Given that space and time are pure intuitions (i.e. intuitions of the form of appearance in general), they are in essence available, to determinations of pure thought: “since there are pure as well as empirical intuitions…a distinction between pure and empirical thinking of objects could also well be

621 KrV A 20/ B34.
622 KrV B75/51.
623 KrV A256/B311.
624 KrV A54/B78.
625 KrV A48/B65.
For Kant, the pure thinking of objects – i.e. the determination of pure intuition by pure thought – is called transcendental logic. Unlike general logic, which has no relation to an object (at least insofar as it moves within the mere form of empty thought), transcendental logic concerns the cognition of “objects completely a priori” and, thus, the “origin of [a priori] cognition of objects”. This ability to cognize objects entirely a priori opens up the possibility of the deduction, i.e. the necessary obedience of the empirical world to logical determinations cognized a priori. Though this will have to be worked out in greater detail, it is enough to see that the emptiness of pure thought permits its coupling with the pure manifold of a priori intuition.

**Intuitions without concepts are blind.** For Kant, intuition is empirical if “sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of an object) is contained therein; but pure if no sensation is mixed into the representation”. Where pure intuition offers up the form of what will appear, empirical sensation is “the matter of sensible cognition”. Here, the unorganized, “unbound reality [of sensible stuff] is regarded as the matter” of all logical determination. As it is traditionally understood, matter is potentially an object and, were it to be determined, or informed by a concept – i.e. by a rule that would limit it, differentiating it from what it is not – then it would be an object with a particular identity. Pure sensible reality, as the pure matter of informative concepts, is therefore completely indeterminate; it is without any limitation (negation). Though the matter of intuition entails the givenness, or empirically real presence of an object – and is thus able to fill the emptiness of thought – it is, in and of itself, unable to offer objects of possible

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626 KrV A55/B80. My emphasis.
627 KrV A57/B81.
628 KrV A55/B80.
629 KrV A85/B117. “
630 KrV A50/B74.
631 KrV A57/B81.
632 KrV A267/B322.
633 KrV A267/B322.
634 KrV A55/B80. “
cognition. This is the insufficiency of sensible matter and it signifies the insufficiency of pure
givenness. If what is given is not referred, and determined by, a concept, there can be no world of
objects – the limit between things would be blurred irrevocably and absolutely. It is “thus just as
necessary to make the mind’s concepts sensible (i.e. to add an object to them in intuition) as it is
to make its intuitions understandable (to bring them under concepts)”.

For Kant, this means that any object of possible experience is (a) composed of intuitable
stuff and (b) informed by conceptual rules – these are the forms of any possible experience. Any
object of experience must, therefore, be given in intuition and determined by a concept – the
intuitable manifold its matter, the rules of thought, its form. Both matter and form contribute to
the object as a unit, albeit in different ways. While the form, determines the limits of the matter,
the matter instantiates the form. Without form, heaps would be divided numerically into units in a
merely arbitrary way; without matter, there would be no heaps and thus, no potential actuality in
nature. In order for cognition to be possible then, the objects of the world must be given to intuition
and determined by thought; they must obey the rules of spacetime and the categories of the
understanding if they are to be objects of experience at all. This means that intuition and thought
are a priori conditions for objects of experience. Where “all appearances…necessarily agree with
this formal conditions of sensibility, because only through it can they appear…concepts of objects
in general lie…as a priori conditions” for the determination of these appearances. Furthermore,
where space and time have objective, empirical validity insofar as everything given to intuition is
organized accordingly, the categories of an object in general – of what determines the matter –
secure their validity by bringing the pure manifold of intuition under the rule of the logical

635 KrV A51/B75.
636 KrV A93/B125.
operations. By themselves the form of intuition, along with its pure manifold, and the form of thought, along with its pure concept of an object, are insufficient for the constitution of experiential objects.

As Adorno has pointed out, Kant’s hylomorphic conceptualization of objects may be understood as a kind of self-defeating nominalism. On the one hand, Kant is a nominalist, at least insofar as concepts are the mere “products of thought”, and not the reflection of real, worldly essences. Universals do not exist in things, as it were, at least not as they do in certain Medieval traditions; bringing something under a concept is not, therefore, indicative of an essential intuition, an illumination of reason, or an impression in the passive intellect. Instead, it is a merely subjective, transcendental activity. At the same time, since unifying intuitable matter (whether pure or sensible) under the rule of a concept, is a condition for the possibility of any object, the world – when taken as the totality of objects – implicitly contains, as its very possibility, a schema of conceptual rules. As Adorno writes: since “everything that can be meaningfully discussed [is the] consequence of mental activity…Kant stands on the threshold of a development in which the considerations that led to a radical nominalism begin to turn against themselves”.

If objects, insofar as they are possible, are products of the mental efforts of unification (of conceptualization), then the empirically real objects contain, in the very fabric of their possibility, universal rules: “categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances, thus, to nature as the sum total of all appearances”. By making appearances ideal – i.e. by reducing what is objective about

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637 KrV A93/B125.
638 Adorno 1997, 125
639 Adorno 1997, 125.
640 Adorno 1997, 125.
641 KrV B163.
them to the efforts of mind – concepts are made ‘real’ again, albeit in a qualified sense: they are real in ideal objects (i.e. appearances).

Transcendental cognition, as our ability to cognize objects a priori, is subject to these same determinations and insufficiencies, remembering (of course) that ‘transcendental’ means both “the subjection of what is given in experience to our a priori representations, and correlatively the principle of necessary application of a priori representations to experience”.642 On my non-reconciliatory hypothesis, these pure forms of sensibility and thought belong, not only to the mind, but also to nature itself. With the pure cognition of space-time, or with a priori thinking generally, the mind moves within the structures of what its cognition is of, i.e. the nature of a world. For when we hypothesize that the mind (as the cognition of objects a priori) is the self-consciousness, not of mind itself, but of what I have termed ‘nature’, then the pure structures relating to said cognition belong antecedently to nature. These are, therefore, the necessary conditions for the possibility of worldly objects. Since these forms of sensibility and thought make up the total realm of a priori cognition, they must reside in the mind a priori. And since we have labeled ‘mind’ the self-consciousness of nature – i.e of the necessary, underlying structure of the world – we must affirm the ubiquity of these forms themselves and, in so doing, liberate them from the stuffiness of mind. Though they are (and indeed must be) ‘in the mind’, they are “in it”, not as idealities facing off against a heterogeneous object.

This marks a transition away from, what might be called, Kant’s ‘informative’ construal of the faculties. Because Kant begins under the assumption of the difference between thought and object, he limits the possible relations between these powers and their object to the dynamics of constitution; either the faculties inform objects or objects inform the faculties. Though in the end,

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Kant affirms that it is a little bit of both, the ‘informative’ power of these faculties takes precedence over (and indeed above) the receptive, or impressive nature of sensibility. For if a priori knowledge is to be possible, the faculties of sensibility and thought must inform the object in a specific and significant way. When the forms of these faculties are freed from the mind, i.e. when transcendental mind is taken to be the nature of the world, these faculties are indicative, not of an informative, but of a revelatory power. We have a priori knowledge of the world because mind is, in its formal use, nature, which (according to our definition) is the form of the world. When nature is self-conscious through mind, it cognizes what are, in fact, the necessary structures of the world. This is because mind and nature are taken to be formally identical. For Kant, on the other hand, these formal structures belonged exclusively to the faculties and are later imposed onto the world, either through the receptivity of sensibility or through the synthetic ordering of sensible stuff in time. Given their exclusive mentality, the pure cognition of these forms by the appropriate faculty can mean nothing more than cognition of the form of that faculty itself. Thus, pure intuition is nothing but the cognition of sensibilities form (space/time). When these forms are freed from the mind and are said to belong equally to nature, i.e. to the form of the world, these faculties must take on a different meaning; they no longer ‘contain’ these forms but are the means by which these forms are revealed. When nature folds onto itself, the means by which the form of extension cognizes itself is called pure sensibility. Sensibility, in its pure use, is therefore the intuition of the formal structures of spacetime.

The world itself, therefore, has an extended and a logical dimension. The forms of sensibility are real forms, independent of thought; space and time are formal rules that apply to the world itself. Given that it is the act of nature’s folding or self-consciousness, these forms can be cognized in their purity by the mind a priori, though this does not entail idealism. The same
holds for the forms of pure understanding, which are isolated by mind through the abstraction away from all content and, in and of themselves, provide the schema for the unity required of all possible objects. Because transcendental mind is the formal nature, it follows that the insufficiency of these forms, as they are in themselves in thought, must be carried over into their reality. For if sensibility were sufficient for the cognition of objects, obedience to its form (i.e. space and time) would be sufficient for the possibility of said object. If it were, in fact sufficient, then the faculty of sensibility would, itself, be adequate for the cognition of objectivities. This, as we have seen, is not the case. The insufficiency of sensibility – when placed within a non-reconciliatory framework – is indicative of an insufficiency in spatio-temporal stuff generally, at least when it comes to the constitution of objects. Spatio-temporal stuff without any logical form is a heap, the intuition of which is “blind”. Likewise, if pure thought, without any sensible content, is empty and devoid of objectivity, then this must entail an insufficiency in the logical form of nature itself. If there were no such insufficiency, then thought would be sufficient for the cognition of objects. The organization, immediacy, and fecundity of prearranged sensible matter are not enough for the production of a ‘this’. This matter, in addition to being informed by the rules of spatio-temporal relation, must be ordered logically. These general rules unite the material heap, both in the division/enumeration of distinguishable objects, and in the system of their synthetic community/change. The overall argument here can be broken down in this way: 1) If obedience to a particular form was sufficient for the constitution of an object – e.g. if following the rule of space and time was enough to satisfy the conditions of being an object – then the faculty for cognizing the realm of this obedience (e.g. sensibility) would, by itself, be adequate for the cognition of objects. Since the faculty of thought and sensibility are not, in themselves, up to the

643 These are meant here to parallel the Anticipations of Perception and the Axioms of intuition respectively.
644 These forms of synthesis are elaborated in the analogies.
task—i.e. since pure intuition is indeterminate and pure thought is empty – the realms of their proper form (extension and unity respectively) are not, in and of themselves, suitable hosts for objects. The forms constituting these realms of extension and its unity are insufficient. Each requires the other.

The world of objects is therefore hylomorphic; it is composed out of spatio-temporal stuff and logical, or rather morphological rules. Where the former provides the matter, which will ground the individuation of the form, which is a general schema, the latter provides the form, through which the limits of said individuation are drawn. Without the influence of former, there would be no world of individuals, only empty generalities. Without the latter, these individuals would be insubstantial, i.e. they would be impervious to limitation and unavailable to judgments or predications of any kind. Their limits, in other words, could not be drawn and the very individuality that they are said to here possess would be contradicted. Without spatio-temporal stuff, on the other hand, there would be only be empty schema; there would be possibility without actuality. In this respect, it may be noted that where Kant traces the insufficiency of sensible and logical form back to the finitude of the human being, I trace it back to their real deficiency, i.e. their inability to constitute a natural world (at least when considered in isolation form the other). Because the mind is nature’s act of self-consciousness, it cognizes nature’s pure forms a priori: through intuition, it cognizes space and time; through understanding, it cognizes the logical form and unity of possible objects. And given that these natural forms give rise to their respective worldly realm, i.e. to material stuff and schematic unity correspondingly, the faculties of sensibility and thought, which in their pure use are predisposed to the disclosure of these forms, are respectively sensitive, and adept to reveal (or know) the world. In this way, the form of sensibility
is space and time, not *because* it is a mental structure, but rather because it is the power⁶⁴⁵, or *means* by which nature comes to be conscious of the form underlying its material dimension.⁶⁴⁶ To this extent, a faculty is the formal nature of nature; through sensibility, the spatio-temporal dimension is revealed; through understanding, the logical schema of world is. Sensibility is sensitive to the actuality of things, understanding to possibility. Pure form is empty; pure matter is indeterminate. Thus, the insufficiency of these (faculties) results, not from the finitude of the human being, but from the deficiency of these forms themselves of the forms themselves. Where sensibility and understanding are (by themselves) insufficient for the *revelation* of the world of objects, their respective forms are insufficient for its *constitution*.

For Kant, the insufficiency of lone thinking and lone sensibility gives rise to his conception of *possibility and actuality*, which (as he says in the *Critique of Judgment*) is “necessary for the human understanding”.⁶⁴⁷ It is necessary for human understanding because, without such a distinction, the emptiness of pure thought, its inability to engender an object – and, thus, its very finitude – would be contradicted; concepts, as such, entail the mere *possibility*, and not the actuality, of an existent something.⁶⁴⁸ In this respect at least, transcendental concepts (the categories) make up the mere possibility of experiential objects generally. Actuality, on the other hand, signifies something at once distinct *from*, and synthetically added *to*, a concept, which is its possibility.⁶⁴⁹ Thus, my concept of dog is ‘filled’ when a sensible dog, which is homogeneous with said concept, reveals itself to my intuition. Given that the actualization of *more* than what is possible is impossible (since then, “my concept would not express the entire object and thus would

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⁶⁴⁵ Faculties *are* traditionally called powers.
⁶⁴⁶ The same goes for the understanding. It is the means or power by which nature becomes conscious of its own logical unity or structure.
⁶⁴⁸ This, of course, is distinct from a divine understanding, whose conceptions entail subsequent actualizations.
not be the suitable concept of it”650), we must recognize, says Kant, that being or existence (Dasien) is not a predicate. If the existence of an object added something to its corresponding concept, said concept would be inadequate for said object. Likewise, if the actuality of a possibility realized more than what said possibility entailed, this would occasion an impossible actuality, which is irrational; “thus the actual contains nothing more than the possible”.651

But how can an actuality be distinct from its possibility if it must, by definition, be homogenous with it? How can something be distinct from what it is the same as? For Kant, the answer is that, through sensibility, an object can be intuited that is, at once distinct and homogenous with a concept of the understanding.652 What makes something actual, in other words, is its being made an object of a sensible intuition: actuality, in this respect, “signifies the positing of the thing in itself (apart from this concept).”653 When something is taken up in intuition, forced then to obey spatio-temporal law, it becomes actual. Prior to this, it was only potentially spatio-temporal. For where an actual dog is extended in time and space, its corresponding concept is not; for though my thought of a concept is in time, the concept itself is not; if it were, the concept of a dog would come to be and pass away with the dog, or with my thoughts, which would conflate what is possible with what is actual. This is, of course, not to deny that the concept of a dog includes the concept of a body, and thus the essential involvement of space in time in its realization, but this does not entail the spatio-temporal nature of the possibility or concept itself, only its

650 Ibid.
651 Ibid.
652 In fact, Kant is going to say that this must occur if the experience of objects is to be possible at all. Since categories are concepts that condition the possibility of experience, the homogeneity of sensible stuff with them is transcendentally necessary. See Kant. Critique of Pure Reason. 322. A219/B266: “…if the categories are not to have a merely logical significance, and analytically express the form of thinking, but are to concern things and their possibility, actuality, and necessity, then they must pertain to possible experience and its synthetic unity, in which along objects of cognition are given”.
653 Kant. Critique of Judgment. 272. KU: 402. Here thing in itself does not mean what it usually does. Kant is just pointing out that the actuality of something is a thing distinct from its concept; it exists outside of our thinking of it.
actualization. Unlike an actual body, which is singular and self-contained, a concept ‘encompasses’ an infinite number of possible enumerations (or actualizations), not in itself like a spatial container, but as their “common mark” and rule of unity. For Kant then, actuality entails the intuition of an object, which is simultaneously distinct from, and homogenous with, it’s corresponding thought: “that which is connected with the material conditions of experience (of sensation) is actual”.655

This homogeneity does not necessarily entail the impossibility of an un-actualized concept or an un-conceptualized actuality: “We can, in other words, have a concept (a possibility) without any corresponding actuality, or an actuality (i.e. an intuition) without any corresponding concept. In both of these cases, however, the cognition of an object could not be said to occur. If we think the concept of a non-sensible ‘object’ (e.g. god), then we are unable to anticipate any possible intuition of it; and since actualization always entails a possible intuition, an actuality consistent with the concept of a non-sensible ‘object’ is, transcendentally speaking, impossible. For human cognition, there is no corresponding actuality to non-sensible possibilities.656 Similarly, if I were to intuit something without the promise of a corresponding concept, I could in no way be said to cognize an object, i.e. an intuition distinct from my representation of it.

On the non-reconciliatory account, actuality and possibility take on a new, and perhaps more traditional, significance. The categorical and spatio-temporal forms, under the pressure of their reality (and not mere ideality), are distinct in such a way as to allow a difference between what is actual, i.e. what is subject to spatio-temporal law, and what is merely possible, i.e. what is

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654 Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. 175. A25/40. This phrase comes up in Kant’s discussion of why Space is not a concept.
655 Ibid. 321. A218/B266.
656 Even though the supersensible realm of things in themselves allows for their possibility, i.e. their freedom from sensible laws.
an unrealized schema. Thus, like Kant, obedience to the forms of space and time determines what is considered actual, even though (unlike Kant) these forms have a real, and not merely ideal, significance. Similarly, a concept, as the schema of a possible object, is not merely a possibility of thought. For if said schema can conform to the rules of spatio-temporal relation it is not merely a possibility, it is a potentiality, i.e. an unrealized object latent in the changing, and thereby actual, states of affairs. Since not all possibilities can be realized in space and time, but can be schematically supersensible (e.g. God), we must differentiate potentiality from possibility. Where the former signifies what is possible within the material world, the latter signifies what is possible simpliciter.

At first glance, it seems that supersensible objects are, indeed, possible, but are unavailable to the faculties of sensibility and understanding. This is because the faculty of the understanding is, by itself, insufficient and empty – it needs a corresponding intuition, which though homogenous with the concept, is distinct and individuated from it. The mind could not know a supersensible object because thought is insufficient for the revelation of an object. And since a supersensible object is lacking in what the understanding needs – i.e. material actuality – the revelation of supersensible beings by the understanding is impossible. This is complicated, however, by the fact that these forms are no longer merely ideal; they are, in fact, real and (in themselves) insufficient for the constitution, and not merely the revelation, of objects. On this new account, it must be concluded that any possibility that is not also a potentiality – i.e. a material possibility – is empty. Since a supersensible object is a pure schema of an object, and since a pure schema is empty, it follows that a supersensible object neither is nor cannot be a natural object at all; it is a mere possibility without any possible actuality. Where possibilities are not sufficient for the production of a corresponding actuality (i.e. in nature), the possibility of supersensible objects is undercut. It
is in other words, an unrealizable possibility. The objects of traditional metaphysics (i.e. god, freedom, and immortality) are therefore problematic. Though they are possible, they cannot exist in the actuality of nature, given that they are supersensible or, what is the same, non-spatial and a-temporal. This will, of course, leads to the problems of dialectic, i.e. the antimonies and Paralogisms. For now, what is important is the fact that natural possibilities are, as pure schematics, potentialities realizable only in space and time. These possible objects must therefore obey, or be able to obey, the synthesis or marriage of logical and spatio-temporal form.

This reverses the relationship that Kant proposes between actuality and sensibility. Because space and time are forms of sensibility, the actuality of an object must depend, for Kant, on its availability to a possible intuition. If the actuality of X requires that X be subject to forms that are, in fact, structures of sensibility, then a possible intuition of X is a necessary condition for its realization. If space and time are real forms, however, and if sensibility is revelatory instead of constitutive, then the actuality of X depends merely on its spatio-temporality, not in its availability to intuition. Even though obedience to these forms is sufficient for the availability of X to sensibility – which after all reveals the world of extension – it is no longer this availability per se that promises obedience to space and time. In other words, objects are intuitable because they are spatiotemporal; they are not (as Kant says) spatiotemporal because they are intuitable. This means that, where for Kant actuality always signifies the presence of a possible ‘observer’, this demand is no longer necessary for the consideration of actuality. Because space and time are not merely ideal – i.e. because they are not just forms of sensibility – a spatio-temporal world of actual beings is possible without the presence of an observer of any kind. However, because the extended realm is the proper object of sensibility – i.e. because the latter reveals the former – the deployment of an observer in any spatiotemporal world is, at least without further qualifications, possible.
A necessary condition for sensibility is the extension of its object in space and time. Thus, all sensible objects are extended. And if we add the further stipulation that sensibility *reveals* the extended world, it can be maintained that, though there may be contingent, physiological limitations, the obedience of an object to the forms of extension is sufficient for its availability to sensibility. If there were a spatial or temporal object that exceeded the powers of all possible sensibility, sensibility could no longer be considered a faculty of nature’s self-consciousness, which would contradict our hypotheses. In self-consciousness acts, after all, the subject and the object are the same; if, in the case of sensibility, the subject is nature, then the object must, therefore, be natural. If sensibility is the self-consciousness of nature’s extended form, for instance, then its object must be nature’s extension. A non-sensible extension would, therefore, exceed nature itself, which is contradictory. Thus, not only must sensible objects be extended, extended objects must be sensible. Objects are sensible, however, *because* they are subject to space and time, and they are not subject to space and time *because* they are sensible. Sensibility, as the faculty of revealing extension, has the power to intuit spatiotemporal things and can, therefore, be confused for the source of space and time (as Kant has done). At the same time, because sensibility is the act of space and times *folding*, we must acquiesce with Kant: every spatio-temporal object is an object of a possible intuition. Thus, this alternative account not only alters Kant’s positions, it also explains how this position is possible in the first place. Insofar as they are necessary and sufficient conditions for intuition, space and time can easily be posited as *constitutive* forms of sensibility.
From here, an important question arises: How do we confront the pressing metaphysical difficulties that are said (by Kant) to occur when categories apply to things in themselves? After all, isn’t the whole point of the critical system to limit reason in order to avoid the problems presented in the Paralogisms and Antinomies? Isn’t my non-reconciliatory model a blatant return to rationalism? While I must accede to the real possibility of a legitimate metaphysics, I would argue that there are solutions besides those offered by Kant. Because dealing with each Paralogism and Antinomy would constitute a project in its own right, however, I am forced here to limit myself a few general points, followed by a few examples. This will be enough to show that a return to a kind of rationalism does not necessarily entail, what Kant thinks are unavoidable, metaphysical problems. By offering metaphysical solutions not exemplified by Kant, I will cast suspicion on the comprehensiveness of the antinomies – which are supposed to represent the “entire dialectical play of the cosmological ideas,” this will be enough to cast doubt on the dialectic in general. If alternative solutions to these antinomies can be offered, besides those obtainable through transcendental idealism, then despite Kant’s claims to the contrary, the application of categories to things in themselves does not entail a metaphysical aporia.

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657 KrV A308/B365 “The principles arising from this supreme principle of pure reason will, however, be transcendent in respect of all appearances, i.e. no adequate empirical use can ever be made of that principle”. For Kant, dialectical problems occur precisely when we take the categories to apply to things themselves; this forces our reason to develop ideas, for which no empirical – and thus, no legitimate – example can exist. For an excellent overview and analysis of this problem, see Grier, Michelle. 2001. *Kant’s Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. “For Kant, the categories express conditions under which objects can be thought. If the categories are instead held to be conditions of the real possibility of things [(as I am arguing, for instance)], regardless of the particular mode in which such things are given, then, it is assumed that conclusions can be generated regarding objects through deducing consequences simply from formal concepts or principles…the problem concerns mistaking conditions of thought for the conditions of things.” 91.

658 KrV A452/B490 my emphasis.
I can make this move in two ways. One might argue that problems occur when we confuse what is in fact a formal cause with a separate independent entity. Formal causes are not properly speaking, things; they are the rules necessary for the possibility of a thing. If we treat them like things, however, then we confuse what is, in fact, a virtual relation between a thing and its form, with a real one. Here I might refer to the first mathematical antinomy, where reason grapples with the totality of the extended world: is it limited by (a) a beginning in time, a definite extension in space or (b) is it infinitely extended in terms of both? For complex reasons, Kant argues that both positions are incorrect. His answer to the problem is to point out that, according to his own system, the world is an appearance, not a thing in itself, and is therefore not a totality – it is of indefinite extent.

Because I am attributing space and time to things in themselves, I cannot appeal to such an argument. Instead, I might argue that, since space and time are formal causes, the extent of the world must be understood, not in terms of its real relations to these structures, but in terms of its obedience or adherence to these forms. And since forms are rules (which are general), the extent to which they are obeyed is neither infinite nor finite, but indefinite. I might argue, therefore, that the world should be understood, not so much as a quantity, but as an ontological community of spatiotemporal law. Communities, or what I call ‘ontological regions’, are defined not by the quantity of their membership, but by the breadth of their law, allowing it to grow and shrink indefinitely.

An ontological region refers to a ‘region’ of a certain kind of being. Given that any region of the ontological variety is so in virtue of a set of rules – i.e. pre-conditional laws that permit membership – we may also say that each ontological region has its own formal cause. Thus, a form

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659 KrV A427/B455 – A430/B458
designates a region of possible membership; the form of an Owl, for example, designates a logical, or virtual extent without, at the same time, determining the real extent of actual owls. At this same time, it is only by following such rules that matter may attain, and indeed maintain, membership. In this way, a form is both the possibility and the actuality of an object, albeit in different senses. It is the possibility of an object insofar as it can tell us nothing unique about any of its members, for it entails the truth of all. (In this respect, we can say that the form of an ontological region determines what will be the truth of this region, pertaining to all its possible members). However, given that obedience is a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a region, anything may be said to be this being if, and only if, it obeys some form of determinate region. If the world is the community of extension, then its extent is indefinite. Interpreting the world as a totality – i.e. as an independent, self-enclosed thing – is to misunderstand its relation to space and time, which is best understood as a relation between a community and its set of formal laws. In this way, I might argue that this metaphysical antinomy is resolvable, despite the application of space, time, and categories to things in themselves.

Another solution to this antinomy – likely the easier of the two – is to argue that the extent of the world is, in fact, an empirical fact, albeit one that, unlike most other facts, is utterly beyond our reach.

There are resolutions to the fourth antinomy that allow the application of categories on things in themselves. In this antimony, the conflict exists between the propositions that (a), that in the world (or outside it as its cause) there is an absolutely necessary being and (b), there is no absolutely necessary being, “either in the world or outside the world as its cause”. Through transcendental idealism, Kant is able to say that both propositions can be true and that the conflict

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660 KrV A452/B480 – A456/B484.
itself is a product of the pure use of reason.\textsuperscript{661} For although no unconditioned natural cause can exist,\textsuperscript{662} a transcendent being that is absolutely necessary can.\textsuperscript{663} In this respect, Kant utilizes the ulterior realm of the things in themselves to make room for faith. Since nature, on my account, is in itself, I can make no such appeal. My alternative would be to suggest that, while no absolutely necessary being exists in a positive way, the negativity of one does. But how can negativity be said to exist? How can something be present in its absence (at least from nature)?

Here, I might make a brief appeal to teleology. As the end of an act, the object of a desire, i.e. its telos, is a present kind of negativity. What is sought need not, in any sense other than being desired, exist; the object of desire can exist as a mere negativity, conceived by the aspiration itself. Thus, if we say that a necessary being does not exist, except as an end, then (like Kant) we commit ourselves to both propositions of the antinomy. For while there can, in fact, be an absolutely necessary being – i.e. a being underlying the world of nature as its cause – this does not necessarily entail its existence within, or beyond said world. As the end of nature, this being does not exist in nature – in this respect, it is outside nature. This transcendence of nature does not, however, necessarily entail the existence of a positive entity. As an end, it can exist merely as an object of desire. Thus, both sides of the antinomy can be true without appealing to transcendental idealism; their conflict is engineered. These considerations are highly speculative and inconclusive, however. As metaphysical concerns of the highest order, they require much more attention than I can, at this time, give them.

\textsuperscript{661} For a definition of the pure use of reason see KrV A305/B362 – A310/B366.
\textsuperscript{662} A563/B591; see also A485/B513 – A491/B519. The fourth analogy is also central to this point.
\textsuperscript{663} A563/591.
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